

**Migration and Body Politics:**

**A study of migrant women workers in Bellville, Cape Town**

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of the requirements for Masters Degree in the  
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## Declaration

I declare that “**Migration and Body politics: A study of migrant women workers in Bellville, Cape Town**” is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Full name: Kudzai Clara Chireka

Date: November 2015

Signed.....



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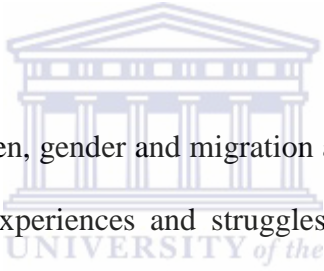
Panashe Chiguta, you have been with me from the beginning and you pushed me to write even when I did not feel like it, you stayed up late with me studying, gave up your computer for me so I could do my work. Thank you my love for the undying support and love through it all.

**Key words:** Migration, Body Politics, Hairdressers, National Belonging, Survival, Citizenship, Identity constructions, Feminism, Gender, Class, Xenophobia, Bellville, Cape Town, South Africa



## **Abstract**

Migration has become very prominent in South Africa, and unlike most countries on the continent, it is an extremely prominent destinations for migrants. The country attracts migrants because there is a common perception that there are better economic opportunities, jobs and living conditions within South Africa. Countries like Zimbabwe, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Senegal, Mozambique and Nigeria are statistically high ranking in migrants entering South Africa on a daily basis (Stats SA, 2011). Most forced migration research seeks to explain the behaviour, impact, and challenges faced by the displaced with the intention of influencing agencies and governments to develop more effective responses to address the challenges.



As a case study focusing on women, gender and migration at the micro-level, this study deals with the gendered and classed experiences and struggles of women migrants working as hairdressers in street salons in Bellville, Cape Town. The study explores how women who are socially marked as “other” in terms of gender, class, space, identity and nationality navigate an environment in which social worth and belonging is constantly defined by physical appearance and the environment in which the body is physically located.

Through a feminist qualitative research method, the study focuses mainly on women’s experiences through interviews and participant observation. The research is therefore deeply grounded and rooted in feminist theoretical perspective and feminist methodological approaches in order to understand women’s lives and gender roles, their body politics and working lives.

One of the major findings of this study is that the lack of a gendered analysis of migration has perpetuated stereotypes about who “migrants” are, what access they can have in a foreign country, in what ways they are considered “other”, and, most importantly, how they respond to their experiences of “othering” and political marginalization. It is argued that migration has been constantly changing: many contemporary migrant women are driven by adventure, desire and spirit, and not by famine, war, spouses and poverty. This study therefore develops recommendations for future researchers and policy makers in considering gender and the dynamic changes surrounding migration.



## Table of Contents

Declaration.....	i
Acknowledgements.....	ii
Key words .....	iii
Abstract.....	iv
Abbreviations.....	viii
<b>Chapter One</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Introduction .....	1
Addressing Gaps in Research on Migration.....	1
Theoretical Framework: Exploring Knowledge in Different Ways .....	7
Outlining the Study’s Structure .....	11
<b>Chapter Two</b> .....	<b>14</b>
Migration Studies in relation to Women and Gender.....	14
Outlining an Interdisciplinary Field.....	14
Gender and Migration .....	17
Explorations of “Push” and “Pull” Factors in Migration studies.....	20
Migration Policy and Xenophobia .....	22
Body Politics.....	27
Analysing “Resistance” in Migration .....	33
Space, Place and Identity .....	37
<b>Chapter Three</b> .....	<b>45</b>
Coming to Grips with Migrant Women’s Agencies.....	45
Participants and Sampling.....	45
Methodological Framework.....	51
Locating myself as a researcher.....	54
Participant Observation.....	57
Interviewing .....	61
Subject-Specific Interviewing and Data analysis: Women and Education.....	62
<b>Chapter Four</b> .....	<b>68</b>
Integration, Exclusion, Survival and Resistance .....	68
Reassessing Push and Pull Factors .....	69
The invisible body of the migrant woman .....	78
Social Networks and agency among young migrant women.....	83
Street-wise bodies .....	88
Community as a family unity: The development of a sisterhood .....	92
Using social capital: language, education and identity .....	95
Body Politics, Identity Construction and Xenophobia .....	98
Migrant women and their redefinition of social belonging .....	106
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>111</b>
Reflections on modern migrant women.....	111
Strengthening future research, policy and practice on migrant women.....	112
References .....	115
Appendix .....	134



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## **Abbreviations**

DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
SA	South Africa
SAMP	South African Migration Project
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
UN	United Nations
WOLCN	Women of Colour Leadership Network



# Chapter One

## Introduction

### Addressing Gaps in Research on Migration

According to the Sustainable Livelihoods Foundation research on the South African hair care business, “The business of hair care in the form of salons and barbershops has mushroomed in the townships and working class areas of Cape Town and Johannesburg over the past 10 years.” (Charman, 2013: 2). The report goes on to stress that it is mainly African immigrants who are driving the new hair care industry, and these are mainly women. As a group marginalized on the basis of gender, nationality, class and race, many migrant women hairdressers therefore occupy complex locations of invisibility, visibility and hyper-visibility. On one hand, their bodies are constantly “policed”, discriminated against as feminine, “foreign”, poor and black. On the other hand, their work and movements within the public space of the city affords them a considerable measure of agency to survive.

This study focuses on the experiences of migrant women working as hairdressers on the streets by investigating how these marginalized women situate their bodies, how others perceive their bodies, and their own occupational roles in working on others’ bodies through hairstyling. A key reason for combining body politics and migration studies in this study is that migrant women working on the streets in a country not deemed their own, are constantly negotiating profound embodied politics and practices in relation to the working spaces they occupy. Often, these women sit along the pavements and use plastic shacks for shelter and provide chairs for their clients. Some do not have shelter, they just stand on the streets with stools and chairs and that forms their street salons.

In the context of the current explosion of xenophobia in South Africa, it is especially important to analyze the ways in which working-class migrant women in public spaces are

particularly vulnerable and soft targets of persecution. Being foreign and a woman present what Sigsworth, et.al, (2008) calls “*double jeopardy*.” According to these authors: “Foreign women in South Africa therefore face double jeopardy: they are at the intersection of these two groups that are so vulnerable to exploitation, abuse and violence” (Sigsworth, et.al, 2008: 8). Yet there is very little analysis or research around gender and/in relation to xenophobia in South Africa.

A survey conducted by the South African Migration Project (SAMP) in 1997 revealed that 25% of South Africans wanted a total prohibition of migration or immigration and 22% wanted the South African government to return all foreigners presently living in South Africa to their home countries. 61% agreed that migrants put additional strains on the country's resources (SAMP, 1999; Siddique, 2004).

It is against this background and the xenophobic attacks of 2008 that the findings by SAMP are clear indications of the kind of hostile environment migrant women find themselves in regardless of the promises or dreams of South Africa holding out a better life for them. It is also alarming how there seems to be a lack of gendered analysis when it comes to xenophobia. Yet one is constantly confronted by statistical histories such as the SAMP survey, which presents the hostile mind-set of the people occupying the space migrants aim to infiltrate for purposes of earning a decent living.

Since the focus of this study is on how migrant women are both affected by and respond to their social and political experiences, the study focused on encouraging research participants to share their ambiguous experiences through interviews. The research also serves to draw attention to the low status and experiences of discrimination and agency affecting street hairdressers. Their clients include mainly working class and lower-middle- class black women who opt to use street hairdressers because they are more affordable than “proper” hair

salons, and they are often able to bargain about prices.

The research project is therefore an attempt at approaching the effects of migration involving race, class, culturally constructed notions of gender, communal belonging, nationality, citizenship and sexuality. These intersecting identities are explored in relation to the working body and the experiences of migrant women. These experiences include “the problems they encounter, their coping or survival strategies, and the shaping of their identities and attitudes.” (Jacobsen & Landau, 2003: 8)

Kawar writes that: “Women more than men tend to occupy jobs within the informal sector which is not covered by any labour legislation or social protection.” (Kawar, 2004:76).

This presents opportunities for a gendered analysis of the informal economy and how it is heavily populated by women. Lefko-Everett argues that “In Southern Africa, there is still a serious lack of gendered analysis of contemporary cross-border migration, and limited understanding of women’s experiences as migrants.” (Lefko-Everett, 2007:1).

This research aims at investigating the experiences of migrant women in order to reveal a gendered analysis that makes sense of how they contribute to the national economy and occupy national spaces, and are also politically, culturally, racially and economically marginalized in a space that is so diverse, yet very unwelcoming to foreigners.

In dealing with the interconnectedness of struggles on the basis of connected gender, race, class and national identification, the study concentrates on patterns associated with the following questions:

Where do these migrant women come from and why do they come to South Africa? In addressing this, it is useful to site Stats SA. According to Stats SA’s 2013 findings, many of these women migrate from Zimbabwe, Nigeria and the DRC. These three countries are currently recorded as being in the top ten of countries with many immigrants in South Africa.

Zimbabwe is number one, Nigeria second and the DRC being third.

The reasons why these countries have the largest number of immigrants entering South Africa is because South Africa is considered a land full of opportunities that are economic and financial. For women who seek to be financially independent, South Africa provides the best destination to set up a business or seek employment. Many from countries like Zimbabwe, in which the currency has become value-less and the economy is very weak, will opt to migrate to countries such as South Africa that promise a better life.

Another question is: how do women experience the link between survival/agency and social marginality/victimization? Such a question requires considering how migrant women are both victimized and resist their victimization. One of the ways to answer this question is to reference a term used by Sigsworth et. al (2008), who argue that women who are migrants face what is called “*double jeopardy*”

Studies of South African attitudes to foreign nationals have exposed some of the highest levels of negative attitudes when compared to similar studies which have been conducted in other countries across the region and across the world (SAMP, 1999; SAMP, 2004). Migrant women in South Africa who work in the streets are continuously re-defining their roles in society, and they have to appear to others as if they are nobodies. In many ways, they face an identity crisis in order to survive and not experience identity-based exclusion based on nationality, race and gender. The question of how these women situate their bodies and how others perceive their bodies particularly in the Bellville areas in which they work is a crucial one. This question is best answered by looking into body politics and considering how embodied subjects occupy space and relate to that space.

Many migrant women have mastered the art of being invisible bodies. They relate to their

clients and those that conduct street trading around them in such ways that they are not considered a threat. By doing so, their bodies are considered not important. The men who work in the streets, taxi ranks, shops and train stations perceive these women as sexually available and often focusing only on their sexualized bodies, while their customers seem to ignore them. Working migrant women often only become needed and visible when clients require their services of hairdressing.

The reasons for many women becoming hairdressers in the first place reveal a lot about their statuses. Equally important is how others see their occupations. The women that were interviewed stated various reasons why hairdressing became an option for them to earn a living whilst based in South Africa. After having migrated, some of the women were introduced to the culture of hairstyling by women they met in the communities that they reside in. They opted for this type of a job because this form of work was easy to get and set up. Some of the women faced ridicule from their families back in their home countries because they left home to look for better opportunities, yet settled for an occupation that they could have taken up in their home countries. Many of the women stated that others do not really respect them because their work is conducted along the street and not in a building. It is therefore not seen as socially acceptable or defined as 'proper' work.

This research was done in the Metropolitan area of Bellville in Cape Town, currently a hub of considerable demographic and social transformation, including cultural transformation linked to the presence and subcultures of migrants. Bellville was once a city of the Western Cape but now it is part of the Cape Town metropolitan area. According to the City of Cape Town Census of 2011 it's estimated that Bellville has a population of 44 209 (City of Cape Town Census, 2013) the racial make-up of the area is predominantly white (60.8 %), colored (16.9%), blacks (16.9%) and Indian/Asian (0.7%) (City of Cape Town Census, 2013). Yet my own observations of the area of study reveal a different racial makeup from what the

statistics show. The racial makeup of people operating in the Bellville area is predominantly black, then colored and Indian/Asian but not white.

The first languages are Afrikaans, English and Xhosa, although the presence of migrants has led to the prominence of a rich variety of languages, including French, Pigeon English, Lingala and Shona spoken in the streets. Consequently, although the statistics provided in the City of Cape Town 2011 Suburb Census reveal that white people are the majority, the location of this research, the bus terminus, taxi rank and train station area is inhabited predominantly by blacks, Indian/Asian and colored people who conduct business in the area. Bellville has also become a market for migrant people including Ethiopians, Somalis, Pakistanis, Zimbabweans, Congolese and Nigerians.

Upon entering Bellville station, one sees a range of informal commercial and trading sites and activities. In a nutshell, parts of Bellville are thriving informal communities, busy market places where all forms of marketing and trading of goods and services take place, and where *informal* trading is the order of the day.

Of particular importance in my research, however, are the experiences of the migrant women who, in-between the traders (who are usually men), struggle to make a living in situations that are often extremely precarious, difficult and even dangerous. These women are from a range of backgrounds, and for many of them, past experiences have not prepared them politically or emotionally for the competitive and often violent contexts in which they currently work. Although I explain my sampling method in later chapters, I should stress here that the study is not aimed at developing conclusions on the basis of extensive quantitative research. Rather, I am interested in exploring the gaps and complexities that quantitative research often ignores. I have therefore worked with a few research participants with the aim of identifying the nuances, contradictions and ambiguities that warrant ongoing research in

studies of migration and gender.

These nuances and contradictions surface especially strongly in relation to the occupations that my research participants have pursued. It is especially important to note that street hairdressers work out in the open, unlike traders who often use improvised stalls and even small shops. Street hairdressers, who work alone, are easily exposed to, for example, the anger of dissatisfied clients, bad weather conditions, dirt and harassment by men or xenophobic South Africans. Their resilience is a constant source of inspiration, and an analysis of their experiences, as this research will show, can complement existing studies of women migrants in South Africa or policy research.

### **Theoretical Framework: Exploring Knowledge in Different Ways**

My exploration of the politics of embodiment was viewed through the themes of social belonging, class status, space and identity. These connected terms provide a lens for looking at the experiences of women's working bodies through citizenship, nationality and status as migrants. This meant using a theoretical framework that shows how social identities intersect. Therefore intersectionality will be an important tool for looking at the politics of the working body. To quote Patricia Hill Collins 1 "One can use the framework of intersectionality to think through social institutions, organizational structures, patterns of social interactions, and other social practices on all levels of social organization" (2008: 208). I will therefore analyse the "multiple ways that race and gender interact with class in the labour market" (Cho, Crenshaw and McCall, 2013. n.p).

The theoretical framework was also guided by social constructionist work that focuses on identity not as a fixed process, but as a process of becoming. Stuart Hall argues that:

"instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact...we should think, instead, of identity as a 'production', which is never complete ,always in process ,and always constituted



within not outside representation.” (Hall, 1993:1)

This was useful in tracking the way women view themselves being in a different social setting from their home countries. This allowed me to consider how women identify themselves, or seek to identify themselves in order to negotiate forms of empowerment, access to employment, or degrees of authority.

Yuval Davis (2006) talks about “*to belong and belonging*” and engages in an interesting debate on what it means to belong and to experience belonging within a foreign land. She discusses belonging as an emotional attachment a *‘feeling at home’*, or an act of self-identification by self or others. Furthermore, belonging is a dynamic process; it is not fixed and is a process that changes. Moreover, it can be looked at through different levels, including social locations, identifications, emotions, ethical and political values (Yuval Davis, 2006). The importance of the work by Yuval Davis is that it assists me with pursuing an intersectional analysis of my research subjects, whose experiences are characterized by instability, and social and physical movement.

Yuval Davis shows how social locations exist on an axis of power; therefore, the power relations found in the location where participants in this study work will be a focus of my analysis of power relations amongst the hairdressers and those around them. Waldinger & Soehl (2010) approach body politics in relation to what is available to whom. They state that migrants, once they move, become foreigners in the country they are entering and are simultaneously foreign in the countries they come from. This situation of being in limbo, and how that position is dealt with by certain women was central to this study’s investigations.

This research shows that migration for women is not always traumatic and painful, and that women do experience certain advantages when they are living in the Diaspora. Moreover, their decisions to migrate are also often made independently. According to Kwar

“Despite the difficulties and constraints, migration offers women new opportunities and financial independence in addition to improved status within their homes and communities. Over and above the challenges they face, female migrants are now major contributors to their home country economies through their private remittances.” (Kawar, 2004: 73). Furthermore, when women migrate to other countries, they may find possibilities for freedom, rights and making personal choices which were not available in their home countries.

In identifying how marginalized women experience a socially constructed sense of who they are in a different environment context, Barnes notes: “Sometimes it is expected that being black anywhere is the same as being black everywhere” (Barnes, 2002: 246). Despite the evidence of black women’s varying experiences in different locations, the homogenizing of black women is very much evident in the way in which many scholars address social and identity-making processes related to poor black women’s experiences of certain issues<sup>1</sup>. My research tried to avoid this homogenizing of black women’s experiences in terms of race, ethnicity, class and nationality (to name a few). The main aim was to show the different analytical levels of these social divisions in speaking to the very distinct experiences of the various participants to the study. In this sense, I have tried to follow the kind of analysis suggested by Yuval-Davis’ discussion of intersectionality. For her, intersectionality does not merely mean adding on the different variables, but dealing with constitutive intersectionality, where race, gender, class, nationality, sexuality and citizenship all come together in shaping distinct experiences and responses of women.

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<sup>1</sup> Kehler, Johanna (2001). Women and Poverty: The South African Experience. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 3(1), 41-53. Available at: <http://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol3/iss1/3> is an example of how social identity processes of black women tend to be homogenised.

One of the reasons why a feminist theoretical framework was best suited for this research was “Women’s experiences, informed by feminist theory, provide a potential grounding for more complete and less distorted knowledge claims than do men’s.” (Harding, 1987: 184-5)

Building on Harding’s attention to women’s experiences in general, Chandra Mohanty in her article entitled “Under Western Eyes” argues that problems arise as a result of doing analysis of women’s experiences as if these experiences exist in a vacuum. She argues that western scholarship tends to group “women” as a historical group which is undifferentiated by other factors such as class, ethnicity, and geographical location to name a few. It may be that they have a “shared history of political and other agency, not their shared status as objects” (Mohanty, 1991:65).

Feminist theory has become a paradigm shift for continuously challenging dominant patriarchal and mainstream notions of theory and knowledge. In providing conceptual and analytical tools, it has become a driving force for many people to want to rethink, reinvent and understand what theory means, what knowledge is and how they can be a part of alternative knowledge-production. Therefore even the interviews conducted could be seen as forms of theorizing in so far as women’s narratives for feminists are not simply expressions of their experience, but interpretations that embed theoretical understanding. The research participant actively produces knowledge, rather than provides data for the researcher only. Devault & Gross emphasize that this is extremely important: “Rather than viewing women informants as objects of the researcher’s gaze, feminists should develop ways of conceptualizing the interview as an encounter between women with common interests, who would share knowledge.” (2006: 178). Taking this approach adds onto existing knowledge of the experiences of different women who have migrated to different countries and are working and living within certain contexts.

## **Outlining the Study's Structure**

The thesis starts by explaining my theoretical framework and use of a particular interdisciplinary perspective and secondary sources. In the first two chapters, I explain how and why I draw on several disciplinary influences and themes in existing studies within the humanities as well as the social sciences. Although much work on migration draws on the social sciences, this study tries to show that work on social subjectivities and human experiences, work that is often pursued in the humanities, should be connected to more conventional social science work. Chapter two therefore contextualizes this study within various studies of migration, gender, space, belonging and body politics. The section guides the arguments raised and is a foundation for my analysis of the research findings in chapter four.

Chapter three describes and rationalizes the research design and methodology. In certain social science and development studies, methodology is sometimes explained with very little attention being paid to how methodology and methods are connected to theoretical frameworks. This study attempts to make constant connections between how I decided to pursue my research and choose certain methods, and what the implications or effects were in terms of my theoretical framework. In making these connections, I focus, firstly, on the general importance of qualitative research. As opposed to quantitative studies, which are able to provide statistics about migration numbers and trends, qualitative research can provide a richer picture of the social and human implication of these trends.

Within the use of qualitative research, I was also very much concerned with following feminist qualitative approaches. Feminist qualitative research was used as a methodological framework as this framework best suited my efforts to bring out the voices and experiences of the research participants' and not only my own as a researcher.

In trying to access the research participants' own voices, participant observation and face to face interviews were used as methods of data collection. As will be demonstrated in this chapter, these can never be fully defined before the actual research. This chapter also deals with how feminist qualitative research can and should focus on the location of the researcher. I consider what it means to pursue participant observation, and also describe why and how this is relevant to feminist theoretical frameworks that attempt to analyze gendered experiences in in-depth and comprehensive ways.

In Chapter four, the research findings are analyzed and discussed. It is also stressed that the process outlined in chapter 3 is an important aspect of my research findings as it sets the scene of the findings and the basis on which the data being analysed was gathered. In the analysis the politics of push and pull factors are explored. Women in the contemporary migration process have shifted from traditional and popularized reasons for migrating. In recent years, women have become far more independent in their decisions to migrate. What comes out in this chapter is that there are under-researched reasons for women's migration. The "feminization of migration" is a concept that assumes the stereotype of an impoverished, sad and suffering woman who is running from something. In contrast, this chapter reveals that not all women migrate because of negative reasons, and some come from good and secure homes. Some of these women are following their dreams and passions and fulfilling their sense of adventure.

The formal research findings of this study are the result of a thematic analysis. This method of analysis draws on common themes that emerge from the interviews and observations. It is these experiences of the research participants together with literature reviewed that constitute much of the analysis in this study.

Chapter five provides a summary of the research findings and recommendations based on the analysis in chapter three. . It is shown that statistics and well-known trends of migration often inform policy, although the micro-research I undertake can raise important insights for guiding policy or advocacy. Research should go beyond well-known and documented experiences and re-think the image of a migrant woman to take into account women living in dynamic environments where technology is much more advanced, transport is more developed; many women now move freely without partners or dependents and are more adventurous in their decisions. Moreover, research needs to address the fears and experiences of migrant women being targets of xenophobia especially in the wake of the 2008 and 2015 xenophobia attacks on black foreigners in South Africa.

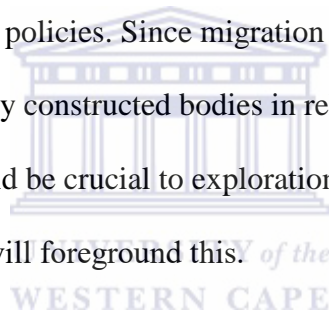


## Chapter Two

### Migration Studies in relation to Women and Gender

#### Outlining an Interdisciplinary Field

Scholarly and policy-related literature on migration tends to be gender-blind and has dealt with migrants' experiences, xenophobia and immigration laws as though all of these do not affect groups distinctively on the basis of their gender. For example the International Organization of Migration (IOM), World Migration report of 2015, an influential recent study of migration, does not deal with gender within migration at all, but focuses on immigration laws, urbanization and migration policies. Since migration revolves clearly around the mobility and movement of socially constructed bodies in relation to social, geographical and political parameters, gender should be crucial to explorations of migration, hence my study of women's experiences of gender will foreground this.



Apart from drawing on work dealing with gender and migration, I am also indebted to scholarship by authors such as Stephanie Camp (2005) who focus on body politics in the sense of how human bodies are constructed and represented in relation to culturally defined context and historical periods. Although migration studies tend to draw on the social sciences, work on body politics has grown mainly out of the humanities, and has tried to explore the complex ways in which bodies are treated, positioned and labeled in relation to dominant gendered, racial, class and other discourses and power relations. Attention to body politics has also focused on bodies as sites of resistance. Thus, the socially subordinated bodies of migrant women are often not only oppressed, but also, as my research will show, active in that embodied subjects dynamically and courageously assert their rights to visibility,

dignity and better lives.

A range of fields in social science and humanities scholarship can assist with analyzing and conceptualizing migrant's gendered experiences, as well as the details associated with their multi-layered struggles for survival. Consequently, my discussion of the literature that informs this study outlines the connected subjects on which this study of migrant women's struggles will draw. The range of resources used deal with; gender and migration, gender and space, identity construction through body politics, belonging as a process, social networks and feminist geography. These are the main interconnected fields on which the study draws.

As indicated in the literature review, various strands in migration studies, as well as scholarship and research on body politics and resistance are crucial to developing detailed exploration of how social subjects experience and respond to migration. Enlisting this wide range of work therefore assists in transcending approaches that tend to flatten and generalize complex struggles, especially those concerning women.

Like many other social constructionist and feminist analysts who deal with women's struggles, Nead explains why women are marginalized by the emphasis placed on their statuses as appendages to others and argues, "A woman is defined through her identity as a wife, mother and daughter and the categorization is reinforced through the dedication to each of these roles" (1988:28). Socially constructed ideas of women's roles only in relation to others is one of the main reasons why women have been marginalized and left out of research concerning issues like migration. In counteracting this gap, it is important that migration studies not only focus on women who migrate, but look into why they migrate and pay attention to what experiences they go through after migrating.



In 2007, in a working paper of the United Nations, the term feminization of migration was openly identified (UN, 2007). In this paper, feminization was broadly defined as, “the significance of female migration and the role of gender in shaping migratory processes and, most importantly, the increasingly important role of women as remittance senders” (UN, 2007: 2). This definition marked the inclusion of women into the migration process by an international organization that has a major influence on countries and their policies. Although the term “feminization of migration was recently coined, and seems to respond to a recent pattern, female migration is dated as early as the 1960s (Zlonik, 2003). What the coining of this term has done is not to identify a new phenomenon, but help to explain the growing trends of migration. These are reflected in past and current migration trends, although it has become apparent that more recently women are migrating independent of men. Moreover, they are often becoming breadwinners and remittance senders when they migrate. These are the independent and active roles that previous research tended to ignore.

By drawing on interdisciplinary theories of embodiment, this discussion addresses issues around power and resistance in a way that allows migrant women as research subjects in this study to speak for themselves, hence my choice of feminist theoretical and methodological frameworks.

Migration is a growing concern globally, and in South Africa particularly it has been characterised by several waves of xenophobia that have been extremely violent. Therefore, the literature gathered helps to map out the complex political, social and psycho-social experiences and challenges faced by my research participants. I drew extensively on work that focuses on gender, identity, space, women and their body politics because much of this

work allows scholars to understand how social identities and experiences are conveyed and represented through individuals' bodies. Bodies are represented, violated and dislocated by social attitudes, institutions and laws, and what is done to bodies, especially in terms of gender, nationality, class and race tells us a great deal about what is done to particular persons and the groups to which they belong.

## **Gender and Migration**

Women are slowly beginning to be accounted for within statistical data on migration. The United Nations Population Division statistical data shows for both documented and undocumented migrants, that between 1960 and 1990 female migrants are growing faster than male migrants (Lefko-Everett, 2007). Over a number of years, research is also showing that half of all international migrants are women. This realization is starting to prompt dialogue on the subject and make way for new directions in policy research and scholarship on migration in the form of work that takes gender seriously within the field of migration. For example the International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2015 Migration report encourages coherence between global level migration policies and urbanization policies to avoid the lack of policy coherence (IOM, 2015) this way issues affecting migrants can be properly addressed at policy and scholarship levels. What it means to take gender seriously in the field of gender and migration can be best explained in Omelaniuk's comments that: "a gender analysis of migration looks beyond differences in migration behavior between men and women- such as the likelihood and type of migration-and examines the inequalities underlying those differences. It looks at how these are shaped by the social and cultural contexts of the individual, and the influence that membership of social groups and economic and political conditions can have on decisions about migration" (Omelaniuk, 2005: 1).

In order to take gender seriously this study employed qualitative research methods that focus on women's narratives as working migrants in informal economies. This study also seeks to build on this emerging tradition of research and deepen analysis of the impact of migration on body politics.

Migration has been a topic predominantly dominated by and revolving around men. However the popularized reasons for migration have started to change especially for women. The trends of international migration are suggesting that women no longer migrate only (or even mainly) because they are travelling with or joining their husbands/family (Caritas Internationalis, 2010; Lefko-Everett, 2007). Recent years have shown an independent wave of migration where women are migrating for more than just economic reasons or natural disasters (Dodson and Crush, 2004). Some women migrate in order to loosen the traditional ties that do not allow them the freedom to exercise the right to equal opportunities. These ties often involve domestic violence, and defamation of character in societies (Lefko-Everett, 2007). Many women are becoming economic providers and breadwinners for their families; therefore, rather than migrating under the banners of wives, sisters and family dependents, women are becoming independent economic and social migrants (Dodson and Crush, 2004; Lefko-Everett, 2007; Caritas International, 2010).

Kihato, who addresses the social, conditions of migrant women states;

“Much of the literature consequently gauges population movements' material costs and benefits for migrants, households, hosts and source countries or regions. With their focus on economic engagement and wage labour, scholars have typically overlooked the active role women play in the migration process as women are analytically consigned to the home or informal economy.” (2007:397)

Many scholars have overlooked some of the issues surrounding women and migration that Kihato (2007) highlighted above. This might be because not a lot has been documented from past events around the migration of women except what Lefko-Everett (2007) have identified as the main reasons for women's migration. It is therefore crucial for women-centered research on migration to be continuously conducted in order to capture the dynamic issues surrounding women and migration. By seeking to document and analyse the experiences of women from different countries after they have migrated, this study indicates how women experience social marginality and vulnerability and also how they experience and address their circumstances in relation to their embodied experiences in a new environment.

As indicated previously, the recognition of the growth of women's migration led to the term "feminization of migration". As argued, the "feminization of migration" has become a popular term to describe the trend of migration or its status in the international migration scheme. Historically, the migration of women was not as effectively documented as that of men, with this suggesting that women either did not migrate or if they did it was to move with/join their husbands and families. My observation with regards to the neglect of women in migration is that it is a symptom of how women are generally seen in history and social processes: women have not been seen as direct contributors to the global economy or active in the public sphere. Their roles in society are confined to activities in the domestic sphere, which is not seen to warrant recorded in analysis of historical and social processes.

To some extent, the emphasis on the feminisation of migration corrects this. However, scholars like Kihato are of the view that much of the literature on the feminization of migration "focuses on instances of overt exploitation; portraying women as passive

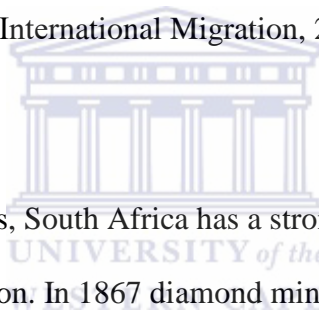
participants or victims without individual or collective agency or status” (2007: 397). Certain scholars therefore show that the focus on women has not necessarily led to adequate gender analysis. According to Lefko-Everett “In Southern Africa, there is still a serious lack of gendered analysis of contemporary cross border migration, and limited understanding of women’s experiences as migrants” (2007:1). Therefore my research, like some other studies that adopt a similar perspective to Lefko-Everett’s, seeks to close that gap between migration and experiences of women who are migrants.

In an attempt to address women’s experiences of migration, this research tries to avoid portraying women as victims or only in a negative manner by resisting an exclusive focus on “overt exploitation”. Many migrant studies perceive migrant women as victims, victims of prostitution, abuse, and labour exploitation. However true it may be that migrant women face extreme forms of violence, discrimination and oppression. Migrant women are also human agents; agents who have chosen to leave their countries and are determined to transform their lives as best they can. Kihato does acknowledge that some of the literature is “potentially well intentioned” (2007:399). But however well-intentioned it is, it can have the effect of naturalizing women’s inevitable victim status. In seeking to draw attention to the oppressive circumstances that face migrant women the danger of this well-intentioned focus on power over others is that it neglects attention to their agencies, and some empowering aspects about their migrant status and experiences. It should therefore be contested.

### **Explorations of “Push” and “Pull” Factors in Migration studies**

Apart from the focus on women and gender in migration studies, considerable attention has been paid to analysing migration in terms of historical and political circumstances (Crush,

2008; Maharaj, 2004). Crush states that “cross-border labour migration between South Africa and its neighbor dates back to the mid-19th century, when the South African diamond and gold mining industries were founded and the country began its trek toward a modern industrial economy.” (2008:1). The industrial revolution of the economy in the 1860s-1880s when diamonds and gold became South Africa’s most valuable resource (Worger and Byrnes, 2015) led to many migrants entering the country mainly to work. “The developing mines and cities of industrialization attracted foreign capital and large-scale immigration” (Worger and Byrnes, 2015:1). In expanding on this explanation, it has been argued that “It is not surprising that many people are looking for a future beyond the borders of their own country, both within their own region and, if they have the means to get there, to more distant parts of the world” (Global Committee of International Migration, 2005: 6).



Relative to other African countries, South Africa has a strong economy which became the major attracting factor for migration. In 1867 diamond mining became very prominent in South Africa; it was because of this that large scale immigration developed. This extended to 1886 when gold was being mined. The two minerals altered not only the economic structure of the country but the political structures as well (Worger and Byrnes, 2015) fast-forwarding to the 1980s, it was when African urbanisation restrictions within South Africa were lifted that migration trends increased (Posel, 2003). “With this came the increased possibility for families rather than individuals to migrate, and the expectation that circular or temporary migration within South Africa would be replaced by the permanent settlement of people at places of employment (Posel, 2003: 4).

From the mid-1990s when the ANC led government was in power, many entry restrictions to

the country were relaxed. (Siddique, 2004). Some have argued that this relaxing of restrictions came with a flood of illegal immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa (Crush, 1999). For many South Africans who felt that the state needed to prioritize their employment, housing and security needs responded with resentment and anger to the influx. Consequently, before the 2008 xenophobic attacks, immigrants were seen as posing a threat to locals, and as commentators remarked, “The arrival of illegal immigrants has become a source of conflict among the local and immigrant black workers” (Siddique, 2004: 1).

Despite the problems that the majority of Blacks in South Africa face, South Africa is seen by many as a country which provides hope for better opportunities, better living conditions and/or freedom from the political turmoil that is haunting other countries. These factors are the driving force behind many of the illegal migrations (Maharaj, 2004; van Meeterea and Pereira, 2013; Jacobsen and Landau, 2003). By focusing on individual experiences, this research will hopefully add to studies of existing push and pull factors or help enrich the existing reasons given for women’s migration.

## **Migration Policy and Xenophobia**

Yet another prominent theme in scholarship and policy research on migration concerns, immigration policy as well as the official and public responses towards migrants. For many, the immigration policy of South Africa is considered to be fairly restrictive as it fails to fully address human rights protection for migrants entering the country (Khan, 2007; Maharaj 2004; Dodson, 2002). The South African Immigration Regulations of 2014 came into effect in May 2014 with the aim of amending their Immigration Amendment Acts of 2007 and 2011. Although this was a step towards trying to balance the need for better security with the

contribution migration makes to community development and prosperity, the amendments put forward failed to address human rights protection and gender issues around migration. Instead it focused on short-term issues such as the term permit being replaced with a visa.

Immigration policies are indications of what the lifestyles of immigrants are likely to be when they enter a country. Dodson states that “There have been long delays in developing a new progressive immigration policy in South Africa, and this has been attributed to national politics, bureaucratic bungling, and the very real dilemma of formulating democratic, rights-based migration in what is a highly xenophobic society.” (2002: 1). As mentioned earlier, this is reflected in the 2014 amendments put forward for the South African Immigration Act which still left out the human rights aspect and still saw the country experience another wave of xenophobia in 2015.



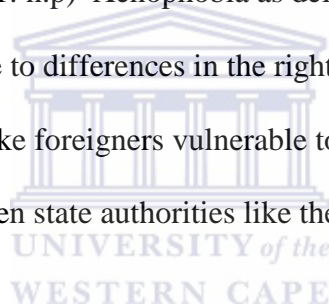
The lack of policies in place to aid the number of immigrants entering the country might be the cause of the immigrants remaining illegal and undocumented and therefore engaging in menial labour, poorly unpaid jobs and existing in lower-class communities and informal settlements. Migrants, especially women, are left with very limited options; they cannot return to their countries of origin because of push factors; hence they enter the country illegally and find whatever means of survival is available at times at the cost of their own safety.

Some women have become victims of harsh living conditions and abuse because of the lack of protection in countries they migrate to. Because of the lack of protective policies for migrants, human trafficking, sexual exploitation and labour abuse are some of the traumas



women who migrate have experienced. The violence and suffering experienced by women migrants in South Africa could constitute an entire research area in itself, but for the purposes of this research these factors will be invoked mainly to help map out the way in which the receiving country has affected the everyday lived experiences of migrant women.

In the wake of the waves of xenophobic attacks on migrants in South Africa in 2008, Gabriele Santi, the Medecins Sans Frontieres' project coordinator, gave a speech on migrants in Johannesburg in 2011. She stated that "What they find in South Africa is exploitation, discrimination, poverty, destitution, and in the past have been met with xenophobic outbreaks of extreme violence." (Santi, 2011: n.p) Xenophobia as defined in this context as harm that is inflicted on the physical body due to differences in the rights that locals and "outsiders" have. These differential rights often make foreigners vulnerable to physical violence, abuse by the communities they work in and even state authorities like the police.



Gabriele Santi's above mentioned comment on xenophobia seems to refer mainly to the different formal rights that individuals within a country have on the basis of their nationality. This shows that xenophobia actually takes many forms (Harris, 2001). Xenophobia in fact raises many issues about human rights as well as about citizenship, nationality, feelings and perceptions of belonging. In other words, xenophobia is deeply embedded in how people perceive and feel about others. Such perceptions and feelings transcend legislation and formal rights.

Xenophobia often raises the matter of who has access to what, who controls the material, cultural, spatial and linguistic resources in certain contexts, and how one's body is used as a

means to enforce differences and prejudice. As has been argued by one commentator:

“Whether documented or undocumented, foreigners are frequently treated as a homogeneous category of 'illegal aliens'. Xenophobic discourse prevails around this category and forms the basis for hostility, conflict and violence between South African citizens and (predominantly black) foreigners” (Harris, 2001: 1). In the course of my research, I found that sometimes migrant women are forced to pack up their stands and carry all their material without being given any warning. This vividly shows how issues around space, embodiment, physical persecution and security all come together in migrant women’s encounters with xenophobia. Harris (2001) explains the role xenophobia plays in victimizing foreigners; he also argues that xenophobia in its many forms ranges from public hostility, institutional discrimination, verbal abuse alongside murder and physical violence. Harris’s (2001) analysis of xenophobia is unfortunately a lived reality for many black foreigners in South Africa. This raises numerous questions around the concept of belonging and citizenship, such as what it means to belong, to what extent one can belong, what the difference is between formal citizenship and perceptions of legitimate belonging within a nation, and whether formal citizenship is enough to guarantee safety from xenophobic attacks?

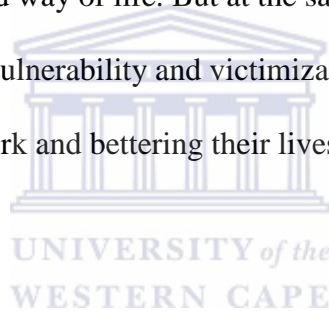
Exploration of the concept of belonging is closely related to the issues around citizenship that is part and parcel of understanding attitudes towards migrants. As mentioned earlier, there are often power struggles between migrants and citizens in terms of who owns what, who has access to what, if there is access to what extent is it accessible. Many of these contestations revolve around definitions of the body that is seen to have the status of a “true citizen” and that is therefore seen to have legitimate rights to certain resources and spaces.

Gender can compound women's experiences of marginalization as migrants. Immigration laws and policies have a distinct impact upon women migrants. Some laws automatically define women as "dependents" placing them in a "...family role" rather than "market role" This, in turn, can reinforce some of the factors creating the social vulnerability of migrant women" (Boyd and Grieco, 2003: 1). Women who migrate in search of employment other than the stereotypical tasks of childcare and domestic work often lack work permits and end up being employed illegally. This lack of permits may be because certain countries separate the right to reside from the right to work. Migrant women are more likely to be given only the right to reside in the countries they enter because they are often seen as non-productive "appendages", rather than as potentially productive actors. Therefore labour exploitation, abuse and violence can become common among migrant women who seek employment without the right paper work. This is reinforced by the view that: As women and foreigners, migrant women often face double discrimination in the labour market. Boyd & Grieco (2003) deepen this analysis of women's situations by showing that a gendered analysis of migration allows one to see that even highly skilled female immigrants experience work opportunities, jobs and the working environment differently because of the traditional gender roles assigned to women by society.

Explanations and analysis of women's migration have been limited, but have raised some important themes. According to Lefko-Everett (2007) migration for women has presented itself as an opportunity to work, a chance for decision-making in women's daily lives and to earn their own money. This is despite the fact that most of these women are informal traders in an informal economy. However as Lefko-Everett states, the research done by the Migrant Voices Project showed reasons behind most women's migration was based on a primarily household need and that these women tend to be older and mature (Lefko-Everett, 2007;

Forbes Martin 2004). In contrast, Dodson's (2002) research showed that most women migrated in response to difficult circumstances.

Some women who make the choice to migrate face discouragement from their families based on their gender. They are told that no woman should travel alone to a foreign country because they fear that they will be raped, abused, exploited or even killed in the process. But the hope for a better existence drives most of these women to leave home and at times leave home without notifying their families where they are going. Therefore migration presents a way for women to better their lives by gaining independence, a source of income and an experience of a new place, culture, language and way of life. But at the same time it comes with risks and dangers that lead to the extreme vulnerability and victimization of these women pursuing their personal goals of finding work and bettering their lives and that of their families.

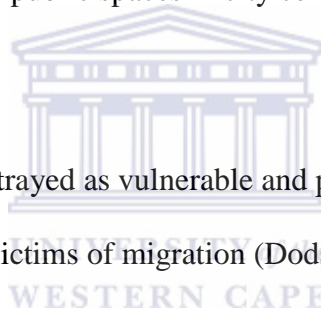


### **Body Politics**

The notion of body politics in scholarship and scholar-activism arose from feminist politics and abortion debates. This concept is reported to have started during the "second wave" of the feminist movement in the United States in the 1970s. According to one influential feminist, "Body politics refers to the practices and policies through which powers of society regulate the human body; particularly the female body. It involves the struggle over the degree of individual and social control over the body." (Nzegwu, 2015: para 1) This concept involved the fight against objectification of the female body, reproductive rights and violence against women and girls. This term has since evolved to encompass a variety of areas that affect women and their bodies. The reasoning behind the emphasis on body politics in relation to gender struggles is that women's social, economic and political experiences are

profoundly embodied in the sense that discrimination and oppression are justified on the basis of assumptions made about their bodies; furthermore, the challenges they face affect them at a corporeal level. These challenges include economic injustices, oppressive and forced marriage, and migration.

Body politics in relation to migration is mainly discussed in terms of sexuality, violence, abuse, slavery and human trafficking (Jacobsen and Landau, 2003). The emphasis is therefore on how women are entrapped in illicit or forced forms of labour, how they are constantly victimized, abused and oppressed. There is relatively less work on productive bodies in legitimate work spaces, especially public spaces in city centres.



Migrant women are generally portrayed as vulnerable and prone to human trafficking and sexual abuse which makes them victims of migration (Dodson, 2002; Caritas Internationalis, 2010; Chammartin, 2002). This research study will identify the multiple forms of violence that occasionally face women. Much of the research on migrant women and bodies does not focus on migrant women who seek work beyond sex work, transactional sex or the human trafficking network but is deeply implicated in objectifying the female body rather than exploring women's economic and social contribution within the informal business sector. It is often working women migrants, in South Africa who fill the gap in the lower wage market of South Africa especially in the informal sector. The ILO report on the South African informal economy confirmed that "More women are employed in the informal economy than men – 2.4 million women in comparison to 1.6 million men"(ILO, 2002: 42).

Despite the fact that many migrant women who seek work do not of course rely only on sex

work, they confront deeply embodied experiences of oppression and struggle. Body politics is often discussed in ways that reveal how social, work and political experiences affect women politically, emotionally and psychologically. “Body politics also refers to how something outside our control, namely your physical being can impact the quality of our daily existence. The attention to politics is crucially connected to the concerns of this study since it reveals what happens when external forces impose, pre-suppose or characterize who we are” (WOLCN, 2008: n.p).

Another definition of body politics is that it “refers to practices through which powers of society regulated the human body as well as the struggle over the degree of individual and social control of the body”<sup>2</sup> Policing of the body also extends to state policies and regulations in this case bodies of people termed migrants. The personal power to control one’s own body is lessened when an immigrant crosses the borders of their home countries and become foreigners in their host country. At border posts a person is either denied or given entry into a country. The permits that are issued, act as controlling agents as to what activities the person can conduct in that country, what they have access to and how long they can stay in the country. This response to the physical body then established in many ways how this person will be treated.

Exploring body politics is central to understanding group and national belonging, and, therefore, the social status of particular women. According to Yuval-Davis “The politics of belonging comprises specific political projects aimed at constructing belonging in particular ways to particular collectives that are, at the same time, themselves being constructed by

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<sup>2</sup> <a href="http://encyclopedia.jrank.org/articles/pages/6016/Body-Politics.html">Body Politics - FEMINISM

these projects in very particular ways.” (Yuval Davis, 2006: 197). It is therefore important to look at how the sense of belonging becomes politicized for “outsiders” or immigrants when they settle into different communities and engage in paid labour. As will be shown, group belonging and acceptance play a crucial role in the everyday lived experiences of the research participants targeted by this study, especially regarding the conditions under which they work and their experiences as workers.

“Belonging” is an extremely complex process for most migrants, and especially for migrant women from other African countries who live in South Africa. They often have to go through drastic changes not only in dealing with the new environment but also in the types of work they engage in, to be able to make a living in the new host country. It has been argued that: “The migration of women is mostly unrelated to career advancement and skill acquisition. There is enough evidence to suggest that a significant number of migrant women possess skills and qualifications often not recognized or unneeded in the types of work that they perform. In fact, many studies indicate that migration involves deskilling for some groups of women” (Kawar, 2005: 74). It is easy to overlook the impact of deskilling of the human body due to change of location. But having read Kawar’s article, I began to think deeply about the research participants and the politics of their bodies through the concept of deskilling and how that affects their sense of dislocation in their country of adoption. Through participant observation and several interviews this research explored this concept in relation to the migrants’ experiences’ migrating to South Africa and the impact that change of location and type of work they perform has on their physical bodies.

Having a connection to a place can create a sense of belonging for any person. It becomes

crucial to explore this concept of belonging for migrants. Lyons asked two questions “How is a sense of belonging constructed among immigrants? What are the new ways of constructing citizenship?” (2011: 1). I found these two questions very pertinent and worth exploring, especially for research concentrating on issues surrounding space, location and belonging. In particular, these questions inspired me to explore work done on belonging amongst immigrants and what citizenship really means.

There are various theories about what constitutes citizenship. Drawing on the work of Jones and Gaventa (2002) “Liberal theories advance the notion that citizenship is a status, which entitles individuals to a specific set of universal rights granted by the state. Central to liberal thought is the notion that individuals act ‘rationally’ to advance their own interests, and that role of the state is to protect citizens in the exercise of their rights (Jones and Gaventa, 2002:3) The following words stand out in this liberal definition, ‘status’, individuals’, rights, granted and state. These words highlight the formal aspects of citizenship in terms of rights and entitlement. In the course of my research with migrant women, I found that such a take on citizenship ignored citizenship from the perspective of social standing and perceptions, where individual migrants are seen to experience feelings of belonging and being part of a space and community. Moreover, citizens of the host country also have attitudes and feelings about outsiders. These feelings have little to do with formal rights and entitlements, even though they have extremely profound social and psychological effects.

Communitarian thinkers such as Sandal (1998) and Smith (1998) have been important in advancing liberal philosophical thought on what constitutes citizenship. They argue that “an individual’s sense of identity is produced only through relations with others in the community



of which she or he is a part. As this implies, communitarian, thought centers on the notion of the socially embedded citizen and community belonging” (Jones and Gaventa, 2002: 3). As scholars have shown, and as this study will illustrate, the concept of citizenship includes various levels of belonging: it is not only about voting, rights, access, and birth-right, but should also be about participation and a sense of belonging.

The perception of citizenship as legitimate belonging within a nation has had extremely destructive effects on migrant men and women from Africa. This is because ideas about legitimacy can be very biased, racist, and hostile to those considered to be “outsiders”. Discourses of belonging that addresses issues around citizenship show that it can either promote inclusion or exclusion of people in any state. Migrant men and women are seen as threatening the “proper” sense of belonging in society, hence the terrifying waves of xenophobic attacks they experience. Yuval Davis specifies that “An analytical differentiation between belonging and the politics of belonging is, therefore, crucial for any critical political discourse on nationalism, racism or other contemporary politics of belonging” (2006:197). Thus, the politics of belonging is crucial to this research because in exploring the working bodies of migrants, the study will consider how certain women actively participate as productive members of society, yet they are denied the recognition and rights of “proper belonging”.

According to Lyons (2011) belonging can either be a state issue or a personal issue. As a State issue it means that issues around citizenship, inclusion or exclusion and nationalism are defined and determined by the laws of the state defining who is who. ‘Personal belonging’ involves “personal identification and a sense of connectedness.” (Lyons, 2011:1) In fully

understanding migrants' experiences of exclusion, it is necessary to find out what citizenship means and how to redefine it not only according to state terms. The broader meanings of citizenship assist in allowing one to explore what access and rights migrant women have in South Africa, and how this access or lack of access has impacted deeply and comprehensively on their lives.

### **Analysing “Resistance” in Migration**

Resistance is sometimes defined as clear-cut and direct collective opposition to injustice or oppression. But recent social science research has stressed that resistance can also often take the form of minor and individual acts, or the action taken by small groups. “Resistance is a multidimensional and complex practice, appearing in different shapes with different aims” (Lilja and Vinthagen, 2015: 1). From this perspective, resistance can involve the everyday strategies and behaviour that allow individuals or small groups to assert their rights and human dignity despite the social pressures that oppress them (Lilja & Vinthagen 2015; Scott, 1992). James Scott highlighted that there is much focus on visible historic events in the conventional treatment of resistance. These events are organised rebellions or collective action, yet the assumption that they are the only real forms of political resistance is the reason why we miss subtle yet powerful forms of everyday agency and rebellion (Scott, 1985). Much work on body politics is concerned with the small acts that signal individuals' or groups' efforts to transcend or oppose dominant structures, discourses and relationships. For example, Nzegwu (2015) talks about women refusing to shave their legs and wear tight clothing as a form of resistance of objectifying of women's bodies. In a different time, between the 1830s and 1860s, young slave girls in the southern parts of the United States would sneak out of their homes to go to parties and drink alcohol. This is something they saw

as “pleasurable resistance” against the roles that slave girls were forced to abide by (Camp, 2002). These two examples show that women who experience extreme oppression can at times come together and perform acts of rebellion against certain structures, discourses and socially constructed ideas of who/what a woman is, even though these acts might seem trivial, irrelevant and non-political.

From the observation conducted on the research participants I noticed how culture played a huge role as a form of resistance/rebellion against complete assimilation in the community they operated in. Some participants stated that they would learn the local languages as a means of survival, but they insist on speaking in their mother tongue as much as they can to keep a sense of culture of their home countries. It seemed that these women were fighting an invisible battle that only they knew. They saw learning the local languages as a survival mechanism but refused to make these languages part of themselves. In their own way, they were resisting the idea of assimilating into the community they worked and lived in.

In developing an analysis of resistance in relation to migrant women’s experiences of exclusion and “belonging”, this research will focus on work in migrant studies on social networking. Jean (2008) talks about social networks and how they have an impact on the integration of migrants into the societies. He states that “There is also abundant literature looking at the experiences and social networks of migrants based on their nationalities” (Steinberg, 2005; McDonald et al., 2000 in Jean, 2008). This literature is extremely valuable because it assists with understanding everyday resistance in the form of the apparently “trivial” strategies of empowerment used by many migrant women who work as street hairdressers.

Social networking among women is likely to be distinct from that among men. As scholars such as Poros (2011) have shown, women's gendered roles often allows them to establish strong and sustainable support groups for pursuing collective action. Spatial knowledge of the environment plays a huge role in the way one socially networks or establishes these networks. In explaining this, Fenster states that "A significant aspect of "everyday belonging" develops through men's and women's spatial knowledge of environment" (Fenster, 2004: 243).

Literature also shows that sometimes "migrant networks can be considerably gendered" (van Meeterea and Pereira, 2013: 5). This is because migrant women tend to rely on their social networks which are mostly predominantly women, just like men do with other men. It is these networks of different women that facilitate migration. Some women will hear from other women of business, work opportunities in foreign countries and hence migrate based on the information from those within their social networks.

According to Poros "A migrant's ability to move to a particular destination, find a job and housing open up business, participate in the development of their home country, and access health care can all be directly impacted by or even dependent upon the migrants social network." (2011: para 9). Many women working as street hairdressers have shown that their social networks have been useful on how they navigate and experience their lives as migrants in the city. The ability to use networks as migrants has led to the concept of "social capital" (Poros, 2011: para 10) Social capital is the capital that helps migrants to get by, for example minimizing risks when moving by considering places where they know other people.

Migrant networks can also be a source of information on housing and employment (van Meeterea and Pereira, 2013).

For the purposes of this study, an emphasis on the way that people constantly negotiate their body politics will be useful because the way in which migrants situate and define their bodies in the work they do has an impact on the kind of lifestyles they live. Another important theme will be the social networks they make and their reaction to the political system of the country which passes policies that affect them on a daily basis. Therefore, the significance of the literature is that it explores body politics in relation to a different understanding of social networking. Although many migrants draw on past identities to establish networks, many also seek to forge “new” identifications and alliances to establish social connections in the new host country.



According to Goffman (1956) in a study done in the 1950s but still very relevant decades later, people are actors of their identities. And this normally happens when there is the continuous presence of a particular group of observers. This concept of “front activity” is a useful aspect to consider when looking into the lives of street hairdressers and how they act when they have clients around, how they form social networks using their “front activity”, and how they treat each other. According to Goffman, the “personal front ..... Can include racial characteristics, size, looks, facial expressions and bodily gestures” (Goffman, 1956: 14). This work focusing on performative identities is crucial in exploring how migrants straddle different cultural and geographical works in defining a sense of “who they are” for different reasons and for different audiences.

Social statuses on the basis of gender are carefully constructed according to Lober (1994), who argues that people are born and then sexed, but they are taught to be masculine and feminine. Therefore in lived spaces, socially constructed ideas are taught, learnt, emulated and enforced. This is similar to the way Green (1998) views how women in their leisure spaces construct and reconstruct their identities. They can teach each other and enforce cultural beliefs for each other as well.

Humour, laughter and friendship are identified by Green (1998) as behaviour in which women can reflect on their lives and enforce or subvert cultural beliefs. Therefore space, identities and gender are concepts that can help to develop a social analysis of personal and psychological behaviour. Such behaviour need not necessarily be “purely”, but can tell us a lot about group experiences related to social statuses and contexts.

According to Massey “The geography of social relations forces us to recognize our interconnectedness, and underscores the fact that both personal identity and the identity of those envelopes of space-time in which and between which we live and move are constructed precisely through that interconnectedness” (1994: 122). This quote helps one to understand the connection between space, identity and time in a way that expands on much existing research, where these three are often treated as if they each exist in a vacuum.

### **Space, Place and Identity**

When looking to understand social behaviour and experiences, it is important that one understands the spaces that the people occupy and how they live in, interact with and experience these socially mapped spaces. That is why understanding social geography is important. For this research, feminist geography is especially valuable in analysing how women’s experiences are shaped by gendered spaces. Feminist geography according to

Hansen “relies on gender and place based analyses to more fully understand the interface between human and natural environment.” (2012:1). ‘Humans and the natural environment’ proved to be an important aspect of this research because this researcher had to fully (as much as possible) try and understand the working area (geography) of the targeted participants (social subjects) in order to be able to analyse their body politics in the place they work.

This “place based analyses” suggested by Hansen (2012) is a very useful concept that, once put into play, helps look at space in a different context and allows for deeper analyses of certain spaces. And a gendered analysis helps in exploring and understanding the relationship between gender roles, identities and the natural environment women live and work in. It was useful to view my topic through a feminist geography lens because the concept of feminist geography impacted significantly on this study and methods such as participant observation. Within feminist geography, feminists have advocated for the inclusion of gender within the field of geography in order to be able to fully explore the experiences of women in different physical places (Kwan, 2001). This has led to more feminists advocating for gendered analyses of many issues. For example Kihato stated that gendered analyses of “migration process has resulted in the emergence of a body of literature that highlights the experiences of women migrants in Africa.” (2007: 398).

An important task for feminist geographers has been to make women visible by developing geography of women. The concept of geography of women speaks to the specificity of my choice in the selection of research participants, research methods and methodology and especially the framework adopted. As Gregory et.al, said “Women’s experiences and

perceptions often differ from those of men, and women have restricted access to a range of opportunities, from paid employment to services” (Gregory et.al, 2011: 1947). Therefore, a feminist theoretical framework (which will be fully discussed later) specifically locates this research in this body of literature around feminist geography, in order to make women visible by developing a geography of women. As a researcher, I adopted the theories and concepts around feminist geography in order to “analyse the part played by gender role differentiation in people – environment relations” (Brown et.al, 1982: 19). According to Sparkes et al, when looking at the body and space one has to “understand the ways in which bodies and space are reciprocally constituted along with the dilemmas this poses for individuals within a cultural setting” (2010:333); hence the special focus of this research on bodies, geography and migration.

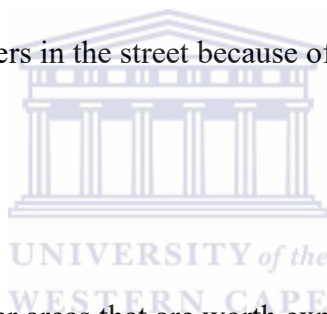
When looking at gender and space it is important to look at how the two are connected. Space plays a big role in how identities are shaped and constructed (Gupta and Ferguson, 1992; Kong, 2006; Massey, 1994). “But the victim/victor, visible/invisible dichotomies emerge in debates do not adequately describe or explain the lives of migrant women.” (Kihato, 2007: 400). When a body inhabits a certain space, it begins to transform either to fit in or rebel against the space it occupies.

Most people who migrate inhabit a space that plays a role in constructing how they identify themselves. The environment one is in, the people around them and the things that happen around them, influences how they carry themselves, and live their lives. Working in the street puts a person in a space that is vulnerable to traffic, people walking around, rain, noise and smells. All these factors affecting the physical body force individuals to adapt to their environment and navigate space carefully in order to adapt and work as effectively as possible despite surrounding pressures. All the above-mentioned factors play a role in identity construction, whether by the people working in the streets or by those requiring their



services.

When looking into geography and its impact on women and how they navigate and deal with their environment, one has to look into issues which give specifically political, cultural and social meanings to the physical environment. This could be the street the women work in, what happens around them and how they engage with this socially charged environment. For example, Douglas (2003) talks about the issues around pollution and taboo. She analysed “dirt as matter out of place”. This analysis looks into issues such as who cleans up the dirt being a pointer towards social status, and who pollutes the place being an issue of social hierarchy. This is an interesting way of viewing the environment the research participants work in: for example, it is important to see how social status or power struggles are related to those that encounter the hairdressers in the street because of the physical environment’s connotations. .



Feminist geography opens up other areas that are worth exploring. For example ‘Place, Space Gender’ which leads to the analysis of identity construction and how all these three concepts are interconnected. According to Massey “The geography of social relations forces us to recognize our interconnectedness and underscores the fact that both personal identity and the identity of those envelopes of space – time in which and between which we live and move are constructed precisely through that interconnectedness. (1994: 122) Therefore the analysis of literature around place, space, gender, identity is crucial to the development of research that focuses on identity construction.

At the same time in this research the focus is also on how women go about their everyday lives, identifying how these women embody multiple identities and how they use these identities strategically as a means of survival to their advantage

Green in her article states “Put simply, we ‘learn to be women and men’ and in the process acquire gendered identities which shift over time, in relation to changing historical and cultural contexts.” (1998: 175). This statement indicates how gendered identities are rooted spatially and temporally, making it clear how identities can be shifted in relation to space and time. Though Green talks about historical and cultural contexts this assessment can extend over into geographic spaces. Green mentions how space and place are important in gender construction of identities. Hence whenever a context changes there is bound to be a shift in gendered identities. Burke and Stets try to explain identities and explain fluid identity construction in the following way: “it can take itself as an object and can categorize, classify or name itself in particular ways in relation to other social categories or classifications.” (2000: 224) This analysis of changing of identities, ties in with the migration process. Once migrants cross over into a different place they are confronted by a new lifestyle, new systems of operation, different people, at times different cultures and traditions. Gupta and Ferguson (1992) focus on the complexities of space in sociological terms, showing that with the increased mobility of certain people, social identity can become reflexive. These new social and economic changes can possibly influence identity and character. For the migrant women I worked with the changes they encountered forced them to be stronger, independent and resourceful, something that, thus far has worked to their advantage and survival.

According to Hogg and Abrams (1988 in Burke and Stets, 2000) “social identity is a person’s knowledge that he/she belongs to a social group” (Burke and Stets, 2000:225). In these social groups the people who make up the group have common social identities or view themselves as part of the same social group. These groups are formed through ‘social comparison’ and those who do not have commonalities are automatically the “other”. This explains to some extent the reasons why migrants in South Africa, especially blacks face such harsh, violent treatment which results in unwarranted xenophobic attacks. They are ‘othered’ based on their

nationality, class and if it is Zimbabweans because of their country's political and economic situation.

It is important to understand these theories because they deal with fundamental aspects of social sciences and how people relate to each other and most importantly how the notion of "otherness" is created in societies. As Burke and Stets state: "The social categories in which individuals place themselves are parts of a structured society and exist only in relation to other contrasting categories (black/white)" (Burke and Stets, 2000: 225). Therefore, having a psychological understanding of the place, society and identity of a person can explain how they experience and relate to their environment, to other people and most importantly who they identify as being (Hauge, 2007). Hence the question "Who am I?" (Hauge, 2007) is always thought about in relation to place and space as these two contexts play a crucial role in how one identifies oneself.



By forming a social identity, the subjects of this study identify themselves with fellow hairdressers because of the common social and business activities they conduct. They become a social group because they occupy the space along the street in certain ways; they know who's who of that social group. When someone else enters that group if their views, morals and way of life differs from the group they are socially excluded. Therefore it is vital to consider what Burke & Stets stated, "The role of an identity is the categorization of the self as an occupant of a role and the incorporation, into the self-meanings and expectations associated with that role and its performance." (2000:225) Therefore, when talking of social identities and individual identities it is important to look at the role of the body within a certain space.

Green (1998) explores the notion that leisure spaces can be key sites for construction of gendered identities. She argues that these spaces not only construct new identities but they are spaces where women use “...leisure as a site of personal choice, and self-determination, which can also provide opportunities for individuals to exercise personal power.” (Green, 1998: 172). ‘Leisure’, whether being a geographical location to carry out activities, or a form of activity it allows a woman to construct and reconstruct their identities.

These spaces consequently influence how some women see other women and see themselves. It is quite interesting how Green mentions these spaces as spaces where women use and exercise personal power. This is because Sparkes et al (2010: 333) also discusses “how individuals negotiate an embodied identity within a network of power relations.” So in most cases when identities are being constructed there could be power relations between the body and space, gender and space, body and bodies. Therefore identity constructions in new places become a relevant area of study for this research because it helps locate this research within existing literature around such matters.

How people act out their gender roles which become part of their identities, must also be analyzed in the space that these identities are being acted out. “Low highlighted that space and gender must be grasped as an “effective, reciprocally constructing and constructed culture.” (Sparkes et al., 2010: 334) For example, some of the hairdressers in Bellville bring their children to the hair stands they operate from. They mother their children as they work with hair, chemicals and hair fiber. They take on the role of a mother in a space that is not meant to raise a child. Therefore by being able to multi-task, these women can see themselves as strong and bold to be able to work and be a mother in the same space. However there are

always ambiguities about the role of space as a site for the construction of gendered identities and shaping of social responses. Although I have stressed my interest in focusing on migrant women's active roles and agencies, particular spaces can often constrain this. Green usefully identifies this in her own research by stating that, "This isn't to suggest that women-only events or women's networks are always liberating in terms of gendered identity construction, indeed this study has argued elsewhere that female networks can, and often do serve to effectively constrain choice for women and reinforce the traditional roles of wife and mother" (1998: 176)

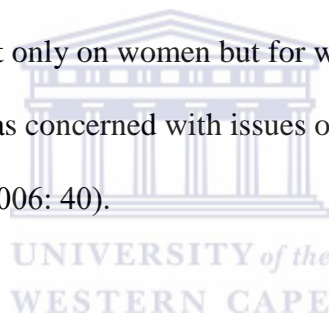
This clearly shows that not only do spaces help to create active responses among socially subordinate groups; they also limit forms of agency by setting in place social expectations about who a woman (especially foreign) should be and what her "legitimate" roles are. These examples show how structured social spaces turn into places with an identity (Sparkes et al, 2010). As feminist geography emphasizes, the spaces one works in have strong identities that affect those who inhabit them. Recognizing this encourages one to pay attention to how the body is affected by the space it operates in. People come to occupy space sometimes temporarily "while their bodies' identities are being reconfigured, socially validated and positioned" (Sparkes et al., 2010: 335).

The impact of space on identity is also complicated by the way that migrants experience, especially complex forms of multiple identification on the basis of nationality. The identity construction of migrants is often complicated by decisions and choices about which identity to take on. Bauer and Kolmar highlight this nicely, "social identities where individuals migrate, between different countries can choose either a national identity or a class identity (Bauer and Kolmar, 2009: 1). And these decisions and choices are strongly determined by space and environment especially for migrants entering into a new social and economic space/environment.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Coming to Grips with Migrant Women's Agencies**

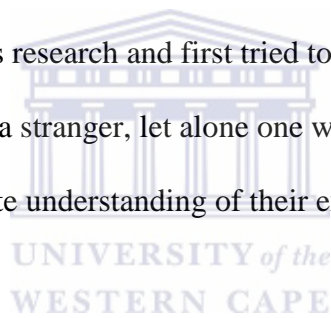
Sandra Harding distinguishes between methods “techniques for gathering evidence” and methodology as “a theory and analysis of how research goes or should proceed” (Harding, 1987: 2–3). With this distinction in mind, I was able to establish the kind of methodology the research would be rooted in, which is feminist qualitative research methodology. The methods I employed in my research were influenced by the qualitative approach. In this section I will explain how the theory I adopted influenced the ways I collected the data and pursued the analysis. In particular, I will show how my feminist theoretical approach influenced my methods in the form of “challenging mainstream ways of collecting and analysing data, doing research not only on women but for women, issues of power and reflexivity and feminist research as concerned with issues of broader social change and social justice” (Doucet and Mauthner, 2006: 40).



### **Participants and Sampling**

As the interdisciplinary literature on migration reveals, many migrants face significant obstacles in the countries in which they live and work. Efforts to establish social networks, to lead fulfilling lives as well as the practical efforts to earn a living are considerable. This is especially true of illegal migrants as they try and form trustworthy communities among themselves and social links that enable them to survive, while at the same time trying to stay in the shadows and avoid revealing their status. Because of this it is not easy to establish a relationship with migrants especially if one wants to do research on their lives. They are very protective of their way of living. This makes it hard for independent student researchers to penetrate the migrant society for research purposes.

The methodology used in this research grew out of growing awareness that many of participants were likely to be suspicious of who I was, why I wanted to do research about them and with them. Because of their circumstances, I assumed they would be reserved and intimidated by a researcher wanting to interview them about their experiences. Most migrants are obviously not willing to talk about their experiences with someone they do not know, since most fear exposure of their immigration status. That alone can make them shut out any researcher, since they often think that the research is being undertaken from an official or governmental perspective with the aim of exposing them. The exposure any immigrant fears is exposure that gets them arrested, persecuted and deported. And indeed my assumptions were confirmed when I began this research and first tried to enter their spaces. I was not sure how these women would react to a stranger, let alone one who tried to become part of their community and gain more intimate understanding of their experiences.

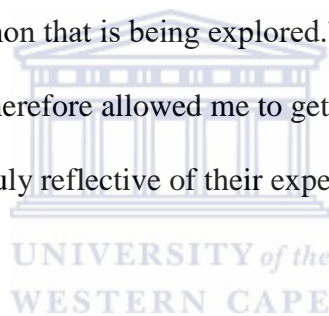


In light of the above mentioned thoughts and reactions of migrants to researchers, the methodological approach steadily shifted away from my original aim of using one approach, towards mixed methods aimed at gaining the trust of participants. This approach also sought to draw out the participants' responses gradually and in various ways. Because of the nature of work of the participants, it is often challenging to obtain detailed results simply through interviews or focus groups, when participants might be busy or preoccupied with other urgent matters. I resorted to holding informal conversations with the participants and observing their everyday lives. I was able to acquire a broader insight both into the pressures they face as well as their successful efforts to respond to these.

At the outset of this research, however, I chose to use purposive sampling (Tongco, 2007; Kothari, 2004). In adopting purposive sampling, I sought to investigate a particular group of people that would provide reflections on their lives in ways that spoke for their lives and bodily experiences as black migrant women working as hairdressers in the street. I managed to do in-depth interviews with six (6) women with different occupational experiences.

Whether they belonged to a common social group or location was not an issue because their experiences of working as street hairstylists would be similar in many ways. Therefore I identified and located a cross-section of migrant women experiencing comparable lives of working as street hairstylists. This involved drawing on a phenomenological theoretical approach “which usually involves identifying and locating participants that have experienced or are experiencing the phenomenon that is being explored.” (Rudestam, 2007:106).

Employing purposive sampling therefore allowed me to get the best suited participants to help me conduct a study that is truly reflective of their experiences and lives.



One reason for the manageable sample size was to ensure the feasibility of this thesis and ensure that it was not too unwieldy. I felt with a smaller group, I could spend more time with each participant and get an in-depth story. As mentioned earlier, migrant communities are hard to penetrate, especially for a student researcher whose only promise to her participants is to protect their confidentiality and anonymity. These promises are substantiated with a consent form, one that I gave them, which to them does not provide much security. By targeting a small group I managed to get the six women, who trusted the motives behind my research, to agree to be part of the study,. A second reason was to create time and effort to gain the confidence of a smaller group of women and ensure that communication with them was effective. Having spent time with some of the women, I found that their major worry was being portrayed in a negative light in the media. The women stated that some of the



interviews they had seen on television or heard about, portrayed aspects of migrants' lives in very degrading and stereotypical ways. Given the nature of the research interest in the daily lives of migrant women, many of those approached were not open to being interviewed about their lived experiences in South Africa, at all. Since it was not easy to get trust from potential research participants, much of my initial research concentrated on building up trust among those with whom I was able to establish an initial rapport.

A third reason for the relatively small sample was to obtain in-depth analysis of individual women's diverse experiences. These experiences would include how they inhabit and move in public spaces, what it means for them to be working women, their experiences of being foreigners (in the light of xenophobic attacks), and how they seek to lead dignified lives while trying to make a living.

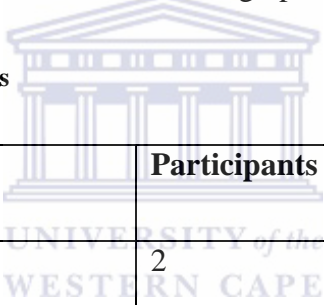
Since this research is qualitative, I was eager to devote as much attention as possible to detail, and to the sorts of interactions, behaviours and activities that, for example, interviews could not yield. I therefore realized I could not rely only on interviews, but had to do participant observation (which shall be discussed later) as well. When it came to notifying potential participants of one of the research methods, participant observation and what it entailed, some participants stated their discomfort about having someone who was not a customer intruding in their working and, in some cases, personal lives. This was a hard hurdle to jump over but with time, and multiple visits and chats with the women, I gained their trust in some ways, which helped in obtaining consent from the participants to be in their working and social space.

One of the ways that I gained trust and access to the social and working space of the

participants was to explain to the women who were willing to participate in this research that their identities would not be made public and that they would remain anonymous. I also sought to reassure them that as participants they could withdraw from the project at any time they felt uncomfortable. Having explained the above to the women, the signing of the consent forms made the research participants more willing to participate because they saw that they also exercised authority in the research process. Most importantly, they felt that they would have recourse in being able to contact the university and my supervisor if they had concerns which I could not address.

The table below is a detailed breakdown of the demographic of my sample;

**Figure 1: Demographics of participants**



<b>Countries</b>	<b>Participants</b>
DRC	2
Nigeria	2
Zimbabwe	2
<b>Age Range</b>	22-35
<b>Race</b>	Black
<b>Marital status</b>	Single
<b>Education Level</b>	
Secondary	4
Tertiary	2

<b>Language: Fluency</b>	
English	Basic (minimum requirement)

The research sample was made up of migrant women from Zimbabwe, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Firstly women from these three countries were selected based on the women's accessibility, their availability and willingness to be part of this research. It is also significant that many migrants from African countries in South Africa come from these three countries. According to Stats SA (2012), the countries that ranked highest with migrants seeking to stay in South Africa were Zimbabwe with 17,2% of migrants followed by Nigeria with 10% and DRC with 2.8% . Not only are they the top three countries in Africa in terms of being considered more developed and wealthy than others; these three countries are also among the top 8 leading countries globally with migrants entering other countries (Stats SA, 2012). Women from these countries also dominate the informal hair care industry, and their experiences of working as African migrant women are vast and insightful (as this research will show). Because of their representative role at many levels, the women participants that I selected provide important insights into dominant patterns in the experiences of migrant women in South Africa.

I interviewed women who had been in the country for at least two years because they would have spent enough time there to have had comprehensive experiences and could reflect on their lives over an extended period. I am not disputing that some people experience a lot in a short period, but I wanted recollections from past years to come together with present experiences and form a story that is rich with experience, and could possibly be related to other women's experiences.

## **Methodological Framework**

As indicated in the discussion of sampling, this study was alert to the merits and strengths of the kinds of methods required for the research I wished to do in the course of actually doing the research and working in the field. One of the main criticisms that could be made about this research is over-generalizing because of its limited scope. As mentioned in the sampling section, one of my main aims was to obtain in-depth qualitative experiences from my respondents. The desire to obtain these experiences in such a way is fully in accord with feminist theoretical and methodological interest in women's own perceptions and interpretations of their lives. I am aware that much valued social science research focuses on breadth rather than depth, (namely, obtaining findings from as many respondents in order to justify generalizations and conclusions.) However in this research depth was more important than breadth. To fully understand the plight of a migrant woman working in country that seems welcoming and full of opportunities yet compounded by violence, poverty and xenophobic attacks, I had to focus on particular work experiences (hairdressing) and a small sample (six) in order to tease out in as much detail as possible

I have also been concerned with using methods eclectically and provisionally. According to Jacobsen and Landau, "Effective and ethical research requires that methodologies be sound and that scholars explicitly recognize and critique the limits and strengths of confirmed approaches to generating both data and knowledge" (2003: 3). The research methodology which was adopted for purposes of this investigation acknowledges that feminists should avoid single definitive methods even if there is a common strategy that has been taken up (McDowell, 1992; Hesse-Biber, 2007). By using several methods, researchers can avoid restricting their research process' potential to uncover in-depth information

There are many lenses through which migrant women can be observed, such as a political lens, or economic, social, behavioural or globalization lenses. These lenses encourage one to

ask questions about why they migrated, what contribution they are making to the economy, whether or how their behaviours influence culture and society and what part they play in the globalization phenomena. But this research chose one lens that would fully explore the intended research interest, in understanding the many reasons for and results of women's migration, with particular attention to their active choices and acts of resistance, however small these may appear to be. Feminist qualitative research is a valuable research tool because it consistently seeks to explore layers of research participants' experience and to avoid privileging my preconceived perspective. In other words, it means exploring the complex experiences of women from their points of view, and therefore challenges traditional social sciences methods of imposing interpretations on marginalised groups' experiences (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002b).

In line with the aim of exploring women's complex and ambiguous experiences of victimization, empowerment and resistance, I aimed to remain receptive to women's views about their experiences, how they make sense of the new worlds they inhabit, and especially how their experiences of suffering and resistance are embodied. By doing so I tried to allow their voices to be central to their stories. At the same time I tried to remain open to learning, empathizing trying to understand their experiences in order to be able to interpret and analyse these experiences with a wider audience.

The research will therefore demonstrate that the narratives, concerns and knowledge that are brought into the research process are what make feminist research feminist (Brayton, 1997; Harding, 1987; Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002a; and Hesse-Biber, 2007). In doing feminist qualitative research, one removes the boundaries that exist between researchers and participants in traditional research methods. For example, when this research was conducted my research identity as a woman, who also gets hair done on the street, helped to level a power hierarchy in the interviewer-interviewee relationship. I became the client who had

previously never listened or paid attention to them, getting a front row seat to hear what life is for the woman I once never paid attention to.

However, feminists do argue that power hierarchies never really disappear even when they are alleviated to some extent. What is most significant is that, despite the inevitable power relation between myself as a researcher and my respondents as working women, I invested my own personal identity in the research process I built with the women and worked towards a more equitable relationship with them. In seeking to remove the hierarchical boundaries (Letherby 2003), that usually exist between researcher and research subject, I worked on establishing personal relationships with the women by, for example, approaching them initially for their services as hairdressers. I tried to ensure that the interview situation remained as informal as possible, and that my participants did not feel pressurized to respond to me as the “research expert”. Changing for a moment the mindset that I was a researcher helped in reducing the hierarchical boundaries, and this allowed for some level of openness between me and the participants.

In the beginning, when I approached various women, talking about my research created an awkward relationship immediately. I would walk up to someone explaining my research and they would ask me what that had to do with them. Approaching these women not as a client but for other official business that they did not expect resulted in them automatically becoming defensive and untrustworthy of my intentions. I immediately realised, these women did not want some student coming into their space, asking questions that could be potentially harmful to them. I realised that my approach had to change completely and eventually, it was through a woman I knew, who used to do my hair that I managed to get an audience with some of the women. I then began visiting them as much as I could, casually walking by and

asking, for example, how their day was and sitting and watching them work and experiencing what it was like to spend the day at the terminus. Because I changed my approach, it was through such visits that the women would start to talk to me bit by bit, offering me food and at times letting me help them to clean up after work. This helped break down the unspoken tension and created a start to a working relationship which resulted in my hearing their life experiences.

Despite my initial efforts, my participants were still skeptical about giving too much information about their lives. Their main concern was being portrayed negatively in the media. Based on the media's portrayal of immigrants, I understood their concerns especially with past xenophobic attacks also being based on media publications on the impact of migrant workers. Therefore to reassure them, I explained to them what a consent form does for them. They felt they had power to control how the information given can be used. By trying to lessen the hierarchical boundary based on researcher getting information and exploiting it, I managed to encourage the women to understand that they also had power and freedom as research participants. In particular, they came to understand that they had power over their life stories and how these stories could be portrayed.

### **Locating myself as a researcher**

Marjorie Mbilinyi (1992), who has extensively explored the challenges for feminists who work with women whose experiences are very different from those of the privileged woman researcher, writes that: "Decisions about what problem to study and which methods to employ, arise not only from adopted theoretical frameworks but also in the ideology, personal identity and material social location of the researcher" (Mbilinyi 1992: 35). In doing my

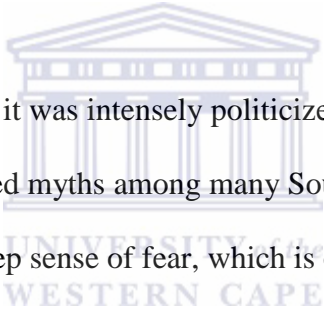
research my location was a great influence on how I obtained my data and whom I obtained it from. Feminist methods invaluable helped me to develop research which was deeply grounded not in any simplistic sense of female culture, but in recognition of the divides that inevitably shape women's diverse experiences.

My personal identity within this research and the methods employed were challenged throughout. I had to be aware of my gender, ethnicity, sexuality, class and my theoretical approach in the research process and how it would affect observation, analysis and interpretation. I saw that my gender provided an advantage in gaining the women's attention. A male researcher approaching these women to speak to them about their experiences might not have been easy or feasible. My research made me realize that personal identity does allow one to explore certain areas that researchers with other identities might not be able to raise. However, I was well aware of my position as a university student wanting to obtain her Masters Degree, interviewing women working as hairdressers along the street. I was well aware that it would seem as if I had some sort of power over the women I interviewed. At other times it seemed they had power over me because to do this research I needed them to approve of my presence in their 'community' as an observer, a participant and researcher. At times it seemed as if there was a struggle to get their approval, but once I was accepted in their midst I gained their trust and approval. I became more appreciative of their everyday lives and work because I not only got to do my research but got an insight into a world that was once invisible to me. I say invisible because my experience as foreign student limited the extent to which I could relate to the many experiences of being a migrant woman, especially one obliged to work in the informal sector. I got to realize that the women I was working with were contributing enormously to the hair care industry and informal economy, and yet no one



really knew about their everyday experiences.

Since I have been trained to interpret what I see and to form opinions about other women's actions, I had to learn to hold back on guiding the direction of interactions with my subjects. I had to ensure that my research not only conveyed their experiences, but also that it reflected their own voices and their understandings of their experiences. This was achieved by letting the women speak about their experiences, express their opinions and give an account of their perceptions of how their identities and experiences have been "embodied" – not only to them but also according to others.



I began my research knowing that it was intensely politicized. The waves of xenophobia in South Africa have surfaced charged myths among many South Africans. They have also led many migrants to experience a deep sense of fear, which is often reinforced by the challenges of present-day South Africa's immigration laws and processes. As the research progressed, I realized more and more that I did not stand outside of this political situation. I was a foreign woman interviewing other foreign women, and despite our different immigration statuses, we were all potential victims of xenophobia, and bound by the same immigration laws and processes. What I did as a researcher and what I would say would have a bearing, however small, on the public knowledge about migrants; therefore, the constant reflection of myself in this research.

The political implications of feminist writing are clearly raised by Harding when she writes that: "Feminism is a political movement for social change" (1987: 182). My focus on women marginalized not only on the basis of gender but also on the basis of nationality and being

considered “alien” made my research even more obviously political. The recent xenophobic attacks, which followed my field research, have made me sharply aware of the significance of telling migrant women’s stories in certain ways. In the face of xenophobia and prejudice, I have been prompted to want to protect these women and at the same time make their stories known. In feeling “protective” I was and remain aware that I ran the risk of falling into the trap of seeing myself as a researcher-savior, even though I believe theoretically that my participants are the most important agents in their own political struggles. It was and still is a constant battle of emotions, feelings and integrity.

I felt the biggest challenge to my research was doing ethical research in trying to tell the stories of migrant women. Their stories and perspectives as the main voices of this paper are invaluable, yet they have to be presented accurately and carefully to avoid negative portrayal and sparking xenophobic violence or prejudice. At the same time, since I am a researcher and not a journalist, I am an active interpreter of their stories.

### **Participant Observation**

My first plan for data gathering was conducted through participant observation. According to Laurier (2003), we all have been engaging in this form of data gathering from the moment we are born by taking in what happens around us and interpreting these events. As part of my research method, I decided to pursue participant observation in a consistent and self-conscious way. I wanted to observe the conditions under which my participants work as closely as possible, and be part of the environment of my participants before doing the interviews. This was very important because it helped me to understand that culturally coded physical space is extremely significant in how one goes about existing within certain

communities. As mentioned earlier, interviews were simply not enough to get an overall picture of what happens in the women's working areas. I needed to see and observe behaviours, treatment by customers and fellow traders, and also ask questions about the environment they operated in.

My data gathering was done at one of the many hair salon stands along the street in Bellville. Upon entering the Bellville area, it is immediately obvious that the Bellville train area is very busy and crowded. It was not easy in the beginning because it was hard for me to fit into the routine of people around me going about their everyday lives in the most natural way possible. But everyone who works there knows how to navigate that space because of certain unconscious scripts that people spontaneously follow. One obvious example is that even if someone does not show up for business on a particular day, no one will take up the space they usually use to conduct their business. In this way, boundaries are set even though they are invisible and everyone around abides by them. The moment someone violates these unspoken boundaries they run the risk of being threatened with violence and social exclusion.

The women I interviewed would tell you that just by looking at someone they can tell that that person is not from the traders' immediate community. Outsider/insider binaries are very vivid in the area. There is a level of comfort the women have from knowledge of operating in the area. Having situated their bodies in this busy, vibrant and very diverse environment, these women have made an effort to know how to navigate the space they are in, how to talk to other traders and how to manipulate the spaces they have control over. This is clearly shown by some of them setting up washing sinks and having access to electricity through establishing relationships with shop owners.

The scene set in the previous sections reveals a lot more than what I would have seen if I had

simply done interviews. The role of participant observation was to capture the unspoken or inexplicable events that take place on a daily basis in a busy, vibrant place like the Bellville terminus where one could not possibly capture intimate details unless they are physically felt or observed.

One of the main results of my participant observation visits was that I realized that the women who worked in groups under one tent often socialized together and one or two would be indirectly excluded. In the beginning I thought the excluded ones were either anti-social or introverts, but it was a language barrier that caused the separation. That got me to think about the role language plays in research especially this research. According to Kawulich “Some of the ways the researcher might be excluded include the community members' use of a language that is unfamiliar to the researcher, their changing from one language to another that is not understood by the researcher...” (Kawulich, 2005:1) This observation applied to me when, during the first few days of going and spending the day in Bellville, I could from time to time notice how some women and other people would look at me as I took notes. They would either just stop speaking in English or change the topic of discussion. This made me feel uncomfortable and I realized that my outsider status, cultural difference, and the language barrier were all factors that had a huge impact on the way the women acted. After going to the stands several times things did get better. However, I was still aware of how such factors can impact the research process. I had to make provision for informally appointed interpreters, (some of the hairdressers who could translate) to break down some of the barriers created by the language barrier. Therefore, some of the main participants had to explain in their mother tongue to the others, who I was, why I was there and for how long I would be there. This was necessary in order for the other women to feel comfortable with my presence; only then did the situation get better and most women became much more welcoming.

To some extent, I did anticipate some sort of exclusion when I started this research. This anticipation is best explained by Kawulich saying “all researchers should expect to experience a feeling of having been excluded at some point in the research process, particularly in the beginning” (Kawulich, 2005: 1). What is important is the ability to identify afterwards what that exclusion means to the research process. I realized that if I did not make an effort to mix well and take the risk of being rejected, I would not get people to talk to me openly and would be forced to change my research methods by adopting less flexible ones.

Kawulich summarises Bernard’s (1994) definition of participant observation, “as the process of establishing rapport within a community and learning to act in such a way as to blend into the community so that its members will act naturally, then removing oneself from the setting or community to immerse oneself in the data to understand what is going on and be able to write about it.” (Bernard, 1994 in Kawulich, 2005:1) This also captures how I went about conducting my data gathering through participant observation. I would go to Bellville as often as I could. I would go on different days at different times. I was there three times a week, twice every week and on every Saturday. Going on week days and weekends would allow me to compare dynamics at different times of the week. I often chose Saturday because at weekends more people are not working and would want to go out to shop, eat or get their hair done. On Saturdays, the street hair salons are busy, and the hairdressers would encounter many more people than during a week day. This also helped me to see how the hairdressers and clients interacted for comparison in the analysis. While observing I would take down notes, at times I would not if I noticed the women became uncomfortable with my note taking; once I got into the habit of avoiding note-taking, however, I ended up not taking notes at all because I realized this would disrupt the flow of events and exchanges. I had to rely on memory and write down what I could remember as soon as I left Bellville.

As indicated in my previous comments on the relevance of witnessing how women occupied and used spaces, one of the most important aspects of participant observation is that it provides a context for the development of sampling and interview guides (Kawulich, 2005, DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002). My main participants were drawn from the women I observed and spoke to when I visited Bellville salon stands. This helped me in developing a sample that (purposively chosen) would help answer my research questions. Through this research method I was able to be aware that note taking while sitting at the stands was not advisable. Even though this did not affect my research methods significantly, it did mean that I had to be especially observant and closely observe the events taking place and then take notes later.

## **Interviewing**

I conducted a number of unstructured in-depth interviews with the hairdressers. The interviews consisted of open-ended questions because they allowed for greater spontaneity and allowed my participants to speak more openly and frankly than they would in surveys and questionnaires (Valenzuela and Shrivatsava, n.d). The open-ended questions encouraged my participants' to express their own knowledge and encouraged them to express how they felt. One of the things I liked about the interviews is that the determination, resourcefulness and wisdom of hardworking, clever and very resourceful migrant woman were brought out. It is often assumed that migrants "take" jobs from local nationals, but getting to know these women and their working environment this stereotype was totally debunked. These women highlighted the fact that where they work is open space; it's free and any person can set up business as long as she or he has the ability and determination to do so.

The interviews served to build up my understanding after the initial participant observation.

Therefore, through the interviews, information around lack of citizenship or working visas revealed why the women make the informal environment they are in their workplace and work for their own good. Through the interviewing process it was also revealed that not all women are dependent on their male counterparts, or migrated because of men. These women proved to be independent and had very diverse and interesting personal reasons for having migrated to South Africa.

The interviews acted as a follow-up to the participant observation notes I had gathered. In looking at and analysing the women work and interact with the traders' community, I was able to follow up and ask questions about their relationships with other traders, the police and taxi drivers. The responses they gave were very insightful as these further affirmed what is already known: that migrants either keep to themselves or try and integrate into the local community as much as possible as they fear persecution especially in the face of the xenophobic attacks that foreigners are subjected to. Although this research did not rely solely on interviews, conducting interviews with these women proved fruitful because of the scope that this method provided to follow up on issues and for participants to fully elaborate on their rich and complex experiences.

### **Subject-Specific Interviewing and Data analysis: Women and Education**

Interviewing processes are always based on expectations of what a researcher is likely to find. In undertaking this research, however, I found that interviewing often took me in directions I had not anticipated. One direction had to do with education and discovering the profound role that education has on migrant women's experiences. Although I will return to

this subject in my analytical chapter, I believe it is important to discuss how education played itself out in my methodological approach and methods.

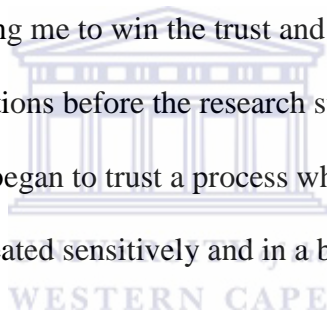
Education, in determining participants' social status, their responses to me as a researcher, their reasons for migrating and their experiences of migration, was very important in influencing my research methods and so should be reviewed in a preliminary way in this chapter. Because my awareness of education was crucially connected to my research process, and how I proceeded with my research, I discuss it here.

In my initial research work I established that the level of education of many migrant women ranged from secondary to tertiary. This was significant and confirms research, which has shown that women migrants tend to be more educated than the men (Dodson and Crush, 2002; Lefko-Everett, 2007). Although there was no direct comparison between men and women in terms of education in this research, my interviews revealed that all the women I interviewed had attended secondary school, though only two held some sort of tertiary qualification. There is a danger of assuming that formal education is equivalent to being skilled or is a definitive indication of skills. I am aware that there is not always a correlation, but it was clear that the women I interviewed had acquired solid reading, critical skills and general knowledge about, for example, African history and politics. The evidence of their critical literacy totally disproves the stereotypes that lack the ambition or educational background to become skilled. It also disproves the myth that migrants hold low income jobs because of lack of education or skills (Danso and McDonald, 2001; Crush, 2001; and Zietsma, 2010).

Apart from education, my sample age group was influenced by a number of reasons. Firstly,



it was the national statistics of the country that had the biggest impact on my selecting a particular age for the target group. According to Stats SA “It is observed from the age data” (of foreigners entering the country), “that almost half (46.6%) were in the age group 20-34” (2012:15). Therefore I chose that age category for two reasons; one, with the national migration statistics provided by the age data, women I would encounter would have a high probability of being in this age range. Secondly, I chose to interview single women between the ages of 22-30 as I felt they would be more open to discussing their lived experiences with me because I am also a single black foreign woman who falls into that age category. I suspected that older married women might feel that I was not mature enough to understand or analyse their experiences. The choice to interview women who were in many ways like me was therefore important in enabling me to win the trust and confidence of my participants. Although they had strong reservations before the research started because of their fear of being portrayed negatively, they began to trust a process where they felt their positive and negative experiences would be treated sensitively and in a balanced way.



But other educational influences and patterns were also important. For example the role and use of language among migrants can be linked to their educational experiences and backgrounds. The interviews were dependent on having a common understanding of one language. Within feminist theory and other social constructionist frameworks, it is important to realise the power of language because it can be a tool for exclusion or inclusion (Kawulich 2015). Among other feminists, Audre Lourde and bell hooks challenge how feminist theorizing is constructed to suit the elite and often racially dominant women. In this way it sometimes sidelines and fails to challenge differences between groups, classes and races. Guided by the views of theorists like Lorde (1984) and hooks (2003) I was alerted to the importance of linguistic and other forms of exclusion in relation to choosing appropriate

methods. This helped me try as much as possible to conduct complex research while using simple language and techniques that would be easy to understand and not guilty of elite theorizing. I therefore tried to remain alert to the dangers of making my feminist work inaccessible in ways that feminists such as Lore and hooks have criticized.

Since my participants were from countries where English is not the first language, it was important that my participants be able to at least speak and understand basic conversational English. This is so that the data collected would not be misinterpreted, and the voices of the women's experiences can be heard. I managed to select women who had basic to advanced understanding of the English language so as to avoid as far as possible the reduction or simplification of my participants' information and narratives as far as possible.

However, for some participants there was often code-switching between English and Shona with the Zimbabwean women, even though English was dominant. One of the women remarked as follows "*Ah nhai asikana taku South Africa tingangotaura Shona pese pese here, but hazvina basa.*" Meaning "Hey girl we are now in South Africa how can we just keep speaking Shona every time but it doesn't matter." She was implying that a change of location sometimes comes with certain expectations: if you are not in Zimbabwe where Shona is widely and often spoken, and are in a place where English is your new mode of communication, it would be good to adjust to that language change. Therefore, we were both free to interchange between the two languages because we were both comfortable speaking either Shona or English. When I interviewed the women from DRC (who speak French, English or Lingala their mother tongue), they would at times ask the other women close by to come and listen to what I was asking, if they did not understand what was asked, or if they could not answer in English. But it was not all the time that they required assistance; most of

the time they felt comfortable to answer questions on their own. The participants from Nigeria spoke English, Yoruba and Igbo (mother tongues) of which Yoruba and Igbo were the two common, dominant local languages amongst the hairdressers. Their spoken English was very good and they did not require assistance from other hairdressers to interpret.

In exploring the politics of language Christian (1990) talks about the impact of language on research and how language usage affects the message being put across. She talks of hierarchies that are created by language, the way in which these hierarchies work and how they sideline certain people and therefore articulate ideas in ways that the literature is not clear to all people. To rectify this she suggests that academic feminists take language fully into consideration so as to avoid essentialist constructions of black womanhood and to remain alert to how divisions along nationality, class and education occur within the category of “black women”. This analysis of the role of language further substantiates why my research is deeply rooted in feminist qualitative research. Research is a form of knowledge creation that should be shared and understood. But that can only happen if the issues of language raised by Christian (1990) are addressed. In my research I therefore tried to encourage the spontaneous and informal use of language, often through code-switching, I felt that I created a relaxed mood and sense of trust for the interviews. There was often laughter and chatting and the participants looked comfortable and at ease with me and the manner in which I conducted my research. Having a relaxed and trustworthy environment for research allowed participants to share freely and give more in-depth information.

According to Bracken and Oughton “Common understanding derived from shared languages in turn plays a vital role in enhancing the relations of trust that are necessary for effective interdisciplinary working.” (Bracken and Oughton, 2006: 371). Although I do not believe that

I entirely resolved the problem of translation or interpretation, I do believe that what I learned from participants' use of language, how language is linked to class and social status, and how to encourage communication that took this into account, considerably assisted me with obtaining richer data.

Having established my research sample, as well as the key demographics and methodological framework, I then conducted the interviews. The interviews that were recorded were transcribed, and it is through these transcriptions that the thematic analysis was generated. I identified themes based on the information given during the interviews and participant observation. A thematic analysis proved to be an effective method for my research because it allowed for a fairly smooth analysis of data: one theme flows into the next and creates a coherent account of research findings. Braun and Clarke (2006) support the use of a thematic analysis in qualitative research. They state it is a process that can provide flexibility in research analysis.

Thematic analysis helped me to analyse the data in many different ways. My field notes (often written after meeting with women) were useful as part of my interview analysis and added to a picture of what was going on in the working environment of the hairdressers. Laurier (2003) states that field notes help the researcher to start to see the environment they are in through the eyes of their participant, recording how the participants see, hear, feel and relate within the space they occupy. The combination of interviewing and field notes really contributed to insightful analysis and revelation of interesting dynamics especially on the constant negotiation of space and belonging experienced by migrant working women.

## Chapter Four

### **Integration, Exclusion, Survival and Resistance**

The lives of migrant women have often been documented and analysed in ways that shape, re-affirm and perpetuate stereotypes. For example Kihato states feminisation of migration “focuses on instances of overt exploitation; portraying women as passive participants or victims without individual or collective agency or status” (2007: 397). This is because their voices are rarely heard in ways that allows one to see their life and experiences through their uncensored or cut voices.

This chapter carefully analyses the stories of different migrant women and seeks to make sense of their experiences from their point of view. In other words, the women narrate in their own words their struggles according to their own views through what they experienced. Different themes emerge from the lived experiences of these women. Some are connected and some are contrasting. Yet all reveal the following core patterns: the survival/agency binary, redefinitions of citizenship, the politics of belonging and identification and misidentification through stereotyping. In my analysis I will focus on these core patterns using the voices of the participants to show how they all intersect or affect lives of migrant women.

As indicated from the start of this study, the themes of social belonging, class status, space and identity were dominant throughout this study. These themes have allowed me to concretise my exploration of embodiment which is one of the major aspects of my theoretical framework. Exploration of the politics of belonging was achieved mainly through using the conceptual and methodological tools of intersectionality, a tool used to explore how the

various identities and experiences intersect, and overlap in affecting the lives of migrant working women.

### **Reassessing Push and Pull Factors**

As suggested in my literature review in chapter two, explanations of migration are popularly discussed in terms of common push and pull factors. These include political factors, economic factors, famine, war and poverty (to name a few). The discussion of push and pull factors is usually determined by deterministic theoretical and political perspectives. These assume that certain countries are modern and democratic, while others are pre-modern, undemocratic and unstable. Migration is consequently explained in terms of individuals' desire to move from pre-modern and unstable context to "developed" ones. Migration studies have over the years been governed by an overwhelming emphasis on economic and political issues which have taken up the politics of push and pull views. Mostly the common factors put forward are, economically poor, politically unstable, economically and socially unstable countries push their people to migrate. As Maharaj (2004) states, these factors provide an image of other countries (in this case) South Africa as a country of great stability especially after the 1994 election and most on the other hand, other countries in Africa as being unstable. South Africa is therefore seen as a country with guaranteed increased economic and political stability that attracts a lot of migrants (Landau, 2003; Crush, 2008; Maharaj, 2008 and van Meeterea and Pereira 2013).

Even though South Africa is clearly more economically powerful and stable than many other African countries, the simplistic view of South Africa's attractiveness of migrants is not confirmed by my participants. They held different views that will be discussed later on what

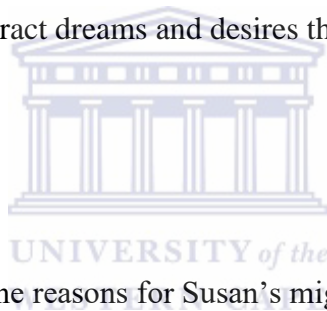
South Africa as a migration destination held for them. Much of the literature on migration and women states that the main reasons women move concerns their desire to join their husbands and families. The explanation assumes that women are incapable of making independent decisions or taking autonomous action in migrating to other cities or countries. Such ideas also implicitly reinforce views about the naivety or gullibility of migrant women who are often seen to be totally persuaded by the lure of the “modern” spaces to which they migrate. The stereotype also assumes that these migrant women are motivated only by material and survivalist issues and neglects to consider that some women are not naïve, but are well aware of what choices they are making and why they are making those choices.

Work focusing on feminisation of migration reveals several reasons for women’s migration. These reasons are slowly changing, and in many cases the desire to join spouses or families is not the main reason for women’s migration. Young women’s decisions to join partners to whom they are not formally married also deserves attention, since it reveals that young women migrants often take risks in acting on their desires. One of my participants from the DRC, Susan, stated that her strong feelings for her boyfriend were the reason why she came into the country.

“He say to me after we been in love come South Africa neh, so I sell my stuff, my clothes my TV, microwave all that stuff I sell so I come here. So me I come here and I get here. I meet my boyfriend we happy”. (Susan)

What is noteworthy in Susan’s explanation is her sense of courage and independence to leave home, based on a promise of being fascinated by “love” for a place she had never been to.

What is revealed here is Susan's sense of adventure and determination, something conveyed in Parker's view that: "Migration is tied to the human spirit, which seeks adventure, pursues dreams, and finds reasons to hope even in the most adverse circumstances" (Parker, 2007:1) in other words, Susan, like other migrants, was motivated not simply by money, running away from famine, war or drought. Susan's reasons for migrating were inspired by what she terms "love", a factor that seems to be underexplored when it comes to migration because of the popular researched reasons often given for why people migrate. Susan's boyfriend becomes the pull factor for her to come to South Africa, even though she is not married to him and they do not have formal ties of commitment or obligation to each other. In some ways, then, her boyfriend seems to be more of a symbolic figure for her, appearing to represent realization of many abstract dreams and desires that young women have of going to a new place.



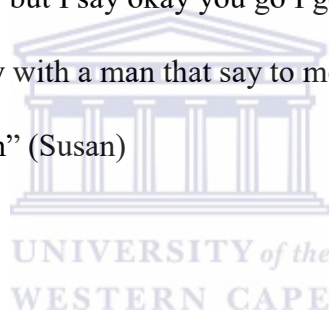
It should be stressed that among the reasons for Susan's migration war or famine or any experience of deprivation or lack in her home country DRC were not significant at all. In fact, Susan stated that her family is well off and so poverty, economic crisis and other experiences of deprivation were definitely not factors in determining her move. Susan also highlighted that her family was unaware of her real reason to move to South Africa. Only her sister knew the real reason for her moving and what had transpired with her boyfriend.

"Well I told my sister but she don't tell papa woo he will be angry. So I kept quiet and decide to stay and see how life be. I cannot go back I am a woman now I have to try grow up. And make money so when I go to Congo I go with something". (Susan)



Susan's family would not have approved her reason for moving, which was to join her boyfriend. This is because her family, their knowledge of history has documented that women who move, move because of their husbands and no mention of boyfriends. Even with the evolution of migration, women moving to work, more than to explore or for adventure, Susan's father would not have accepted her desire to be with her boyfriend as a legitimate reason to leave home. Interestingly, Susan is no longer with the boyfriend she initially came to South Africa to be with. Yet she retains a strong sense of adventure and independence, and says that

“I hurt so much, so deeply but I say okay you go I go and make a life for myself because I'm no gonna stay with a man that say to me he has another woman. No I have my pride as a woman” (Susan)



Susan also described to me her hopes of starting her business when she settles down.

“I want to have my own business and have a proper salon where clients come and get hair done nicely. Not out here because I am not from here I will never have plenty”

What Susan speaks to here is twofold. Firstly that hopes and dreams for a better life have no nationality or citizenship: migrants are just like everyone else, they also have goals and ambition. These ambitions and dreams cannot be ignored, for Susan they have become a driving force to live in South Africa, which might be a lived reality for many other migrants living and working in South Africa. Secondly, Susan brings out the issue of access, space and belonging. She is speaking to the politics of being a foreigner and identifying their limited

and potential access to make their lives better. She also shows how she is suffering when she says she hurt a lot at the same time shows determination and independence in limited ideological and physical spaces through having her pride as a woman.

Most of my participants share the common hope of what they term “settling down”. From what they say settling down means various things. For Caroline (Nigeria) this means going to university, getting a degree, a good job and to live on her own. She yearns for financial independence, and furthering her education. Susan (DRC) and Sarah (DRC) share the same view that through starting their own businesses they will get to settle down. Susan also desires to get citizenship so she can worry less about her life, while Sarah feels if she has her own business that’s her chance to be treated better because she will be her own boss. There is value placed on status from the above mentioned desires of these women. It seems as a migrant the change in immigration status promises a better life for them and better treatment from locals. However one then wonders to what extent change of status written on paper has on actual social relations for these women.

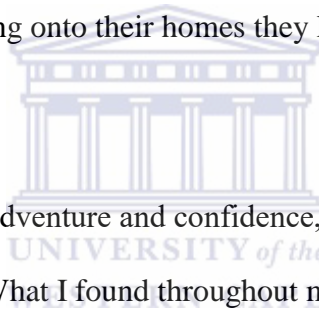
However, Susan hints at the traditional idea of settling down, when she states “God will give me another” when she speaks of her experience with her ex-boyfriend and how she would not get back together with him but wait for God to give her another man who will be her husband. Religion plays a huge role in lives of many people. It is a comforting factor and provides a sense of hope and security, which why many people turn to religion in order find meaning of whatever situation they are in. For Chipso (Zim) settling down means, improvement of her working conditions, getting a car, working in beauty and hair salon off the streets. Rudo has a totally different perception: she wants an office job and that seems to

be her only set desire, and has no certain future prospects. Rudo states “yes, I want work in an office, but *izvezvi* (right now) I need to get somewhere and then I will see what I will do with my life. For now *zvandiri ndizvozvo* (at the moment where I am is fine)”. It is therefore noteworthy that the women collectively do not aspire to traditional ideas of “settling down” into wifehood and motherhood.

The desire to “settle down” is not exactly a push or pull factor but it is often an important reason that women give for remaining in South Africa. I would therefore suggest that the category of “staying factors” would help to complement attention to the push and pull factors of migration. “Staying factors” often imply that women, once they have migrated, make thoughtful decisions about their futures based on their new prospects and sense of circumstances after having spent some time in South Africa. While migrant women are often seen as simply following spouses, it is noteworthy that through this research, it was revealed that migrant women develop a strong sense of how to empower themselves and improve the quality of their lives as independent persons, despite their initial reasons for migrating.

The everyday experiences of working in the streets, navigating a space governed by a violent past of apartheid and xenophobia can overshadow the small things migrant women do as forms of resistance within a their new environment. As James Scott puts it “focus on visible historic events such as organised rebellions or collective action, we can miss subtle but powerful forms of everyday resistance” (Scott, 1983: 1). Attention to these kinds of detail helps to deepen understanding of how women migrate and also how they make decisions about their lives after having spent some time in the host countries in this case South Africa.

Even though these women decide to be “invisible bodies” operating in the background, hiding their identities by trying to penetrate the cultural systems of the locals, learning to speak local languages. These women still show signs of resistance of being completely assimilated into the local systems, through their dress, especially the women from Nigeria and DRC wear their traditional dress together with jeans or general clothes. Most of the women cook their traditional food that they have for lunch. When I asked what that means to them they responded proudly and assertively stating it is how they keep their identity and show it through food and dressing. This desire to portray certain images of oneself reveals the need for identity preservation. Their identities are tied to their culture and traditions, which are parts they do not want to lose after migration. Hence they use food and clothing as means of remembrance and holding onto their homes they left behind.



As indicated in Susan’s sense of adventure and confidence, many women migrants are extremely resourceful and bold. What I found throughout my research is that women (especially the young women I worked with) affirmed what Dodson and Crush (2002) said, namely that women now migrate based on independent decisions and sometimes they do not even have family or friends in the countries they move to. My participant Sarah stated that she and her son moved to South Africa so that she could give her son a better life, despite not having family (a man) or friends in South Africa.

“Ooo my sister woo...I came to South Africa because I feel it better for me and my family...I take care of my son. But mainly I wanted to take care of my son in a better place and not worry about him. So I come with because of my son.” (Sarah)

Parents normally migrate in order to provide better lives for their children but in most cases the children stay behind in the country their parents would have migrated from. The myth is also that men pave the way for their wives and children, although in Sarah's case she was the primary breadwinner and a single parent. She did not have a man to pave way for her migration; she took on the "masculine" role of migrating to create a better life for her child. But from hearing Sarah's story I found that some women do move with their whole family, as the breadwinner in search of better lives for their dependents and often also spouses and extended family. Because Sarah is her son's sole provider, her son became her main reason for moving to a place that promised better opportunities to take care of her son.

Some reasons why women migrate are purely personal and driven by the desire to experience life in a different place. In other words, they do not seem to reflect any of the contradictions and pressures associated with traditionally feminine roles such as being a mother, girlfriend or wife. This is evident in the experiences of two of my participants, who spoke boldly about their desire for different lives. Chipo a young woman from Zimbabwe said

"I wanted to experience a different life, to see what is out there so I left home and came here". (Chipo)

Reflecting this spirit of adventure, Caroline, from Nigeria told me: "I needed to leave, to where I was not sure but I wanted something different". (Caroline)

My primary respondents in this research therefore demonstrated that the reasons for migration are both often contradictory (seeming to combine women's prescribed and

independent roles), changing (as is the case with Sarah (DRC), for example, who eventually drifts towards wanting to “settle down” as well as highly independent and adventurous (evident in Chipso (Zimbabwe) and Caroline (DRC) who made the decision to move quite independently of any others. And this goes to show that migration has many aspects or characteristics to it that need careful and in depth analysis, in order to not reproduce stereotypical characteristics of women and the process of migration.

In my research I have not discovered any work that highlights the personal motives of women’s migration, and it is almost as though researchers were unable to accept that women, as independent human beings, have complex human desires based on personal feelings and ambitions that drive them to act on their personal ambitions and desires. I believe this is an important area for further research, especially in view of the younger generation of people migrating. It would be important for research to pursue these trends in a more open-minded way and also in a way that takes into account gendered biases dealing with women’s experiences a gendered analysis so as to add onto existing literature why women migrate.

However different the reasons for women’s migration are the common push and pull factors cannot be disregarded. For example the economic crisis of the home countries pushes people to migrate. Rudo (Zim) one of my participants highlighted this fact as her reason for moving. Rudo states

“I came here soon after I got my certificate *re* secretariat stuff. Because Zim was just not happening. Imagine the economic crisis, no jobs, no food in the shops”. (Rudo)

As Rudo's remarks reveal, her perception of her country's economic crisis is not simply based on seeing herself as a victim of this crisis. Instead, she has a strong sense of purpose and survival, and seeks to better herself by migrating, rather than merely wanting to "escape". It is important to hear from the different women who migrate why they migrate, to fully understand what lies behind these reasons.

### **The invisible body of the migrant woman**

Self-identity is crucial to most people when it comes to defining a sense of who they are with reference to where they come from. From my observation and talks with people who get their hair done on street salons, I realised that most of the time, women hairdressers especially on the streets are invisible bodies. The invisible body can be seen as not just as the marginalization of the physical body but also the silencing of the humanity of the women migrants. No one pays attention to them unless they want them to do their hair or reduce prices of the hair. They are often seen as unfeeling bodies that mechanically perform a service for others, and it is only when they become active in terms of negotiating and bargaining about prices that they become visible to most people.

When I asked my participants if they forget their clients and treat them simply as people requiring service and not as human beings, they said no. When I asked how their clients treat them the responses varied but most of them were negative. This is what some of them said,

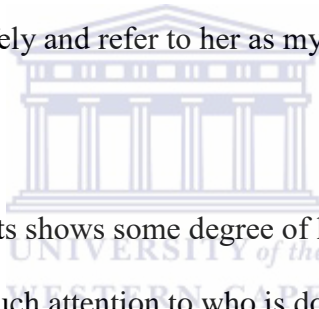
“Some forget your name and they just come to the stands and say I am looking for

this lady. Everyone ask which one because they don't really look at your face they easily forget you. All they remember is your hairstyle or what you wore when they last saw you \*laughs\* I guess people think we dress and look the same every day”.

(Chipo)

I asked Chipo how this made her feel and she said,

“Like I am not important. Because how can someone think I wear the same clothes every day? If it were in the salon I'm sure they would keep the girl's number or card safely and refer to her as my hairdresser.”

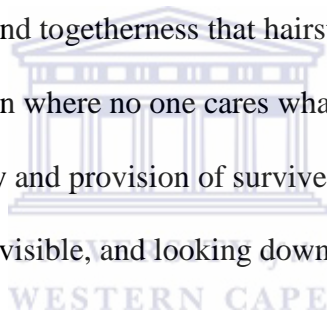


Chipo's experience with her clients shows some degree of her invisibility to her client, because the client does not pay much attention to who is doing her hair. Making reference to the clothing and hairstyle belittled Chipo as a human being because her face was invisible, her name was forgotten but her clothes and hair are what was being used to identify her. The difference between a body in the streets and in a building is hinted at by Chipo saying a hairdresser in a salon is treated and referred to differently than the one on the streets. The street is a place to walk, drive, home to the homeless and people throw trash as opposed to a place of formal work within a building.

If the street is transformed into a place of work, the work is informal and treated as such. Hence the street hairdresser's are now attached to the meaning of the street and hence treated as such. The invisibility of a human body is interconnected with the issues of space. In this



space the body occupies, it becomes part and parcel of the space hence the body is treated as that space is treated. Space plays a big role in how identities are shaped and constructed (Gupta and Ferguson, 1992; Kong, 2006). It is ironic that hairdressing is an extremely intimate act, since the hairdresser works on a vulnerable part of the client's body: the head, touching, stroking cutting, braiding often for very long periods of time. Yet many clients have no interests in the actual persons who are attending to their bodies and engaging them in what can be seen as intimate ways. For example when Bell Hooks (1989), explained the intimacy she called it "a culture of intimacy" where women who may not know each other meet and talk and have a moment of intimacy with their hair and shared experiences yet sadly this is not the common case in modern day hairstyling, because it is now seen as a business and strips the intimacy, bonding and togetherness that hairstyling used to hold. This leaves a cold, detached business transaction where no one cares what the other thinks or feels as long as there is an exchanged of money and provision of survives. This shift and lack intimacy has resulted in some people feeling invisible, and looking down upon themselves.



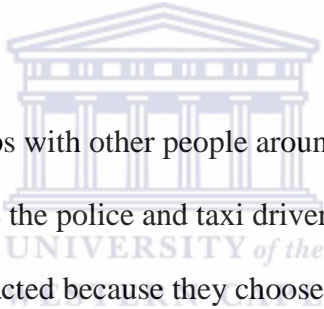
The way my participants reference the body was also often ways of talking about other things such as money and their life.

“Well here I charge little money than salon money and still the client wants less money. I have to live and survive but that is not her concern.”

“She just wants hair done nice but not think I need money too. But as long as I get something I am happy I can't complain because then I lose client to someone else. So I just keep quiet.” (Sarah)

Lack of concern by the client for Sarah's well-being makes her unhappy but at the same time

she conforms to the demands of the client. She fears not getting any money so she chooses to take a step back and give the client what she wants. Because of the space that Sarah is in, her social and identity perspectives become more reflexive (Gupta and Ferguson, 1992) Burke and Stets also found that the different theories of the self, become reflexive “in that it can take itself as an object and can categorize, classify or name itself in particular ways in relation to other social categories or classifications” (2000: 224). Therefore Sarah and Chipo by making their feelings, emotions and beings invisible to cater to the mind-set of the client, are in effect denying themselves a sense of humanity by classifying themselves as insignificant in relation to others as Burke and Stets (2000) stated. This then makes them the invisible ones at a very deep psychological level compared to their clients.



When asked about the relationships with other people around conducting business or engaging in various activities, like the police and taxi drivers, my participants did not have much to say about how they interacted because they choose to be unseen and unheard by specific groups of people such as the police and taxi drivers. Fear of exclusion from the society would result from people seeing them talking to the police. If they experience social exclusion, they immediately lose any form of invisible protection that fellow traders provide to each other. Because they have to be complicit with illegal activities because of their marginal status, these women choose to keep silent and continue to exist on social margins and at the same time careful not to cause problems that sees them being socially excluded.

“Around here much happens and if people see you talk to police a lot they not gonna like you very much.” (Susan)

“I am afraid of them. Taxi drivers are known to be violent...but ya the police they

come and go as they please if they stop they talk to my friend who gave me job. I just keep to myself and work no other business because it not good for people to see you with them they no gonna trust you”. (Caroline)

“As long as you mind your business you will be okay. So I come to work and I go home”. (Rudo)

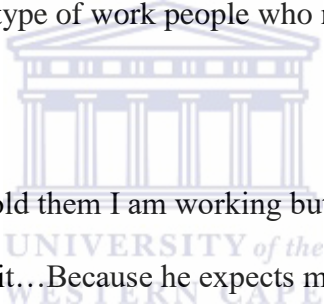
Social exclusion in a country where you are a foreigner seems to be one of the biggest concerns. My participants Susan and Rudo spoke in relation to how vocal and visible one can be. It sounded almost like a warning, an unspoken warning amongst the people in their social networks. Invisibility is used to ones advantage to stay connected with others, guaranteeing you some sort of loyalty and trust amongst others so as to avoid exclusion from the formed community. This form of invisibility affirms what Kihato stated “But the victim/victor, visible/invisible dichotomies emerge in debates do not adequately describe or explain the lives of migrant women (2007: 400) therefore the need to fully understand where these women are coming from and how they feel about their experiences is crucial to address certain binaries such as visible/invisible and to what extent they impact the lives of migrants.

I found it very interesting when my participant Susan referred to herself as a woman in situations that related to her giving herself an identity and being self-reflective when trying to define who she is. She perceived her body as a woman’s body with a status of being a woman. But when she talks of her work in relation to others she denies herself an identity and gives others visibility. That aspect of visible/invisibility that Kihato (2007) refers to is revealed and shown how Susan treads between the two in order to avoid confrontations or issues due to her marginal status therefore, Susan chooses to be the “nobody” so that she will

be left alone.

“Sometimes they just treat you like a nobody but they leave us alone” (Susan)

The invisibility is not only money related or about appeasing others by confirming their sense of their greater visibility. It seems also with the families of these women, some do it strategically, since they have to hide what type of work they are doing because of the judgement they will receive. I asked what their families thought of them being in South Africa and how that made them, feel. Caroline’s response highlighted how chosen invisibility may also be connected to a need to conceal lives from families because of their lie in family stereotypical opinions about the type of work people who migrate engage in.



“They are okay with it. I told them I am working but I don’t tell what I am doing. My father would never accept it...Because he expects more and I am sure he would complain why I left home to come and be a nobody.” (Caroline)

### **Social Networks and agency among young migrant women**

Resistance is often defined in two-dimensional terms in conventional social science research. Michael Foucault is well known for saying “Where there is power, there is resistance” (1978: 95-96) while Lila Abu-Lughod analyses resistance differently, that “where there is resistance, there is power” (1990: 42). Feminist theorizing and methodology, however, have revealed how complicatedly women often navigate intersecting power relations and circumstances.

It is significant that globalization and the information revolution have radically altered the way we think about social networks. Previously, these would have included individuals who directly know each other. Social media has allowed many migrants (especially younger women) to connect and establish a sense of community and support in innovative ways before and after they have made the decision to migrate. It provides some sort of security in connecting with people in the country one desires to migrate to without needing direct contact with them. This therefore influences and provides confidence in the decisions being made. For example Caroline stated that

“So through Facebook I connected to some friends of mine who told me to come here and that it was better than Lagos”. (Caroline)



This example highlights how social media is now influencing migration and could be an extremely fruitful path to be explored in related in-depth research. But my main point here is that Facebook is an extremely important communicative platform for migrants. In Caroline’s case, it was the medium she used to get in touch with her friends, to be inspired by and hence influence her decision to move. Caroline had someone informing her and giving her information about the place she was thinking of migrating to. Because of this her social network becomes very influential in her decision to move.

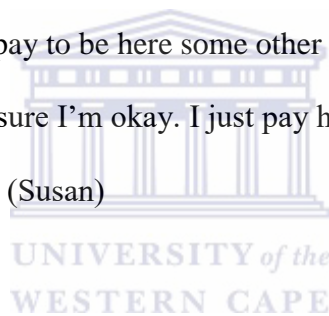
According to van Meeterea and Pereira (2013) Social capital is the capital that migrants use that helps them to get by, for example migrant networks can be considered social capital. This is because the networks help these women in minimizing risks when moving by considering places where they know other people. According to my participant’s responses,

they all found the use of social capital significant in one or other contexts or situation. For example Chipo's sister helped her get connected to someone who gave her a job.

“So I asked her (her sister) where I could work. She told me to go look for a lady called Miriam. She (Miriam) introduced me to the other ladies. They asked me to work. So I got a job because I was Tatenda's sister”. (Chipo)

For Susan it was through her relationship with the lady who gave her a job “Mama Leslie” that she learnt about the business.

“So I met *Mama Leslie* here in Bellville...Mama Leslie is a nice woman. She teach me hair, she make me no pay to be here some other stands you pay but she sees me as her little sister she makes sure I'm okay. I just pay her for stuff we need like chairs to do hair of our customers.” (Susan)



Susan's relationship with mama Leslie speaks more to the economics of the relationship. They are connected in a way that benefits both of them for their businesses to succeed. Therefore the social capital can be used to benefit relationships economically.

The choices made by most of these women to migrate should not be seen as easy or shallow ones, especially when they have no social networks to rely on for help and information. Without social networks some of these women basically walk into the unknown. South Africa on the African continent is seen as a land of hope, opportunities and better living conditions (Maharaj, 2004) and that is how it is portrayed. But the reality is, no matter how affluent the country is, there is also widespread inequality and injustice, and these affect migrant women

considerably. When one of the participants, Rudo, had to sleep in the streets of Hillbrow, and Cape Town she experienced a reality that few people talk about. Rudo almost ventured into prostitution as a means of survival because she had no hope, no opportunity and better living. All her reasons for initially coming to South Africa were shattered and ruined by lack of access or networks to establish some sort of life.

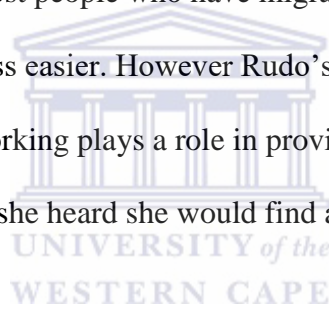
“So for transport I came here with some people who were living Zim. I really didn’t know them but I thought since they are from Zim they would be nice and kind to me, but I paid of course to come here”. (Rudo)

The above quote is of how Rudo travelled to South Africa. Already one can see the trust she puts in her fellow companions and compatriots when she first came to South Africa. This trust was based on them being from the same country. Jean (2008) acknowledges that there is a lot of literature looking into experiences and social networks of migrants that is based on their nationalities. This is something we see in Rudo, who catches a lift with her fellow country mates even though she did not know them as acquaintances or friends. However as she goes on to give an account of her story one realises that there is a harsh social impact on lack of social networks.

“Ah I was shamwari (my friend) I was just panicking at every turn I didn’t even know in which direction SA is but I kept hoping I would be safe. When we got to SA they left me in Johannesburg. I had no idea where to go or what to do. I heard people saying Hillbrow is where a lot of Zimbabweans are. So I went there asking people how to go about it. I was shocked at what I saw. This is not the land of hopes and

dreams as people said. It was crowded, dirty, noisy and not safe. I sat by the road side till I met a lady who then introduced me to other ladies she was with. They showed me where I could sleep so I started off sleeping outside and they said I must buy vegies and sell.so I was selling vegetables on the side of the road. I can't even remember how long I slept outside this one place and going to shelters. Later found a room to share with a lady from Congo we both started selling". (Rudo)

Unlike Caroline, Rudo, before coming to South Africa, did not have any established contacts who would have given her information about South Africa beforehand. She had to experience migration in a raw sense - like most people who have migrated without any social networks to help make the migration process easier. However Rudo's experience shows that self-initiated and indirect social networking plays a role in providing information. Rudo managed to get to Hillbrow, a place where she heard she would find a lot of Zimbabweans.



However her first-hand experience of South Africa was not as good as people made it out to be. Rudo was homeless and slept on the streets because she did not know anyone when she arrived in South Africa. Sometimes social networks directly or indirectly can be a disadvantage. Rudo encountered a lot of difficulties through use of information gathered indirectly from other people's social networks. Eventually she established direct social networks that later proved to be fruitful. After meeting a Zimbabwean woman who helped her out, she was able to become self-sufficient and created more social networks that worked to her advantage.

"Migration can often be very difficult. It includes a lot of changes both in lifestyle and work.



There are many different reasons for migration though they all seem to fall under umbrella terms” (Department of International Development, 2007). However true this maybe, it becomes even more important to look into the different experiences of these migrant women because not all of them go through the same experiences of migrating. Therefore to avoid generalising experiences under “umbrella terms” a feminist research approach was crucial to my research. I managed to hear the experiences of these women and not make general assumptions such as women who migrate suffer when they get to their host countries. Thus, Rudo’s experience mentioned above is not the same as Chipo who states

“I was fortunate that my sister had already resettled here in SA. So I came to stay with her. She works in a salon, she rents a chair”. (Chipo)

Both women came from the same country but their experiences after entering South Africa were radically different due to the support system that networking offered. Therefore to generalize the experiences of migrant women would be to do their life experiences injustice. Hence my research basis all analysis on the in-depth stories of six migrant women, which may relate to other women and as mentioned earlier, may be contradictory.

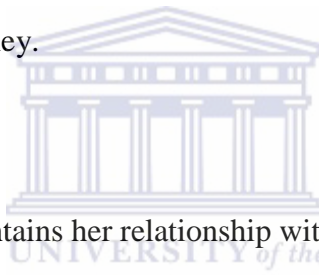
### **Street-wise bodies**

In as much as my participants state things that make them invisible bodies, they also use their bodies and the things they observe and learn to their advantage. If one looks at the setting in which these women work, they have to be street smart to be surviving in an area most people would dread to be in. Each woman seems to have developed techniques to help navigate the space she is in and benefit too. An interesting example is Susan from the DRC. To begin with

when Susan talks about how she remembers her clients, she said she takes pictures of their hair and face so as to remember her clients.

“I take pictures after I do hair see so I know who I do. Some new I ask to take picture of hair and face so I can remember”. (Susan)

But what makes her clever is that she realised how people react when she remembers each and every one of her customers. She plays on those emotions to get her clients to feel special and keep coming back to her, therefore developing street-wise techniques to help keep her in business and be able to make money.



When I asked Rudo how she maintains her relationship with her clients, she states that she realised talking to them has played a big role so that's her technique. Rudo realised that actively engaging with her clients creates relationships and now her clients always go back to her.

“Ah I talk to my clients. They like it when I talk to them a lot. I have made some good relationships because most of my clients come back to me. We exchange numbers and I text them to ask how they are”. (Rudo)

Chipo has found two things that help her navigate her space of work. Firstly she says she learnt how to speak one of the local languages as a means of surviving. This was her response

when asked about how other people around her who do business treat her

“Because of being a foreigner they won’t be so nice to you especially if you can’t speak their language...I had to learn otherwise here in, working in an open street that is open to everyone it is important to be able to speak something”. (Chipo)

Her ability to speak just enough of the language to get by helps her exist within her new location. Secondly Chipo stated that beauty, make up and fashion was her thing. She used her knowledge of fashion and beauty to get the other women to like her, for her to fit in; she did this for both her clients and fellow hairdressers. “They are nice to me because I give them fashion advice, makeup and dating tips too \*laughs\*” As for her clients Chipo says “I take their numbers and check on them. Give them tips to keep their hair looking nice. That helps”. In some ways this brings out the concept of commodification of bodies and its parts which is discussed by Scheper –Hughes stating “the body is made into a commodity and how its marketization in turn remakes social relations and cultural meanings” (Scheper-Hughes, 2002: n.p). Bodies are constantly being changed to suit a particular context and hence the parts become commodities which enhance relationships in this case women performing acts to beautify the other, as Chipo highlights.

Being street wise entails that one be sharp minded, think quickly and be able to use your environment and what you have to get the best out of whatever situation one is in. The examples above have shown wisdom in how these women have internalised their surroundings, the people they encounter and engage with on a daily basis to come up with ways that help them use their knowledge to their advantage. According to Sparkes et.al. “The ways in which the bodies and space are reciprocally constituted along with the dilemmas this

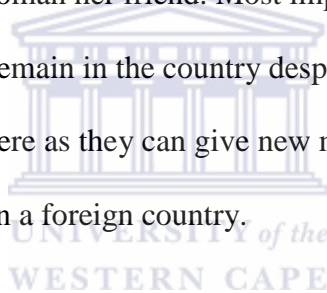
poses for individuals within a cultural setting” (2010: 333) Therefore concepts around space, place and identity plays a crucial role in analysing how these women navigate the space they are in.

Another strategic device used by many migrant women concerns language usage. I noticed as I was sitting at the stands how some of the women would change their accent when they talk to clients as opposed to when they speak to one another. When they try to get clients they would say “*unjani*” (how are you) or call clients “*sis*” (sister) they tried to incorporate parts of the local languages that are common such as greetings to get clients to come to them. They are appealing to the local culture in the hope that the people they approach would hopefully be impressed. Code-switching through accent change and shifts in language greatly allowed them to become temporary “insiders” and win the trust and confidence of potential clients, who temporarily saw them as people and looked beyond the stereotype of the foreigner hairdresser.

My participants also showed that acquired knowledge of the spaces they operate has helped them stay safe as well. As Chipso said, just knowing enough of the local language has helped her survive. For Susan, Rudo and Caroline acquired knowledge has helped them realise that staying out of the police’s way and taxi operators has kept them in a safe space. They can remain invisible but to their advantage. They all have become clever about whom they associate with and to stay in certain circles of friends or people they now call family. Indirectly they hint at which groups to associate with and which ones to not do so. Not only is this the police but some of the women specifically point out Nigerians as doing illegal business and how not everyone likes them.

### **Community as a family unity: The development of a sisterhood**

According to Jean (2008) social networks have an impact on the integration of migrants into societies, and he argues that some migrants have social networks based on their nationalities. Therefore, to some extent, reasons for staying could also have been influenced by the fact that the women managed to penetrate the community they just entered. For Susan this was as a result of meeting the Zimbabwean she now stays with welcoming her and offering her accommodation especially after her boyfriend had betrayed her. This was the first friendship bond she made after coming to South Africa. Finding someone to accept her, made her comfortable enough to call this woman her friend. Most importantly, this friendship gave her the strength and perseverance to remain in the country despite the challenges she faced. The power of relationships is shown here as they can give new migrants the courage to move on and build a difficult yet new life in a foreign country.



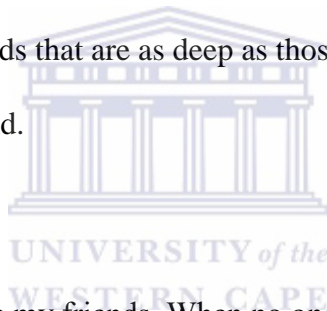
All my respondents encountered other women who helped them in getting jobs, places to stay and some knowledge of the place they were in. Interestingly, Rudo and Sarah saw these encounters as the process of the community almost becoming a family rather than acquaintances of just friends.

“I sat by the road side till I met a lady who then introduced me to other ladies she was with. They showed me where I could sleep so I started off sleeping outside and they said I must buy vegies and sell... Till this day we are all good friends”. \*smiles\*

(Rudo)

“I come again Bellville and one lady I speak to speak my language Lingala. So we talk and she say I come to her corner again. She say I just do one person hair and she see how I do and she like it so see now I here. I have job and I make money. So I do that and I start coming day a day and soon I make some money and it was fine. And I thank her for the help”. (Sarah)

The lady that gave Susan a job and taught her how to do hair is a symbol of foreigners’ community taking each other in and creating relationships. Sometimes like in this case foreigners start to feel like family existing with one another and helping each other. My participants refer to their fellow colleagues as “sisters” or “friends”. Referring to fellow workmates as “sisters” clearly shows to what level the intimate connection they have with each other in terms of bonds. Bonds that are as deep as those within families and reflecting on the depth of each relationship bond.



“I love my sisters, they are my friends. When no one wants me they want me, take me and give me job. So ya my sister we love each other. I have family” \*laughs\*

(Caroline)

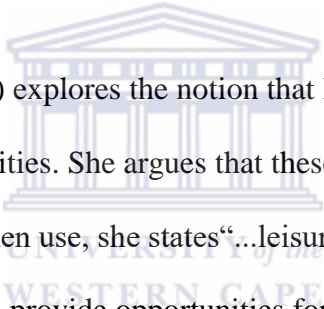
From conducting participant observation I noticed there is a deep intimacy attached to seeing the people around as family and friends. Therefore these women working on the streets have developed into a strong yet not always obvious community.

“Once you get to know them they are nice women, they all care for each other and we have all become our own community”. (Chipo)

They have developed into a family that looks out for each other and takes care of one

another. This is evident when Susan talks about how if one is sick the others will take over their clients. They make sure that no one's client goes away without getting their hair done. There is a development of a sisterhood in these salons. They are becoming places of social interaction, women bonding as well as those of work and leisure. Even how Susan spoke to me, she would call me "sister" and "sweetie" terms of affection as if to make me feel comfortable in the space we were in. Though just like sisters there is some sort of sibling rivalry that takes place from time to time.

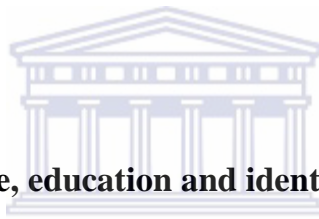
"Women from the other stands gossip about us but we also gossip. We not out to hurt each other. Its fine we do it to each other all the time." (Caroline)



An article by Eileen Green (1998) explores the notion that leisure spaces can be key sites for the construction of gendered identities. She argues that these spaces not only construct new identities but they are spaces women use, she states "...leisure as a site of personal choice, and self-determination, which can also provide opportunities for individuals to exercise personal power" (Green, 1998: 172). Therefore these spaces influence how some women see other women and see themselves in very positive ways. It is quite interesting that Green (1998) mentions these spaces as spaces where women use and exercise personal power. This view on space shows how my participants and possibly other women are negotiating their gendered identities in ways that may not always seem empowering, but that do give them a considerable degree of confidence and strength to create and embrace their identities. Therefore spatiality becomes very important to identities of resistance and opportunities for exercising personal power and nurturing growth.

Some people walk by and just see a stand with people getting their hair done. Yet the

psychological and political processes amongst hairdressers are often extremely complex and deep. In the course of my research I discovered that a lively subculture has developed amongst these women. My participants talked about how one of the women cooks for the others, and they all eat together. This collective eating reflects and reinforces deep bonding and ties of affection and trust. And it is noteworthy that the women often trust one another with money, food, and babysitting each other's children in that same space of work. Rudo says "...most people if they find people from their country they become brothers and sister." This development of a family unit seems to be a significant feature of migrant women (and migrant people more generally) constructing a social identity in the context of the broader host country.



### **Using social capital: language, education and identity**

Among the many forms of social capital that migrants use, education and language play a crucial role. Language in particular can be seen as either as a tool or a weapon against many people depending on which side of the language barrier they are on. My participant Susan uses her ability to speak Basic English to lure customers her way.

“Because I speak English better than some of the girls I follow the client and ask for next time. The other girls just let them walk away”. (Susan)

She clearly found ways that work for her survival not only as a hairdresser but as a woman out to make a living in a foreign country, using her educational background to her advantage. This challenges the popular view of the body of an immigrant as uneducated and taken



advantage of; many migrant women are in fact highly educated. Being able to negotiate the use of language plays a key role in surviving in a foreign country. Susan can now rely on herself to communicate with clients and encourage their support, and this makes her different from others who speak minimal or next to no English at all. The survival techniques based on linguistic ability therefore helped her make her experience in the city somewhat easier.

However Language can be a source of exclusion from the social networks that are created. Bracken and Oughton state that “Common understanding derived from shared languages in turn plays a vital role in enhancing the relations of trust that are necessary for effective interdisciplinary working.” (2006: 371) For example Sarah speaks about a woman from Nigeria who had worked at the same stand as her.

“Sometimes some woman from Nigeria come work with us but she not speak Lingala so it not nice for her to sit here. So we work with women like me, from Congo”.

(Sarah)

This example shows how important language is in some settings in order to get by and fit in. This is also revealed in the way Rudo complained in about a first-hand experience of how a change in language can affect one socially.

“But sometimes *zvinongobhowa* (it’s annoying) when they start talking in their languages. *Saka hauchaziva kuti vari kukunyeya* or what (you don’t know if they talking about you or not). So most times I keep to myself and keep quiet. So I just go talk *kune vamwe vangu mazimbo tomboseka hedu.*” (So I go talk to my fellow Zimbabweans and enjoy some laughs). (Rudo)

Because of use of a different language, Rudo automatically feels left out. Burke and Stets (2000) talk about how each person's personal history places them in different social categories and the impact of this is social exclusion, marginalisation or ill-treatment. Rudo clearly experiences this, and opts to go to other women from her own country because there she feels she fits in because they speak the same language. Rudo finds security in speaking to those from her country which is the same sense of safety Susan expressed when she talked about speaking Lingala which is her mother tongue. This obviously helped both participants form their social networks.

Being able to speak a local language has helped women like Chipo to, in her words "survive" the city. It is interesting that Chipo mentioned how she had to learn the local language as a means of survival because language became a tool to aid transitioning to and existing within a foreign place. When asked if she could speak the local language this was her response

"Just enough to get by. I had to learn otherwise I could never survive because us living here in townships working in a street that is open to everyone it's important to be able to speak something." (Chipo)

Language is presented as a survival mechanism in the society and place of work. This reliance on using language in certain ways is connected to her geo-political context. Staying in a location area in a foreign country where English is not the first language it might be difficult to penetrate that society in order to fit in. Therefore it was important for Chipo to learn to speak a language where she could use to her advantage.

What was also interesting was, in trying to be “invisible” and not attract attention, many women hid their levels of intellect and education. When I asked about their levels of education, they all had been to school, and two held tertiary qualifications. Yet they would feed into the misconception of migrants being uneducated especially female migrants, yet research has shown that at times migrant women tend to be more educated than men (Dodson and Crush, 2002; Lefko-Everett, 2007). What this reveals is the politics of survival and construction of identities. These women realise the impact of being outstanding or appearing to be superior to the locals has consequences such as xenophobic attacks, hence they identify themselves as being of a lower class and uneducated as a means of survival.



### **Body Politics, Identity Construction and Xenophobia**

Doreen Massey (1994) a feminist geographer talks very thoughtfully about a sense of space in her work. She argues that space may be constant, yet it should not be essentialised and not perceived as static by those who inhabit it. Moreover, identities are not stuck in time, and identities like space constitute a process, “perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a 'production' which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation.” (Rooks, 1996: 15) Therefore identities rather than fixed “things” are performances that define a person, or allow one to let other people see them and the expectation that they are really understood or perceived.

My respondents’ answers often confirmed Massey’s (1994) and Rooks’ (1996) views on identity construction. Street salons as geographical spaces are evolving places where identities are continuously being formulated, changed and lived. Most importantly, the

women respondents themselves are also constantly evolving. This is so especially because they are not inside a salon building that they have full control of, it is harder to control the dirt, the noise and weather that affect them as they work outside.

My participant Sarah gives an account of how she had to mother her child and still work in the same space.

“Yes my sister. If I don’t know one will take care of him. I don’t make enough money to ask someone to see to him, and bath him and feed him. So I bring him here with me. So I work and look after him. It was fine but I get tired quick because I have to feed him, sleep him and do hair for customer. Too much work.” (Sarah)

Sarah is an example of a working mother. She braids hair and mothers her child within the same place. This is an aspect that is overlooked in historical and sociological work done on women and gender roles, where women usually perform different gender roles in different spaces (for example, being a mother in the home and a worker in public spaces).

Mostly women would join their spouses/families but there is no further recognition of women like Sarah who would have to act out two identities of being a mother and a worker in the same space. She experiences two spheres (the domestic and the public) in one space which is collapsed into one as the “public” street space. Even though others would see it as public, though, she experiences it as both private and public.

This raises the importance of researching how certain working mothers do not necessarily

involve considering how women work and then go home to see to their children. In the informal sector where there is less regulation many women are actually mothering children in the same space as they work. We could speculate that migrant women, who often work in the informal sector is because of limited opportunities and legal constraints, often experience the complexities of private/public spaces.

Body politics among my participants was constantly negotiated and re-negotiated as they sought access to material resources. Susan, Sarah, Caroline and Rudo talk of different uses of their bodies in many different ways to get by day by day. To begin with they have to actively go out looking for clients on the street, at the risk of being ignored, answered rudely and made to feel like nobodies. I observed many people walking past them, when they asked them to if they wanted someone to do their hair. Their bodies are treated as invisible. Yet they are the providers of beauty for many women. They are only visible (and even then, almost half visible) when clients want their hair done and they call on them or when negotiating prices after they get their hair done.

It seems that the body that is termed “client” is more important to my participants than her own body. This is because when we were talking about relationships with clients this is what my participants said,

“I talk to them, make them feel comfortable because *ndini ndirikuda mari (because I am the one who needs the money)*. I have to be extra nice to the client even if they are not.” She further says when things happen even which is beyond her control she apologises for that. “Well sometimes people make noise, shouting, papers coming to the stand or if they show they don’t like something. Well I do it so they feel I care for

them even if they don't care about me." (Chipo)

This shows how Chipo is working and providing services in a diverse environment where things happening around her and her client are out of her control. But because she wants money she becomes especially polite to someone who seems not to care about her. Based on what Chipo states in the above quote she displays what Goffman termed a "personal front...an activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers" (1956: 13). Showing she cares for her client over things she cannot control.

Susan stated how she put her client's needs first before hers. She makes sure they don't get rained on; she even asks shop owners if she can do the client's hair close to their shops to provide good shelter for her client - with the likelihood that she will be charged for using that space. at times even when the hairdressers are sick they still attend to their clients and only give clients to others if they are seriously ill.

"Because you see this is the only way to get money so I don't want to go a day without getting something so I will go to work." (Rudo)

"I don't come when I am very sick but sometimes you don't want to let your client down so you come. It not good for my body but I need to work cause I need the money so me I'm gonna force my body even if I get 1 client. It is better than nothing." (Caroline)

"If I get sick I do one or two client and give away the other. It not easy but I have to".

(Susan)

In all this it seems the clients with ‘their’ money have more power than the hairdresser and their skills. This difference in status is governed partly by who is paying who for the service. But it is also determined by the “subordinate” migrant status of the service provider. Yet the women conduct themselves as business women and serve their clients in a way that shows professionalism. They give and treat the client as being highly important as any other business wanting money would do. Caroline acknowledges not wanting to disappoint her clients hence the difference in treatment because the as a paying customer with nothing except money, the client has no worry of disappointing the hairdresser.

How one gets money speaks to the power dynamics between client and service provider. Because the work these women do is currently their only source of income they are subject to whatever treatment that they receive from their clients.

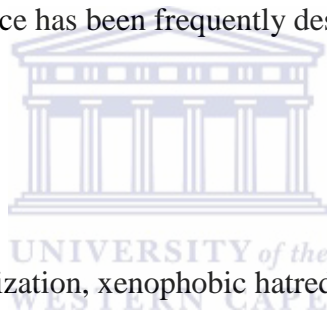
Waldinger and Soehl (2010) talks about body politics in relation to belonging and who is what and what is available to whom. In this case the politics of the physical body is based on the fact that the client’s body is treated with more care because they have the money that the hairdresser is looking for. This shows the occupational roles of hairdressers working on other’s bodies. My participants gave insight into perceptions about their bodies in relation to others, and how other does perceive their bodies highlighting the relationship between marginality/victimisation and survival and agency.

Sometimes my clients made reference to their status as foreigners as being either a hindrance to progress in their lives or the reasons why they are treated the way they are. Caroline states how other people call her “*kwerekwere*” a discriminatory term used to refer to foreigners.

When asked how other business people treat her she says

“I stay away from other people. I think they are nice because they have no reason not to be but the other South Africans sometimes you hear them refer to us as *kwerekwere* and that’s not nice.” (Caroline)

No one would want a degrading term used to refer to them. But as Caroline states there are people who do that to other people. This can be related to territorialism. The ones who use the “*kwerekwere*” term know that they are humiliating and degrading someone else as they feel their space has been invaded by a foreigner. In South Africa the treatment of foreigners has been extremely harsh and hence has been frequently described in the media and public discourse as xenophobia.



Despite the experiences of victimization, xenophobic hatred and even violence, some women retain and preserve a strong sense of bodily pride and personal self-esteem. One respondent conveyed this by stating:

“I would come to work with make up on because I didn’t care it was by the side of the road. I would tell them looking good has no place.” (Chipo)

I often observed the women doing one another’s hair. When I consulted them about that they would laugh and say they want to look good too. At the end of the working day they would put on make-up and comb their hair, and some would go behind their stands or in the shops and change their clothes. They also showed that they value their bodies even if they work in a place that so strongly undermines their body image.



Also significant in discussing body politics and identity construction is the environment of the physical body. Women working on the street are subjected to harsh working conditions that are mostly beyond their control. Unlike many other forms of work in buildings, hairdressers on the street work outside. When it rains they either find shelter or have to pack up and leave, when it is cold they still have to stand for hours doing hair.

“I think winter is the toughest because it’s still dark around 7am apa (yet) you maybe have a client coming and travelling in the darkness to the streets *hazviite* (it’s not good). Worse if it’s raining...when it rains we take shelter under the bus and sometimes we ask the ladies who work in the inner salon in the clothing stores for shelter and they charge us R20 *kana* (or) R50.” (Rudo)

“Because its winter it gets cold and rain too people don’t like to come and sit in the street but we come. I bring blanket small for client so she not get cold and I stand and do hair. Sometimes it’s not nice, rain too much”. (Caroline)

Their bodies are subject to harm from the weather together with their clients. But hairdressers like Caroline she makes sure her client at least have a blanket while she stands and does hair. What this shows is how much importance is put on one’s body compared to the other. A client is covered up with a blanket; a client is taken to an inner salon to avoid getting wet or cold. But the hairdressers themselves often stand outside under a bus station in the cold and rain.

The physical dirt often associated with the hairdressers' bodies is revealing. At around 5/6pm the women who work along the streets whether as hairdressers, vendors or shop assistants pack up, and start cleaning around their stands and outside the shop. The amount of dirt they collect sometimes is alarming. The streets of Bellville especially the train, bus and taxi rank area is not so clean. People throw rubbish on the streets and urinate around the area these women work.

“I don't like it though because ah sha (friend) when people pass by vanorasa marara pasi and kusvipa (they throw dirt on the ground and spit everywhere) and some urinate mu (in the) road and never mind kuti isu (us) we work here.” (Chipo)

“Some people walk past us and go urinate right next to the bus station, yet the smells will affect all of us especially when it rains it doesn't look nice.” (Caroline)

“But I get so angry because it's outside people no gonna respect you are working there.” (Rudo)

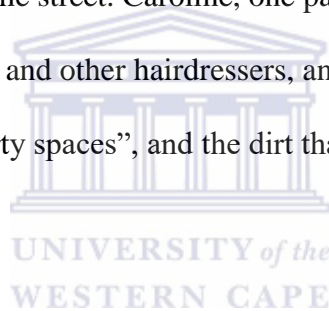
“People just throw paper everywhere.” (Susan)

The ease with which certain people litter or urinate despite who occupies that space speaks a lot about the social status of those occupying that space. Mary Douglas in her book “Purity and Danger” (2003) discusses dirt in a way that most people do not think of. Douglas (2003) says dirt is “matter out of place”. Below is a brief explanation of what dirt as “matter out of place” symbolizes and its significance in relation to my research participants and what they experience working in the street.

“If dirt is a matter of cultural bias the question is who cleans up becomes an important

indication of social organization... “Matter out of place” isn’t dirt-its succinct description of whole life. Ability to cause dirt to someone else’s property denotes status. Hierarchy: cleaning denotes status the cleaners are seen as socially lower than the cleaned.”<sup>3</sup>

Dirt is being analysed as an indicator of hierarchy within a society by Douglas (2003). This analysis of dirt brings out the idea that where my participants work is socially inferior to spaces such as buildings. The street may not be the hairdressers’ property but their stands are. And having someone urinate in that space inconveniences those working there and also reveals how that person is thought about. In some ways, polluting that space is a means of establishing power over those in the street. Caroline, one participant, spoke about lack of respect being a main issue for her and other hairdressers, and this is revealed. This clearly revealed in their proximity to “dirty spaces”, and the dirt that others unthinkingly surround them with.



### **Migrant women and their redefinition of social belonging**

Highlighting the impact of xenophobia in relation to migrants and their future is important. Xenophobia, apart from immigration status poses as one of the greatest threats to the lives of migrants. Therefore to highlight the impact of this threat cannot be done in isolation of what some migrants view in terms of their future prospects, in a country where there seems to be uncertainty of possible outbreaks of violent attacks which could possibly result in their death.

The extremity of xenophobic violence in South Africa is sometimes incomprehensible.

Waves of xenophobia in South Africa (2008 and 2015) were brutal, horrifying and have

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<sup>3</sup> The analysis of Mary Douglas book that briefly outlines what was in the book and how it transcends to everyday society. *Dirt is matter out of place? Four cultures; Culture, Theory and Society.*

raised numerous public debates and questions. One of these questions concerns what xenophobia really is, not only where migrants are the targets but where it's black migrants. From mere observation one can see that the women operate within their immediate circles, but with further investigation one realises that the effects of xenophobia are shaping to what extent these women can exercise any freedom. There is a general understanding on “rules of the streets”. No one wants to be seen talking to the police, no one wants to interact with certain groups accused of selling drugs, no one is rude to the taxi drivers because of their reputation of violence. It is all these spoken codes of conduct, yet often also unspoken rules that govern the space they operate in.

It is noteworthy that the face of the xenophobia victim is often that of a man, the media and the public seem to notice men as the victims and side-lines women.<sup>4</sup> As mentioned in earlier chapters there is very little gendered analysis of xenophobia. Yet the numerous codes that women observe around interaction, mobility and public visibility are strongly gendered, and reveal the ways in which they are responding – as migrant women – to xenophobia.

However, these young women are not simply being victimized by xenophobia. They have also found ways to exist and even thrive in the society they are in. They have found new senses of their personal dignity, citizenship and rights to “belong” in South Africa. They have and are using their future prospects as a means to survive. They all seem to have an end goal in mind and that has helped them to survive and endure working as hairdressers on the street

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[www.fourcultures.com/2012/01/10/dirt-is-matter-out-of-place](http://www.fourcultures.com/2012/01/10/dirt-is-matter-out-of-place)

<sup>4</sup> <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/04/20/africa/south-africa-xenophobia-killing-photos/> accessed May 2015.

<http://www.newvision.co.ug/news/667076-in-pictures-xenophobic-violence-in-south-africa.html> these two are news sites from CNN and New Vision displaying the very few of thousands of images and stories that show Foreigners (men) being attacked. The attackers are also mainly men hence the discussion around masculinities and xenophobia.

because it is temporary even if they constantly faced with possible xenophobic attacks.

Evidence of the above was revealed when I asked the women about their hopes and dreams. They all spoke of what their lives should be and would be. The interviewee's most common response was they all want better jobs. Be it to own a business or getting a formal job. Some participants expressed the desire to further their education.

When asked what else they would want to do this is what they said;

“I want to have a beauty and hair place. There I can be my own boss, here I am but I need to make money. But with my own place I can be relaxed and do what I like also by then who knows I will have a car and no need to be scared to come to work early no more loud men shouting, people doing what they want because we are in the streets.” (Chipso)

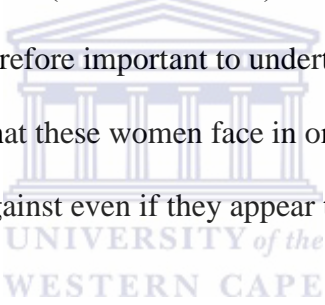
“I want to have my own business. And have a proper salon where client come and get hair done nicely. Not out here because I am not from here I will never have plenty. I will always be here because they don't like us here. No place for us for business. But I want to stay here but it's tough. It's always that ID they want but me I have asylum paper. But I don't know.” \*silence\* (Susan)

“I want to go to college even the university. Get degree better job and stay on my own so my parents can be happy and proud.” (Caroline)

“Yes I wana have business. I want to have clothes shop and sell and live better. If it will be here I don't know but I will look so I can see. I really want my business. Because I won't have to go look for job and be treated bad because I not from here you see. So ya my business.” (Sarah)

“Yes work in an office \*laughs\* but *izvezvi* (for now) I need to get somewhere and then I will see what I will do with my life. For now *zvandiri ndizvozvo* (what I am is what the reality of my life is right now)” (Rudo)

The responses above highlight the strength and courage within these women’s hopes and dreams. They obviously face some discrimination based on their work, yet they have a strong belief in their ability to work in more independent and dignified ways. According to Mallender et.al “One of the difficulties in assessing discrimination risk for female migrants is a result of the lack of research on female migrants in the context of employment. Research on female migrants has focused on other (more traditional) issues such as family planning” (Mallender et.al.,2014:43) it is therefore important to undertake careful research on the specific forms of discrimination that these women face in order to ascertain the subtle ways in which they are discriminated against even if they appear to be self-employed or independent..

The logo of the University of the Western Cape is centered in the background of the text. It features a classical building facade with a pediment and columns, with the text 'UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE' below it.

The women in my research hinted at the impact of being a foreigner on their development and growth as business people. They speak of how there is no place for them to conduct successful businesses, with Susan stating she is not from South Africa and will therefore never develop, or earn more than what she is getting. Yet it was inspiring to hear women talk about how they desire to develop their lives. It shows that at some point they have constructive thoughts on how to advance their lives and how they would do that.

These young women’s experiences are not representative of every migrant woman but through their stories of their lived experiences they have provided window lenses for one to see into the life of a modern-day migrant woman. From a distance, watching these women

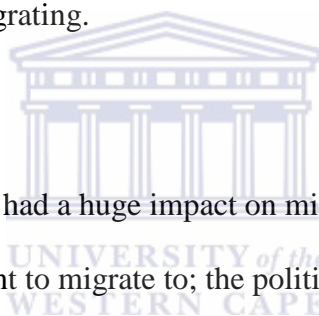
work, socialise and live their lives, I realised that the definition of migrant is so distorted by stereotypes and negativity that one misses firstly how complex their lives are, and secondly how strong, independent, resourceful and wise they often become because of their experiences. The story of the modern migrant woman is not a pity story of a woman crossing the border, exposed to sexual violence, abuse and oppression but a story of young educated, adventurous and hopeful women who are driven to make it in the world. The lives of these women should be seen as instructive to feminist research and a means of counteracting the negatively portrayed process of migration.



## **Conclusion**

### **Reflections on modern migrant women**

The feminisation of migration has certainly seen changes in the documentation and analysis of women's migration. However, the trends of migration have been changing over the years, and it is significant that further careful research should respond fully to these changes. Many changes have involved the shift from married women trying to join spouses to young, single women migrating for independent reasons such as looking for work, to find love, for experience and the adventure of being in a different place. Furthermore, the modern-day migrant woman has a complex story to tell and that story is not all doom and gloom: it is a story that is slowly re-defining migration and the explanations of why women of younger generations and all classes are migrating.



Technology and globalisation has had a huge impact on migration. These have made people more aware of the places they want to migrate to; the political, social and economic situations of the host country. Having such information beforehand has seen many young people migrating faster and easily. Most people through technology using social media and the internet have managed to establish social networks which have proven to be an asset to most migrants.

One of the aims of this research was to explore the experiences of women working as hairdressers on the street and how they explore, negotiate their body politics and also in relation to others. The data gathered showed that working on the street has adverse effects on the body and health, but at the same time the politics of being immigrant are constantly negotiated in relation to how others perceive the migrant body and how the migrant woman



sees herself. It has been argued that this negotiation of body politics works between social marginality and survival and agency. Through being self-conscious of how visible one is in society and what networking makes one visible, my research participants challenge being defined as “invisible” in order to protect their identities and their well-being.

The lives of migrants are not necessarily sad stories about violence, struggles with bureaucracy and endless struggle. They are also about the lives of people who actively make choices to move and embrace their new space, occupy that space in positive aspects. My participants shared their life experiences with me and I chose to use those experiences to show that there is life beyond the popularised state of migrants in South Africa. I managed to get information that highlighted how clever these women are in negotiating their new space in order to survive. Which highlighted issues such as communities developing that show sisterhood in how the women bond and form relationships. These social networks work a line of sustainability of existing in city that it not home or where one has no family therefore relying on the external community for support. Some of the experiences are not positive especially in relation to those they call clients. Other than that while existing in the social margins these women also have hopes and dreams of living better lives and owning their businesses which is an aspect that at times is overlooked.

It is essential that when looking at body politics one looks at the notion of belonging and becoming. This helps go a step further into understanding how migrants experience the country after they have settled. It also goes further in providing information on how others view the migrant body and also to look at issues around agency, survival and marginalisation.

### **Strengthening future research, policy and practice on migrant women**

Becoming a foreigner in one country means you become foreign to the country one migrated from Waldinger & Soehl (2010), a notion that seems to be of influence when looking at the

future of most immigrants and requires further exploration. The theoretical cases for working migrant women needs to be revisited in order to fully understand the experiences of migrant women after they have entered the host country. In my research findings I did comment on the need to look into “staying factors” which are the reasons why migrants decide to stay in a country after the push and pull factors have been in effect.

The scale of this research and debates around it is therefore extensive and diverse. Even when it is looked at the micro level, migration studies forms the interdisciplinary field that needs to take many theoretical frameworks and disciplinary lenses into account. Therefore to generate effective policy strategies and development targets with regards to migrant women and body politics, there is need for more women centred research at the micro level celebrating the lives of migrant women, instead of reproducing stereotypes. This will help with further assessment of local dimensions on the subject matter. Therefore if research aims to explore some of the following as future research strategies this can then help facilitate reaching certain goals: looking into why the migrant women choose to stay in their host country; what are their hopes and dreams, do these depend on staying in the host country or returning home; the effects of mothering children at workplaces especially in the informal sectors like the hair care industry, farming, domestic work, street vending and various market places.

The lack of a gendered analysis on xenophobia has resulted in an unspoken bias towards portraying men as the main victims of xenophobia and women seems to be left with their stories not fully explored. Research on this area is greatly needed to cover this gap and have experiences of both men and women equally documented. Xenophobia has had devastating effects on migrants. Migrants vividly and silently live in fear, they have re-shaped their lives

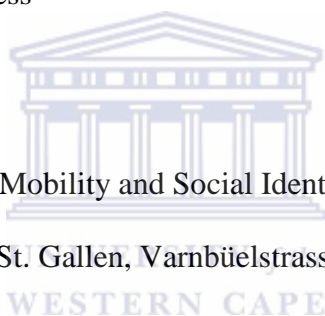
in the way they socialise with locals and to what extent they can do so. Social inclusion and exclusion poses a great challenge for migrants especially post-xenophobia attacks.



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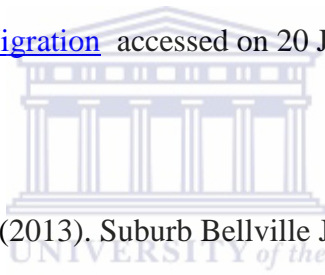
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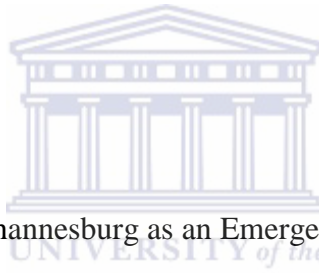
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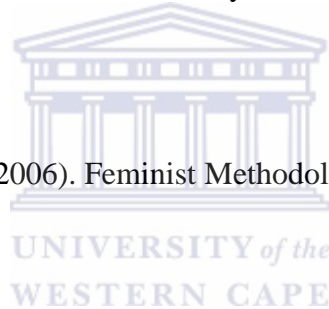
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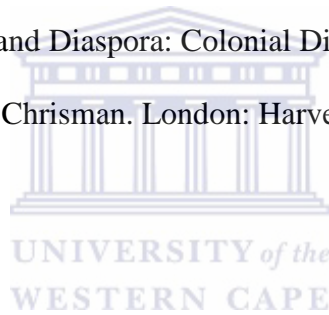
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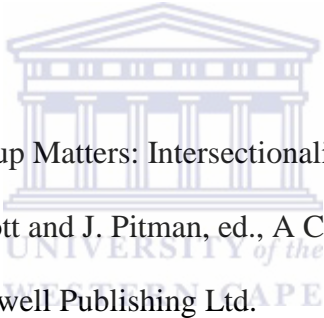
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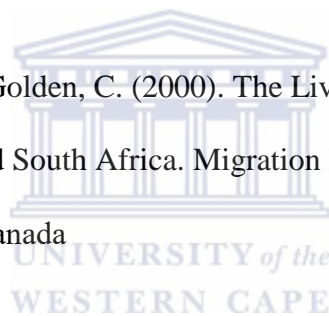
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## **Appendix**

### **Guide for In-depth Interview with participants**

1. Which country are you from?
2. When did you come to South Africa?
3. Why did you choose to migrate to South Africa?
4. Did you know someone in South Africa before you came here?
5. What did your family say about moving? And did you ever think of going back to your home country?
6. Tell me how you came about being a hairdresser.
7. Tell me what has been your experience working as a hairdresser on the street salon?
8. How do you keep your relationship with your clients and fellow hairdressers?
9. How do the other people who do business around here treat you?
10. How do the clients treat you?
11. Are there a lot of foreigners around here?
12. Is this your only work?
13. When you tired or sick what happens?
14. Who cleans up around here?
15. Is the money you make enough for you to live?
16. What are your future goals and dreams?