



**LIVING WITH XENOPHOBIA: UNDERSTANDING THE LIVED
EXPERIENCES OF BURUNDIAN AND RWANDESE REFUGEES
IN DURBAN (SOUTH AFRICA)**

by

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DECLARATION

I, C MUJAWAMARIYA....., declare that:

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Signed:.....

D HÖLSCHER (Supervisor)

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Almighty God who has done so many mysterious things in my life, especially my academic achievement. I also dedicate it to my husband Andre Kanamugire and to my children, Dr Jean Baptiste Twayigira, John Lionel Habimana and Sarah Umuhire.

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Firstly, I would like to thank God Almighty for giving me the opportunity to see a need to upgrade myself and be determined to do so against all odds.

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To my partner Andre Kanamugire, thanks always for your never ending supply of patience, encouragement and understanding.

To my children Jean Baptiste, John Lionel and Sarah who understood me when I could not be with them. They encouraged me and believed in me.

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the study described in this report was to better understand the lived experiences of refugees from Burundi and Rwanda living in the inner city of Durban and facing xenophobia. This study was motivated by available research evidence that xenophobia is a widespread phenomenon, together with the researcher's own experience of living as a refugee in South Africa. The investigation was guided by 'structural social work theory' and used a qualitative descriptive approach. The sample of the study, purposively selected using snowball sampling technique, consisted of ten adult refugees from Burundi and Rwanda who had been granted refugee status in South Africa. As a data collection tool, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants. To ensure trustworthiness, criteria of credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability were taken in account.

The study revealed that all the participants have fled their respective countries due to ethnic conflicts and on-going civil wars. Traumatized by the experience that had led to their flight, all ten participants were found to have been re-traumatized further along the flight, and symptoms of post-traumatic stress syndrome were common. It was possible to demonstrate that this background experience undermined participants' ability to cope with xenophobia. Xenophobia was found to feature in the form of both interpersonal and structural violence, the latter consisting of both social and economic marginalisation and exclusion. According to the research participants, the prevailing xenophobia in South Africa can be attributed to a number of interconnected factors including: the impact of South Africa's apartheid history on attitudes of South Africans towards black foreigners, coupled with a general lack of knowledge about who are refugees; high levels of violence coupled with an apparent social acceptability of crime; as well as the negative statements of the media about foreigners in general and refugees in particular. Against this background, participants indicated a range of coping strategies, including the following: escape from identity; psychological and social withdrawal; living in overcrowded inner city areas to cut costs of living and minimise risks of exposure to xenophobic violence; embracing self and informal employment.

Based on the study findings, this research report concludes with the proposition of a number of recommendations towards curbing xenophobia in South Africa and enabling refugees to overcome past traumatic experiences, integrate and become active contributors to South Africa's economy, in line with the qualifications that they may have attained prior to flight. To this end, contributions are required of everyone concerned with the refugees' integration including the South African government, the media, the social work profession, the refugees themselves, as well as the communities amongst which they live. Much more research needs to be done to increase social workers' understanding of the needs of refugees and of xenophobia, and to guide appropriate professional responses.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANC	African National Congress
ATM	Automated Teller Machine
AU	African Unity
BBTG	Broad-Based Transitional Government
CDE	Centre for Development and Enterprise
CORMSA	Consortium for Refugees and Migration in South Africa
CRAI	Citizenship Rights in Africa Initiative
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DHA	Department of Home Affairs
FIDH	International Federation of Human Rights
GCRO	Gauteng City Region Observatory
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HRW	Human Right Watch
ICG	International Crisis Group
ID	Identity Document
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IOM	International organization for Migration
IRRI	International Refugee Rights Initiative
NCRA	National Consortium for Refugees' Affairs
NGO	Non-Government Organization
OAU	Organization of African Unity
ODIHR	Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RDC	Republic Democratic of Congo
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Property
RPF	Rwandese Patriotic Front
SAMP	South African Migration Project
SAPS	South African Police Services

TV	Television
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UN	United Nations
UNAMIR	United Nations Mission for Rwanda
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNODOC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USA	United States of America

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since the transition of South Africa from apartheid to democracy in 1994, a considerable number of refugees from around the world have fled their countries of origin due to ongoing ethnic conflicts and wars and entered the country in search of personal safety and security. However, they encountered challenges in the process of their integration due to prevailing socio-economic conditions and xenophobia. The present research study was initiated to examine how xenophobia manifests itself in the experiences of refugees and what its consequences are on their lives, focusing on Rwandese and Burundian nationals living in the inner city area of Durban, South Africa. The first chapter recaps the background and outline of the research problem; draws together the objectives, the key questions to be asked, the broader issues to be investigated as well as the underlying assumptions; elucidates the theoretical framework and the potential value of the study; and provides an overview of the subsequent chapters.

1.1. Background and rationale

The problem of refugees in Africa in general, and in African Great Lakes region in particular, has reached unmanageable proportions with civil wars being the major contributing factor (Olusola, 2008). Political, ethnic and regional divisions that generated violence and displacement have driven out of African countries a considerable number of refugees (Hovil, 2008). At the same time, after the fall of apartheid in 1994, the stability and relative prosperity of South Africa has attracted a large influx of refugees and immigrants, especially from other African countries (Chokuwenga, 2000; Livesey, 2006). In addition, South Africa has, since 1994, become a signatory to international agreements and conventions concerning refugees, “such as the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention, its 1967 Protocol and the 1969 OAU Convention regarding specific aspects of refugees in Africa” (Republic of South Africa, 1998, 2002; UNHCR, 2009).

According to the United Nations 1951 Convention (UNHCR, 1951) and the Republic of South Africa (1998), “a refugee is a person recognized as being outside the country of his (her) nationality following the fear of persecution by reason of his (her) race, religion, nationality, or political opinion and is unable, or because of such fear is unwilling, to avail himself of the protection of the government of his (her) nationality” UNHCR (1969) through “the OAU Convention on Refugee Problems in Africa defines refugees to include persons fleeing their country of origin due to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination, or events seriously disturbing public order in either a part or the whole of the country of origin or nationality”. South Africa formally acknowledged the plight of refugees when the Refugee Act No 130 of 1998 and the 2002 Immigration Act came into force proclaiming the country’s commitment to refugee protection (Singh, 2005). As a direct consequence of the above developments, the UNHCR (2012) estimated that there were about 58,000 people with refugee status in South Africa by December 2010 and a backlog of 171,700 cases of asylum seekers that still has to be processed.

Accommodating refugees is a very recent addition to democratic South Africa’s global, regional and local responsibilities. Thus, as indicated by Grootenhuis (2007), “it is not surprising that most of the social work literature concerning refugees, available to practitioners in the field of services to refugees and asylum seekers in South Africa, is based on the experiences of refugees in countries including Europe, North America, Australia or New Zealand, although these countries host a minority of the world's refugees”. And yet, the majority of the world's refugees are found in Africa and Asia (Ager, 1999).

Western countries are seen as relatively safe and stable environments for refugees who are generally provided with some form of social and financial support, while the majority of refugees in Africa resettle in neighboring or other close-by poor countries where they receive very little or no care (Westin, 1999). In South Africa, refugees and asylum seekers who have obtained legal documentation for their status should have access to many public services (food, water, shelter, social security, health care services) as enshrined in section 27 (1), (2) and (3) of the South African Constitution

(Republic of South Africa, 1996). Although these rights are stipulated on paper, in practice they are not well implemented (Gotz, 2003). In addition, the often complicated asylum procedures, as well as the notion of 'temporary protection' are common to these refugees (Neuner *et al.*, 2004; Vale, 2002).

Among the problems encountered by refugees in South Africa, the most horrendous is xenophobia (Sharp, 2009). Xenophobia is not a new phenomenon in South Africa, and attacks against foreigners have been well documented over the years (Stiftung, 2008). It deeply permeates South Africa's social fabric and translates into pervasive difficulties faced by refugees when attempting to integrate themselves into mainstream socio-economic life (Nyar, 2008:5), and/or to access those services to which they are legally entitled.

The consequences of xenophobic attitudes have both immediate and long term effects on the lives of refugees (Landau, 2004). Jacobsen (2006) argued that pursuing livelihoods in this unsupportive, unsafe context leaves refugees reliant on their very meagre social capital for material and emotional support, advice and potential employment connections. As this is a very small network, most refugees are left vulnerable, unprotected and desperate (Grootenhuys, 2007). Consequently, refugees are amongst the most exposed to human rights violation in South Africa and have the least protection and support to defend their rights (FIDH, 2007). Most refugees live in poverty under the threat of violence, without or with extremely limited access, to basic services and opportunities for education and employment (McGrath *et al.*, 2007). All of the above factors add up to already existing stressing conditions and can cause refugees to re-experience war inflicted trauma and the sense of despair affiliated with it (Luebben, 2003). This in turn can cause a relapse of, or an increase in existing, posttraumatic stress symptoms (Gray and Elliot, 2001) in spite of the fact that its legislation meets international standards of refugee protection.

Outside social work-specific literature, there is a broad range of studies available on issues concerning xenophobia, as well as the plight of refugees in Durban, South Africa

and beyond. For example, Steinberg (2005) published a monograph on how Mozambican and Congolese refugees were received in South Africa. Amisi (2005) explored the livelihood strategies of Durban Congolese refugees. Gema (2001) reviewed the integration processes of Ethiopian refugees. Hakizimana (2001) looked at the adjustment of Burundian refugees in Durban. Palmay (2002) published a report on the role of local government in refugees' safety towards xenophobia in South African cities. McKnight (2008) published a study on xenophobia in the South African refugee system, focusing on the refugee law rather than their day to day living. Landau *et al.* (2004) published a paper on "xenophobia in South Africa and problems related to it". Haigh and Solomon (2008) explored the responses to xenophobia in South Africa. Grootenhuis (2007) published a study on psychotherapeutic work with African refugees in South Africa.

In sum, "research has established that South Africans are hostile toward foreigners living in South Africa" (Warner and Finchilescu, 2003:36). Although the study of Grootenhuis (2007) found that xenophobia posed a large risk to the psycho-social well-being of refugees in South Africa, none of these studies have specifically dealt with the psycho-social impact of xenophobia on refugees and their coping strategies to survive it. "The traditional lack of emphasis on the 'targets' perspective usually results in a bias toward understanding the perpetrators rather than the victims, or survivors, of prejudice" (Swim and Stangor, 1998). Yet, "research on the victims/survivors' experience of prejudice can provide the opportunity to understand how 'targets' manage aspects of their social world, rather than how they are only manipulated by the prejudice of others" (Swim *et al.*, 1998:38), and "how they are survivors, rather than victims of prejudice" (Warner and Finchilescu, 2003:36).

1.2. Research Problem

Against this background, it is of great interest for social work to better understand just how victims of violence become survivors by framing their environments in such ways as to enable them to manage, control and actively shape, rather than being passive recipients of their circumstances. This provides valuable insights into how best to respond to the

consequences of South Africa's post-1994 repositioning with global human rights principles, and the opening of its borders to refugees from other parts of Africa. This study therefore focuses on refugees facing xenophobia and its consequences: that is, their views and opinions about xenophobia, as well as their lived experiences and coping strategies in the face of those challenges caused by the pervasiveness of xenophobia in South Africa.

Taking into account the challenging experiences encountered by refugees in their respective home countries and during flight, as well as their plight of having to survive xenophobia here in South Africa, their host country, the research problem that I sought to explore was '*how xenophobia manifests itself in the experiences of refugees and what are its consequences on refugees' lives*'. Thus, I needed to explore the structural limitations that might be impeding the success of these strategies as much as I needed to further look at what the targets of xenophobia believed ought to change at structural levels of the South African society to make the tasks of survival and integration in their land of refuge easier.

1.3. Research aim, objectives, key questions and broader issues to be investigated

In view of the above, the aim of the study was to better understand how xenophobia manifests itself in the experiences of refugees and what its consequences are on their lives, focusing on Rwandese and Burundian nationals living in the inner city area of Durban, South Africa.

Based on its broad aim, the study's specific objectives were to:

- Consider specifically how their pre-migration and flight experiences have shaped participants' experience of xenophobia;
- Explore the perceptions, feelings and thoughts around experiences of xenophobia that research participants may have had in South Africa;
- Identify the economic, psycho-social and health effects of xenophobia on the lives of the participants;

- Identify the participants' coping strategies in relation to xenophobia, and finally;
- To deduce implications of the above for social work practice and social policy in South Africa.

Therefore, the key questions to be asked were as follows:

- How have the pre-flight and flight experiences shaped participants' experience of xenophobia?
- What are some of the participants' experiences, perceptions, feelings and thoughts in relation to xenophobia in South Africa?
- What are the economic, psychosocial and health impacts of such exposure to xenophobia in the lives of the participants?
- How do the participants cope with their experience of xenophobia in South Africa?
- What are the implications thereof for social work practice and social policy in South Africa?

In terms of the broader issues to be investigated, this study endeavored to explore the ways refugees experienced xenophobia in South Africa and their responses to it. This will be explained in more detail in the Theoretical Framework (1.4).

1.4. Underlying assumptions

The underlying assumptions in this study were the following:

- The pre-flight and flight experiences shaped the post flight experiences of the participants;
- The participants faced enormous daily problems of coping with xenophobic threats, and this coupled with the fact that xenophobia was found in all spheres of South African society, made adjusting and integrating to daily life difficult for the participants;

- Xenophobia had many negative effects on the psychological and emotional well-being of the participants as well as on their family members;
- Refugees vary in their ability to cope with xenophobia, depending on the context and their own personal strengths, resources, educational level, profession, origins and social backgrounds.

As will be shown in Chapter 4, the first two assumptions were confirmed by the studies finding. With regard to the third point, however, the study's findings revealed that factors such as personal strength, educational level, professional training and social background impacted the participants' respective coping abilities much less than initially assumed.

1.5. Theoretical framework: Structural Social Work Theory

Structural social work theory stands in the tradition of Critical Theory. As such, its objectives are never limited to only understanding a social phenomenon, but to simultaneously understand the impact of social practices and structures in achieving a more humanitarian, egalitarian and participatory society. Hence, it appears to be a highly appropriate framework to guide this study, given that xenophobia is regarded as one of the major social problems facing foreign nationals in general, and by refugees staying in South Africa in particular. It is impossible not to draw a link between xenophobia and the fabric of South African society. Hence, Wilkinson (2004:1) and Burns (2008:120) believed that "xenophobia is linked to social and economic inequalities leading to a big gap between the rich and the poor". Their claim was that "underprivileged South Africans have created a target to blame for their ongoing deprivation and poverty. Therefore, refugees became scapegoats of frustration".

According to Ife (2005) and Mullaly (2007), structural social work locates the causes of economic and psychosocial problems in oppressive and inequitable social structures. In other words, the system or the structure of society are ultimately to blame for social wrongs and the individual difficulties that social workers are generally called on to ameliorate. Social problems, therefore, are built into the structures of the society, and

focusing on individuals as the ‘cause’ of social problems is tantamount to blaming the victim (Mullaly, 2007:244). In other words, we cannot blame people for what may seem to be their maladaptive behavior or their failure to become self-reliant. Instead, these phenomena and other ostensibly individual inadequacies are an outgrowth and consequence of an unjust society.

Because “structural social work views social problems as arising from a specific societal context rather than the failings of individuals, its primary focus is to address what it identifies as structural forms of oppression” (Mullaly, 2007). This is to critically link “the personal and the political; the individual and the structural; or ‘private troubles’ and ‘public issues’” (Mullaly, 2007). The same author specified that “our social institutions function in such a way that they discriminate against people along lines of class, gender, race, sex orientation, disability and citizenship, or strangeness”.

Refugees from Burundi and Rwanda arrive in South Africa having lost everything in their countries of origin. Given that “the South African government does not provide any financial” (Warner and Finchilescu, 2003:38) or other form of integration support for refugees, they are forced to stay in impoverished areas where they share the same struggles with poor South Africans, and where they have to compete for scarce resources. This leads to many South Africans feeling threatened by what they may then frame as ‘undeserving refugees’ who should not have come to compete for ‘our scarce resources’ in the first place. Refugees, on the other hand, “feel excluded and unwanted in their day-to-day interactions with South Africans” (Warner and Finchilescu, 2003:37).

Mullaly (2007:262) indicated that “oppressed people are seldom oppressed along one dimension only, but tend to be multiply oppressed. Given the fact of multiple identities and the wide array of forms and sources of oppression, most oppressed people belong to more than one category of oppression”. Refugees from Burundi and Rwanda experience the same kind of disadvantages as do poor Black South Africans. However, because they are also identified as refugees (foreigners, outsiders or others) by South Africans, they

experience the additional disadvantage of xenophobic violence and discrimination. This limits the range of options that refugees can readily exercise.

The chosen theoretical framework for this study – guided by the perspectives of the oppressed group’s members themselves – helped to enhance our understanding of some of the dynamics of xenophobia and its consequences, in such a way as to show the potential therein for positive change.

1.6. Anticipated value of the study

As stated above in Section 1.5, Structural Social Work Theory has a strong practice, or transformative, orientation. Whether or not such transformative outcomes are achieved, will largely depend on the extent to which the study’s findings can be disseminated, and used to inform practice. In the context of this study, the ultimate goal is to contribute to the transformation of South Africa into one that is answerable to the public at large, rather than being primarily controlled by the relatively small group of people composed primarily of white and black economic and political élites. In order for this to be achieved, the disadvantaged South Africans should know that the real causes of social issues, such as unemployment, crime and poverty, cannot simply be ascribed to *Others*, but are made up of historical, social, economic, political and cultural conditions which together constitute contemporary South Africa, and which have emerged prior to, and continue to exist beyond the presence of foreigners in general, and refugees in particular. According to Ife (2005), “helping people to make the connection between the personal and the political is central to consciousness-raising. As awareness of social injustice and oppression grows, oppressed people are more able to identify the causes of their oppression and are less likely to blame themselves or to scapegoat *Others*”.

The aim of consciousness-raising is “to provide an awareness of the structures and strategies of social change, within which people can participate and take effective action” (Mullaly, 2007). Ife (2005) believes that “measures aimed at alleviating the dire poverty of the majority of the population through the empowerment of more disadvantaged

sections of the society, could help to bring about a more socially just society”. Since the purpose of this research is “to understand how the targets of xenophobia manage aspects of their social world” (Warner and Finchilescu, 2003:36), and to lend a voice to the voiceless; articulating, understanding and disseminating their views, experiences and interpretations that can contribute to changing the way they are perceived and treated by xenophobic perpetrators. Their contribution to South Africa’s development may thus be more visible and better understood. It might open opportunities for mainstream groupings in society to see them in a new perspective, thus presenting opportunities for change. The understanding of this marginalized group’s experience will contribute to societal transformation, towards a greater level of humanity, egalitarianism and participation in the country.

In sum, this study adds to the existing literature on refugees’ lives in South Africa, with a focus on xenophobia in that it makes a distinctive contribution to a better understanding of lived experiences, perceptions, thoughts, feelings and coping strategies of refugees in the face of xenophobia. Such better understanding of the multiple aspects of the refugees’ pre-immigration experiences, losses, trauma and up-rooting – as well as their lived experiences with xenophobia in South Africa, can in turn guide the implementation of psycho-social interventions in order for refugees to achieve both the environmental and emotional containment that they require.

In addition, the study’s findings can be used to support arguments towards improving refugees’ protection and providing assistance for their socio-economic integration. Last but not least, this research can be used to advocate for social action directed at various outcomes, which may range from overturning specific unjust practices such as xenophobia, to radical transformation of the entire South African society. Therefore, it is hoped that the study’s findings will be used to further the broader aims and objectives of Structural Social Work, namely:

- ***Humanism***: humanizing social structures and non-exploitative relationships among humans, where each individual has equal opportunities to develop his or her fullest human potential (Mullaly, 2007);
- ***Egalitarianism***: advancing social justice, social equality, and entitlement to equal civil, political, social, and economic rights, responsibilities, and treatment (Mullaly, 2007);
- ***Participation***: democracy providing individuals with opportunities to take part in making significant decisions about their everyday life (Mullaly, 2007).

1.7. Outline of the study

Chapter one provided an overview of the study. It discussed the background and outline of the research problem. Thereafter, it deliberated on the study's aim and objectives, and the key questions and broader issues to be investigated. It included the theoretical framework which focuses, on the one hand on the impact of structural injustice, violence and exclusion as forms of oppression, and on the other hand, to promote people's emancipation and ability to have an impact on the environment within which they live. Finally, it provided the potential value of the study.

Chapter two presented the literature review. Its focus was twofold: firstly, it provided a detailed description and discussion of the population concerned; that is, the social, economic, political, ethnic and cultural background of Rwandese and Burundian refugees, as well as the legal context of their stay in South Africa. It is members of this group, whose experiences, sense-making, identity and coping strategies, this study seeks to better understand. Secondly, it explicated the phenomenon of xenophobia in South Africa utilizing a combination of historical, economic, social, political and cultural perspectives, so as to consider its root causes, trends and consequences as related to the population group of black foreign nationals, including refugees.

The study's methodology was presented in chapter three and contained a description of the qualitative research paradigm, qualitative descriptive design, application of sampling, data collection and data analysis methods, as well as a discussion of how the study's trustworthiness and validity were assured, limitations dealt with and ethical standards adhered to.

Chapter four presented the discussion of findings of the study in relation to the main findings of the literature review and within the chosen conceptual framework.

Chapter five closed the research report with a summary, and an explanation of its contribution to a better understanding of lived experiences, perceptions, thoughts, feelings and coping strategies of refugees in the face of xenophobia. Recommendations towards further research, social policy, social work education and practice concluded this chapter.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

As noted in Chapter 1, Section 1.1 (Background and rationale), a broad range of studies exist on issues concerning xenophobia outside social work-specific literature. Therefore, the literature review consulted and compiled in this study was intended to present what has been done in the field of refugee experiences in South Africa and identify gaps within this wealth of literature, in order to support the formulation of aims and objectives of the study.

I begin by briefly introducing the history of interethnic conflict in Rwanda and Burundi which has resulted in the flight of refugees from these two countries. I continue with an overview of the pre-flight and flight experiences of refugees in general and Rwandese and Burundian refugees in particular, as well as how these experiences shaped their post-flight lives. Thereafter, I introduce the rights of refugees as enshrined in the Act No 130 of 1998 (Republic of South Africa, 1998). I continue with the overview of the current refugee-receiving system in South Africa, which is a peculiar combination of internationally-aligned refugee-protecting legislation and a laissez-faire approach to such concerns as the economic and social integration of refugees and the presence of trauma in their lives. Finally, I explore the continued existence of deep-rooted xenophobic sentiments amongst the majority of South Africans, as attributed to a number of factors including isolation, nationalism and racism, culture of violence, impunity, scapegoating, media sensationalism and institutional discrimination.

I conclude the literature review by finding a major gap in current refugee-related research to be a matter of perspective. There is a tendency to perceive refugees as victims rather than survivors of adversity (including challenges in the host countries). Consequently, existing research tends to focus on deficits and unmet needs on the part of the refugees, while highlighting the question of agency mostly in relation to the xenophobes and perpetrators of violence. From a social work perspective, this is a serious concern and

constitutes a gap which ought to be closed. Hence, the present study seeks to focus on the refugees' agency including their strengths, resilience, and potential for empowerment within the context of xenophobia.

The targets of xenophobia in this study are Burundian and Rwandese refugees in Durban. The question of knowing how Rwanda and Burundi produced refugees is to be considered before proceeding with their hardships and struggles with xenophobia in their host country, South Africa. Therefore, the following section explores the making of refugees through a brief history of interethnic conflicts and civil wars that ravaged both countries, sending a considerable number of their inhabitants into exile in many countries around the world, including South Africa.

2.1. The making of refugees: a brief history of Burundi and Rwanda and their peoples

This study specifically focuses on Durban-based refugees from the African countries of Rwanda and Burundi. There has always been a parallel between the conflict in both countries, and their problems seem at times identical (Kraynaya, 2007). "Burundi and Rwanda have been devastated by recurrent political turmoil for decades" (Ndura, 2006:1), with ethnic strife and civil wars being the major contributing factor (Olusola, 2008). The discord emanates from the ethnicized conception of democracy creating two rival ethnic groups; "which the Hutus define in terms of the rights of the majority, and the Tutsis in terms of minority protection" (Chretien, 2003) "with no consideration of their intimate interdependence upon which rests the survival of their nation and region" (Ndura, 2006:5). Therefore, there has been "a history of exclusion and subjugation that favored one ethnic group and excluded another" (Ndura, 2006), leading to a persistent intensification of interethnic conflict.

Interethnic violence that ravaged Rwanda and Burundi has its roots in a clientele system of domination developed and established during several hundred years by the Tutsi minority (14%) who exercised an overall control, while the majority Hutu (85%)

population was cast in the role of 'peasant-serf' (Fetherston, 1994). "Chronic waves of pre-emptive violence and revenge killings, have produced a culture of impunity, deeply ingrained interethnic grievances, and mutual fear and mistrust" (Brachet and Wolpe, 2005), causing the frequent displacement of entire populations with severe humanitarian consequences (Huggins *et al.*, 2005). According to Smith (2004), "the tragedy is that once the ethnic mask has been donned, it is very difficult to remove".

According to Teshome (2008), "when a revived sense of group identity coheres around resentment and grievance, especially in time of crisis and war, it can produce apparently irreconcilable hatred in protracted and often cyclical conflicts, and the Hutu/Tutsi rivalries of Burundi and Rwanda can be seen as a primary contemporary example of this". Although Burundi and Rwanda have experienced identical problems of interethnic conflicts between the two main ethnic groups of Hutus and Tutsis, the shifting of power differed in time and ethnic group holder, with the political power going into the hands of the Hutus (majority) in Burundi since 2005, while Rwanda is dominated by Tutsis (minority) since 1994. However, the similarities reside in the fact that the seizure of power by one ethnic group does not prioritize the democratic principles and practices and the social and political exclusion of the dominated group, thereby generating a persistent and recurring interethnic conflicts.

The interethnic conflicts that occurred in Rwanda and Burundi for decades caused the displacement of a high number of refugees outside their borders to neighboring countries, including Uganda, Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo; as well as to other African countries including Congo, Kenya, Zambia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Malawi and South Africa; and to the Western countries mostly in North America (USA and Canada) and in Europe (England, Holland, Switzerland, Belgium, Norway, Sweden and France). According to UNHCR (2010, 2011b), there are approximately 84,064 Burundians and 114,836 Rwandans who sought refuge in many countries around the world, among whom 2,400 Burundians and 1,400 Rwandans are in South Africa. The following two subsections present a brief history of interethnic conflicts in each of the

countries of Burundi and Rwanda, and its consequences on both of the two rival ethnic groups of Hutu majority and Tutsi minority.

2.1.1. A brief history of interethnic conflict in Burundi

“Burundi is a small and landlocked country in Central Africa with a surface area of 27,840 square kilometers” (Ndayizigiye, 2005). It has common borders with Rwanda in the North, Tanzania in the East and South-East, and the Democratic Republic of Congo in the West and South-West. Burundi is entirely inhabited by three ethnic groups: Twas, Hutus, and Tutsis, living in the area for centuries. Demographically, the Twas or Pygmies make up 1%, the Hutus or Bantus, 85%, and the Tutsis or Hamites, 14% of Burundi’s population (Gahama, 2002; Christensen, 2004). The analysis by Ndikumana (2005) referred to “four main historical eras in Burundi: the pre-colonial and colonial eras, the reign of the monolithic military republics (1966-1993), and the post-1993 period”.

“Burundi was colonized and absorbed by German East Africa in 1889, and was thereafter administered by the Belgians not technically as a Belgian colony, but as a Trust Territory (Trusteeship) of the League of Nations in 1918” (Chretien, 2000). The Belgians had promoted the ‘Hamitic Myth’, which held that the Tutsis were born to rule, while the Hutus were born to farm (Malkki, 1995; Waters, 2009). Thus, “they gave preference to the Tutsis in the colonial-run education and administrative systems, and progressively ousted traditional Hutu chiefs and ruled the country through the pool of better educated Tutsis” (Waters, 2009). More than sixty years of colonial rule had consistently resulted in the Tutsis being favored over the Hutus (Christensen, 2004:5). Therefore, “Hutus and Twas became strongly associated with poverty and notions of powerlessness” (Ndayizigiye, 2005). Numerically, the Hutus outnumber the Tutsis (85% against 14% or six to one). Consequently, “while the Hutus, who have historically been oppressed politically, socially, and even academically, want their fair share of the power, the Tutsis have a significant and permanent fear for their safety if the Hutus take power” (Moyo, 2004).

The Burundi interethnic “conflict escalation occurred during the colonial period. This was the consequence of the demand by the Hutus for more participation and representation in government” (Ndayizigiye, 2005:7). In the late 1950s, Hutus began to rebel against the Tutsis’ rule (Bowen, 1996; Ndikumana, 2005). However, the Hutus did not manage to take control of government power, and “every subsequent attempt by Hutu leaders to overthrow the Tutsi-led government in Burundi – in 1965, 1969 and 1972 – ended in dismal failure, each time resulting in another wave of brutal repression and purges of Hutus from political, military and economic structures, culminating in 1972 with the genocidal massacre of between 100,000 and 200,000 Hutus” (Curtis, 2009; Lemarchand, 2000). The 1972 Burundian massacres are considered to be the first in what was to become a string of genocides in the Great Lakes Region, driving several hundred thousand civilians into exile in different countries, including South Africa (LeMarchand, 1995; Christensen, 2004).

In 1988, interethnic conflicts “broke out in two communes in the north eastern part of Ntega and Marangara in the North of Burundi where bands of Hutu youth massacred the Tutsi community damaging and cutting off bridges and trees to obstruct roads. The army succeeded in cordoning off the troubled zones, preventing the extension of violence” (Gahama, 2002:8). In 1989, the then President Buyoya, due to increased mobilization and activities by armed and unarmed opposition to the Tutsi regime, as well as strong international pressure, finally led to the introduction of multi-partyism culminating in free legislative and presidential elections in 1993. The election was overwhelmingly won by a political party mainly associated with the Hutu ethnic group (Ndikumana, 2005).

“For the first time in history, a member of the Hutu ethnic group, President Ndadaye Melchior, became Burundi’s President. He incarnated the aspirations and hopes of the Hutu ethnic groups to assume the management of the state affairs from which they had been excluded for centuries” (Ndayizigiye, 2005). However, the government was short-lived as an attempted military coup by the still Tutsi-dominated army killed the president and several high-ranking Hutu politicians, “including the president and vice-president of the National Assembly and several ministers on the 21st of October 1993” (Christensen, 2004; Vorrath, 2009). The “inter-ethnic massacres that followed culminated in a civil

war, once again inciting the Tutsi controlled army to violence followed by a massive flight of 700,000 Hutu refugees fearing for their lives following the acts they had just committed and reprisals from the army” (Ndikumana, 2005).

Moyo (2004) indicated that the “use of violence and the exile of opponents has been an important strategy used to exclude opponent groups on ethnic and racial grounds”. The “perceived absence of justice and accountability for acts of violence, has given rise both to pre-emptive murders and revenge killings, strengthening the feeling amongst the Burundian ethnic majority (Hutus) that there was a plot to eliminate them and to protect the Tutsis” (Moyo, 2004). On one hand, “the Hutus have felt that they weren't getting a fair share of power. On another hand, the Tutsis who felt that their traditional power base was threatened by power sharing attempts, continued to dominate the army and politics, while discouraging active Hutu involvement in government” (Nomura *et al.*, 1996).

Since the assassination of the first democratically elected Hutu president, Melchior Ndadaye in October 1993, Hutu rebel movements based in neighboring countries continued to gain strength and engage in frequent violent clashes with the Tutsi government. Subsequently, comprehensive multiparty peace negotiations, known as the Arusha peace negotiations, began in June 1998 in Arusha, Tanzania (Curtis, 2009). These negotiations led to “the signature of the Arusha agreement on 28th August 2000 and the installation of a transitional government in November 2001” (Vorrath, 2009). In the transitional government, negotiations continued and led to democratic elections in March 2005. In August 2005, a Hutu President was sworn in (Brachet and Wolpe, 2005). Although the Tutsi political dominance came to an end in 2005 with the internationally mediated installation of a unity government, the fragile political situation has yet to inspire refugees from abroad to return home in very significant numbers. According to Curtis (2009), since the governance in Burundi remains highly militarized, the country’s power-sharing institutions and practices should not be taken as the central determinants for future violence or non-violence. The same author elaborated that even though violence in Burundi is not expressed ethnically today, this does not mean that it could not

become relevant for conflict in the future, especially since the mechanisms for violence are still largely in place.

2.1.2. A brief history of interethnic conflict in Rwanda

Rwanda is a small central African state with a surface area of 26,338 square kilometers and has common borders with Uganda in the north, the Democratic Republic of Congo in the west, Burundi in the south, and Tanzania in the east. The population of Rwanda “falls into three ethnic groups: the Hutus (85%), the Tutsis (14%) and the Twas (1%)” (Akodjenou, 1995). According to Amnesty International (2004:7), “Rwanda is one of the few culturally homogeneous states in Africa with all Rwandese sharing a common culture, language, social structure and, to a large extent, history”. In cases of mixed marriages, the children belong to their father's ethnic group. Chretien (2000) indicated that Rwanda had a two-fold colonial experience. The Germany colonial era (1885-1919) came first, followed by the Belgian Trusteeship from 1916 to 1962. The Belgians introduced the use of identity cards with Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa categories, marking the beginning of Rwanda’s population being labeled as consisting of three distinct ethnic groups (Ndura, 2006).

The racist assumptions underlying and justifying this practice were that the Hutus were of Bantu origin, the Tutsis of Hamitic origin and the Twa of pygmy origin (Gasana, 2005). These formalized and codified divisions were sharpened by the practice of the colonial power to use the Tutsi elite as officials; giving them preferential access to education and other colonial benefits such as government posts, together with the concomitant privileges and power over the two other ethnic groups (Bowen, 1996; Smith, 2004). The inevitable consciousness of injustice amongst the disadvantaged ethnic groups increased and widened further the gap between Hutus and Tutsis (Adejumobi, 2001). Later on, the Hutu elite used this historical constellation as an argument to pinpoint Tutsis as the primary source of their troubles (Waters, 2009).

The 1959 Social Revolution which preceded the 1962 independence from Belgium was a turning point in Rwanda's history and involved violence by the Hutus against the Tutsis, so far the dominating ethnic group (Huggins *et al.*, 2005). The 1960 general elections gave the Hutu majority the opportunity to control power and to eliminate members of the Tutsi minority from all government posts, creating a major refugee crisis (Gebre-Selassie, 2000). According to Nzongola-Ntalaja (2004:8), "the Hutu regime, originally established on the basis of the anti-Tutsi pogrom of 1959, had consistently discriminated against the minority Tutsi since independence in 1962". Adejumobi (2001:14) stated that "the 1959 social revolution, together with the Hutu access to power following 1962 general elections, generated intense intergroup conflicts in Rwanda where the Hutus unleashed on the Tutsis their pent-up aggression and psychological demeaning suffered under the colonial rule that favored the Tutsis". Thus, "between 1959 and 1962, no less than 130,000 Tutsis were driven into exile in neighboring countries of Tanzania, Uganda, Zaire (current DRC) and Burundi" (Adejumobi, 2001:14).

"By 1993, Rwandese refugees and Rwandese of undetermined status in a refugee-like situation were estimated at 600,000 in the four neighboring states" (Amnesty International, 2004:7). Most of them were Tutsi and were denied their full citizenship rights, while also being denied their rights of return to Rwanda; the reason being that there was no place for everyone. Therefore, as a survival strategy, a considerable number of Tutsis refugees enrolled in the Uganda's National Army where they held top positions (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2004). They took that opportunity to reorganize as a rebel movement called RPF (Rwandese Patriotic Front) which, backed by the Ugandan Government, invaded their home country Rwanda on the 1st of October 1990 (Gasana, 2005:10). The attack was the beginning of "a four-year civil war during which related violence killed thousands and displaced hundreds of thousands more, mainly from the majority ethnic Hutu group" (IRRI, 2010:12).

"Between 1990 and 1993, the civil war continued in Rwanda culminating in the Arusha Peace Agreement signed in Arusha (Tanzania) on August 4, 1993 ostensibly ending the war. Part of the agreement was that a multi-party system would be implemented in

Rwanda, and that a Broad-Based Transitional Government (BBTG) would be formed and would include the RPF” (Prunier, 1998). However, before the accord could be observed, the conflict was exacerbated by the death of the then Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana in a plane crash at the capital city’s airport while coming from power sharing negotiations in Arusha (Tanzania). The three months (from April 6, 1994 to July 19, 1994) following the April 6, 1994 plane shooting incident, saw the genocide of Tutsis and the mass killing of moderate Hutus (over one million people lost their lives), carried out by the extremist Hutus, after their government had blamed the Rwanda Patriotic Front (mainly composed and chaired by Tutsis) for shooting down the plane that carried the late Hutu President (Adelman, 2003). The loss of the top political and army leadership in the April 1994 plane crash caused chaos and mistrust in the army ranks and political administration of the Hutu government. The ensuing perpetration of genocide against the Tutsi civilians by the Hutu government and its allies was sanctioned through the imposition of the UN arms embargo in May 1994 (Amnesty International, 1995). Thus, after three months of intense fighting, the RPF army defeated the Hutus’ army, thereby ending their political power and the genocide.

It is estimated that the victory of the Tutsis over the Hutus after the Rwandan genocide drove two million Hutus into exile into neighboring countries (Tanzania, Burundi, Zaire and Uganda) “from the threat of revenge attacks from Tutsi survivors” (Olusola, 2008). The wheel of history has turned again in Rwanda where under the current politico-social and economic constellation, it is again a majority of Hutus “who feel excluded from power, excluded from the best jobs and schools, and afraid to speak out” (SAVERWANDA, 2010). The exodus of Hutu refugees (from Rwanda) included “only ten to fifteen percent of Hutu militia and a significant section of the political and military leadership of the defeated Hutu government’s army who participated actively in the genocide, with eighty to eighty-five percent being genuine refugees” (Passant, 2009:7). However, Rwanda’s new authorities (Tutsi dominated) have ascribed a mass-identity to the majority of civilian Rwandans who, by virtue of belonging to the same Hutu ‘ethnic’ group as the genocidaires, are seen as guilty of committing genocide (Hovil, 2008). IRRI (2010:4) indicated that “the genocide – and the legacy of guilt, heart-searching and

recriminations that have surrounded it – is being used by the Government of Rwanda as a smokescreen for political repression, particularly through the association of Hutu identity with the genocide”. These assumptions of virtual and mass guilt directed at the Hutu population by the current Tutsi dominated government, do not encourage refugees to return home any time soon.

It is always expected that people who are forced to flee their native countries to other countries do so for survival, and experience either individual or group problems (with some problems being life threatening) before and during their flight. In the following section, the experiences of refugees from Rwanda and Burundi in their respective countries, leading to and during their flight to exile, will be considered.

2.1.3. Pre-flight and flight experiences of refugees from Burundi and Rwanda

Ethnic conflicts in both Rwanda and Burundi have led to “an unprecedented refugee crisis in the Great Lakes region” (Olusola, 2008), sending refugees to countries around the world including South Africa. Verpoorten (2010:1) reported that “during the nineties, Rwanda experienced several forms of internal violence, including civil war, genocide and reprisal killings that triggered an unprecedented refugee crisis”. The “civil war broke out in Rwanda in October 1990 when the RPF, a rebel army consisting mostly of Tutsi exiles, launched an armed attack on Rwanda from Uganda” (Gasana, 2005). Since then, there have been two major phases of internal displacement. Before 6 April 1994, “around one million people from the northern part of the country were internally displaced (IDPs) as a result of the RPF invasion” (Deng, 1995:2). These IDPs, mainly Hutus, “regrouped into camps of hundreds of thousands surviving in miserable conditions throughout the ensuing war” (Erlichman, 2004). The second wave consisted of Hutu civilians from the southern part of the country who fled in front of the advancing RPF forces in April 1994 (Deng, 1995:2), in the wake of 1994 genocide of Tutsis (compare section 2.1.2) perpetrated by Hutu extremists to ensure their political control and dominance of Rwanda (Orth, 2001:1). The massive displacement of the Hutu population was caused by the widespread killings and fear of RPF reprisals (Kleine-Ahlbrandt, 1998:8-10). The massacre of the

population in areas occupied by the advancing RPF was accompanied by widespread sexual violence and victimisation of children (Weiss, 1996). Des Forges (1999:692-735) reported that “the killings by the RPF were more selective, mainly targeting educated or politically active Hutus”.

As the RPF defeated the then Hutu government and took control of Kigali in July 1994, almost 2,000,000 refugees fled Rwanda to neighboring countries (compare section 2.1.2). Simultaneously, “the French military launched ‘Operation Turquoise’, creating a safe zone beyond RPF control in south-west Rwanda to protect fleeing Hutus” (Haspeslagh, 2003:1). The IDPs were regrouped in camps and assisted by different NGOs. The humanitarian zone was controlled by the French army from June 23 until 22 August 1994 and then handed over to UNAMIR peacekeeping forces (Haspeslagh, 2003:2). From then, the assistance was gradually reduced to ‘persuade’ people to move out of the camps which the government wanted to close down (Deng, 1995:3). The internally displaced Hutus who were unable or unwilling to cross the border and who did not feel able to return home joined the IDPs camp of Kibeho (south) monitored by UN peacekeeping forces. Accommodating around 100,000 IDPs, Kibeho was the last IDPs operational camp. It was later suspected by the government to be a sanctuary for people who committed genocide and was tragically attacked and closed by the Rwandan army in April 1995. As a result, thousands of Hutus were forcibly returned in their native villages; 2,000 died and several thousand others managed to cross the border to Zaire (Kleine-Ahlbrandt, 1998:8-10) to join the 1994 refugees.

Almost all the refugees in the July 1994 influx and the subsequent movements were Hutus, fleeing from Rwanda in fear of reprisals from the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). Many of them had already been displaced in Rwanda before deciding to cross the border (Jaspars, 1994:5). Adelman (2003) reported that “there were about 1,250,000 refugees in Zaire (current Democratic Republic of Congo) in the spring of 1996 of which 1,100,000 refugees came from Rwanda. The other 150,000 were Burundian Hutus who had fled the civil conflict and the military repression of the Tutsi regime in that country”.

In the case of Burundi, there has been a considerable Burundian refugee population, almost entirely Hutu, in Burundi's neighboring countries including Zaire (current DRC) and Rwanda since the 1972 mass slaughter of Hutus, when 300,000 were reported to have fled (ICG, 1999). Some Burundian refugees fled to Rwanda following the October 1993 assassination of the newly elected first Hutu President by a group of Tutsi army officers, thus triggering off interethnic massacres that culminated in a civil war (Ndayizigiye, 2005:3). These refugees were forced to flee again during the mass exodus of Rwandan Hutus into the east of DRC [then Zaire] after the genocide. They lived with Rwandan refugees in camps along an 80 kilometer stretch of South Kivu, on the Burundian border as seen in Figure 2.1 (ICG, 1999:6).

The influx of nearly one million refugees into Zaire, after the Rwandan genocide in July 1994, created disastrous humanitarian conditions. Both Rwandan and Burundian refugees experienced what Silove (1994) and Gray and Elliot (2001) described as a "continuum of trauma that began with experiences of social upheaval, danger, deprivation and multiple losses in their home country, followed by a period as internal fugitives, before escaping to a country of first asylum, often without family members".

The response to this influx was highly problematic and malnutrition, morbidity and mortality rates rose substantially above normal levels. For example Leopara and Goodin (2011:263) reported that "in July 1994, a cholera epidemic hit the 850,000 refugees of Goma camp/Northern Kivu, causing more than 80,000 deaths in ten days and ravaging the camp for months". These humanitarian disasters did not spare the South-Eastern Kivu camps although they did not attain the same scale.

REFUGEE CAMPS IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION (As of 1995)

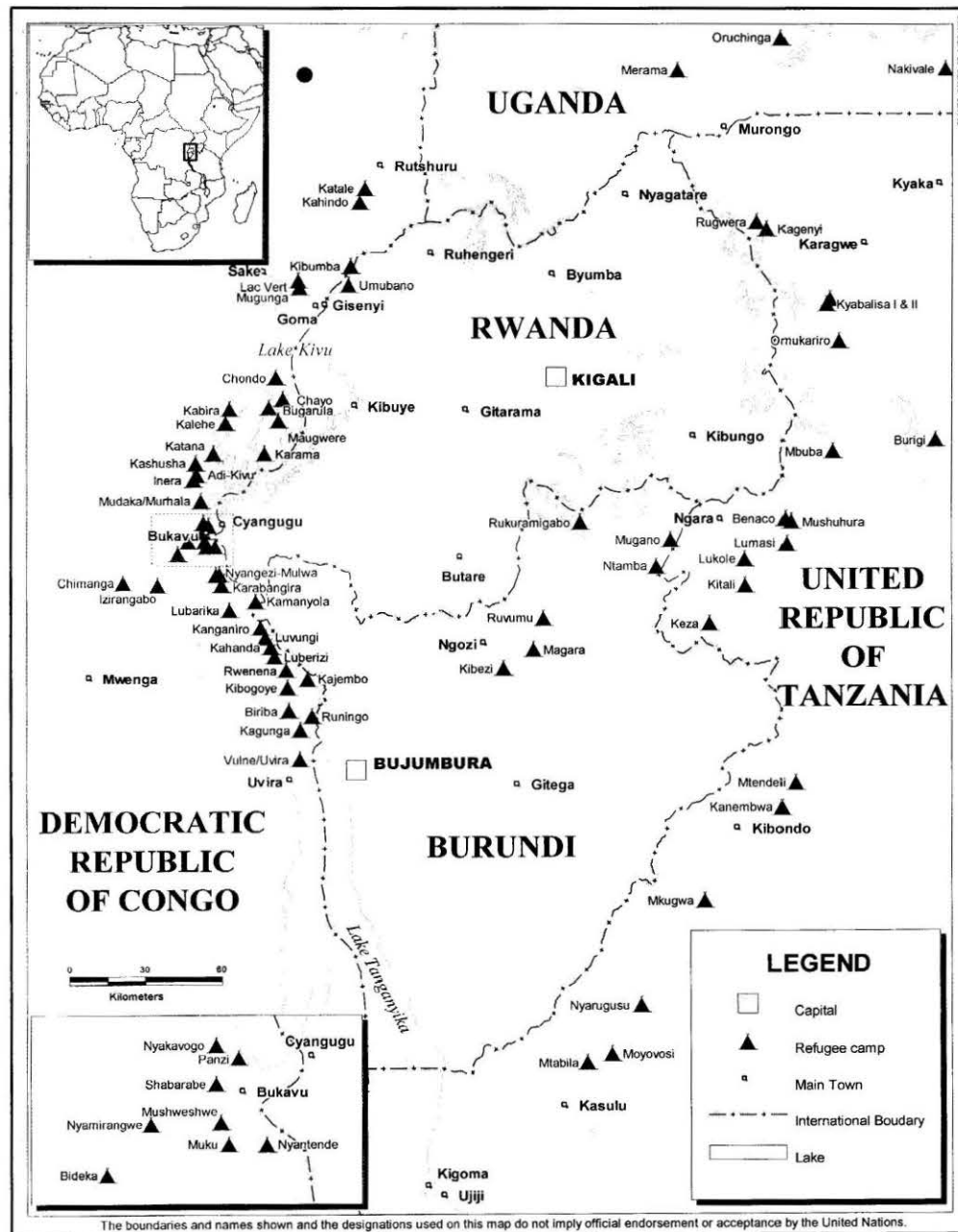


Figure 2.1. Refugee camps in Eastern Zaire as in 1995 (Source: Bird, 2003:23).

In general, one week after their implementation, all refugee camps together witnessed 600 deaths a day and after two weeks, 3000 deaths a day (Toole, 1994:8). The refugee emergency phase that started in mid July 1994 was contained by the end of September (Boutroue, 1996:1; Milner, 2000:4). Hamilton (1999:1) reported that “more refugees followed in the coming months, most settling only a few miles from the Rwandan border in massive camps, the likes of which the international humanitarian community had never seen before”. Although the living conditions in camps were unbearable, most refugees resisted repatriation out of fear of reprisals inside Rwanda (Eriksson, 1996:8).

It was reported by Pottier (2002:143) that “the international community, so glaringly absent during the genocide, regarded Rwandan refugees in eastern Zaire through the deceptive lens of moral sympathy with the RPF-led regime in Kigali”. Accordingly, Rwandan refugees were seen as a collectively guilty mass. The perception was reinforced when refugees who remained in the camps after many of the aid agencies pulled out, were barely sustained on inferior quality food. Pottier (2002:143) describes the provision of inappropriate and inferior food by the World Food Programme in the Goma refugee camps as “the clearest sign that they [the Rwandan refugees] were treated as a mass of undifferentiated, unworthy people”.

2.1.3.1. Life in refugee camps

The refugee camps in Zaire [current DRC] were set up in July 1994 and accommodated Hutu civilians who fled revenge attacks by Tutsi inside Rwanda (compare section 2.1.2), “but also contained large numbers of former *genocidaires* who had been actively involved in the Rwandan genocide” as indicated by Passant (2009:4). Initially, the refugee camps were highly disorganized. “The first months were marred by chaos and violence and in July 1994 alone; a virulent cholera epidemic killed more than 80,000 refugees” (Leopara and Goodin, 2011:263). The security levels in camps were improved in early 1995 due to the deployment of a contingent of organized UN military personnel (Passant, 2009:9). Regarding life in refugee camps, Daren (2011) noted that “although the physical conditions of camps varied widely, the effects tended to be uniform. The

most important characteristics of the camps in Zaire were segregation from the host population, the need to share facilities, a lack of privacy plus overcrowding with a limited and restricted area within which the whole compass of daily life had to be conducted. This gave the refugees a sense of dependency, and the clear signal that they had a special and limited status and were being controlled”.

Bird (2003:18) stated that “the situation for the Rwandan refugees in eastern DRC was harsh. There were substantial numbers living in the forests and in the internally displaced persons’ camps and they were not considered as refugees by many international agencies and were thus given little support. Therefore, children of these people had limited or no access to education. Even in the camps, education was banned”. The same author characterized certain camps in Tanzania as virtual prison camps, for example the Ngara and Kigoma transit centers. Although the Rwandan Hutu refugees were assimilated to the authors of genocide as belonging to the same ethnic group, Chaulia (2010:10) indicated that “there were also innocent people in the camps where more than half were women and children”. Life in eastern Zaire refugee camps “was one of restricted mobility, enforced idleness and dependency – a human warehouse where lives are on indefinite hold, not unlike the punishment of a prison (Figure 2.2), though with the added injustice of never having committed a crime” as indicated by Lavall (2012:1).



Figure 2.2. View of one of Rwandan refugee camps in Eastern Zaire (DRC) in 1995
(Source:http://www.google.co.za/Rwandan_refugee_camp_in_east_Zaire.jpg)

It was reported by Adelman (2003:2) that “refugees, especially from Rwanda were subject to several Zairian army attempts to trigger their massive repatriation. In August 1995, while approximately 15,000 Rwandan refugees were pushed back across the border, 100,000 fled the camps and moved deeper into Zaire. The policy was suspended four days after having been instituted, when the UNHCR agreed to step up voluntary repatriation programs in the region”. In 1996, with the assumption that Rwandan refugees in Zaire posed an immediate threat to the security of their country of origin, and using the prevention of the recurrence of genocide as a justification, Rwanda invaded the DRC (then Zaire) and destroyed eastern Zaire refugee camps that hosted refugees from Rwanda and Burundi. Perera (2011:2) and Whitaker (2002:7) reported that “in just a few days, the violence forced roughly 600,000 refugees back into Rwanda and an unknown number to Burundi, with another 300,000 Burundian and Rwandan refugees heading west into the dense forests of central Zaire, where many were massacred by advancing Zairian rebels and Rwandan troops”. Several hundred thousands of refugees, who had escaped the forced repatriation and killings fled further away from their homeland and sought asylum in the eastern Congo’s impenetrable forests and jungles as well as in western Tanzania, especially in the town of Kigoma (Stein, 1997:2).

The repatriation of Rwandan refugees also occurred in Tanzania where the newly arriving refugees from Congo were caught again in new repatriation campaigns. Murison (2002:7) indicated that “on December 6, 1996 the government of Tanzania, along with UNHCR, issued a directive that all Rwandan refugees must leave Tanzania by 31 December 1996”. Whitaker (2003:3) reported that “the repatriation process forced the return of 475,000 refugees to Rwanda out of a total of 574,000 in December 1996, with the remaining Rwandans re-entering the camps claiming to be Burundians, or dispersed and integrated into the local community, with a few exiting Tanzania to neighboring countries of Kenya, Uganda, Mozambique and Zambia”, and some others to South Africa. Although refugees always included men, women and children, most literature indicated that refugee women and children were more vulnerable than men. In the following section, specific pre-flight and flight experiences of women and child refugees were explored.

2.1.3.2. Experiences of refugee women and children

The impact of a life in exile for women and children is often given little attention by assistance providers (El-Bushra and Fish, 1997). Hamilton (1999:8) reported that “in addition to problems faced by all refugees, women and girls face a variety of gender specific challenges during their refugee experience”. Hamilton (1999:8) added that “one of their most formidable challenges is the threat to their personal security, particularly in the form of sexual violence”. Mohamed (1999:1) indicated that “the vulnerability of refugee women is a product of a number of factors. Some of these include language and cultural barriers, racism, and structural and institutional discrimination”.

Hamilton (1999:8) reported that “rape and sexual violence are used to persecute women for their own or relatives’ political activity. Rape and sexual violence are also increasingly recognized as weapons of war that lead to women's flight from their homes. During flight, women are often separated from their husbands or brothers, further increasing their vulnerability to armed attack and sexual violence”. Rogge (1994) indicated that “the perpetrators of this abuse may be pirates, border guards, members of the armed forces or rebel troops, male refugees, and others with whom they come in contact. Rogge (1994) added that “sexual and other forms of violence leave refugee women with deep emotional scars and psychological damage”.

Besides sexual violence, women refugees face other security problems related to their gender. In Zaire (current DRC) refugee camps, women and children were responsible for collecting water and firewood. As water and wood were needed to prepare food and were not distributed by camp authorities, they had to find them outside the camps. Once outside the camp, women were assaulted either by unruly soldiers or vagrant local men. Hamilton (1999:1) added that “women were sometimes victims of snake bites while looking for water and cooking wood”. Furthermore, Toole (1994:3) reported that “unaccompanied children as well as the households headed by women in the camps were found to have less access to relief items, such as food and shelter material, than the households headed by men”.

In a few words, the life of Rwandan and Burundian refugees during their long run from their villages to a host country was a particularly hard one. As indicated by Taylor (2004), they all may have witnessed the killing of their relatives, friends, neighbors and/or acquaintances, or they may have only received the news of their death, days, weeks, months, or even years later. Their flight experiences included the escape rather than a planned departure; living in hiding and/or camps for internally displaced persons, as well as a long and hard journey to exile with limited access to health services or other services. They left behind all but a few of their worldly possessions. Their search for refuge took them long distances, often on foot. Flight itself was arduous due to the loss of family members or loss of contact with each other. They went through what El-Bushra and Fish (2004) called the trauma of being uprooted from one's home and of becoming separated from family members, adding to the terrifying experiences that many underwent before and during their flight. The lack of skills in languages used by host countries and the unfamiliarity with new surroundings, coupled with fear and concern about events back home created added burdens. All these experiences influenced the refugees' life in the host country.

2.1.4. The shaping of refugees' post-flight experiences by their pre-flight and flight experiences

Carta *et al.* (2005) reported that "refugees experience losses that affect their social and mental health by contributing to marginalization, disorientation, and depression". Refugees' losses may include separation from their respective families and communities, loss of a sense of belonging and identity, traditions and values; loss of home, job, position in society, as well as support networks. Carta *et al.* (2005) added that "already under strain, facing additional stressors in the host country may result in mental illness". Bhugra (2003) found that "the prevalence of depression in various migrant groups depended on a number of factors and concluded that a degree of biological or psychological vulnerability, when combined with social vulnerability after migration, can lead to depression". Bhugra (2003) added that "refugees, whose lives were threatened or

who witnessed the death of family members or travel companions would be at a particularly high risk of developing mental illness”.

Acierno *et al.* (2000), Lesserman (2005) and Anda *et al.* (2006) reported that “there was considerable evidence from around the world that violent or abusive experiences are associated with mental health problems including depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), suicide, substance abuse and other anxiety disorders”. Indeed, Golding (1999) added that “there was a relationship between exposure to life-threatening situations and PTSD symptoms, with greater exposure associated with more severe symptoms”. According to Bhugra (2004), “it has been found that people forced to migrate, develop higher levels of mental health problems than those who migrate voluntarily”. Hopson (2009) argued that “many refugees come from countries that have experienced a lot of violence and therefore have a long history of exposure to trauma”.

The exposure to xenophobia in a host country, such as South Africa, is likely to cause considerable psychological problems to refugees susceptible to mental disorders. Refugees arriving in a new country face a number of stressful situations. These include unemployment, discrimination, isolation, lack of local language skills, difficulties with climate and even food (Gray and Elliot, 2001). Young (2000) and Ferguson *et al.* (2005:132) reported that “refugees were constantly confronted with their inability to access their host country’s resources because they are seen as “undeserving foreigners”.

Whilst economic migrants have the option of returning to the safety of their home countries when confronted with life threatening events such as the xenophobic attacks of May 2008, refugees generally have no choice other than to remain in the host country, without the option of returning to their home countries, until the causes of their security concerns are addressed (CRAI, 2009). Haigh and Solomon (2008) indicated that “following the May 2008 xenophobic attacks, immigrants from Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia who had been living in the hot spots of Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban preferred to go back home”, while refugees from Rwanda and Burundi chose to go to safety camps for protection because they feared for their safety once back in their

respective home countries. Little is known about the psycho-social and mental health effects of the violence, and how they are related to the refugees' pre-flight and flight experiences, or about the coping strategies that members of the two latter groups have employed in the wake of the 2008 xenophobic violence.

2.2. The making of xenophobia: A selection of issues from South Africa's present and past

South Africa has had a particular historical relationship to the rest of Africa, shaped by its apartheid history. Prior to 1994, South Africa was well known for its migration control that restricted black people inside its borders. As an example, the famous 1991 Alien Control Act (Republic of South Africa, 1991) "primarily operated to exclude black migrants" as indicated by Handmaker and Parsley (2001:41). Livesay (2006:13) reported that "it is only after the collapse of apartheid in 1994 that a large number of refugees and immigrants, especially from other African countries ravaged by civil wars and violence entered South Africa in search of safety and better life". However, in stark contrast to the refugees and immigrants' hope of security, their lives were flawed by xenophobia from local communities. In the following section, the definition and right of refugees, the xenophobic elements in South African's refugee receiving regime as well as factors contributing to xenophobia are explored.

2.2.1. Definition, statutes and rights of refugees, and their application to Rwandese and Burundians abroad

Harris (2001:13) indicated that "refugees in South Africa form a relatively new category in terms of state policies and procedures. This category first emerged during the country's political transition in relation to returning exiles in the early 1990s. In 1993, as the political transition became a reality, the South African government reached an agreement with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) regarding the return of exiles to the country. Alongside procedures for returning exiles, the agreement also defined criteria for determining refugee status. In this way, the foundations for refugee

reception in South Africa were set. In 1995, South Africa ratified the 1969 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. In 1996, the 1951 United Nations (UN) Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the United Nations Protocol of 1967 were also acceded to (Human Rights Review, 1999). This international legislation underpins the current definition of a refugee in the 1998 Refugee Act, an act developed from recommendations in the 1997 Green Paper on International Migration to deal specifically with refugees in South Africa.

Refugees are documented immigrants who are in South Africa not by choice but out of necessity as a consequence of the accumulated persecution and intimidation they have experienced (Fox, 2002; Papadopoulos, 2002). According to the Refugee UN Convention (UNHCR, 1951), and the 1998 Refugee Act (Republic of South Africa, 1998), the refugee status is granted to “a person owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his (her) former habitual residence, is unable to, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it” [Chapter 1, Article 1, Paragraph A(2)].

UNHCR (1969) indicated that the term ‘refugee’ “shall also apply to every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination, or events seriously disturbing public order in either a part or the whole of the country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his/her place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his/her country of origin or nationality”. People fleeing from adverse political conditions and recognized as legitimate refugees have institutionalized rights in a well-established international refugee framework that protects their rights and obliges individual countries to assist them (Redelinghuys, 2000).

The Refugees Act No 130 of 1998 by Republic of South Africa (1998:18-20) contains the general rights of refugees as follows. A refugee:

- 29 (1) Is entitled to a formal written recognition of refugee status in the prescribed form;
- 30 (2) Enjoys full legal protection, which includes the rights set out in chapter 2 of the Constitution and the right to remain in the Republic of South Africa in accordance with the provisions of this Act;
- 31 (3) Is entitled to apply for an immigration permit in terms of the Alien Control Act, 1991, after five years continuous residence in the Republic from the date on which he or she was granted asylum, if the Standing Committee certifies that he or she will remain a refugee indefinitely;
- 32 (4) Is entitled to an identity document referred to in section 30;
- 33 (5) Is entitled to a South African travel document on application as contemplated in section 31;
- 34 (6) Is entitled to seek employment;
- 35 7) Is entitled to the same basic health services and basic primary education that the inhabitants of the Republic receive from time to time” (Republic of South Africa, 1998:18-20).

South Africa (Republic of South Africa, 1998:18-20), through the new Refugee Act No 130 of 1998 which came into effect from April 2000, intended to fast track the asylum process. However, Human Rights Committee (2001) stated that “many refugees have waited for periods as long as six years for their application to be processed”. While there were about 58 000 people with refugee status (including 2400 Burundians and 1400 Rwandese: *ibid* 2.1) living in the country by the end of January 2011, the backlog was evaluated at 172 410 cases of refugees that still have to be processed (UNHCR, 2011a). Lawyers for Human Rights (1999) reported that “besides undermining basic human rights and refugee rights, such irregularities are held responsible for widespread public opinion that foreigners are pouring into South Africa”.

2.2.2. Xenophobic elements in South Africa’s refugee receiving regime

South Africa’s readmission into the regional and global economy after 1994 has been accompanied by a growth of immigration into the country (Landau, 2004; Duponchel,

2009). Therefore, South Africa shifted from a refugee producing country to one receiving refugees from across the African continent and beyond (NCRA, 2006). Harris (2002:1) reported that “regardless of the 1994 transition from authoritarian rule to democracy, prejudice and violence continue to mark contemporary South Africa”. The 2002 Immigration Act, roundly criticized by human rights groups at the time as “internal policing” (Crush, 2008), reflects the institutional discrimination through prejudice as well as within law enforcement and police practices (Harris, 2001). The Act encouraged citizens to report foreign nationals to the authorities if they suspect them of being in the country unofficially. For many critics, this seemed like a state license for social disintegration, suspicion and conflict. Such discriminatory attitudes and practices continue to manifest themselves in new forms of identity-based violence, the most disturbing of which has been xenophobia (Valji, 2003). The targets of xenophobia in South Africa include all documented and undocumented black Africans from African countries (Crush and Ramachandran, 2009:64).

Since 1994, South Africa has become a signatory to international agreements and conventions concerning refugees, such as the 1951 United Nations Convention and the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention (ratified or acceded to international human rights treaties that have a bearing on treatment of refugees (Republic of South Africa, 1998, 2002). With the signing into law of the New Refugee Act No 130 of 1998 and the New Immigration Act No 13 of 2002 (Republic of South Africa, 1998, 2002), the South African government has pledged to abide by the obligations stipulated therein and to carry out its humanitarian tasks of both protecting and assisting these refugees. Despite this, however, black African refugees from African countries have not escaped abuse from South African citizens (Mnyaka, 2003). Although there are provisions stating that “xenophobia must be prevented and countered both within government and civil society” in the 2002 Immigration Act (Republic of South Africa, 2002), policy experts in South Africa as reported by Hopson (2009) “argued that the framework of the Act is still incoherent and in many respects, unimplemented”.

The refugee context in South Africa is unique compared to the more stable and supported refugee context in most western countries such as Canada or Europe (Grootenhuis, 2007), and the warehousing of undocumented refugees in camps for lengthy periods in other African countries (Story, 2005). Though both capital and personal needs for refugees are covered in western countries including Australia and New Zealand (Taylor, 2004), specific services for refugees in South Africa are limited to the granting of permits and refugee status (CORMSA, 2007). Services such as material relief, assistance towards the economic integration of refugees, trauma counseling, as well as any other form of psycho-social assistance is provided to an extremely limited extent through a small number of NGOs, located within South Africa's main urban centers and functioning outside the South African government's welfare structures, while funded in the main by the UNHCR (Hölscher *et al.*, 2012). Thus, psycho-social mal-functioning, linked to the trauma of pre-flight, flight and post-flight experiences of refugees, remains by-and-large unaddressed.

Economic sustenance is, in the main, left to the refugees' self-initiative, from where originates the idea that "outsiders take jobs from South Africans" (Pineteh, 2005). Contrary to perceptions such as this one however, research has shown that refugees were more than twice as likely to be self-employed than South Africans, and those who start their own businesses actually created jobs by hiring others (Hopson, 2009). The question of how perceptions emerge in opposition to observable evidence leads us to the issue of xenophobia, which is explored in more detail below.

2.2.3. Nature and extent of xenophobia in South Africa

Vorster (2002) stated that "xenophobia is a growing social and human right issue in the contemporary world and its main manifestation is a collective fear and subsequent aggression by a community against foreign immigrants". McDonald and Jacobs (2005) define xenophobia "as specifically referring to a "deep dislike of foreigners". According to McDonald and Jacobs (2005:1), "xenophobia describes a discrete set of attitudes that manifest themselves in the behaviors of governments, the general public and the media".

Harris (2002:2) explained “xenophobia as “a term that cannot be separated from violence and physical abuse, since it is not only an attitude, but also an activity. It is not just a dislike of foreigners, but this dislike, extends to violent practices that may result in bodily harm and damage”.

Shindondola (2003:6) understood xenophobia as “a bitter outcome of the exertion of collective identity. This identity is characterized by the dominant ethnic, religious, economic, political and cultural demands”. Yakushko (2009:44) considers “xenophobia as a form of attitudinal, affective, and behavioral prejudice toward immigrants and those perceived as foreign”. Reynolds and Vine (1987:28) stated that “xenophobia is a psychological state of hostility or fear towards outsiders”. Crowther (1995:1385) emphasized that “xenophobia focuses on individuals who come from ‘other countries’ and toward whom native individuals have “an intense dislike or fear”. Ratele *et al.* (2008) characterizes “xenophobia as an intense dislike, hatred or fear of others based on the perception that they are outsiders or foreigners to the community, society or national identity”.

Delantry and Peter (2007) described “xenophobia as a new racism, differential racism, or cultural racism. Therefore, cultural instead of racial differences become the basis of a new form of social and economic exclusion”. Unlike racism and nationalism, Fekete (2001) defined “xenophobia as a spontaneous and natural biological reaction to strangers. Defined in these terms, xenophobia becomes a ubiquitous phenomenon which is difficult to challenge and confront”. While Crush (2001) considered “xenophobia as the hatred or fear of foreigners [immigrants and refugees]”, Valji (2003), Stiftung (2008) and IOM (2009) indicated that “xenophobia has been an ongoing reality in post-1994 South Africa, having steadily increased throughout the recent past”.

Xenophobic violence in South Africa can be traced to as early as a few months after the first democratic elections in April 1994 (Duponchel, 2009). Harris (2002) and Crush (2008a) contended that “history reminds us that the horrors of xenophobic and anti-outsider violence have been a long-standing and increasing feature in post-apartheid

South Africa”. Since then, “South Africa has become a highly xenophobic society, which does not naturally value the human rights of non-nationals” as identified by (Dodson and Oelofse, 2000). Even though a number of attacks against immigrants have previously been documented, the intensity of May 2008 violence was unprecedented (CRAI, 2009), and showed that xenophobia has become an undeniable social issue in the country (CDE, 2006:1).

CORMSA (2010) reported that “violence against foreign nationals has not stopped since May 2008. At least 10 incidents have occurred in 2010 already, in places such as Siyathemba, Atteridgeville, Mamelodi, Orange Farm and, most recently, on 3rd and 4th May, in Sasolburg, where large crowds looted foreign owned shops. One shop owner who was looted had lost three previous shops in other towns, also through xenophobic violence”. Danso and McDonald (2000) and Erasmus (2009) stated that “compared to other countries in the region, South Africans across race and class revealed among the harshest anti-foreign sentiments, and hold strongly negative views about immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers particularly from other African countries, which are perceived to be responsible for stealing jobs, causing crime in the country and bringing diseases like HIV/AIDS”. Duponchel (2009:5) pointed out that “anti-immigrant sentiments are widespread in many countries, including Europe, North America and elsewhere in Africa, but do not necessarily end in outright violence”.

Fine and Bird (2002:20) reported that “many migrants entering South Africa do so legitimately. These include refugees, who have lost the protection of their own state and who have a well-founded fear of persecution”. Instead of stability and safety – a prerequisite for being able to work through their pre-migration traumatic experience and carry on with their lives – refugees face permanent fear of harm emanating from xenophobia that negatively impacts on their sense of security, and ultimately, their ability to settle in and integrate into their new community (McKnight, 2008). Xenophobic attitudes and actions negatively affect refugees’ incomes and livelihoods through petty harassment, extortion, and discrimination in hiring, housing, and access to basic services (Schneider, 1999; Jacobsen, 2006). In addition to the lengthy and often undignified

asylum procedures, refugees also experience bribery and sometimes the destruction of their documents, as well as more extreme instances of physical violence, often by those employed to protect them (Harris, 2003).

Landau *et al.* (2005:22) reported that “despite the government’s commitment to universal rights and the promises of cosmopolitanism embedded in law and policy pronouncements – refugees, especially black Africans, tend to feel unwelcome and unprotected”. Many local power brokers as well as the local population regard refugees as constituting a threat to political stability and security. These xenophobic attitudes are exacerbated and propagated by local and national media sources through reporting that is based on stigmas. The overall experience of refugees in contact with state authorities has been always systematic xenophobia, particularly from the police and Home Affairs officials. This systematic xenophobia manifests in the arbitrary exercise of power, corruption, extortion, and gratuitous violence and torture (Hopson, 2009).

Violent attacks on non-South Africans, including refugees, culminated in brutality in 2005, 2006 and 2007 (Crush, 2008b:21). In 2007 alone, over one hundred Somali refugees died in xenophobic attacks and their shops and shelters ransacked and destroyed. Erasmus (2009) indicated that “refugees have been murdered by South Africans as early as 1998”. However, the denialism and ‘we did not know’ approach of political leaders is deeply disappointing and contributes to the silencing of trauma experienced by refugees. Instead, South African leaders refer to legislation such as the new Refugee Act and the Constitution. Thabo Mbeki, South African President from 1999 to 2008, in his public broadcast in May 2008, used the term ‘foreign guests’ to mean people who were murdered, attacked, robbed of their livelihoods and displaced. These people labeled as ‘foreigners’, the term consistently used by the media, were refugees. Some were nameless, some were stateless, some were undocumented, and some, despite being documented, were treated as people without rights.

2.2.4. Contributing factors to xenophobia in South Africa

Landau *et al.* (2005:6) reported that “xenophobia can only be understood within specific economic, cultural, and political contexts”. (Crush (2001:103) indicated that “although there are examples of hospitality and tolerance, with South Africans defending non-nationals’ rights, there is strong evidence that South Africans are generally uncomfortable with the presence of black non-nationals in the country”. Xenophobia has become a real concern in countries where there is a political transition. Shindondola (2003:62) indicated that “the same phenomenon has been seen in countries like Germany after the fall of the Berlin wall and the beginning of democracy”. The reasons for the increase of xenophobia and the contributing factors in South Africa are of prime importance.

Several studies have investigated the causes of xenophobia with varied reasons emerging. Various explanations have been given for the xenophobic attitudes and subsequent actions, ranging from anecdotal to more psychosocial propositions. Recurrent themes are those that portray foreign nationals as primarily an economic threat, taking up job opportunities and social services meant for the locals. Other cited causes of xenophobia are the perception of foreigners as a threat to physical security, racism, isolation and nationalism, political scapegoats, and a lack of knowledge about foreign nationals and their rights. Aspects such as the role of the media and institutional discrimination seem to be of prime importance in instilling xenophobia into the mindset of the South African population.

2.2.4.1. Racism, isolation and nationalism

Landau *et al.* (2005:8) reported that “South Africa’s long history of racial politics and stratification has had an important, if difficult to quantify, effect on how citizens perceive non-nationals”. While racism has been typically associated with prejudice against individuals with different visible phenotypical markers such as skin colour; xenophobia targets specifically those individuals who are foreigners in a particular community (refer to section 2.2.2). Yakushko (2009:47) indicated that “xenophobia and racism were highly

interrelated and mutually supporting forms of oppression and the two forms of oppression appeared to be very similar”. Yakushko (2009:48) added that “for instance racial minorities in the United States (persons of Asian and Latino descent) are often perceived as foreigners rather than as native-born individuals, while white immigrants in United States gain the many advantages accorded to white individuals and inherit the benefits of white privilege”.

Harris (2002:4) reported that “the isolation hypothesis understands xenophobia as a consequence of South Africa’s seclusion from the international community during apartheid”. Boycotting by the international community resulted in South African citizens turning inwards and developing an inability to tolerate and accept differences (Valji, 2003:17). Harris (2002:4) added that “after the fall of apartheid in 1994, South Africa’s borders opened up and the country became integrated into the international community. This has brought South Africans into direct contact with the unknown or foreigners, including refugees. The interface between previously isolated South Africans and unknown foreigners created a space for hostility and misunderstanding to develop”. Morris (1998:1125) and Harris (2002:4) added that “there was little doubt that the brutal environment created by apartheid, with its enormous emphasis on boundary maintenance, has also impacted on people’s inability to be tolerant of difference”.

“Unlike other prejudices, xenophobia is considered a multidimensional and multicausal phenomenon, because it is intricately tied to notions of nationalism and ethnocentrism, both of which are characterized by a belief in the superiority of one’s nation-state over others” (Yakushko, 2009:44). Esses *et al.* (2005) revealed that “nationalism (belief in the superiority of one’s nation over others) rather than patriotism (affective attachment to one’s nation) is related to increased negative views of immigrants on a personal or group level. An example of such a threat is an individual or cultural perception that foreigners are taking jobs from native workers. What further suggested that this prejudice produces political xenophobia, which results in the desire to create and apply public policies that actively discriminate against foreign individuals”.

It was identified by Kersting (2009) that “xenophobia is, to a certain extent, constructed by national media and other opinion leaders. Xenophobic attacks in South Africa and elsewhere are not a sudden eruption and not the action of criminals but are a latent mindset in the midst of society”. Kersting (2009:11) added that “dirty xenophobic thinking too easily and too quickly leads to dirty actions”. Although many citizens show a dislike for foreigners, Pete and du Plooy (2006:6) are of the opinion that violence towards non-citizens/refugees are reported to be committed by black nationals and in a more violent form. According to Valgi (2003:5) and Crush (2001:3), negative attitudes and violence are not generally displayed towards all foreigners, but black foreigners from other African countries are the main target.

2.2.4.2. *Apartheid and South Africa's culture of violence and impunity*

Structural violence that characterized the apartheid regime in South Africa contributed to interpersonal violence (see Figure 2.3).

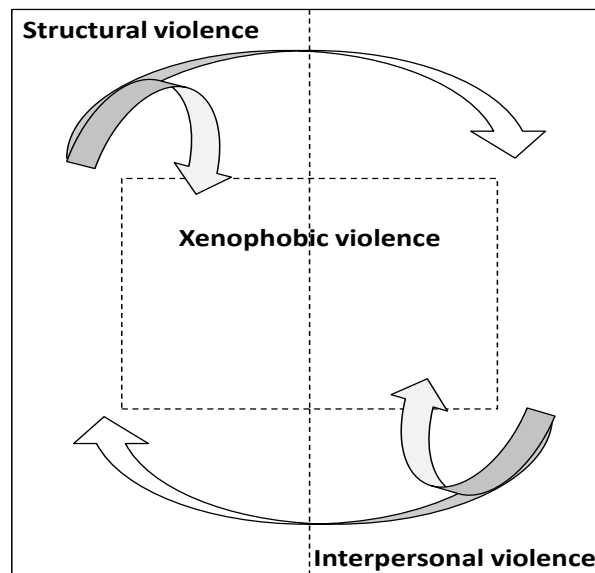


Figure 2.3. Xenophobia as interpersonal and structural forms of violence

Landau *et al.* (2005:9) reported that “South Africa’s long history of racial politics and stratification has had an important effect on how citizens perceive non-nationals”. “The experience of oppression during apartheid, especially by black nationals, seems to have resulted in the mistrust and suspicion of outsiders” (Harris, 2001:70). “During apartheid, differences between all South Africans were highlighted and people were classified according to race and ethnicity” (ANC Today, 2001:1).

According to Hamber and Lewis (1997) and Vorster (2002), “refugees are subjects to structural forms of violence” (Figure 2.3). “Structural violence refers to unequal power relationships and manifests in unequal life chances” (Pilisuk, 2001). Galtung (1969) and Farmer (2004) equated “structural violence with ‘social injustice’; something built into the way in which a society distributes resources, resulting in steep grades of inequality, also expressed in terms of racism and gender inequality”. Keenan and McDonagh (2009:7) and Farmer *et al.* (2006:1686) reported that “structural violence is about not only the unequal distribution of power, but social structures (economic, political, legal, religious, and cultural) that stop individuals, groups, and societies from reaching their full potential“. Structural violence also can lead to other types of violence such as xenophobia (Harris, 2003), which involves more than the violation of fairness and justice, and can lead to hidden but lethal inequities; whereby people can be hurt, maimed, and killed in ways that are unseen and unpunished (Mullaly, 2007).

This ‘culture of violence’ is described by Harris (2001:14) as “a situation in which social relations and interactions are governed through violent, rather than non-violent means; a culture where violence is proffered as a normal, legitimate solution to problems”. This is a direct consequence of the fact that South Africa has been in a long struggle for liberation in which violence was a tool both for repression and defiance (CRAI, 2009).

The then South African government always used force to maintain apartheid, and therefore, those opposing forces also used violence in order to fight against it. Hamber (1999:1) reported that “under apartheid, there was civil unrest, acts of sabotage, harassment, torture, ‘disappearances’ and the murder of political opponents in order to

maintain political power. The opinion is that the current levels of violence have been built on the legacy of the civil conflict of the past”. Harris (2001:14) added that “although the form of violence has altered, it still persists as the main way to solve problems in South Africa”. Valji (2003:18) indicated that “these high levels of violence in society in general seem to have ebbed over into the violent manifestations of xenophobia in South Africa”.

Harris (2001:70) reported that “apartheid resulted in attitudes of xenophobia and closed mindedness in contemporary South Africa, with the mindsets of exclusion still strongly alive and contributing to xenophobic attitudes and actions”. Matzopoulos *et al.* (2009:17) added that “South Africa is characterized by a long history of violence as a means of protest, with foreigners being common targets”. As an example, Bond *et al.* (2010:31) reported how “South Africa recorded an average of 8000 protests (characterized by violence) per annum from 2004, probably the highest per capita rate of social protest in the world. It is evident that the protests can be as easily directed against fellow community residents – especially if they hailed from outside South Africa – as against the genuine sources of their problems”. Structural violence allows and guarantees the impunity for direct violence to take place. Therefore, it contributes to the marginalization of refugees to a semi-clandestine world, enabling xenophobia perpetrators to rob, abuse, and even kill refugees without facing any repercussions (Galtung, 1969; Jacome, 2009).

2.2.4.3. Refugees (foreigners) seen as a threat to economic and physical security

Landau *et al.* (2005:7) reported that “one of the most common explanations for xenophobia - both locally and globally - is the sense that non-nationals are a threat to citizens’ access to employment, grants, and social services”. However, Crush (2008b:33) suggests that “these are stereotypes not grounded in reality, and the economic threat posed by immigrants does not appear to be based on personal experience, as few South Africans he interacted with have had personal experience of losing a job to an immigrant”. Landau *et al.* (2005:7) added that “such negative sentiments are reflected in political discourses, at the national as well as at the local level, with politicians who

believe and preach that immigration places a severe strain on employment levels, housing and public services”.

In his first speech to parliament as the Minister of Home Affairs, Mangosuthu Buthelezi proclaimed that: “If we as South Africans are going to compete for scarce resources with millions of aliens who are pouring into South Africa, then we can bid goodbye to our Reconstruction and Development Programme” (Landau *et al.*, 2005:7). Reitzes (1994:8) added that “Mangosuthu Buthelezi argued also that the employment of foreigners is unpatriotic because it deprives South Africans of jobs and that the rising level of immigrants should absorb unacceptable proportions of housing subsidies and adding to the difficulties experienced in health care”.

Although one cannot completely reject that immigrants/refugees contribute to the country’s severe security troubles, criminal figures suggests that immigrants, in general and refugees in particular, are a disproportionately small threat (Harris, 2001). It is clear that in some instances, political discourse reflects assumptions of non-nationals’ inherent criminality without any substantial proof. Landau *et al.* (2005:9) reported that “while non-nationals who were arrested were charged with immigration related offences; they did not threaten the security of South Africa”. However, refugees do not fall in the category of offenders who constitute a threat to state security because their stay in the country is legal. At the same time, some refugees are charged with immigration offences when they do not extend their refugee permits on time, when their permits are lost or stolen, or they can be victimized by some officials who consider their refugee permits to be fakes in order to extort money from them.

2.2.4.4. Refugees (foreigners) as political scapegoats and the role of the South African media

Harris (2001) reported that “xenophobia is particularly predominant in countries undergoing transition. Within these countries, another trend is a tendency for governments to conflate foreigners with crime and use them as scapegoats for social

problems such as unemployment and poverty”. Generally, Harris’s (2002:3) “scapegoating theory explains xenophobia in terms of broad social and economic factors”. Tshitereke (1999) conceptualizes xenophobia in terms of dissatisfaction and relative deprivation. Parry-Davies (2008) has found that “the South African population does not have access to enough basic resources to live comfortably with dignity. So the poorest of the poor, with the least resources, turn on the softest and most vulnerable targets (foreigners and refugees without the social and legal support structures to protect them), to fight for resources (looting shops and homes)”.

Valji (2003:15) reported that within post-apartheid South Africa, there is an expectation in the so called “new South Africa” that there will be more resources available, that service delivery will happen quickly and that a general improvement in the quality of life will occur. However, resources like housing, education, health care and employment are still lacking and expectations remain high. This has led to feelings of discontent and frustration. Harris (2001:69) stated that “the sense of relative deprivation is a key factor to social unrest, coming from the belief that one is getting less than one is entitled to. Thus, frustrated by escalating costs of living and competition for houses and jobs, poor black South Africans are picking the easiest scapegoats amongst immigrants, including refugees”.

According to Ramcharan (2002), “refugees and immigrants, commonly called ‘non-citizens’, are stigmatized and vilified for seeking a better life. They are made scapegoats for all kinds of social ills, subjected to harassment and abuse by political parties, the media, and society at large”. Valji (2003:15) and Harris (2001:6) agreed that “the minority group of foreigners and refugees has become the scapegoat, blamed for social ills and frustrations from those who perceive the ‘invasion’ as limiting their gains”. Landau *et al.* (2005:10) observed that “South African politicians are by no means unique in building political capital at the expense of foreigners and refugees”.

Harris (2001:13) reported that “one of the most damning indictments of the print media in South Africa is that they perpetuate negative stereotypes about immigrants. Danso and

McDonald (2000:13) were of the view that “these stereotypes to contribute to xenophobia in the country; and that it goes without saying that the media has influence beyond measure, which can be dangerous in a country whose xenophobic tendencies are as high as South Africa”. The media has been very vocal over the past few years regarding immigration and refugees through reporting that is based on stigma. Valji (2003:11) stated that “although media sensationalism cannot be regarded as the only reason for public negative perceptions and feelings regarding refugees and immigrants, they constitute a very big contributing factor”.

Downing and Husband (1995) indicated that “the media plays a big role in exacerbating the refugees’ situation through restrictive measures and declarations that enhance hostility and prejudice against them”. These hostile attitudes appear to be given some justification when political leaders confirm them, or fail to condemn them. Harris (2001:16) argued that “the media has portrayed immigration in South Africa as being flooded or overrun by undocumented migrants or illegal aliens”. For example on September 19, 2005 *Cape Times* (2005:1) opted for “a heading which stated that desperate Zimbabweans flood across the border”. These kinds of emotionally loaded expressions and exaggerated phrases have fanned public opinion regarding immigration. It is a myth that South Africa has been “flooded” by refugees and economic immigrants (Livesey, 2006).

Palmary (2002:4) indicated that “the media has made use of unsubstantiated figures for migration which has led to the stereotyping of foreigners in general and refugees in particular as being illegal aliens, stealing jobs, and being criminals”. For the first stereotype of being illegal aliens, refugees could not be treated so because they are legally in the country where they are provided with refugee status. For the second stereotype of stealing jobs, research has shown that this is not the case. In the face of mass unemployment in South Africa, many foreigners including refugees rely on the informal sector, where they work for themselves through opening their own businesses.

Hawking is popular among refugees who sell sweets, second hand clothes and shoes. Among street traders are also those who cut hair and repair shoes. Therefore, these refugees seem to have created services which were underdeveloped and so show true entrepreneurship (Steinberg, 2005:4). Hawking operations of migrant entrepreneurs have created jobs for others through the establishment of these businesses (Palmary, 2002:7; Singh, 2005:25). Interestingly, the majority of refugee entrepreneurs who employ workers hire mostly South Africans (Steinberg, 2005:6). Thus, despite the negative attitudes and actions of nationals towards refugees, the latter seem to still extend opportunities to South Africans.

The third stereotype of the media portraying refugees as creating crime is also unfounded. Landau and Jacobsen (2004:45) stated that “refugees are more likely to become victims of crime than to be the perpetrators thereof”. This victimization is due to xenophobic attitudes and the lack of protection from officials like the South African Police Services (SAPS). When the negative perceptions created by the media about foreigners and refugees reach the public, they distort the manner in which these foreigners and refugees are viewed and thereby fuel violent xenophobia. Therefore, the media should be aware that the sensational reporting of their approach to the conduct of foreigners and refugees becomes the dichotomy of life or death for the law abiding foreign nationals such as refugees who are here for credible reasons. (Dele, 2009:1) reported that “it is well known that media reporting on foreign nationals simply worsens the disfigured and backward mindset of ordinary black South Africans on the street, making them believe that foreigners from Africa are the main cause of their problems”.

2.2.4.5. Institutional discrimination of refugees (foreigners)

In a study commissioned by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Misago *et al.* (2009:3) “identified factors that triggered the violence, including the presence of institutionalized practices that exclude foreigners from political participation and justice, and a culture of impunity, particularly with regard to xenophobic violence”. The institutionalized discrimination was used by the apartheid regime, where the world was

used to deny black South Africans the rights to political participation as well as the rights to city dwelling. Harris (2001:6) reported that “prejudice and discrimination operated within law enforcement and police practices”. The same author goes on to say that “the potential for abuse spans the entire Criminal Justice System and Asylum System including the South African Police Service and the Department of Home Affairs”. According to Livesay (2006:45), the police are active in tracking down illegal immigrants and have the power to apprehend persons suspected of being illegal immigrants. However, Harris (2001:38) is of the opinion that many refugees are never given the opportunity by members of the SAPS to present evidence of their legal status and are automatically arrested, taken to police cells or sent straight to detention centres, such as Lindela Repatriation Centre, from where illegal immigrants are deported to their country of origin (Human Rights Watch, 1998:69). Thus, many refugees admit to paying bribes to avoid being arrested and sent to Lindela Repatriation Centre (Peta, 2005:3).

Xenophobic attitudes have penetrated the activities of state security agents, and police in particular have become a source of worry to refugees in the country (Segale, 2005). Physical violence including name calling, hitting and kicking are part of abusive roles that the SAPS display towards refugees. Human Rights Watch (1998:119) “interviewed a number of refugees who claimed to have been assaulted by police officers”. According to Palmary (2002:6) and Misago (2009:17), “xenophobic attitudes and behavior of police officers are not only harmful in that they result in unfair treatment towards refugees, but police officers can concurrently be important opinion makers, and can therefore negatively impact on the general public’s perception of refugees and so fuel feelings of xenophobia, as can any public service official who uses a public platform to espouse unfounded anti-foreigner sentiments”. Misago *et al.* (2009:17) reported that “xenophobia in the public service also limits the likelihood that non-national victims will report crimes because they are often victimized or treated with indifference by the same authorities”.

Shindondola (2003:27) “expressed concern regarding xenophobia that seems to be spearheaded by members of institutions who are supposed to be in the centre of providing protection and relief to refugees, especially immigration officers and state officials within

Home Affairs”. Refugees experience difficulties with the Department of Home Affairs in acquiring or renewing their refugee permits. Naicker and Nair (2000:3) are of the opinion that the problem emanates from the fact that the Home Affairs officers only process a few applications daily, and refugees then leave the Home Affairs offices without having their permits renewed, placing them in a difficult situation in terms of the law. This non-access to the DHA makes refugees disempowered and vulnerable to extortion and blackmail by state officials. Thus, the payment of bribes in order to access applications for refugee status seems to have become almost institutionalized. Steinberg (2005:3) stated that “these officials show signs of xenophobia in taking advantage of a vulnerable group of refugees by extorting bribes, knowing that they control the situation as these refugees have no other avenue other than getting papers processed by the Department of Home Affairs (DHA)”.

Misago (2009:3) reported that “there is a disturbing culture of impunity in South Africa with regards to perpetrators of public violence in general and xenophobic attacks in particular. Foreign nationals have been repeatedly attacked in South Africa over many years, but no one has to date been held accountable. In most of the previous cases, no arrests were made, and even where a few were made, suspects were released without charges and in some cases with the assistance of local and provincial authorities”. Similarly, Misago *et al.* (2009) added that “before, during and after the May 2008 xenophobic attacks, some arrests were made at different scenes of violence, but most of those arrested were released without charges thanks to the mobilization of communities and their leaders. Those behind the release of perpetrators of xenophobic attacks believed that the attacks and chasing of non-South Africans from their area did something good for the community and should not be prosecuted. Thus, the actual and perceived impunity with which perpetrators of xenophobic violence are seen to act can only continue to encourage the ill-intentioned to attack foreigners”. Steinberg (2005) indicated that “it is common practice that the police neglect to follow up on individual charges and commonly interrogate and further victimize the foreign complainant, resulting in a process of secondary victimization”.

2.3. Conclusion

In sum, although research studies including that of Swim and Stangor (1998) established that “South Africans were hostile toward foreigners living in South Africa”, none of these studies have specifically dealt with the psycho-social impact of xenophobia on refugees and their coping strategies to survive it. Swim and Stangor (1998) and Harrison (1974) reported that “the traditional lack of emphasis on the targets’ perspective usually results in a bias towards understanding the perpetrators rather than the victims, or survivors, of prejudice”. While Swim *et al.* (1998:38) reported that “research on the victims/survivors’ experiences of prejudice can help to understand how targets manage aspects of their social world, rather than how they are only manipulated by the prejudice of others”, (Warner and Finchilescu, 2003:36) were of the view that “such research can provide the chance to understand how they are survivors, rather than victims of prejudice”.

Indeed, it is of great interest for social work to better understand just how victims of violence become survivors by framing their environments in such ways as to enable themselves to manage, control and actively shape, rather than being passive recipients of their circumstances. This will provide valuable insights into how best to respond to the consequences of South Africa’s post-1994 re-alignment with global human rights and the opening of its borders to refugees from other parts of Africa. This study therefore focused on refugees facing consequences of xenophobia: that was, their views and opinions about xenophobia, as well as their lived experiences and coping strategies in the face of those challenges resulting from the pervasiveness of xenophobia in South Africa.

Taking into account the hard experiences encountered by refugees in their respective home countries and during flight, as well as their plight of having to survive xenophobia here in South Africa, their host country, we needed to understand what coping strategies they were using to overcome their experiences. We also needed to explore which structural limitations impeding the success of these strategies. On that basis, we needed to ask further what the targets of xenophobia believed ought to change at structural levels of society to make the task of survival and integration into their country of refuge easier.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides details of the chosen research design, research site, and the units of analysis. It also provides the data collection procedures, approaches and analysis of data, and presents an explanation of how important issues related to trustworthiness in qualitative research were addressed in order to achieve the objectives of the study. Ethical considerations and limitations of the study are discussed. In Table 3.1 below, the research methodology and the route intended to be taken by the study are depicted.

Chapter 3: Sub-heading	Methodological choice	References
Research paradigm	Interpretive paradigm, rooted within a critical theory tradition	Babbie & Mouton (2001) Lindegger (2006)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest in everyday realities, as experienced by ‘ordinary’ people • Focus on inter-subjectivity • Understanding in context • Acquiring knowledge inductively • Interest in achieving emancipatory results 	
Research design	Qualitative – descriptive	Terre Blanche <i>et al.</i> (2006a) Babbie & Mouton (2001)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of the self as instrument • Situating research in the participants natural environments • Production of in-depth, thick descriptions of specific persons/events etc. 	
Units of analysis	• Individuals	Babbie & Mouton (2001) Durrheim (2006)
Sampling strategy	Sampling criteria:	Creswell (2002) Newman (2000)
	• Purposive strategy	
	Sampling process:	
	1. Availability sampling (<i>also known as convenience sampling</i>) 2. Snowball sampling	

Data collection methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured interviews • Field notes on observations 	Greeff (2005) Rugg and Petre (2007)
Data Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thematic content analysis 	Kelly (2006a) Terreblanche <i>et al.</i> (2006b)
Strategies towards validity/ trustworthiness of the study	Credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability	Babbie & Mouton (2001) Kelly (2006b)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purposive sampling • Prolonged engagement • Triangulation of data collection methods • Thick descriptions • Members check (<i>communicative validity</i>) • Auditing • Kelly's (2006a) steps towards critical inquiry 	
Ethical considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informed consent • Safety considerations • Privacy and Anonymity • Confidentiality and reliance 	Smythe and Murray (2000) Ellis <i>et al.</i> (2008)
Limitations flowing from the research strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study used only 10 participants • Information depends on participants' disclosure • Reflexivity 	Sewpaul (1995) Terre Blanche <i>et al.</i> (2006b)

Table 3.1: An outline of the research strategy which guided this study

3.1. Research paradigm.

The study was guided by an interpretive paradigm rooted within a critical theory tradition; a paradigm that interprets the everyday troubles individuals face as being intricately linked to public issues of power, justice and democracy. The aim of the study was to better understand how xenophobia is manifest in the experiences of refugees and what the consequences are on their lives. In my view, it is essential that a study that is concerned with the social, economic and cultural marginalization of refugees should be able to contribute to social transformation and the promotion of social justice. Therefore, the focus of critical social theory is “to transform or change the human condition through a critique of those alienating or repressing factors which sustain their alienation/self-deception/false consciousness” (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:36). I have taken an interpretivist perspective because it emphasizes the human mind or consciousness. As human beings engage in the process of making sense of their (life) worlds, they continuously

interpret, create, justify and rationalize their actions (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:28). Interpretivist tradition sees social action on research results as a meaningful and important outcome of the inquiry process. The interpretivist tradition has also an emancipatory interest. It believes in the human capacity to be self-reflective and self-determining; to act rationally, enhancing autonomy and responsibility (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:34). Thus, researching refugees who have been marginalized can create change because the paucity of research about refugees' experiences of xenophobia can accentuate and perpetuate powerlessness.

3.2. Type of study: Research design

According to De Vos *et al.* (2005:73), "a research design is a...detailed plan for how a research study is to be conducted" This assertion may be read in conjunction with Silverman (2002:2) who asserts that "if you are concerned with exploring people's life histories or everyday behavior, then qualitative methods may be favored". The term qualitative implies "an emphasis on an examination of processes and meanings, but not measured in terms of quantity, amount or frequency" (Labuschagne, 2003). Rather "qualitative research methods allow the researchers to understand how research participants perceive their situation and their role within the context" (Katzenellenbogen *et al.*, 2002).

The great strength of qualitative research is therefore that it attempts to depict the fullness of experience in a meaningful and comprehensive way (Winget, 2005). Since the main aim of this study is to understand the lived experiences of Burundian and Rwandese refugees in Durban's inner city vis-à-vis the presence of deep-rooted and widespread xenophobia, a qualitative research approach was the appropriate method to gain such insight. This research gave the participants the opportunity to voice their perspectives on xenophobia that negatively affected their lives, the successes and failures of their coping strategies, and what they believed should be done to address the problem of xenophobia (see the concluding chapter).

A particular type of qualitative research, a qualitative descriptive approach, was used in this study. Sullivan-Bolyai *et al.* (2005:128) explained that "the goal of qualitative description is not theory development, but the provision of thick description, and adding interpretative meaning to

an experience depicted in an easily understood language”. Thus, this qualitative method responds to the goals of the topic undertaken. A qualitative descriptive approach offered the researcher the opportunity to gather rich description about refugees’ experiences. The focus was placed on direct communication with the research participants, eliciting rich descriptions about their experiences of xenophobia, and offering a valuable opportunity to acquire ‘inside’ knowledge about how they see their world. This was made possible by interviewing the participants at their respective homes (natural environment), enabling them to feel more comfortable. And while coming from the social work field my experience and skills as a social worker assisted me in conducting interviews, having a refugee background allowed me “to interact with the participants in an empathic and understanding manner, in naturalistic and everyday settings” (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006b:206).

3.3. Research population and units of analysis

A research population may be considered to be any group of individuals who share one or more characteristics, experience/s or situational exposure that are of interest to the study (Babbie, 1995; Willig, 2001). Similarly, De Vos (1998) defines a research population as the total set from which the units of analysis are chosen for the study. Durrheim (2006) in turn defines the unit of analysis as the “entity of investigation”. As the study sought to understand the experiences of refugees from Burundi and Rwanda living in Durban, and its units of analysis were individuals.

As individual units of analysis, each of the study’s research participants brought to the study his/her own interpretations and understandings of their experiences (ethnic conflicts, civil wars, pre-flight and flight experiences, life in camps and xenophobia). This is exactly what shed light on how structural forms of injustice translate into specific manifestations of identity; and why individuals may experience, and respond to xenophobia and oppression differently. It is these differences that enabled deeper understanding, the drawing of more valid conclusions, and recommendations for policy and practice that will be meaningful for activists, social workers and social policy makers.

3.4. Sampling strategies

The decision to select Burundian and Rwandese refugees for participation in the study was based on several considerations. Firstly, “due to their countries of origin, Burundian and Rwandese refugees as a research population shared significant demographic and linguistic similarities, as well as a sharing a history of rampant civil wars due to ethnic conflicts and dynamics” (Ndura, 2006:3). Secondly, all the research participants brought alongside with them similar backgrounds as their reason for being in South Africa. Thirdly, they all lived in the inner city area of Durban, which means that they were exposed to the same socio-economic context, and are therefore currently confronted with similar life challenges. This allowed for enough similarities to compare their contributions to the data of this study. In qualitative research, the sample size needs to be small enough to allow the researcher to capture individual intricacies in the analysis (Banister *et al.*, 1994). At the same time, the sample ought not to be so small as to reduce variety. Hence, a sample size of ten was considered appropriate.

3.4.1 Deciding on the sampling criteria: Purposive sampling

Babbie and Mouton (2001:166) indicated that “having a small number of participants required purposive sampling, with selection based on the researcher’s knowledge of the participants and the nature of the research aims”. Creswell (2002) indicated that a “purposive sampling technique is usually used in qualitative research because it permits the choice of participants who are able to assist in comprehending the situation that is to be studied”. Willig (2001), Mason (2002) and Patton (2002) indicated that “in purposive sampling, the sampling units are chosen because they have particular features such as socio-demographic characteristics, or may be related to specific experiences, behaviors, roles which will enable detailed exploration and understanding of the study’s central themes”. For this reason, the following criteria for inclusion were set out:

To ensure the necessary degree of homogeneity, the sample in this study comprised five refugees from Rwanda and five refugees from Burundi who had refugee status and resided in the inner-city of Durban. The criterion of having refugee status meant that participants in the study have been granted most of the constitutional rights enjoyed by South Africans (barring the right to

vote), including the right of access to most of the public services that South Africans are entitled to (Republic of South Africa, 1996, 1998). The sample comprised five men and five women adults who had active memories about the events leading up to the flight from their respective home countries and their journey to South Africa; and whose identities were more distinctly non-South African than those of their children who grew up here (second generation of immigrants). To ensure that persons with varying expectations and understanding of what their ‘deserved’ socio-economic status should be, the sample comprised refugees with levels of educational and professional training ranging from secondary school education to the completion of tertiary degrees (compare Table 4.1).

3.4.2. Accessing the sample: Convenience and snowball sampling

In order to access the participants, I used convenience sampling followed by snowball sampling. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:139), “convenience samples are people who volunteer to participate in the study”. Thus, I identified the first three participants who were selected on their availability and willingness to participate in the study within the Catholic refugees’ prayer group named “New Light Prayer Group” of which I am a member.

The process of accessing other research participants was supported by snowballing. Brink (2001:141) defined snowball sampling as “a technique that involves the assistance of study participants in obtaining other potential participants”. Newman (2000) indicated that “snowball sampling begins with one or a few people or cases, and spreads out on the basis of links to the initial cases”. The first three participants suggested other participants from their community who meet the criteria for the study, who were then approached by the researcher. They were interested and agreed to participate.

3.5. Data collection

Qualitative researchers interact with participants in a face-to-face situation. In their search for information-rich informants, and because qualitative research is carried out in the participants’ natural settings (homes), this often means that researchers are entering the private worlds of

individuals. This is not only a very intimate type of research, but may also involve gathering sensitive or controversial information. The tools used in this study for data collection were interviews, observations and field notes.

3.5.1. Semi-structured interviews

The data was collected through face-to-face interviews with participants. The purpose behind conducting face-to-face interviews was to gain an in-depth understanding of each participant's perceptions and experiences of his/her challenges of being exposed to xenophobic threats as a refugee, as well as the psychological and health effects thereof and personal coping strategies. In-depth interviews are appropriate when one wants to compare information between and among people, while at the same time wishing to more fully understand each person's unique experience. Semi-structured open ended interviews were used to elicit holistic information from the participants. Tutty *et al.* (1996:56) ascertained that "with in-depth interviews, there are some predetermined questions or key words used as a guide (Appendix 1). That type of interview is sometimes called a guided interview". The interviews were conducted in the participants' mother tongues as the researcher shares the same mother tongue with the research participants. Translation and interpretation were done in English by the researcher. Thereafter, the researcher went back to the participants to make sure there were no falsifications of their intended meanings during translation and interpretation.

In addition to reflecting on the participants experiences of displacement and flight, the in-depth interviews centered on key themes of the research such as the xenophobic threats, discrimination, coping and survival strategies. The discussion also focused on refugees' future plans and what measures could be put in place to improve the situation of refugees in South Africa (see concluding chapter). All the interviews were tape-recorded with the permission of interviewees in order to give room for transcription of the obtained data.

All the participants chose to have the interviews at their respective homes in the evenings or weekends due to other commitments during week days. The time frame of conducting face-to-face interviews varied and depended on the participants' willingness to talk and to share the

information as well as interruptions during the interviews. In average, the in-depth interviews lasted two hours. The shortest interviews happened with two participants (20%) and lasted thirty minutes each as the conversations were cut short by visitors. The interviews were then rescheduled for another day.

3.5.2. Observations and field notes

The goal of observation was to assist the researcher in gaining the different viewpoints held by research participants. The study was conducted in the Durban inner-city area, with the St Georges and Point Road areas being the main observation sites for the research, as this was where many refugees from Burundi and Rwanda live. This enabled the researcher to explore the experiences of refugees in their natural (ordinary/normal) state (Mulhall, 2003), and visit them at home and at their respective work sites (beauty salons, flea market, street hair salons, tuck shops, and car guarding sites). Additionally, observations were made and field notes were taken simultaneously with in-depth interviews taking place at the participants' homes.

According to (Greeff, 2005:298), "field notes are a written account of the things the researcher hears, sees, experiences and thinks about in the course of interviewing". In order to supplement the interviews, field notes were taken in the form of a personal diary in which the researcher kept track of observations, associations, and re-collections of her own experiences and memories that may be pertinent to the study. These field notes were an important tool towards ensuring validity of the study.

3.6. Data analysis

According to De Vos (2005), qualitative research is dependent on the presentation of solid and thick descriptive information that allows the researcher to lead the reader to understanding the meanings of the experience or phenomenon being studied. Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to all information collected. Thematic content analysis was used to analyze the data of this study as recommended by Terre Blanche *et al.* (2006a:321-326):

3.6.1. Familiarization and immersion

Terre Blanche *et al.* (ibid.) reminded us that data analysis begins before, continues during, but culminates after the data collection process. The researcher was a refugee *before* she collected the data, and hence brought to the study her personal knowledge and experience of the topic. During the proposal stage of the study, she conducted an extensive literature review, exploring the topic from a theoretical perspective. This familiarity with the ideas and theories around the topic being studied assisted in the creation of the interview schedules, as much as it helped guide her during the interviews themselves.

Because the researcher transcribed and translated the interviews herself, as well as reviewed them with the participants (see discussion of member check in the validity section below), familiarization and immersion began at this point. Immersion continued thereafter with the researcher re-reading the transcript carefully and repeatedly, allowing the associations that the data evoked within her to surface increasingly clearly. This was in order to identify whether the interviews had generated the intended information for the study; to get a deeper sense of the intended – and unintended – meanings that participants might have attached to the information they provided; as well as to become conscientised to possible gaps and contradictions that should be in the accounts of participants.

For example, one nurse had stated in the initial interview that it was impossible for a refugee to get a job in her field of expertise, yet she *was* working as a nurse. The researcher returned to this participant, asking her to elaborate more on this apparent contradiction, at which point she explained that even though she had job in her field, it had been incredibly difficult to get in, and that many other foreigners had given up trying to get work in their profession. She explained that even those who made it were left with little choice as to what kind of nursing they wanted to do, but were rather left to apply for the most dangerous and disliked positions.

3.6.2. *Inducing themes*

Once intimately familiar with the data content, the researcher engaged in the process of developing themes and sub-themes. This consisted of grouping data that emerged from reading the transcripts. The initial groupings were separated out into further sub-themes, or, moving in the opposite direction, combined into fewer, overarching themes. The purpose was to find an optimal level of complexity which neither over-simplified the subject matter, nor exceeded the scope of what could be handled in the context of a masters dissertation.

On the one hand a *chronological ordering of themes* emerged, in that the experiences during war, genocide and flight impacted the refugees' perceptions of the post-flight situation and challenges of survival and integration in South Africa. On the other hand, the participants' accounts of their current circumstances had to be sub-divided into different *types of experiences*, ranging from social to economic integration, and different types of xenophobic treatment, from verbal threats to manifest exclusions. These themes and subthemes were given labels, drawing on the language used by the participants themselves. The structuring of *Chapter 4: Presentation and Discussion of Findings*, represents the outcome of this process.

3.6.3. *Data coding*

After the categorizing and theme inducing phase, I proceeded with data coding. Terre Blanche and Kelly (2006) argued that finding themes and coding blend together and support or influence one another. The themes were broken down further into labeled and meaningful pieces for in-depth discussion against one another, theoretical literature and/or the findings from other research reports. Such codes comprised expressions, sentences, or even paragraphs.

Some of these were similar, but others were complementary or even contrary to the findings in the literature reviewed but also in relation to one another. For example, on the issue of livelihoods and accessing employment, the researcher found that the data revealed more complexities than the initial reading of the literature had suggested. Another example concerns the relationships between refugees and South Africans. Again, the data revealed a far greater

diversity in modes of engagement than was initially anticipated, and the presentation and discussion of findings needed to reflect this.

3.6.4. Elaboration

Exploring themes and codes, and how they are interrelated more closely is referred to by Terre Blanche and Kelly (ibid.) as “elaboration”. The exploration of codes, followed by the formulation of themes thereafter, both against one another and against the findings from the literature review, was framed by the study’s theoretical framework. Because the intention behind this step was to capture the finer nuances of meaning in the data, I took care that my prior reading and understanding of the subject matter did not constrain my openness to unexpected findings, or findings that were contrary, or just different from some of my pre-existing ideas.

3.6.5. Interpretation and checking

The final step of the data analysis process of this study was to put together the emerging interpretation (Terre Blanche and Kelly, ibid). I finalized the data interpretation by drawing it together into a sequentially ordered, written account of the phenomenon I have studied. The data was arranged and displayed in such a way as to enable me to draw overarching meanings, connections between individual experiences and their contexts, and so on. To this end, the participants’ voices were given as much space as possible and necessary. This enabled me to arrive at overarching conclusions that were able to answer the research questions and to meet the overall aim of the study.

Before settling on one final account, however, I went through my interpretation again to look for any gaps, inconsistencies or contradictions. This was done through my own reflections, consultation with my research supervisor and by participant checks (see below, Section 3.7). It was in this phase that I was able to revisit my own role in the process, and I was able to observe the subtle but significant impact of my social positioning on the data collecting and analysis processes (compare below, Section 3.7).

3.7. Trustworthiness and validity of the study

In order for this study to comply with standards of trustworthiness and validity – which are according to Babbie and Mouton (2001) the qualitative equivalent to questions of reliability in quantitative (positivist) research, I took into account the criteria of credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability (ibid.). Credibility refers to an assessment of how believable the research findings are from the perspective of the study participants themselves. The concept of dependability pertains to the importance of the researcher accounting for, or describing, the contexts and circumstances as they are relevant to his/her study. Confirmability refers to the extent that the research findings can be confirmed or corroborated by others. Transferability refers to the degree that findings can be meaningfully applied so as to help readers make sense of similar settings, contexts, or situations. These elements will serve to defend the methods, results and conclusions drawn.

In order to increase the validity, or trustworthiness of research findings, the following techniques were taken in account:

Triangulation:

This is an approach that utilizes multiple data sources, multiple informants, and multiple methods, in order to confirm or validate research findings. The primary goal of triangulation is to gather multiple perspectives so as to gain a more complete understanding of the phenomena. In this study, triangulation of data sources, consisted of the interview transcripts, my observations and field notes (as per above, Section 3.5.2).

Member checking:

Member checking consists of the researcher restating, summarizing, or paraphrasing the information received from, and expressions used by, a respondent to ensure that what was heard or written down is in fact correct. In order to achieve accuracy, richness and critical comments in the final report after the data collection, translation and interpretation, the researcher reported back preliminary findings to participants.

Auditing:

This term refers to “the process in which the researcher gives field notes and diary entries pertaining to her theoretical ideas, notes, raw data and interpretations over to an independent examiner who will then study it all in great depth. The examiner will then point out possible biases, flaws, or any other problems in the study” (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Throughout the research process, there were frequent consultations between the researcher and the research supervisor.

3.8. Limitations of the study

For all their benefits, every aspect of a chosen research methodology has limitations that can influence the utility of the final research report. Amongst these, the main limitations of this study were the following:

At the sampling level, the participants interviewed were non-randomly selected. The study reflects the experiences of only ten (10) adult refugees from the Great Lakes region (Rwanda and Burundi) who are living in the Durban metropolitan area, and who volunteered to participate. Hence, outcomes and findings cannot be generalized to the whole Burundian and Rwandese refugee population, not even within the vicinity of Durban. The main objective of this study however, is to explore the impact of xenophobia on refugees with the aim of providing insight and a better understanding of phenomena, and not to generalize the findings to other settings. At the same time, this study can serve as a pilot study for a larger study reaching refugees on a broader scale.

Limitations of data collection methods flowed from the decision to collect data from the study through interviews. In these circumstances, the information and quality of the data obtained depended on the participants’ disclosure. The fact that the interviews were recorded may have resulted in a possible lack of full self-disclosure from the participants, or might have caused the participants to be less spontaneous. What mitigated these effects is the fact that as the researcher, I already had a prolonged engagement with the group from which the participants were drawn; that participation in the study was voluntary and in addition, a considerable amount of time

during the interview was spent trying to deepen pre-existing levels of trust (see above, Section 3.7). In addition, Sewpaul (1995:45) contends that as qualitative researchers are aware of their subjectivities and their influence as persons on the research process, there is a greater preoccupation with reflexivity. The fact that I am myself a refugee living in the inner city increased, on one hand my empathy and ability to interpret what the participants said, and at the same time, heightened my need for reflexivity so that I would not superimpose my own feelings and interpretations.

Accordingly, I paid attention to the way in which I could influence the study, in both the methods of data collection and in techniques of data reporting, with the view to correcting unhelpful behavior and thinking on my part. To this end I wrote a reflective journal, which served not only as a data source, but also as a basis for discussion during research supervision throughout the data collection, analysis and write-up phases of my study (Refer to Sections 3.4). Furthermore, the intended use of a voice recorder to collect data, together with a transcription of these recordings ensured that throughout the data analysis process, I could re-engage with the original voices of the participants. This enabled me to remain critical around the extent to which participants' thoughts and mine are reflective of independent thought processes; are reflective of each other in the course of our conversations; and where, especially during the distancing phase of data analysis (Terre Blanche and Kelly, 2006).

3.9. Ethical considerations

As mentioned by Smythe and Murray (2000), "to be ethical means to conform to accepted professional practices as any research endeavor, which uses and affects the lives of subjects, raises the question of ethical standards". Complying with such standards requires the researcher to keep in mind the moral worth of each individual participant, and the concrete situations in which their need for protection and safeguarding of their rights arises.

The data collection did not commence until ethical clearance was provided by the Ethics Committee of the School of Humanities, University of KwaZulu-Natal. In this study, the

following was taken into consideration during the research process and beyond in order to prevent research participants' exposure to unethical practice.

- Informed consent (See Appendix 2): prior to the interview, each participant signed an informed consent form after the researcher had explained to the participants the purpose of the study, which is primarily academic, in order to avoid erroneous expectations from the research. The process of tape recording during interviews was fully explained to the participants. Participants were also informed about the persons who will have access to the taped information; and those persons are only the researcher and her academic supervisor.

- In order "to protect the research participants from harm that might result from their participation in the research" (Hugman *et al.*, 2011), anonymity and confidentiality were assured in the safeguarding of raw data and presentation of the research findings, as well as by ensuring that no names or other identifying details have been included in either the transcripts or the research report. Dealing with refugees, the issue of confidentiality is particularly important given the nature of their past trauma and current status. I kept the names and other identifying details of all participants, as well as the data itself from public access and the real names of participants were not used. Direct quotes used in data analysis were selected in such a way as to ensure that participants could not be individually identified.

- Voluntary participation: The participants were informed that their taking part in the study is voluntary and were advised that they were free to withdraw from the research at any time should they desire to do so.

- Coming from a social work field, my experience and skills as a social worker assisted me in interviewing as well as appropriate sensitive interaction and handling of issues that arose from the interview discussions. More time was given to the participants for whom an interview session was an opportunity to talk about their issues.

- In some cases where the issues required further intervention, participants were appropriately referred to appropriate service providers. Participants (20%) who were presenting post-traumatic

stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms such as sleepless nights, flashbacks, ongoing headaches, and mood swings (Ellis *et al.*, 2008) were advised to seek medical help.

- Reporting of the findings: Chapter 4 contains an honest and accurate report on the findings of this study.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In this chapter, the study's findings are discussed based on the data collected in terms of themes and sub-themes that emanated from the process of data analysis (refer to Chapter 3, Section 3.5). The data analysis was intended to develop a picture of the lived experiences of refugees from Burundi and Rwanda facing xenophobia in South Africa. The discussion explores the participants' experiences of xenophobia in detail, along the following themes: pre-flight and flight experiences affecting the participants' interpretation of their current life circumstances; experiences and interpretations of xenophobia, and of structural forms of exclusion and marginalization; the perceived contributing factors to xenophobia; the impact of xenophobia and exclusion on their lives; and finally, survival strategies developed over the years, in response. First, however, the socio-demographic profile of the participants is discussed.

4.1. Socio-demographic profile of participants.

A total of ten persons were accessed through a combination of purposive, convenience and snowball sampling (refer to Chapter 3, Sections 3.4.1 and 3.4.2). Table 4.1 provides an overview of the study's participants using key demographic markers.

Participant ¹	Gender	Age	Marital Status	Dependents	Arrival in SA	Highest educational qualification	Country of origin
Antoine	Male	45	Married	4	1997	Tertiary	Rwanda
Beatrice	Female	35	Married	5	1999	Tertiary	Rwanda
Claudien	Male	26	Single	-	1997	Matric	Burundi
Daniel	Male	40	Married	3	2000	Matric	Rwanda
Emilie	Female	45	Married	4	1998	Tertiary	Burundi
Felicitee	Female	35	Married	2	1997	Tertiary	Rwanda
Germaine	Female	33	Married	4	1997	Matric	Burundi
Hussein	Male	36	Married	3	2002	Tertiary	Burundi
Immaculée	Female	35	Married	4	1999	Tertiary	Rwanda
Jerome	Male	46	Married	4	1998	Tertiary	Burundi

Table 4.1. Demographic profile of participants

¹ As indicated in Chapter 3.9, all names have been changed.

Five research participants came from Burundi and five from Rwanda. They speak *Kirundi* and *Kinyarwanda* respectively, as their mother tongue. *French* is their common first language. *English* is the second language they speak in the host country South Africa, together with local indigenous languages which some of them have acquired, such as *Zulu*. Five participants are female and five others are male. All the participants had been granted refugee status (compare section 3.3).

In terms of occupation and employment before flight, seven (70%) held skilled or professional employment (20% were employed in public administration, 40% were serving as teachers at secondary and tertiary levels while 10% held informal employment); the other three participants (30%) were still at high school when they fled (compare Figure 4.5). In other words, the latter three participants were educated below Matric level. The remaining seven had attained tertiary education; out of which three held postgraduate degrees (compare Figure 4.1).

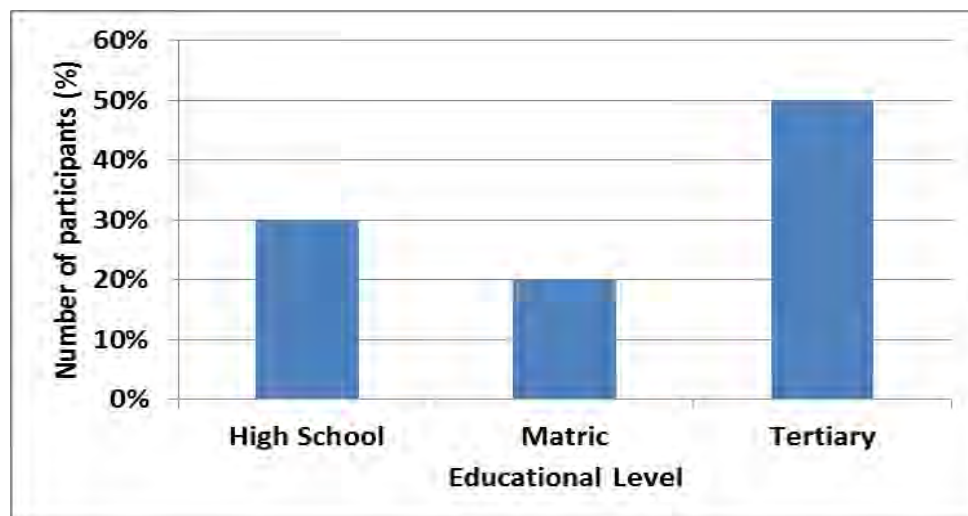


Figure 4.1. Pre-flight educational levels of research participants

All ten research participants left their respective countries Burundi and Rwanda because of ongoing, deadly ethnic conflicts. At the time of data collection (June-July 2011), the duration of the participants' stay in South Africa ranged from nine to fourteen years (Figure 4.2).

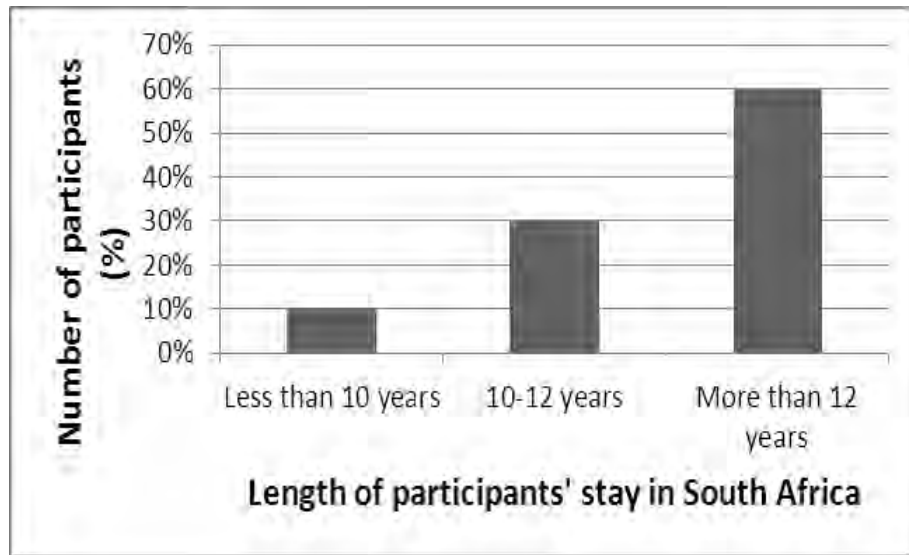


Figure 4.2. Length of stay in South Africa

Also at the time of data collection (June-July 2011), the participants' age ranged from 26 to 45 years (compare Figure 4.2).

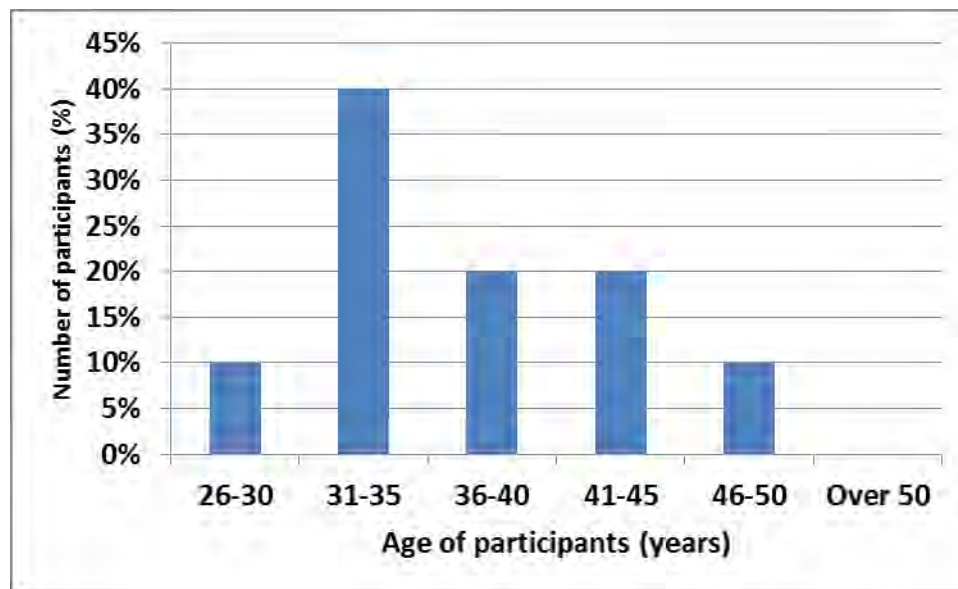


Figure 4.3: Age distribution of research participants

At this point in time (June-July 2011), nine participants are married with children, while one is still single (compare Figure 4.4).

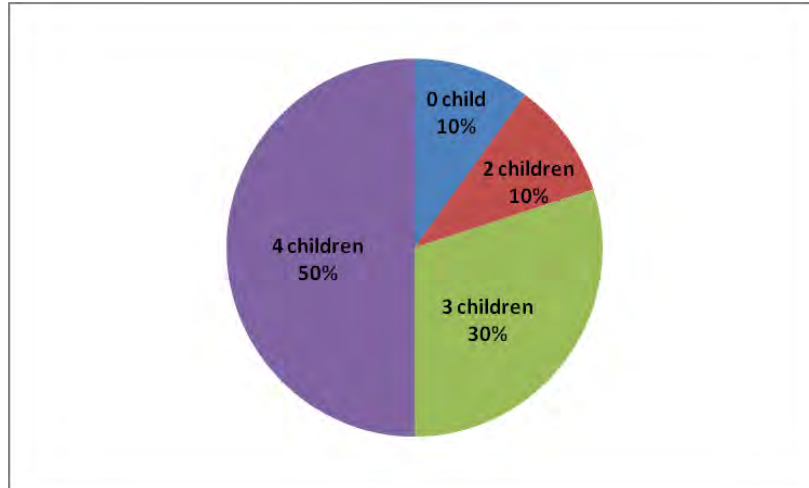


Figure 4.4. Number of participants' dependents

Two of the participants are formally employed; one is still a student; and seven others are self-employed in the informal sector as car guards, hawkers, and street vendors (compare Figure 4.5).

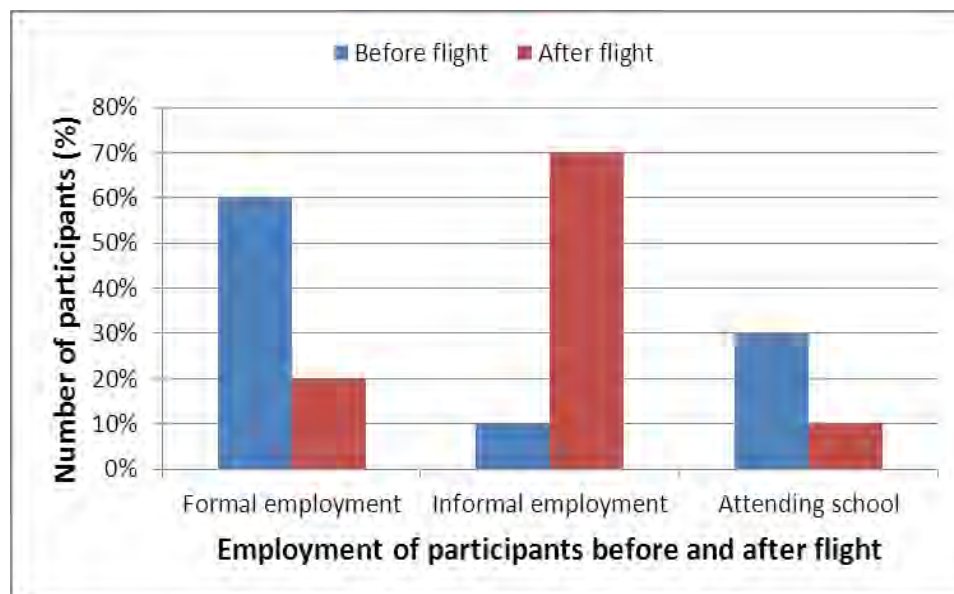


Figure 4.5. Employment status of participants before and after flight

However, before discussing the participants' current life circumstances and experiences in South Africa, their pre-flight and flight experiences are considered.

4.2. Pre-flight and flight experiences affecting the refugees' interpretation of their current life circumstances

This section examines the pre-immigration experiences of the participants which comprise their experiences both before and during the flight. During the interviews, participants highlighted fear for their lives and the lives of loved ones; loss of family and separation; loss of home, loss of possessions and socioeconomic status, a hard and long journey to exile, witnessing of arbitrary suffering and death of close friends, relatives and strangers; as well as imprisonment for lack of personal documentation. In the following, they are organised in terms of participants' *initial trauma* related to *mass killings* and the multiple losses accompanying it (compare Section 4.2.1), the refugees' *deprivation, secondary displacement and re-traumatisation* experienced along their journey to exile (compare Section 4.2.2); and finally, their *imprisonment as a form of re-traumatisation upon arrival* in supposedly safe destination countries (compare Section 4.2.3). All of the above impacted the participants' ability to adapt and adjust in the host country, which includes their respective interpretations of, and ways of coping with, xenophobia and structural forms of exclusion.

4.2.1. Pre-flight experiences: Mass killings and initial trauma

The experience of being a refugee typically involves the amassing of stressful and traumatic events. According to Fischman (2008:107), "trauma is an emotional shock caused by experiencing or witnessing acts of war, mass killings, religious, political or ethnic persecution, domestic abuse, incest, rape, genital mutilation, and human trafficking". Trauma-induced stress, "commonly called Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), may occur when a person experienced, witnessed or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of others; and the persons involved experienced intense fear, helplessness or horror" (Bhugra and Jones, 2001:222). Common symptoms of trauma-induced stress, or PTS "include fear, helplessness, horror, anger, rage, sleep disturbances, alterations in memory, irritability, difficulty concentrating, re-experiencing traumatic events, avoidance or numbing to avoid thoughts and feelings connected with traumatic events, detachment, and estrangement from others" (Murray *et al.*, 2008).

Fischman (2008:108) stated that “the consequences of trauma induced stress (PTSD) vary widely according to diverse variables, such as victim’s age, the pre-trauma psychological context, the nature and severity of trauma, and the support received following the trauma”. Evidence of this can indeed be traced in the data collected for this study.

The research participants are from the countries of Burundi and Rwanda. Both countries have been ravaged by civil wars and ethnic conflicts resulting in mass displacements and killing of civilians (see above, Chapter 2, Section 2.1.1). Prior to leaving their country of origin, all ten participants had been exposed to traumatic events such as witnessing the killing of family members and/or friends, walking over or sleeping among dead bodies, being unable to bury loved ones, living in camps, as well as being subjected to brutality and starvation. Particularly harrowing to all the participants (100%) was that during these ethnic conflicts and mass killings, it was very difficult to identify whom they could trust because the perpetrators included people well known to the victims – including neighbors, even relatives. This made it difficult for the survivors to overcome the pain caused to them by people they had once trusted. For example, Immaculée shared how she witnessed the burning of the family house and the killing of her mother:

I had hidden in a tea plantation in the area. I saw my neighbor [ward counselor] leading an armed group of militiamen. They were heading to our house. As they entered the house, they killed my mother who could not hide because she was sick and unable to go hide in the bushes..... [There is a moment of silence]. Many houses were burnt and many people were killed in the area (interview dated 23 July 2011; highlights and bracket added).

Note that Immaculée appeared to find it difficult to describe this experience in anything other than factual terms; there is no description of any *feelings* of horror and loss, as much as there is no verbalization of outrage at the brutality and injustice of the atrocity committed against an elderly woman – her mother. However, the participants did not lose their family members only through killings. Even if people survived the initial waves of violence, they could still lose their loved ones through separation. In the following quotation, Hussein expresses his feelings of loss and separation from his family members as follows:

Before the open ethnic conflict, my family has been a large one. I lived with my parents, brothers, nieces and nephews. *Now I am struggling alone here.* My parents were killed, one brother is in Uganda and I do not know the whereabouts of others... [in a sad and agitated voice] (interview dated 8 July 2011; highlights and bracket added).

The two examples illustrate how refugees do not all arrive in a new country as part of an integral family. Indeed, all ten of this study's participants experienced losses such as those described by Immaculée and Hussein. As such, their accounts demonstrate how prior to arrival in South Africa, the participants were already traumatized by the circumstances that forced them to run away from their home countries.

4.2.2. The journey to exile: Deprivation, secondary displacement and re-traumatization

The research found that none of the participants came to South Africa straight from their countries of origin. The Burundians fled from the 1993 civil war following the assassination of the elected President Ndadaye Melchior. The Rwandans fled their country because of the genocide that devastated Rwanda in 1994. Apart from this, the experiences narrated by all ten research participants were remarkably similar. They all fled to the neighboring country of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). They were all directed to refugee camps. Life in the camps was not easy because the international community fell short by far of supplying the amount of resources that would have been required to respond adequately to the needs of such a huge number of refugees arriving over such a short time (Adelman, 2003). According to Chaulia (2010), there was an estimated 1,250,000 refugees in Eastern Zaïre (DRC) in October 1996 with 1,100,000 from Rwanda and 150,000 from Burundi. Antoine shared his experiences on arrival in refugee camps in DRC:

We (family) arrived in DRC after two weeks of walking day and night. We were happy to be far from shootings and bombings, but *the life was too tough*. In the first days, *there were so many people without food, without access to water, without facilities such as shelters, toilets; and people were dying in numbers of hunger and diseases*. After two months of misery, the UNHCR came in to provide a humanitarian relief through distribution of food, tents, medications and water (interview dated 11 June 2011; highlights and brackets added).

In other words, having been displaced by mass killings and civil war, Antoine and his family now found themselves deprived of the resources to meet their basic needs and ensure their survival. While life in refugee camps was not viable, the participants were trying to make the best from the worse. But then, between 1996 and 1998, the DRC was itself shaken by a deadly civil war, which displaced 476,000 Congolese citizens alone (Passant, 2009). This forced the participants to flee again. Because they could not go back to their respective home countries, they took a long walk to the nearest country which is Tanzania. Germaine's account of this leg of her journey is particularly detailed and best able to illuminate what all the other participants went through as well. In the following, she shared how it took her family two weeks of walking to get from the DRC to Tanzania:

I was in a refugee camp in DRC, Southern Kivu Province, Uvira region. We left the camp on the 2nd of October 1996 following a blaze due to shooting and bombing during the 1996 civil war [DRC]. It was worse than what we experienced before we left our country. *There was only one road along the Lake Tanganyika surrounded by steep mountains. We were so many people fleeing [Rwandese, Burundians and Congolese] that it was very difficult to walk. There was no food, no water; we had to drink water from the lake with the risk of contracting different diseases. There was no transport; people walked until their feet were swollen and their shoes were worn out. Children and aged people were getting tired of walking and were left behind resulting on some being killed or lost; pregnant women were giving birth on the road without any professional support. It was a complete disaster.* By chance we crossed the Lake Tanganyika and were received in November 1996 in a transit camp located in the border city of Kigoma, Tanzania (interview dated 17 July 2011; highlights and brackets added).

According to Kammerer and Mazelis (2006:9), “the term re-traumatization is used to designate re-experiencing interpersonal trauma again, especially later in life after an earlier trauma”. As such, Antoine's account of deprivation and Germaine's accounts of further violence and a second wave of displacement both meet the criteria of re-traumatization. And yet, these were only the first in a string of re-traumatising circumstances and events in the research participants' lives. While it was a great relief to be able to cross into Tanzania from the war torn country of Congo, refugees from Rwanda and Burundi were not as lucky as their Congolese counterparts. Rwandan refugees were subjected to a Forced Repatriation Agreement that had since been concluded between the country of Tanzania and their country of origin, while Burundian refugees were

subjected to massive and suspicious ‘round-ups’ of all Burundians living outside refugee camps or settlements (Whitaker, 2002). Germaine continued telling about her hard and long journey from Tanzania to South Africa.

While I was in the Kigoma [Tanzania] transit camp, I was thinking to be out of danger. However, *I and other refugees received a notice from UNHCR and the Tanzanian government officials that a repatriation treaty to be executed in January 1997 was concluded between UNHCR as a refugee caretaker, Tanzania as a host country; Rwanda and Burundi as countries of origin of concerned refugees. It was really bad news and I had to manage to get out of Tanzania as soon as possible. This time I wanted to go as far as possible.* The idea of living in camps was no more an option because of the lack of freedom of movements as well as the risk of being an easy target of forced repatriation (interview dated 17 July 2011; highlights added).

None of refugees had yet been given the opportunity to process the traumatic events that had led to their initial displacement from Burundi and Rwanda, or to process the re-traumatising events that led to their subsequent displacement from the DRC-based refugee camps. Instead, all the research participants (100%) were now exposed to the threat of being forcibly returned to the very point where their journey had begun. The fear and anxiety this must have evoked should therefore be considered as yet another point of re-traumatisation in the participants’ lives.

All in all then, Antoine’s and Germaine’s recollections demonstrate how the participants’ journeys from their countries of origin to South Africa were filled with heartache, and how it was about ‘survival of the fittest’. They lost their family members, their home and their belongings; and they suffered both physically and emotionally. During their flight, they found themselves severely deprived, at times struggling to survive. Moreover, they were exposed to the suffering and death of countless others when the conditions of their flight and their own need for survival made it impossible to assist anyone who proved more vulnerable than themselves.

4.2.3. Imprisonment along the participants’ journey and further re-traumatisation

Unsurprisingly in view of their multiple forms of displacement, the research participants’ respective journeys were marred by a lack of proper documentation. This resulted in some of the

male participants being caught and imprisoned while crossing international borders. Having escaped mass killings and other gross human rights' violations in their respective countries of origin, three participants were imprisoned upon arrival in supposedly safe destination points. One participant was arrested on the Tanzanian border of Mozambique, while two participants were arrested on the Mozambican border of South Africa, in each case because of a lack of travelling documents. All three men indicated that they were imprisoned for periods between two and five weeks, with all being released after being interviewed and identified by immigration officers. Yet, such imprisonment is in contravention of the 1951 UN Refugees Protocol (UNHCR, 1967:3), to which both South Africa and Mozambique are signatories, and which states that "refugees who escape from dangerous and life threatening conditions should not be penalized for entering a country illegally". But more than that, being imprisoned constituted another haunting experience for the refugees who were strangers without connection with the outside world, and thus, without anyone to visit or to provide them with the care and support (financial, emotional and psychological) needed by a prisoner. Antoine shared the following experience:

On our way coming to South Africa, we were stopped at the Northern KwaZulu-Natal border of Mangusi by the police and we were held in Mangusi Police Station cells. *When we told the police we fled our countries because of on-going civil war, we were told that we will be freed by the migration officers after our identification and interviews...*[shedding tears]. *The migration officers came after two weeks*, took us to the nearest migration office of Empangeni for interviews, after what they provided us with refugee permits allowing us to walk free within South Africa (interview dated 11 June 2011; highlights added).

Like Immaculée (above, Section 4.2.1) and Germaine (above, Section 4.2.2), Antoine restricted himself to giving a matter-of-fact type account of the incident. But unlike them, he expressed the emotional content of his experience non-verbally. Although he was not physically harmed during his stay in prisons, this suggests that the experience left emotional scars behind. As such, his experience may be considered to be yet another incident of re-traumatization. This is made explicit by Jerome who was arrested while crossing the North-Western Mozambican border:

I was imprisoned in Mozambique (Tête) for illegally crossing the border. We were overcrowded in the prison, there was no proper lighting, no ventilation, and we had to sleep on the floor, what constituted a health hazard. Because it was the year end, we were only heard and freed after four weeks of detention. *It was*

traumatizing to be imprisoned with criminals of all kinds when you have in mind that you were caught for just trying to save your life (interview dated 3 July 2011; highlights and brackets added).

Unlike Antoine, Jerome did articulate a sense of injustice at what was done to him, but he did not do so in terms of outrage and anger, but rather by using a language of trauma and victimhood. Like the other two men concerned, he did not even entertain the idea of asking to be compensated for his detention, even though he had been detained illegally. Mullaly (2007:276) and Dominelli (2002:10-11) indicated that one of the possible responses to oppression consists of an acceptance of existing, unjust conditions as a matter of course; without the belief that there are other available responses, such as resistance to the injustices endured. However, given that by the time he left Tanzania, Jerome had already had multiple experiences of complete powerlessness, it is hard to think how he would have retained the capacity for any other response other than to resign himself to naming, without openly challenging, the wrong that was done to him.

It is worth noting that three out of five males, but none of the female participants, were imprisoned. Matzopoulos *et al.* (2009:2) indicated that “discrimination and violence against refugees (migrants) need to be viewed in context of broader structural and institutional discrimination that is evident in discriminatory government policies and/or abuse of refugees by civil servants (police)”. This may suggest that the reason for the arrest of so many males as opposed to female participants might be that the police target male refugees more than females as male refugees/immigrants are suspected of being criminals, robbers, drug dealers or illegal traders. The sum total of the chain of pre-flight and flight-related trauma in the lives of the research participants is depicted in Figure 4.6.

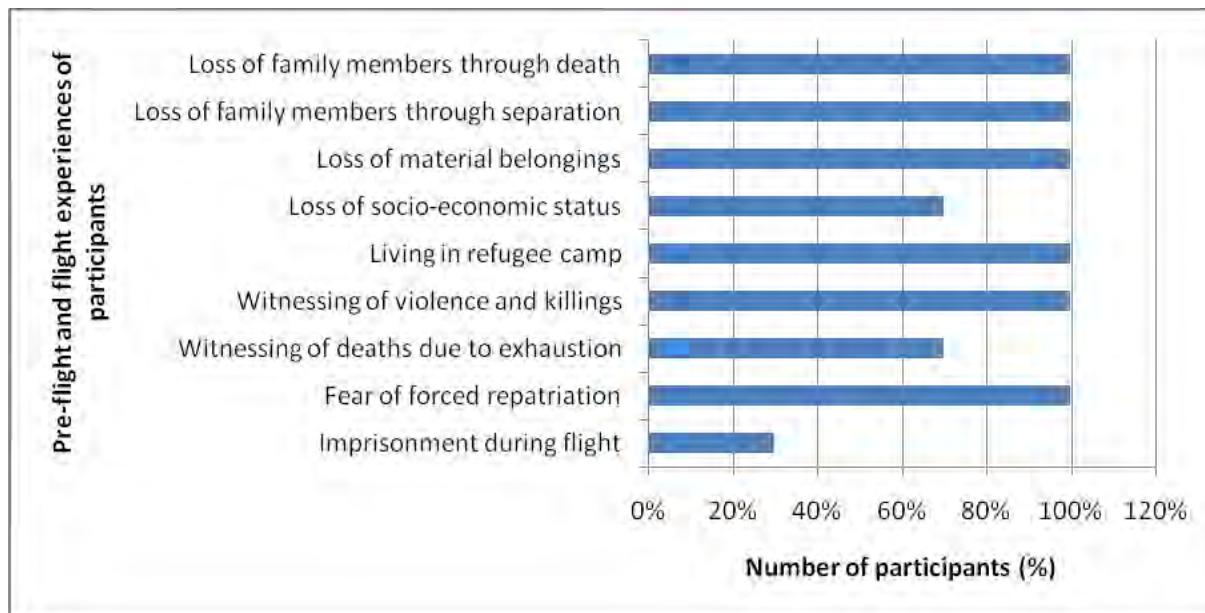


Figure 4.6. Participants' pre-flight and flight experiences

None of the participants indicated that they had received any form of psycho-social counselling or psycho-therapy since they arrived in South Africa. And yet, the majority of research participants (80%) named a range of psychosomatic symptoms, all of which suggest difficulties in coping with the past. These include problems with sleep, such as difficulty falling asleep or interrupted sleep during the night, chronic headaches, nervousness, bone and joint pains and anxiety. The findings of this study therefore support Matzopoulos *et al.*'s (2009:42) claim that "migrants experience losses that affect their mental health by contributing to depression, disorientation, and marginalization". In short, on arriving in South Africa, the participants were already under strain because of their pre-flight and flight experiences. But they arrived in the hope of rebuilding their lives and to do so, they needed a warm welcome and support from their counterparts South Africans. As asserted by George (2009:64): "Refugee-host relationships can create an atmosphere that either aids or hinders the personal adjustment of refugees". Additional stressors such as xenophobia and structural forms of exclusion would feed into and exacerbate, rather than ameliorating, the physiological, psychological and social vulnerabilities of refugees acquired prior to their arrival in their host country.

4.3. Post-flight experiences affecting refugees' lives: xenophobia

It is now possible to begin examining the xenophobia-related experiences in the day-to-day lives of experiences among refugees from Rwanda and Burundi residing in the Durban inner city in their day to day lives. The research participants are among those refugees who landed in Durban after a hard and long journey from their war torn countries of Burundi and Rwanda, and who had decided to settle in Durban because either they met already settled fellow countrymen (women), or they had run out of means to continue their journey to other areas in South Africa as shared by Immaculee.

I managed to get in South Africa (Durban) in July 1997 from Tanzania through Malawi and Mozambique. *When I arrived in Durban, I was completely out of means to be able to go anywhere else and I decided to settle with the help of a countrywoman* who arrived in Durban five months before me (interview dated 23 July 2011; highlights and brackets added).

Thereafter, the participants began their struggles to rebuild their lives. However, they confronted a number of challenges including language barriers, lack of access to essential services, as well as ongoing xenophobia. As this section shows, there is a little doubt that the prevalence of xenophobia in South Africa has psychological, social and economic implications on the study participants' lives. The common xenophobia-related problems the participants shared include: verbal abuse and name calling; psychological problems such as feelings of isolation, fear and powerlessness; lack of social integration and consequently the lack of a sense of belonging, as well as economic marginalization.

4.3.1. Verbal abuse, social marginalization and their effects on psycho-social well-being.

According to Mullaly (2007:261), in order “to understand the meaning and practice of oppression, we must go beyond viewing oppression as the conscious and intentional acts of one group against another”. Xenophobic treatments involve intimidation and acts of violence thereby being the mechanism of oppression which intends to reiterate the injustice that characterises South African society. This is expressed by “many people [who] contribute to maintaining and reproducing oppression in carrying out many of their day-to-day activities, yet they do not

understand themselves to be agents of oppression” (ibid...). The participants’ day-to-day experiences which are discussed below occur at individual, social and institutional levels.

4.3.1.1. Verbal abuse and name callings.

The research found that it was common for the participants to be called by dehumanizing and derogatory terms, such as *kwerekwere*, which are usually associated with negativity such as criminality, theft, and other social ills. The term *kwerekwere* in particular, connotes South Africans’ attitudes towards participants whom they consider as ‘others’ that are benefiting undeservedly from their hard earned democracy. All the participants (100%) indicated that they had experienced verbal abuse, such as name calling. This included being addressed in a stigmatizing manner such as “*How are you doing kwerekwere*”, and receiving verbal threats, some disguised as jokes and idle banter from local South Africans. An example given by several participants was: “*This is not your country, why you do not go back home*”? Open threats included the following: “*If you do not want to go back to your country, you will die here*”.

Participants explained that they tended to be identified as foreigners by South Africans by their language or way of dressing. For instance, Hussein recounts:

It was in the middle of 2010 Soccer World Cup campaign. I was in the queue inside a bank when a black staff member proceeded to ask each person on the line how he can be helped. When he asked me in Zulu, I could not respond and we communicated in English. Thus, *people on the queue realized that I was a foreigner. One of them said: ‘These ‘kwerekwere’ are everywhere; there is not even one place you can go to without meeting them: in the schools, in the hospitals, in the shops, in the taxi ranks, in the markets, and now in the banks. They are becoming a headache for us. I think we have to sort them out for good’. Pointing a finger to me, she said: ‘You will see who we are after the World Cup. Whoever does not want to get hurt can go back to his home country before the end of the World cup, because after it will be too late’.* To hear these scary words inside the bank...made me fear for my life (interview dated 8 July 2011; highlights added).

Against this background of the multiple trauma and re-traumatization already experienced and which such open threats tapped into, it is unsurprising that all the participants indicated that fear was a feature of their day-to-day experiences in relation to South Africans. As a result, eight out of ten participants stated that they found it difficult to trust their fellow South Africans and did not consider South Africa as a safe place to live in as a refugee. This is in line with the findings of Legget (2003:54) in a study done in Johannesburg which indicated that “81% of foreign nationals feel unsafe compared to 38% of South Africans”. It was confirmed further by Landau *et al.* (2005:25) who indicated that “foreign nationals are far less likely to feel secure on the streets, even during the day”.

However, it is important to note that feelings of fear and insecurity are not the only effect xenophobic utterances had on the participants. Other emotions elicited in the participants included feeling unwanted, unaccepted and hurt. This was emphasized by Claudien who stated that:

People from here are not friendly at all; I do not know how I can describe them especially the black people. One day I took a public taxi from South Beach to market (Indian market) to buy vegetables. I paid R20 for transport fare and I had to get back R17 change. When I asked for my change in English, as I do not know Zulu, I never got it. Instead I was called by all names, and they told me to jump off quickly as I used English while I am not a white. They called me ‘kwerekwere’ and other Zulu words that I could not understand. Everyone in the minibus was laughing at me and no one spoke on my behalf. Instead, they started shouting at me saying: ‘Hamba! Hamba! Kwerekwere! (go away, go away, foreigner). Where are you coming from? Why are you here?’ I ran away to save my life, and I left my change behind. I jumped off the taxi feeling humiliated and unwanted (interview dated 28 June 2011; highlights and brackets added).

Together, the participants’ accounts highlight the extent to which they feel exposed and unprotected in South Africa. The majority of such offenses go unreported (as in the incidents quoted above), not necessarily because of unwillingness of the victims to report, but their inability to provide sufficient proof (ODIHR, 2008:48). Sigsworth (2010:2) adds to this finding by indicating that “most of the xenophobia-related offenses are unreported because foreigners are fearful of the police in an environment where the police have a reputation for complicity in corruption, intimidation and abuse of foreigners”. Likewise, the research found that all ten

participants perceived verbal abuse and name calling as a sign of resentment, of being “outsiders” (foreigners to the community, society or national identity) who could be humiliated, abused or called horrible names any time and without any other reason than because of who they were.

In a study done by Dzelme (2008:6) on refugees in Latvia, it was reported that “experiences of hate incidents [including verbal abuse] ... [affect] the sense of the victim’s self-confidence both as an individual and as a minority group member”. And indeed, while acceptance of participants by local populations would have been required to allow them to function effectively in their host country, the experience of rejection and exclusion seemed to leave this study’s participants with feelings of vulnerability, helplessness and of being out of control in a world that seemed no longer predictable. This was emphasized by Antoine:

When someone calls you names or swears at you because of who you are, *you do not know what to do and where to go. It is a violation of human essence, and you can never change who you are while you did not choose to become who you are now.* I am very cautious when it comes to trust South Africans. To me, being a refugee in South Africa is a punishment (interview dated 11 June 2011; highlights added).

Mullaly (2007:253) indicated that “what determines oppression is when ...forms of injustice [including verbal abuse, name calling, threats] happen to a person not because of individual merit or failure, but because of his [or her] membership in a particular group or category of people”. It appears then that threats and name calling in the absence of effective recourse to justice created a pervasive atmosphere of humiliation, hurt and fear in the lives of the participants. The effects of this situation are discussed in terms of the participants’ psychological well-being below (see Section 4.3.1.3).

4.3.1.2. Lack of social cohesion and social integration.

After hard-hitting pre-flight and flight experiences, the research participants came to South Africa with hope of certain relief. In order to understand their respective levels of involvement in local community activities and their levels of integration, participants were asked whether or

not they felt as if they were part of South African society. Although it appeared that all ten participants did have daily interactions and contacts with South Africans that were not characterized by open hostilities, the research found that even in the absence of such open hostility, eight (80%) of the participants considered these interactions and contacts to be superficial at best and an expression of resentment, even passive aggression, at worst. For example, Beatrice felt that,

South Africans seem very distant and unwilling to make friends with us, even when we make efforts to approach them (interview dated 20 June 2011; highlights added).

And Antoine summarized and interpreted his experiences with South Africans as follows:

Locals do not care about refugees; they are not friendly towards refugees at all because they hate non-South Africans. They consider all immigrants including refugees as criminals and drug dealers. Even when they happen to talk to one of the refugees asking about the situation back in the country of origin, it is not that they care, because they always end up by asking him when he is going back. You get a feeling that they are pretending to be nice while they are being hypocrite (interview dated 11 June 2011; highlights and brackets added).

Two participants (20%) reported that they had made a few close and trustworthy South African friends. But even this did not therefore translate into positive and reassuring experiences. A study done by Mang'ana (2004:40) with the Congolese refugees found that the "Congolese refugees who tried to establish friendships with South Africans, gave up after realizing that their efforts were not successful, but others (the majority) confessed that they did not find it worth trying because they know South Africans are xenophobic and hostile towards foreigners in general and refugees in particular". Likewise, one of the participants in this study, Claudien, reported that he would not commit himself to relationships with local young ladies because of his previous experience where he was not accepted by his ex-girlfriend's parents and friends who believed that her relationship with a foreigner was unacceptable.

I broke up with my girlfriend because of not being accepted by her parents and friends. She decided to end the friendship with me after her parents refused to welcome me in their family because I am a foreigner, as well as the comments she

was receiving from her friends who instead of asking her: how is your boyfriend; asked her: how is your 'kwerekwere' (interview dated 28 June 2011; foreigner)? (Highlights added)

Note that Claudien started out by saying that he ended the relationship with his South African girlfriend, only to go on to explain that it was indeed her who 'broke up' with him. Claudien's apparent difficulty in verbalising his experience of rejection together with his subsequent withdrawal from any further attempts to commit to trusting relationships with South Africans suggests that the non-acceptance of participants by South Africans can be as damaging as open xenophobic hostilities in that they, too, penetrate the sense of self of the persons thus rejected, creating suspicion and fear. The rejection inflicted by fellow human beings appeared to shatter the already deeply damaged trust in all the research participants (100%), that other human beings are fundamentally benign.

Claudien was inclined to say more generally that it was very difficult for refugees to make friends in South Africa as:

I have colleague students who I can call friends. We meet regularly, we talk, discuss, but all our contacts are only school related. No one has been at other one's house or introduced to other one's family members. I have never been invited to any ceremony or party as I did not feel like I can invite anyone (interview dated 28 June 2011; highlights added).

This statement expresses how contacts and interactions between participants and their counterpart South Africans were superficial, distant or neutral due to a lack of trust. The research found in the case of all ten participants that their interactions were mostly limited to business: no more interactions after work, school, or religious activities; interactions at personal level were very rare. It appeared that because of what is happening to refugees and other foreign nationals, participants felt that South Africa was not a country they should consider as a home.

Germaine shares her feelings about being a refugee in South Africa:

If there was no sea around, I should have carried on going, because *I do not feel that I can go back home...I do not think I have a future here* (interview dated 17 July 2011; highlights added).

In other words, because of her day-to-day experiences, Germaine appeared to have lost hope, feeling instead that she did not belong in South Africa.

Even the two participants who were formally employed indicated that they did not want to enter into any long term investments, like buying a house or taking out long term insurance policies (funeral cover, life cover, or educational plan). They felt that they are in the wrong place at the wrong time as expressed by Daniel in the following statement:

Life is not easy in this country for a refugee. *We are always on the run. No one knows what will happen tomorrow. You cannot build or buy a house because you cannot take it with you in your run. We are just here because we have no choice.* We keep praying that peace can be restored so we can go back to our home country (interview dated 25 June 2011; highlights added).

Daniel's thoughts emphasize that the pre-migration experiences of participants, including losses of family and belongings as well as multiple forced relocations, influence their interpretation of xenophobic threats and shape their ways of living, thinking and planning for the future. For example Daniel survived the 1994 inter-ethnic conflict in his home country Rwanda and his education was interrupted. He escaped forced repatriation in Zaire [DRC] and Tanzania [Field notes of June 20, 2011]. As in Daniel's case, another four participants who went through similar experiences of multiple losses [family members and belongings] and multiple relocations were not optimistic. They thought that with the prevalence of xenophobia, which they considered as life threatening, they did not have the courage to plan for the future, especially through short or long term investments because they might have to run again any time.

The research found that adjusting to a foreign culture often involved changes in identity, values, behavior, thoughts and attitudes for the participants. Making such changes appeared to be a source of stress for all ten participants and constituted a big challenge in a country where they felt unwelcome. Antoine expressed his concerns about his future in South Africa:

When one feels welcomed in a society, he/she is encouraged to learn its language, its culture and he/she ends up feeling that he/she belongs there. But here in South Africa, the way local people treat us (refugees) like “outsiders”, *I do not even bother to learn their language(s) because they won’t give me a chance to communicate with them.* Instead of noticing my learning efforts, they use it as a way of mockeries for some and ill-treatment for others. *This reminds me that I am not and I will never be accepted in South Africa* (interview dated 11 June 2011; highlights added).

From the above statement, it is clear that participants found it difficult to integrate in their new environment where they felt unwanted. This constituted a barrier to the use of their full potential to progress and improve their living conditions. Because of ill-treatment at the hands of local people, experienced by the participants on a daily basis, none of the participants felt free to talk in crowds. They did not feel free to go anywhere they wanted to because of fear of the South Africans they should meet there. The research found that this avoidance of interaction with local South Africans signified the refugees’ more general sense of isolation and lack of integration which appeared to have had a substantial impact on the participants’ psychological well-being.

4.3.1.3. Effects of xenophobic experiences on the psychological well-being of refugees

As discussed in Section 4.3.1.1 and 4.3.1.2, the study found that in one way or another, all participants (100%) had experienced both open xenophobic threats and subtle xenophobic rejection from local South Africans. One of the common responses, identified by the participants of being a victim of xenophobia, was a sense of anger, which appeared to arise from a deep sense of personal hurt and betrayal. This was in addition to experiences of feeling powerless, isolated, sad and suspicious, as well as experiencing a persistent fear of victimization and fear for their own and for their family’s safety. When an individual is exposed to a traumatic event, there is always a significant subjective component in his/her response to it. This section explores in more detail the implications of these sensibilities for the participants’ psychological well-being.

Beatrice testified how she was seriously emotionally disturbed by the events of the May 2008 xenophobic pogroms which she experienced as similar to the events that had caused her to flee her country of origin:

I was emotionally disturbed by the May 2008 xenophobic attacks and feared for my safety. I had to be hospitalized due to the trauma I was experiencing. *I was reliving the nightmare that I ran away from.* I was a victim of ethnic violence in my native country. I have witnessed my parents being tortured and burnt to death. At the age of nineteen, I decided to leave my country to Tanzania. Under the threat of forced repatriation, I decided to leave Tanzania to South Africa. I was physically abused during my journey. *The May 2008 xenophobic violence reawakened all these memories* (interview dated 20 June 2011; highlights added).

As discussed in Chapter 2 and Sections 4.3, all participants irrespective of country of origin, gender or age, had common experiences of trauma such as dislocation and losses during the mass killings, ongoing civil war and ethnic cleansing. All the participants lost all their belongings and had most of their family members, friends and colleagues killed. All the participants revealed that they had left their respective countries because of the life threatening situation. These pre-migration experiences together with the considerable challenges of settling into a new country, including xenophobia, significantly affected the participants' adjustment and well-being in the host country. This was evident in the following statement by Germaine from Burundi:

When I see on TV and in the newspapers the acts of violence directed to foreigners in general and refugees in particular, it reminds me the sad events I run away from in my country. I have lost all my belongings when my house was burnt. My parents and two siblings were killed in an attack on their house by militiamen. What happens reminds me of these horrific moments, *and brings back nightmares* (interview dated 17 July 2011; highlights added).

In the following quotation, Beatrice from Rwanda added that what she experienced in South Africa as a refugee felt almost like a repeat of what she had run away from in her native country:

South Africans insult us, swear at us and hate us because of not being South Africans. I have seen on TV people being killed. It is the same situation I ran away from in my country where people were killed only because of who they are (their ethnic group). This makes me realize that I ran away from a life threatening situation to a similar one (interview dated 20 June 2011; highlights added).

The above quotations illustrate how the participants' pre-immigration experiences affected their confidence and competence in dealing with conflict or ill-treatment in their land of refuge. The ill-treatment clearly reminds them of what had caused them to become refugees in the first place.

All the participants were traumatized by their experiences back home where they were separated from or had lost relatives and friends, and had been forced to abandon their homes and/or possessions, as well as their ways of life (refer to Chapter 2 and Section 4.3). All the participants (100%) indicated that they suffered feelings of fear and vulnerability. This is in line with the findings of research done by Murray *et al.* (2008) who showed that “post-migration stressors can have a significant impact on settlement outcomes of refugees. The stressful living conditions of participants caused by xenophobic threats exacerbate refugees’ loss of identity, agency and meaning in life, leading to feelings of purposelessness, helplessness and powerlessness”. Antoine depicted this as follows:

I was one evening in a bus going back to my shelter. When I asked the driver to drop me (using English), I heard several commuters shouting the name ‘kwerekwere’ after what one guy pushed me by behind. *I desperately rushed to the bus door and jumped off with such rush and humiliation* that I was nearly hit by a passing car... *Sometimes I ask myself if I am a human being* (interview 11 June 2011; highlights and brackets added).

Riedesser *et al.* (1996:15) argued that “continuous exposure to conflict can result in feelings of hopelessness and even depression. Thus xenophobic treatment can have profound debilitating effects on the victims”. Structural social work (Mullaly, 2007:216-224) “views social problems as arising from a specific societal context rather than the failing of individuals. It critically links the personal and the political; the individual and the structural; or private troubles and public issues”. Xenophobic threats make the participants feel powerless, without the ability to retaliate against the threats and dehumanizing actions. Accordingly, it did not appear that the participants in this study accepted their situation, but rather they found themselves in a position where they came to experience themselves without control. As a result, it appeared that all the participants felt degraded and humiliated, and this had an impact on their self-esteem and well-being generally.

4.3.2. Economic marginalization

The participants’ well-being was not merely affected by their experience of hostility, resentment and subsequent lack of social integration, but by a high degree of economic marginalization and

hardship as well. Mullaly (2007:266) indicated that “economic marginalization excludes whole groups of people from useful and meaningful participation in society, which in turn may lead to severe material deprivation”. Economic marginalization constituted a severe form of oppression experienced by the participants. It deprived them of opportunities to actively participate in the economy in order to meet their basic needs and to contribute to the growth of the host country. In order to understand the participants’ experiences in obtaining employment, they were asked about their educational levels which are reported in the Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 shows that all of the participants were educated up to secondary level, with the majority (70%) educated up to tertiary level, that is, they were professionals in their various fields. Thus since they had the skills and were willing to work in the country, the participants in this study could be viable instruments in constructively contributing to the growth of South African economy. This is in line with the findings of a study done by Jacobsen (2005:48) who found that “refugees often bring with them new or different skills, more business experience than their local counterparts, and knowledge of markets in their home countries”. This also contradicts the common portrait painted in South Africa of foreigners in general, and refugees in particular, as unskilled, uneducated, criminals who impact negatively on the South African economy (Harris, 2001; Palmary, 2002).

Not only could participants, through employment, support themselves and their families but also contribute to the South African economy and poverty alleviation. Thus, labor market participation would have been an important component of the participant’s integration into South African society. However, the research found that this was hampered amongst other things by a lack of recognition of prior qualifications as well as a lack of local work experience. The six participants who had been formally employed before flight (compare Figure 4.5) indicated that their foreign certificates were not acknowledged.

It is in this context that some of the demographic information presented in Section 4.1 need to be interpreted: In spite of the participants’ levels of education (compare Table 4.1), and in stark of contrast to their levels of employment back home (compare Figure 4.5), even after an average of eleven to twelve years in South Africa (compare Figure 4.2), only two out of ten participants

managed to secure employment in the formal economy (compare Figure 4.5). This suggests that on account of being foreigners, this study's refugee participants suffered systematic, that is structural, forms of economic marginalization as defined by Mullaly (2007).

The lack of economic integration through employment leads many refugees to live in isolation, failing to learn the local languages. Indeed, it is very difficult to learn a new language when one is unemployed or lives isolated from the rest of the population. At the same time, it is also difficult to obtain a job without speaking the native and/or official language. As a result, some of the study's participants elected to improve their English knowledge and undertake studies to obtain South African qualifications, thereby trying to increase their chances of employment. However, as indicated by Jerome in the following statement, on the completion of their studies they further barriers, such not having the correct documentation, for example a green, South African Identity Document:

Either you are educated or not, life is the same if you are a refugee here (South Africa). *I am a graduate in Science from the National University of Rwanda. I am working with local security guards who did not even finish their Matric. And some time I regret why I went to school when they ask me why I do not use my qualifications to get a better job. They even think that I am joking and do not believe that I am educated. I tried to look for job where I can teach Sciences but I did not succeed. Wherever I apply for job, they ask me among other things for an ID document. As we refugees are provided with a maroon ID with a two years validity (corresponding to the status permit validity), they never see it as a valuable document and expect me to produce a green ID (reference to the South African green identity document) (interview dated 3 July 2011; highlights and brackets added).*

Felicitee shared the following experience in her attempts to secure employment:

Whatever qualification and experience you should have, no employer in South Africa will employ you if you are a refugee. *Thinking that I should get a job with a South African qualification, I completed a degree in Accounting from UKZN, but still I cannot get a job while old South African schoolmates I have met told me they were working. I sent my CV to many companies with my refugee status permit and my maroon ID book, but I do not get any feedback (interview dated 12 July 2011; highlights added).*

Such experiences are in stark contrast to the provisions of the South African Constitution which states, in Chapter 2, Section 23 (1), that “Everyone has the right to fair labor practices”. They are also contrary to the statement of Kamwimbi *et al.* (2010:76) that “refugees, asylum seekers and other foreign nationals with correct legal documents enjoy the right to work in South Africa, including the rights to self-employment and entering into contracts and leases. For both refugees and asylum seekers, the status document issued by the DHA provides proof of their right to work”. Felicitee’s statement demonstrates that an ‘in principle’ entitlement can be meaningless to the entitled person when it fails to translate into actual opportunities on the ground.

Unemployment was an additional source of stress in the lives of the participants. Out of the eight participants who found themselves unable to obtain formal employment, seven resorted to the informal sector for survival, living in complete uncertainty of the following day. Beatrice (currently a street seller) shared problems she faced when unsuccessfully looking for job.

I am a qualified teacher. I have been looking for a formal teaching job, but I cannot get it. I applied for job at many high schools for several times but I did not get any feedback. And one day, when I approached a principal of a high school, he openly told me that they cannot employ a foreigner. *I feel useless because I cannot support my family* (interview dated 20 June 2011; highlights added).

All three statements above further illustrate how participants were desperately in need of income in order to survive. It is interesting to note that unemployment is a problem encountered by refugees worldwide. Even though the causes of refugees’ unemployment differ from one country to another, language and foreign certificates constitute the common barriers. In a study done in Australia by Lewig *et al.* (2009:23), it was found for example that “unemployment is of particular concern to refugees who have been in Australia for less than five years. Those individuals are often at a disadvantage when looking for work because of language problems and difficulties in the transfer of qualifications, despite the settlement services available to them”. In this study, the participants were black and there appeared to be an expectation from their counterpart South Africans that they speak Zulu as a South African language. Because they could not, they felt that they were rejected by potential employers. Showing a refugee permit or a maroon refugee’s identity document was also seen as a trigger for non-acceptance. Moreover,

some job advertisements included the requirement of being fluent in Zulu and/or that only South African citizens could apply.

The research found that with such limited access to the formal labour market, participants had become marginalized at all levels of society. In line with Olsson's (2002:14) assertion that "obtaining meaningful employment has been identified as a vital part of a person's integration into a new society", this situation contributed further to their lack of integration in their host communities. This was also supported in research done by Suzuki (2004) on Burmese refugees in Canada, where it was found that "refugees who are successful in economic integration are able to integrate successfully at the social and cultural level".

4.3.3. Participants' survival strategies

The research participants fled their respective countries of origin with no resources and this led to their vulnerability and difficulties in rebuilding their lives from scratch in their host country (Section 4.2.1). In South Africa as a host country, the research participants are entitled to move around freely, to seek employment and to access basic social services. However, the participants had to deal with the lack of access to economic resources and lack of adequate humanitarian aid (compare Chapter 2, Section 2.2.1). In particular, the prevalence of xenophobia had deleterious consequences on the participants' attempts to establish a livelihood. It is therefore important to understand the efforts that participants made to cope and to enhance their living conditions in the host country. Given that the research participants had no choice but to survive at all costs, they adopted a range of strategies to overcome the difficult living conditions imposed on them by ongoing xenophobia.

Survival strategies, as defined by Lazarus *et al.* (1986), are "the person's cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage the internal and external demands of the person's environment". The strategies adopted by the participants can be identified in terms of Mullaly (2007:278) as the responses that oppressed people may make with respect to the oppression they experience and included the following:

- *Escape from identity*: To avoid or ease the burden of oppression some inferiorized persons will attempt to escape from the composite portrait used by the dominant group to define their particular place in society. This is discussed in Section 4.3.3.3 below;
- *Psychological withdrawal*: Oppressed persons may adopt a cautious, low profile conservatism as a way of decreasing their visibility and compensating for a disfavoured identity. Section 4.3.3.3 discusses this in more detail;
- *Social withdrawal*: This refers to coping strategy in which the oppressed person externalizes identity conflict into the immediate environment. The oppressed person will develop repertoires of behavior for different audiences, that is, he/she will behave in one way when in contact with the dominant group and in other way when in contact with subdominant community. Compare Section 4.3.3.1 for evidence of this strategy.

Participants combined these internal and interpersonal coping strategies with a range of pragmatic decisions around generating income on the one hand and bringing down cost-of-living expenses on the other. In order to survive, they first tried to embrace self-employment, take up degrading jobs or/and underemployment. Secondly, they chose to avoid residing in *townships* and instead sought shelter in inner city areas where it was possible to share accommodation. Thirdly, they tried by all means to adjust to the prevailing situation, by ignoring their previous status and trying to fit in. Fourthly they sometimes tried to hide their identity, or to *blend in*.

4.3.3.1. Self-employment, 'degrading' jobs and underemployment

Olivier (2009:24) reported that "South Africa has adopted the policy of self-sufficiency for asylum seekers and refugees". It is for this reason that the Refugee Act (Republic of South Africa, 1998) provides its subjects with the right to seek employment and support themselves to fulfill their needs, such as food and shelter, through their own work as any other South African. According to Dhanani (2004:28), taking up employment of reduced hours, in fields below one's qualifications and/or at wages below the rate of one's level of qualification would, under normal circumstances, be defined as 'underemployment'. In terms of this definition, participants could be said to be underemployed. Due to the existence of discrimination in the labor market (compare Section 4.3.2), the participants in this study (70%) had no choice but to go for

‘degrading jobs’ such as taking employment for low wages (car wash companies, shop attendants – two participants out of ten) or undertaking any small entrepreneurial activity (car guarding, street or flea market trading – five participants out of ten). According to (Dennie, 2009:1), “a degrading job is a position that people should be thankful they will hopefully never have to accept in their lifetime, because the same position would never breed a single trace of envy”.

Sixty percent of the study’s participants, having failed to secure formal employment using their foreign certificates, started to believe that it should be easier to get a job with a South African educational certificate (as discussed in section 4.3.2; also compare Figure 4.5). However, this is not what happened in the world of the participants. Antoine (a Law graduate from UKZN) expressed his job hunting experience in the following quotation:

I have tried several times to get a job related to my qualifications. However, *none of my applications has so far been successful. In order to survive, I opted to do street vending.* After four years of hard labour, I was able to use my savings to open a tuck shop (interview dated 11 June 2011; highlights added).

The above statement illustrates how Antoine and the other six participants who are in the same position as him, were forced to ‘forget’ about their previous status back in their country of origin, as well as their qualifications and do anything that enabled them to survive. Likewise, Amisi (2005:72) found that “the informal economy with its constraints and opportunities remains the main source of income for Congolese refugees in Durban regardless of their gender. They then take whatever opportunities they can to establish their livelihood. That is why they are active in hairdressing, shoemaking and repair”. The study found that seventy percent of the participants rely on ‘degrading jobs’ to survive. Therefore, they cannot afford individual or family shelters, but are obliged to find shelters they can share with others.

4.3.3.2. Residing in ‘affordable’ areas in the city and sharing shelters

The researcher wanted to know why the participants prefer to reside in town where the living costs are known to be relatively high, especially the rent. All ten participants responded that they resided in the city primarily for safety reasons. That this is a widely held perception amongst

those foreigners who are forced to survive on the margins of South Africa's economy and can therefore not afford a suburban lifestyle (also a perceived 'safe' option), is confirmed by CORMSA's (2008:50) claim that "many migrants and refugees state that they prefer living in inner-city areas in spite of high housing costs, because they perceive townships and informal settlements to be highly xenophobic and unsafe for them". Beatrice explained that *in the rural areas and townships, dwellers are mostly related and know each other very well*. Hence, any person who joined the community from outside could be identified very easily. On the contrary, the city dwellers were from different areas, cultures and races, and anyone who lived in the city was absorbed in the crowd. Therefore, no one was interested in his/her neighbour's life history, or to know who he/she is and where he/she comes from. Likewise, Emilie justified her choice of residence as follows:

I prefer to stay in the city because *all the people living here are strangers to each other*. They come from different provinces within South Africa and others come from different countries outside South Africa. Hence, *everyone minds his own business* (interview dated 22 June 2011; highlights added).

Although the participants indicated that staying in the city was a preference, they faced many challenges including high rental and exposure to various risks, particularly affecting those participants with large families. Figure 4.4 illustrates that large families make up the majority of the participants.

Because of the participants' lack of financial capabilities, all ten participants resided in overcrowded rooms/flats where they could share the rent. For example Beatrice was a street trader, her husband a car guard, and the family income was R3500 (Field note dated June 20, 2011). She explained:

I stay in a bachelor flat at Point Road (current Mahatma Ghandi Road). I pay R1800 a month including water and electricity. We are a family of six with two teenagers. *The place is really small but we have no choice because it is the kind of house we can afford* (interview dated 20 June 2011; highlights added).

As indicated by the participants, not all the areas in the city accommodated them. Many flats have accommodation requirements including the possession of a green South African Identify

Document, payslip and restrictions on the number of occupants, but the majority of participants (70%) were informally employed and used refugee status documents. According to Beatrice and six other participants, affordable accommodation was limited to the inner city's Point Road (current Mahatma Ghandi Road) and Albert Park areas. These areas were seen as having low living standards and high crime rates. The landlords' renting conditions were usually one month's deposit and the ability to pay the monthly rent. In some blocks, landlords did not even ask for a deposit. The access control was not so rigorous that there was no number limit of room/flat's occupants, as long as the rent was paid on time. It was therefore the responsibility of the main tenant to decide who could stay with him/her in the flat, which is how the rooms/flats become overcrowded [Field notes dated July 11, 16 and 25, 2011]. Jacobsen (2006:275) indicated that "sharing accommodation with unknown families exposes tenants to risks of contracting diseases, risks of theft and physical or sexual violence". Accordingly, 40% of the participants in the study confirmed that they felt their current accommodation exposed them to a number of risks such as diseases related to lack of hygiene (e.g. diarrhoea, vomiting), theft, and safety hazards.

Furthermore, all the participants indicated they preferred to stay in cities because of job opportunities. The following statement was shared by Daniel:

The job [car guard] I am doing cannot be found outside the city, [and] you do not have to worry about transport fees like people living outside the city (interview dated 25 June 2011; brackets and highlights added).

This is in line with the research done by the UNOCHA (2010) which found that "refugees often seek shelter in urban areas because they think it will be easy to find work and make money". In other words, although the main reason for the participants in this study to reside in the city was the relative safety it offered from xenophobic violence, the city was also the only area that offered informal employment such as street vending, street hair cutting salons, tailoring, car guarding, shop assistance and even security guarding. In short, the refugees chose to stay where they could get money to pay for shelter, food, clothes and other goods needed on a daily basis.

4.3.3.3. Acceptance: ignoring, hiding one's identity and paying ones way out of trouble

In section 4.3.1.1, it was discussed that even in the inner city the participants faced xenophobic threats on a regular basis - wherever they were and whenever they had to interact with local South Africans. Given their experience of having no support or protection from the community as a whole or from government institutions, all ten participants stated that they felt unable to change what they perceived to be an undesired and unfair situation; that is, being exposed to constant xenophobic threats. Therefore there was a general preference to just walk away and try to ignore the threats without fighting back. This is illustrated in the following quotation by Daniel:

When someone, after recognizing me as a refugee (outsider), swears at me, insults me or starts to call me derogatory names such as “kwerekwere” (foreigner), I just ignore him and carry on as nothing happened. *The reason of keeping quite is that if I try to reply or retaliate, I can get hurt, robbed or even risk my life* (interview dated 25 June 2011; brackets and highlights added).

The above statement shows one example of how participants tried to normalize the unfair treatment they faced. All ten participants spoke about feeling powerless, feeling unable to fight back, and the pointlessness of complaining because of the lack of public or institutional support such as the police. Amisi (2006:33) wrote that some of the Congolese refugee [hairdressers and panel beaters] participants in his study “complained that some policemen want free services from them. Even if they are willing to pay, they want to pay less than other people. When you refuse them free services, they put up a reason to arrest you and you have to bribe them to get out”. This study produced similar findings: four participants indicated that on some occasions they ‘bought their way out’ (that is, paying bribes) to survive.

All ten participants appear to have learnt from their daily experiences and tried to find a way of getting around the problems by adopting new and safer ways of relating to South Africans. This is illustrated in the statement by Emilie:

I have learnt to *carry the right change with me when I have to use public transport*. I was not able to get change back from the taxi conductors for many

times without reason, only because I was claiming it not in isiZulu but in English (interview dated 22 June 2011; highlights added).

The above quotation is one example illustrating how the participants were particularly vulnerable to being targeted by criminals who appeared to take advantage on the refugees' lack of social support from local people. Antoine explained:

It is not easy to run a business in this country when you are a refugee. I have been several times victim of people who come in my tuck shop posing as customers. Once they have the goods they were asking for, they do not want to pay and just walk out. When I try to get the money from them, they shout at me saying "back off kwerekwere". *For the sake of my safety, I cannot follow them. Who is going to help! It is useless to call the police while the culprits are already gone, and the people around you are not willing to testify* (interview dated 11 June 2011; highlights added).

In other words, Antoine referred to a mixture of indifference and unwillingness on the part of bystanders who then became complicit in exposing him to crime. Unsurprisingly, CORMSA (2008:55) also found that "foreign traders and self-employed entrepreneurs are victims of widespread xenophobic attacks by criminals because they are (perceived to be) less likely to go to the police".

Although the participants felt unwelcome by South Africans, they felt they had no choice but to fit into the society. In general, refugees from Great Lakes Region (including Burundi and Rwanda) have many similarities with black South Africans; hence they are only identified through their home languages and traditional clothing. Thus, all ten participants indicated that they tried to learn about South African culture in order to fit better into South African society. Dressing, hairstyle and language were the main aspects of culture participants tried to acquire. Both male and female participants agreed that, since they entered South Africa, their dress and hairstyles had changed. The reason advanced for this adjustment was not just that they saw South African dresses and hairstyles as better than theirs, but rather that it was a form of disguise; a way of trying to look like South Africans in order to escape from xenophobic hostility. This is portrayed in the following quote by Immaculee:

I am forced to dress like a South African; wear pants, dresses, or skirts, instead of 'Ibitenge' (ladies' traditional clothing in Rwanda and Burundi), because *I have to avoid being identified as a "foreigner" (Burundian). When I am dressed like these people (South Africans) while I can speak Zulu (but not well as they do), they think I am not from KwaZulu-Natal, but somewhere else in South Africa* (interview dated 23 July 2011; highlights and brackets added).

Emilie echoed Immaculee's experience as follow:

I normally used to wear my traditional clothing (ibitenge) when I get here. Now, I am no longer wearing them because people look at me in unfriendly way, showing facial expression of disgust and rejection accompanied with unwelcoming comments (interview dated 23 July 2011; highlights and brackets added).

These statements by Emilie and Immaculee were supported by Antoine who shared how he advised his children to adopt local hair styles to conform to the South Africans' styles.

Where I come from (Rwanda), people with dreadlocks were few and they were not well seen by the society. To have dreadlocks on your head, meant you smoke marijuana. Here many South Africans have dreadlocks. *I have realized that even the people on the street do not suspect a person with dreadlocks to be a foreigner. That is why I allowed my son to get it.* When other kids at the school see him, they think he is a South African; he also gets fewer troubles in taxis and buses (interview dated 22 June 2011; highlights added).

All in all, the research found that participants changed their lifestyle, such as choices of areas to go to; how, where and when they answered their phones; their outfits; using caution in public and their behavior in front of strangers. In other words, none of the participants experienced their adjustments as an enrichment of their own cultural knowledge and practices. Much rather, they tried to assimilate to local people in order to be accepted and survive.

As indicated above, another way the participants had to disguise their real identity was not to speak in their home languages (Kirundi, Kinyarwanda, Swahili and French) in public. Claudien testified:

When I am on the street, in a supermarket or anywhere else with people around me, I prefer not to answer the phone or to make conversation in my language.

Because when you talk in a foreign language, the people will turn and look at you as you did something wrong (interview dated 28 June 2011; highlights added).

The research found that the two participants who were fluent in Zulu felt that they were treated with more respect by locals than those who were only using English when conversing with local South Africans. Germaine, one of the two, reported to have friendly interactions with South Africans because she can speak Zulu.

I have learnt Zulu from a granny who was a street trader at West Street where I was a car guard. She was very friendly. Now *I am able to communicate in Zulu and I have few Zulu speaking friends* (interview dated 17 July 2011; highlights added).

This conforms to the study done by Singh (2009) which found that “unlike the Congolese, Ndebele speaking Zimbabweans are well versed in Zulu, making it easier for them to mingle as it is the language spoken by the dominant Black South Africans in Johannesburg”. And yet, as discussed above in terms of the difficulties this study’s participants experienced in trying to make South African friends (compare Section 4.3.1.2 above), Germaine’s experience was not the norm. Thus, while all the participants believed that one of the ways of reaching out to local people was to try to learn isiZulu, several participants did indicate that they were discouraged by the unfriendly behavior of South Africans who did not seem keen to teach them. For example, Hussein reported that:

I have appealed to my colleagues black South Africans at work to teach me Zulu. *When I try to talk, they laugh at me.* Instead of seeing that I am making an effort to speak their language, they take it as I am a stupid (interview dated 15 July 2011; highlights added).

Inability to speak the local language (isiZulu) is one of the ways used to identify participants as non-South Africans. It also created a barrier for the participants making contact with local populations difficult, and contributing to the social isolation of these refugees.

This section examined the post-migration xenophobic experiences of the participants in the host country. The study found that the participants experienced verbal abuse and name calling;

psychological problems such as isolation, fear, re-traumatization, powerlessness; a lack of a sense of belonging and lack of social integration, as well as marginalization and exclusion from the labor market. In order to overcome these different forms of xenophobia related violence, all ten participants were found to have adopted specific living strategies. The corresponding strategies included self-employment, taking up degrading jobs, underemployment, residing in affordable areas in the city and sharing shelters, hiding one's identity as well as paying one's way out of trouble. Nonetheless, the study's findings so far leave little doubt that all these xenophobia linked experiences socially, economically and psychologically affected the participants' lives and well-being. While the factors behind the hardship the participants underwent following the prevailing xenophobia are documented (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.3), the participants had their own interpretation of the causes of the xenophobic treatment they were experiencing at the hands of local South Africans. These perceptions are explored in the final section of this chapter.

4.4. Structures of injustice: Refugees' explanation of xenophobia.

Xenophobia as it prevails in South Africa can be attributed to a number of interconnected factors (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.3 for details). In this study, the participants were asked what they perceived to be the contributing factors to xenophobia. In response, participants pointed out the following: South Africa's previous marginalization, isolation and lack of knowledge about refugees amongst South African citizens in general and civil servants in particular; South Africa's feature as a violent society that has high levels of tolerance for crime; and the role of the South African media in distributing negative statements about foreigners (including refugees).

4.4.1. Marginalization, isolation and lack of knowledge about refugees (identity issues)

According to Hölscher and Bozalek (2012:1098), "South Africa's traditionally high levels of xenophobia are intrinsically related to the country's deeply entrenched race-based discourses and practices – themselves the result of its history in the course of which successive colonial and apartheid rulers instilled an ideology that framed black people as Others". All ten participants were of the view that South Africans had been alienated economically, intellectually,

psychologically and socially by the previous apartheid regime as this had been based on racial segregation. The participants stated that they believed that black South Africans' behavior towards refugees was a replication of the discrimination and isolation they withstood during apartheid. This was highlighted by Beatrice's thoughts on the economic alienation of black South Africans during apartheid regimes as a reason behind their apparent anger and hatred of foreigners:

Imagine a group of the population (Blacks) residing in shacks; without land, without access to water, electricity, education and job opportunities while in their own country (interview dated 20 June 2011; brackets added).

In other words, Beatrice believed that black South Africans' history was one of double isolation, which in turn explained their hostility towards immigrants (refugees). Firstly, they had been isolated from their counterpart white citizens through residential segregation, making them second rank citizens. Secondly, they had had no contact with people from other African countries due to the apartheid regime that treated African immigrants as unacceptable foreigners who posed a threat. Given that the black South Africans were ill-treated by whites (seen as foreigners by black South Africans) in spite of being fellow citizens, they have lost trust in all outsiders. This is in line with the findings of Hicks (1999:8) who indicated that "the majority of South Africans have little or no contact with people from neighboring countries in Southern Africa".

Eighty percent of the study's participants indicated that many South Africans they had met did not seem to have any knowledge about refugees and their rights and demonstrated a lack of concern about their reasons for being here, their situation and life circumstances in South Africa. Antoine's experience shared in the statement below is an example of how refugees are not well known, not only to ordinary South Africans but also to some officials:

One day I was driving and I was pulled off the road by *a traffic officer*. He asked me for a driving license. As my driving license had a traffic registration number instead of ID number, he asked for more clarifications. When I explained to him that I was a refugee, hence I didn't have an ID number; he *could not understand and said it was his first time to meet a refugee* (interview dated 11 June 2011; highlights added).

This lack of knowledge of refugees' documents and their rights from the traffic officer came as no surprise as it is only since 1994 that refugees were able to enter South Africa. This was also identified by Crush (2008b:45) that "South Africa did not recognize refugees until the 1990s. The racist, apartheid-era Aliens Control Act regulated the reception of those who arrived in the 1990s, meaning that refugees and/or asylum seekers did not have the right to work or to access services (Chapter 2, section 2.1)".

The participants indicated that even those South Africans who had heard about or met refugees did not seem to make any effort to get further information about who refugees are and the differences between them and other immigrants. Daniel shared his experiences in the following statement:

...my colleague car guard (South African) asked me where I come from and where I am staying. I told him that I am from Rwanda and I stay in a flat at Mahatma Ghandi Road area (Point Road). *He said: 'Of course yes! We know you foreigners, you all sell drugs. How can you afford to pay rent in the inner city while doing car guard...?'* (interview dated 25 June 2011; highlights and brackets added).

Hussein shared a similar experience of being mistaken for a Nigerian as follows:

One day I went to a pharmacy to buy medications. *The pharmacist identified that I was not South African through my English accent, and then he asked me: Are you from Nigeria?* (interview dated 8 July 2011; highlights added)

In the above statements, Daniel and Hussein's experiences explain how South Africans tended to associate every foreigner with Nigerians. Associating all Nigerians with drugs and crime, and then associating all foreigners with Nigerians is in and of itself evidence of how deep seated xenophobic sentiments amongst South Africans really are. Valji (2003:16) found that "black Africans (non-South Africans) constitute the target of xenophobia because of their dark skin and foreign accent that are associated with criminality and poverty".

This lack of knowledge or ignorance of refugees' rights by local South Africans deepens the vulnerability of the participants, which leads to their lack of integration. CORMSA (2007:7)

indicated that “there has been improvements in certain areas, with local authorities and others making fresh moves to incorporate refugees and asylum seekers into South African communities. Similarly, efforts to promote the rights of immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers are increasingly evident in South African legislation and policy”. However, in 2011, this study’s participants found that people on the ground still did not understand the human rights situations of other countries, and the reasons why people may have left their respective countries. Hence, there is a need for the South African government, refugee service providers and social institutions to be more involved in promoting public knowledge about refugees and their rights.

4.4.2. Violent society and/or tolerance of crime

South Africa suffers from high levels of violent crime (UNODOC, 2011:24). All the research participants expressed a perception that South Africa is a consistently violent society, with its citizens appearing to express all sorts of feelings, concerns and/or claims in a violent manner. Hussein, for example, asked:

How can you explain the fact that *in every single strike*, private and state cars are burnt; shops ransacked and/or burnt; *people are intimidated, assaulted and even killed*; private and public properties are vandalized; *and afterwards, no one is held accountable of the damages?* (interview dated 15 July 2011; highlights added).

Antoine shared his views with regard to violence and impunity in the country.

...I always see on TV and read in the newspapers about people who die stabbed or shot. People can be killed for anything and criminals do not hesitate to kill for a cell phone. In some cases of robberies, you can see that criminals just kill people for no reason ... not much is done to prevent such crimes....(interview 11 June 2011; highlights added)

Hussein and Antoine’s implicitly stated opinions were that in failing to maintain the rule of law, the state condoned the violent and criminal behavior common in many poor communities. This was echoed by Misago *et al.* (2009:3) who found in their extensive study of the May 2008 xenophobic violence that “one of the contributing factors in the spread of xenophobic violence is the culture of impunity with regard to public violence in general and xenophobic violence in

particular that encourages the ill-intentioned to attack non-nationals and other outsiders for personal and/or political gain”. According to Harris (2001), “the violent nature of xenophobia in South Africa is in part a reflection of the high levels of violence in the society more generally”. Simpson (1993), on the general violence in South Africa, indicated that “there exists in this country what has been termed 'a culture of violence'; defined as being a situation where the use of violence has ‘become normative instead of deviant’ and is viewed as an acceptable response in conflict resolution”.

Indeed, all ten research participants indicated that they felt violence in this country was encouraged by a lack of proper punishment for criminals. Therefore, they as victims felt discouraged to report criminal incidents. As already mentioned above in Section 4.3.3.3, these participants observed that even when there were South African bystanders to such criminal incidents, the victims were left to deal with their fate completely by themselves, with no support available. The participants then concluded that South African society in general was indifferent to their experiences. Immaculee shared her experience of lack of protection and support from state institutions as illustrated in the following quote:

One day I was driving when another motorist knocked my car from behind. I exchanged the details with the driver with promise that he will fix my car. After he found out that I was refugee [from her documents], instead of fixing my car, the driver used my details to identify my physical address to come and threaten me. *He came with two guys in another car changing the story that I damaged his car and I have to pay him R4000 or I will die. I agreed that I will pay to save my life and my family.* I took both number plates of the cars: the car he used to come to my house and the car that was involved in the accident. I reported the matter to the police with all the driver’s details. *The police officers managed to track and speak to him on the phone while I was there, but they did nothing else.* They did not bother to call him to come to the police or go to his house. *They told me that things will be fine so I can go home.* Nothing was done to solve my problem. Instead of getting my car fixed, *I had no choice but to pay the R4000 to the motorist just to save my life as he knew where I am staying. I think the police could have handled the case differently* if it was a South African who was the plaintiff (interview dated 23 July 2011; highlights added).

Immaculee’s experience illustrates how refugees, after being recognized, can be victimized as long as South Africans are allowed to regard refugees as people who have no one to turn to for

help. The findings of a study done by Landau and Polzer (2007:7) on xenophobic violence in the South African province of the Free State suggest that Immaculee's case is not an isolated incident: They note that "the police reportedly did not assist any of the Somalis to open cases against the robbers and arsonists, and the spaza shop stocks that had been taken to the police station for safe keeping allegedly disappeared".

Additionally, Germaine shared how crime perpetrators were not punished for crimes related to the May 2008 xenophobic attacks:

Look! *People* [immigrants including refugees] *were killed across South Africa* in May 2008, their belongings were taken and their shelters destroyed. I heard from TV that some suspects were arrested, but *I have never heard [of] anyone being convicted* (interview dated 17 July 2011; highlights and brackets added).

As discussed above in Section 4.3.1.2, this participant's experience of being denied support from the community and with no convictions being evident for the criminals, resulted in a feeling of rejection and a loss of hope for her future in the host society. This perceived lack of punishment of the perpetrators, together with a lack of willingness to become involved on the part of the witnesses, increased the participants' perceptions of not being valued by their community but instead being deprived of their rights for support and help from the people around them.

This study found that over and above ordinary citizens, public servants employed by the government departments involved in refugee protection, such as the SAPS, can fail to fulfill their responsibilities with the effect of rendering refugees even more, rather than less vulnerable, to xenophobic abuse, and the government needs to tackle this as a matter of urgency.

Having considered the issue of violence and crime, and its apparent toleration by members of the South African police, the very institution tasked with preventing crime in general and protecting refugees in particular, the argument can now move on to considering the role of the media in relation to xenophobia.

4.4.3. Negative statements by the media about foreigners (refugees) in South Africa

According to Danso and McDonald (2000:7), “the mass media have become one of the most important institutions in modern society, playing a role not only in our learning and education, but also in how we see opportunities for change and improvement in our lives”. It follows that media reporting can influence xenophobic attitudes in South Africa, amongst other things, because of its wide reach. The main languages used in the media in KwaZulu-Natal are isiZulu and English. Due to language barriers, none of the participants was able to read newspapers written in isiZulu such as Isolezwe and Ilanga, while 60% of the participants stated that they were able to read English newspapers and understand English language on TV and radio programmes. Hence, while not everyone was able to make a contribution regarding the role of the written media in influencing xenophobia, these six participants felt that few of the radio stations, television programmes and newspapers reported anything positive about refugees or foreigners in general. All six participants expressed concern that immigrants and refugees were mainly featured as being involved in criminal activities, such as drug smuggling, armed robberies, rapes, abuses, ATM bombing, document forgery, money laundering and so on. All these media displays contribute to locals associating all immigrants, especially black immigrants, with ‘the wrong things’. Daniel shared the following:

I have been reading South African newspapers/tabloids for a while. I am always shocked to see that when it comes to reporting immigrants/refugees, *the terms used are dehumanizing and derogatory* such as ‘aliens’ or ‘illegal immigrants’ (interview dated 25 June 2011; highlights added).

In other words, Daniel recognized that labels such as ‘aliens’ and ‘illegal immigrants’ also serve to ‘other’ the refugees and other immigrants, i.e. they label foreigners as strangers who do not belong here. All the six participants felt that the media’s use of dehumanizing and derogatory terms when referring to immigrants, including refugees, does not help them integrate into society, but instead reinforces their victimization by members of the local population. This confirms Steeneveldt’s (2007:4) statement, who noted that the “South African media may play an active part in enforcing the immigrants’ social exclusion and marginalization – as negative representations of foreigners in South African media reinforce and establish xenophobic

discourses”. The following quotation shared by Beatrice, relates to the way newspapers fuel reports on how undeserving immigrants/refugees are seen as living a good life while locals are suffering:

I am really worried about the writing style of newspapers in this country. They only want money at the expense of immigrants’ rights when they portray them as invaders. It is not surprising to read in a local newspaper that, ‘Many South Africans are walking around unemployed while foreigners have jobs’, or, ‘South Africans live in cardboards while foreigners are buying RDP houses supposed to be free to the poorest South Africans’. *Such statements are inflammatory and compromise the cohabitation of immigrants/refugees and local population* (interview dated 20 June 2011; highlights added).

Put differently, Beatrice thought that insofar as South Africans believed that refugees did not deserve to be in their community and were on a mission to destroy their hard earned freedom and democracy, the media could, at least in part, be blamed for co-creating and feeding into such false perceptions. While acknowledging that the newspapers were running a business and thus needed to have attractive stories that would sell quickly and massively for the business to survive, Beatrice expressed concern that at times this might happen at the cost of contributing to harming those whom they were writing about. Dele (2009:1) stated that “media attitudes to foreigners work to encourage xenophobia in local people”. For example the Daily Sun Newspaper (2008:1) reported that “South Africans livings in tin and cardboard shacks are tired of seeing foreigners buying RDP houses from corrupt officials. These houses are supposed to be free to the poorest South Africans. But too many housing and local council officials are crooks”. In other words, such negative statements about foreigners/refugees from the media, often featured in sensational headlines do explain how South Africans do not want foreigners in the country and should do anything to drive them out of the country.

This section explored the explanations of xenophobia offered during the interviews by the study’s participants. The ideas that were proposed are indeed borne out by the available literature on the causes and underlying dynamics of xenophobia in South Africa. Participants felt that the pervasiveness of xenophobia in South Africa could not be separated from the country’s history of apartheid, nor from the prevailing socio-economic conditions and the social classes. The participants highlighted the following as contributing factors to xenophobia: the isolation and

marginalization of South Africans during apartheid; a general lack of knowledge about who refugees are, why they are here, and what their rights might be; the pervasiveness and social acceptability of violence and crime; as well as the negative statements distributed by the mass media about foreigners in general and refugees in particular.

4.5. Conclusion

Chapter 4 discussed the findings of the study based on the data collected from ten Durban-based refugees from Rwanda and Burundi. The data was presented in terms of themes and sub-themes that emanated from the process of data analysis. Together, they provide a fairly comprehensive picture of the participants' lived experiences in the face of xenophobia.

When seen together, it appears that these various components of the participants' lived experiences make up a network of oppression and structural injustices that stretch across the following: firstly, the initial trauma and displacement by genocide and civil war; secondly, multiple experiences of re-traumatization during flight, including war, further violence and displacement, threats of repatriation and illegal imprisonment. In the host country (South Africa), the participants' life experiences were exacerbated by xenophobia which was manifest as multiple forms of intimidation, further threats of violence and discrimination on the labour market, a steep drop in socio-economic status and living conditions and a general sense of being unwanted, humiliated and disregarded. In other words, rather than the trauma of genocide, war and flight being addressed, participants felt exposed, unsafe and unfairly treated in what they had hoped to be their country of refuge.

Chapter 5 contains the summary of findings in relation to the overall research aim and objectives, the overarching conclusions to the study and recommendations towards social work research, education and practice. Figure 4.8 below, represents the findings of the data analysis:

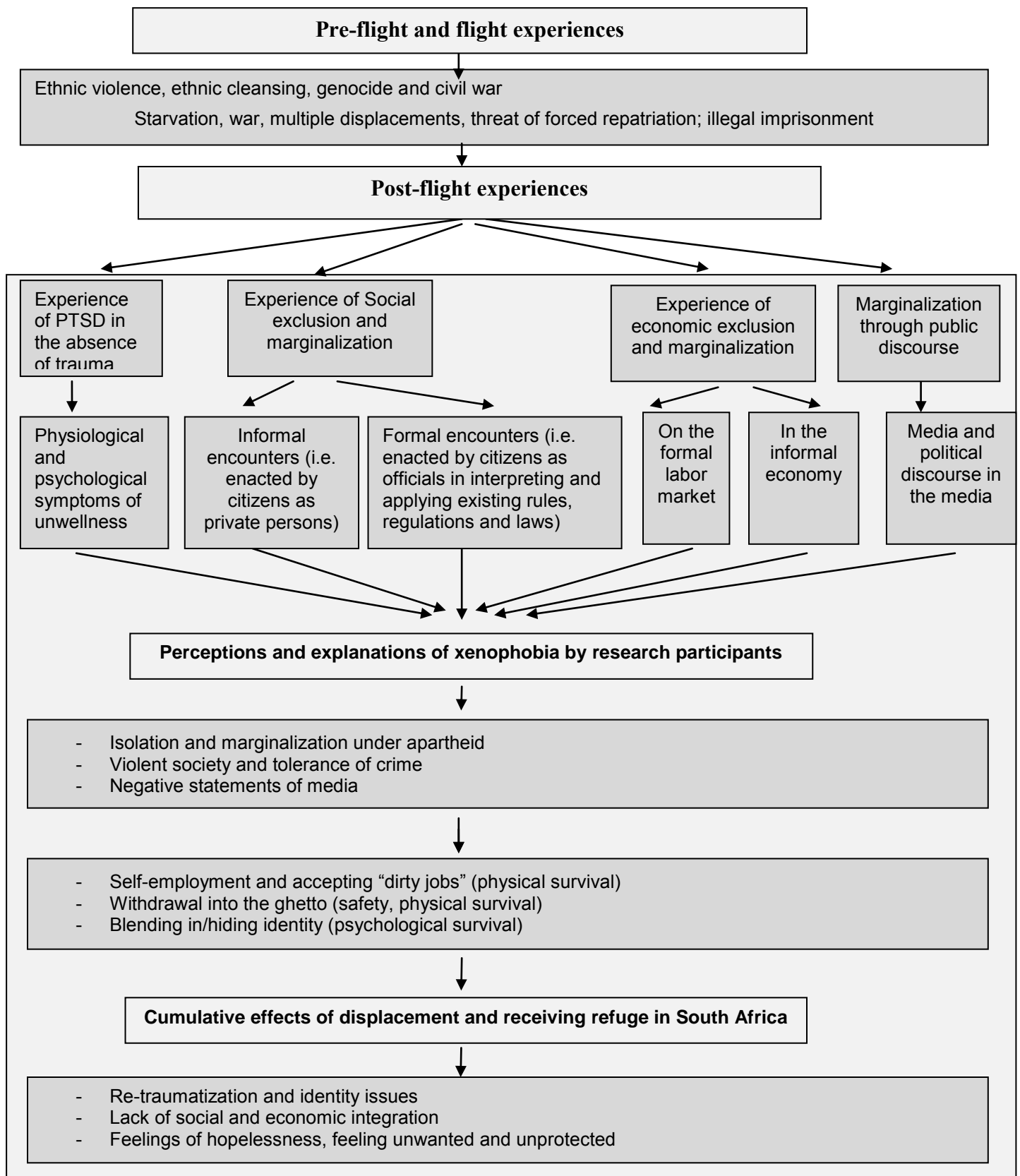


Figure 4.8. *Matrix of xenophobic oppressions*

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The previous chapter presented a detailed discussion of the findings of this study and the key themes were identified and discussed. With this chapter concluding the study, it is necessary to return to the initial research questions, aims and objectives. The aim was to better understand how xenophobia was manifest in the experiences of refugees and the resultant consequences on the refugees' lives with a focus on Rwandese and Burundian nationals living in the inner city area of Durban (South Africa). To achieve this aim, the following objectives were pursued:

- To consider how pre-migration and flight experiences had shaped participants' experience of xenophobia;
- To explore the perceptions, feelings and thoughts around the participants' experiences of xenophobia in South Africa;
- To identify the economic, psycho-social and health effects of xenophobia on the lives of the participants; and
- To identify the participants' coping strategies in relation to xenophobia.

Several underlying assumptions were formulated alongside these objectives:

- Firstly, it was assumed that the participants' respective pre-flight and flight experiences could be shown to have shaped how they experienced xenophobia;
- Secondly, it was assumed that xenophobia, in various forms, would be found to constitute a pervasive feature in the study participants' lives;
- Thirdly, it was assumed that this would be found to have negatively affected the participants' economic, psychological well-being and health;
- The final assumption was that the participants' ability to cope with xenophobia and its effects on their lives would be found to differ according to their respective personal strengths, educational levels, professions and family responsibilities.

A qualitative descriptive methodology guided the research process. The data was collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews with a purposefully selected sample of ten Burundian and Rwandese refugees who were living in the inner city area of Durban. The data was then processed using the 5-step method of thematic content analysis proposed by Terre Blanche *et al.* (2006). Mullaly's (2007) notion of structural social work provided the theoretical framework for the analysis.

In section 5.1, the study's findings are summarized in relation to the research objectives and underlying assumptions. Section 5.2 presents the study's conclusions, which have been formulated in relation to the study's overarching aim and in terms of Mullaly's (2007) notion of structural social work. The final objective of this research was to formulate recommendations towards social work practice, social policy and further research concerning refugees in South Africa. These recommendations are based on the study's findings and conclusions and are contained in Section 5.3.

5.1. Summary of findings

This section contains a brief review of the study's findings, which are presented according to the study objectives.

5.1.1. First objective: To consider how the pre-migration and flight experiences has shaped participants' experience of xenophobia

Data pertaining to this objective was discussed in Sections 4.2 and 4.3.1.3. The pre-flight and flight experiences were remarkably similar for the study's ten participants. Prior to leaving their respective countries, all the participants, without exception and irrespective of country of origin, gender or age had been exposed to, or had experienced traumatic events such as mass killings, which resulted in the loss of family members and/or friends, as well as all kinds of material losses. Most tormenting for the participants was that the perpetrators included people well known to the victims making it difficult for survivors to

overcome the pain. Thereafter, the participants' journeys from their respective countries to South Africa were filled with heartache, and it was about 'survival of the fittest'.

None of the participants came straight from their countries of origin to South Africa. Initially, they left their respective countries of origin and took a long walk to the South Eastern part of the DRC [then Zaire] and Tanzania where they lived in refugee camps. Although life there was difficult, the participants had to make the best of the worse. They had to share facilities, they were subject to brutality and starvation; and the refugee camps were overcrowded. The participants experienced another incident of re-traumatization when they were forced again to leave their respective host countries due to the 1996-1998 deadly civil wars in the DRC and forced repatriation campaigns in both Tanzania and the DRC. The participants' onward journey to South Africa was marred by a lack of proper documentation, resulting in some of the male participants being caught and imprisoned while crossing international borders.

All ten participants arrived in Durban with a background of the multiple trauma and re-traumatization already experienced. Yet, none of them had received any form of psycho-social counselling or psycho-therapy since they arrived in South Africa. Consequently, 80 % of the study's participants suffered a range of post-traumatic stress symptoms as a result of their experiences. These included sleeping problems, chronic headaches, nervousness, and anxiety. In addition, several participants stated that they experienced similar ill-treatment in South Africa to what they had run away from in their native countries (compare Section 5.1.3). Thus, the first assumption above was confirmed by the findings of this study with participants' pre-immigration experiences affecting their confidence, ability to trust, and competence in dealing with conflicts and xenophobia in their host country.

5.1.2. Second objective: To explore the perceptions, feelings and thoughts around experiences of xenophobia that the research participants may have had in South Africa.

Data pertaining to this objective was discussed in both Sections 4.2 and 4.4. The research found that there were three broad types of experiences as perceived by the participants:

- Interpersonal violence: all ten participants indicated that they were exposed to different kinds of verbal abuse (name callings, verbal threats and mockery). As this could happen anytime and in different places [public and work places], there was a general feeling of being unsafe amongst the research participants; they perceived themselves as resented on account of being ‘outsiders’ who could be humiliated and abused without any reasons other than because of who they were.
- Structural violence (social marginalization/exclusion): although all participants did have frequent contact and interactions with South Africans [streets, public transport, shops, churches], the research found that those interactions and contacts were generally considered to be superficial and distant and characterized by a lack of trust on the part of research participants. A further aspect of the social marginalization as experienced by the participants was their shared preference for staying in Durban’s inner city. This was not only because of better access to informal employment but also because of the participants’ sense of feeling unsafe, and in spite of this creating many challenges, including high rental and overcrowd.
- Structural violence (economic marginalization/exclusion): Almost all of the participants were deprived of opportunities to participate in South Africa’s economy at the level of their qualification. Not only did this make it difficult for them to meet their basic needs, but it also deprived them of opportunities to contribute meaningfully to the economic growth of their host country. The six participants who had foreign certificates all indicated that these were not

recognised, and out of those six participants who managed to obtain certificates from a South African tertiary institution, only two were formally employed. Seven participants, because they were in desperate need of income, took up informal employment, where they have to compete with marginalised fellow South Africans. All seven of them were the targets of harassment and robbery, as well as being accused of “stealing” South African jobs.

Participants’ feelings about these experiences have already been alluded to in Section 5.1.1 and are discussed in Section 5.1.3 as part of the psycho-social effects of xenophobia.

The participants thought that xenophobia in South Africa could be attributed to interconnected factors. Reasons that were advanced included the following:

- The behaviour of black South Africans towards refugees was a replication of the discrimination, alienation and isolation they withstood during apartheid;
- Few South Africans seemed to have any knowledge about refugees and their rights and demonstrated a lack of concern about their reasons for being in South Africa, or about their life circumstances in South Africa. Participants suggested that it was further evidence of xenophobia that there were South Africans who associated every ‘foreigner’ with ‘a Nigerian’, and every Nigerian with ‘a drug dealer’ or ‘a criminal’.
- South Africa was a consistently and pervasively violent society, a characteristic that was encouraged in turn by a lack of proper punishment for criminals, as well as a lack of support of victims from community members.
- Public servants involved in refugee protection such as the SAPS, were perceived as failing to fulfill their responsibilities with the effect of rendering refugees even more, rather than less vulnerable.
- Media reporting influenced xenophobic attitudes in South Africa, in that immigrants and refugees were mainly featured in terms of negative stereotypes.

The literature reviewed for this study confirms the prevalence of both the interpersonal and structural violence which together make up the complex of xenophobia as perceived by the study's participants. Likewise, the explanations offered by the participants correspond closely with the causes and dynamics of xenophobia in South Africa that were presented in the Chapter 2 of this research report. Consequently, the second assumption underlying this study, namely that xenophobia, in various forms, would be found to constitute a pervasive feature in the study participants' lives can now be affirmed.

5.1.1.3. Third objective: To identify the economic, psycho-social and health effects of xenophobia on the lives of the participants

Data pertaining to this objective was discussed in Sections 4.3.1 and 4.3.2. In terms of the psychosocial effects of xenophobia, it can be noted that all ten participants had come to South Africa with the hope of rebuilding their lives. Instead, they faced xenophobic threats that made their functioning very difficult. All participants indicated that as a result of their exposure to xenophobic treatment, fear and insecurity were pervasive feelings. Other emotions elicited in the participants included feeling unwanted, unaccepted, hurt, even dehumanised. As a result, eight out of ten participants stated that they found it difficult to trust their fellow South Africans and did not consider South Africa to be safe.

There was a deep sense of anger amongst the participants, a deep sense of personal hurt and betrayal, a sense that hope had been lost, and that there was no place of belonging for participants in this study. Before the background of the multiple and severe trauma with which all participants had arrived in this country, all of this gives rise to grave concern: The flashbacks which eight participants reported to have experienced in response to xenophobic experiences and media reports of xenophobic violence may thus be considered as a further instalment on the string of re-traumatisation in the lives of refugees from genocide and war. It influenced the participants' interpretation of xenophobic threats in that they considered them as life threatening, which in turn shaped

their ways of living, thinking and planning for the future, as they had in mind that they might have to run again any time.

However, the participants' well-being was not only affected by their experience of hostility, resentment and subsequent lack of social integration. It was also affected by their experience of economic exclusion, marginalisation and hardship. After an average of 11 to 12 years in South Africa, only two out of ten participants managed to secure employment in the formal sector. This was in spite of six out of ten participants having obtained degrees prior to their flight and stating that they had improved their knowledge of English language; and in spite of four reporting that they had undertaken studies to obtain South African qualifications. The lack of economic integration constituted a barrier to the use of the participants' full potentials to progress and improve their living conditions. Furthermore, their lack of access to formal employment was one of the main reasons why all participants opted to live in overcrowded conditions in over-priced inner city flats. These living conditions were highlighted by several participants as being health risks in their lives. In other words, the third assumption above that xenophobia would be found to have negatively affected the participants' economic and psycho-social well-being was confirmed by the findings of this study.

5.1.4. Fourth objective: To identify the participants' coping strategies in relation to xenophobia

Data pertaining to this objective was discussed in Section 4.3. The research participants adopted a range of strategies to overcome the difficult living conditions imposed on them by on-going xenophobia. These strategies involved combining internal and interpersonal coping methods with a range of pragmatic decisions around generating income on the one hand and bringing down the cost-of-living on the other. Seven out of ten participants took up employment in fields below their qualifications and/or at wages below the rate for their level of qualification or underemployment, as well as 'degrading jobs' such as washing cars, working as shop attendants or undertaking other small entrepreneurial activities such as car guarding, street or flea market trading, cutting hair or tailoring.

All participants indicated that the city was the only area that offered refugees such informal employment opportunities. In addition, all of them confirmed that they resided in the city for safety reasons – in spite of the high rental payments and overcrowded conditions discussed above. The research found that the participants tried to normalize the unfair treatments they received. All ten participants spoke about feeling powerless, feeling unable to fight back, and the pointlessness of complaining because of the lack of public or institutional support from the police for example. Although the participants felt unwelcomed, they all tried to find a way of getting around the problems by adopting new and safer ways of relating South Africans.

As the research participants found they were identified through their home languages and use of traditional clothing, all ten indicated at least one of the following aspects of their home culture that they tried to hide in public: dressing, hairstyle and language. At the same time, eight participants indicated that they felt discouraged by the perceived behaviour of South Africans to acquire isiZulu, one of the main languages spoken in Durban, which in turn increased their already existing sense of rejection and discomfort. This means that the fourth assumption that the participants' ability to cope with xenophobia and its effects in their lives would be found to differ according to their respective personal strengths, educational levels, professions and family responsibilities was *not* confirmed by the findings of this study.

Xenophobia reflects at once as interpersonal, structural, as well as institutional discrimination and violence. It appears to target all black foreigners/refugees from other African countries irrespective of their educational levels, professions or family responsibilities. Hence, irrespective of age, personal strengths, family responsibilities, education or professional background, xenophobia served to cast the study's ten participants very much alike.

5.2. Conclusions

The overall aim of the study was “to better understand how xenophobia manifests in the experiences of refugees, and what its consequences are on their lives focusing on Rwandese and Burundian nationals living in the inner city of Durban (South Africa)”.

Previous studies in this field (xenophobia) have largely focused on the xenophobic causals and the perpetrators. In response, the present study attempted to better understand the phenomenon from the point of view of the targets of prejudice and violence. While the focus was the participants’ lived experiences here in South Africa especially in the inner city area of Durban, the encounter with the host country could not be separated from the participants’ pre-immigration experiences, showing that their hardships started years before landing in South Africa. The participants came to South Africa with the hope of rebuilding their lives. Surprisingly, they found themselves in the difficult position of dealing with xenophobia, which in turn created conditions that felt not much different from those they had fled from.

When interpreted in terms of structural social work theory (Mullaly, 2007), the major findings of this study offer an inside look into the world of the participants who underwent extreme stress and suffering in their countries of origin due to ethnic exclusion and civil wars. Experiences of voicelessness/oppression/powerlessness were pervasive throughout the participants’ life. These experiences were not processed, but internalized to an extent. In addition, rather than South Africa being experienced as a safe haven, there were further experiences of being threatened and excluded. Even though the participants suffered from different kinds of injustice, they tried to positively fit into the host community. These personal strengths and potentials could be put to good use, in that refugees could, and should be afforded the opportunity to actively participate in the host country’s development. The study findings can serve as a corner stone for the larger goal of the participants’ greater social inclusion, social change and social justice.

In terms of explaining xenophobia, participants expressed observations that are all borne out by the literature; however, there was no indication anywhere in the data that participants saw openings for attaining justice. Participants did state what ought and what ought not to be the case, but did not express any ideas of how this should be attained. This could be explained by a combination of the unprocessed trauma of genocide, war and flight on the one hand, and the pervasiveness of xenophobic violence and exclusion on the other, which in fact taps into prior experiences and invokes traumatic memories. This suggests, from a social work perspective, that it may be up to practitioners to assist refugees in developing strategies of resistance to the injustices they face, as well as offering professional support in relation to such responses. This is discussed further in Section 5.3, the final section of this research report.

5.3. Recommendations

The study's findings and conclusions lend themselves to a multitude of recommendations which stretch from the personal to the political, from social practice over research to education, and across a range of practice methods. Mullaly (2007:294) says, "personal is political". In response, this study recommends that:

On the personal level:

- Firstly, there appears to be an urgent and wide-spread need for therapeutic and psycho-social interventions that respond to the unresolved trauma that many Burundian and Rwandese refugees carry with them; this will help them to deal with the challenging conditions in the host country especially xenophobia ;
- Secondly, in order to change the situation for the better in the future, there is a personal responsibility for victims of xenophobia to report incidents to the law enforcement agencies. However, this will bear positive fruits only if state officials treat refugees in a humane way and the South African Police Services in particular should assist them visibly and without discrimination;
- Thirdly, there is a need for refugees to stand up for themselves and be involved in finding solutions to their problems, thereby moving beyond merely occupying the

role of victims. To this end, refugees should take an interest in learning local languages in order to facilitate their integration into the local community. In addition, refugees could come together and form a community forum which could become an essential tool in the management of tensions, in the prevention of xenophobia, as well as providing support (social, emotional or legal) to the victims of xenophobic abuse.

On the level of community-based interventions:

- There needs to be a coordinated response to the two sets of communities: South Africans and refugee communities. Many South Africans are not well informed about refugees, who they are, what their rights are or their challenges. Although the Refugees Act No 130 of 1998 stipulates the guidelines of recognitions of status of refugees, these guidelines are not taken in account by local South Africans in general, and state officials in particular. However, the social work profession is built around a belief in positive human contact. Therefore, there is then hope that if refugees were properly introduced and presented to the community at large, negative attitudes could change, and important obstacles preventing positive co-existence eliminated. The state could use its facilities such as the media to educate people to know and to accept refugees.

On the political level:

- There is a need for advocacy and lobbying work. It appears that the South African government generally and the police in particular have improved the situation after the May 2008 xenophobic attacks: For example they were able to prevent the xenophobic attacks that were looming after the 2010 Soccer World Cup. In addition, the conditions at the regional Refugees Reception Centers have improved significantly. Strong leadership together with stringent law enforcement, could be a way of improving the situation for refugees in South Africa;

- Organisations quoted in this study such as CORMSA, the Forced Migration Study Unit at Wits and SAMP as represented by authors such as Landau, Polzer, Misago, Crush and whoever else are already engaging in advocacy and lobbying for refugees' rights;
- Social work practitioners and academics are notably absent from these lobbying and advocacy efforts. In order to protect both refugees and South Africans from ignorance, mistrust and hatred leading to violence, much more work needs to be done to ensure that the integration of refugees in the host community is striven for and achieved. Hence, social work as a profession requires engaging in critical discourse and practice rather than remaining silent in the face of the systematic subjugations of refugees.
- Social workers should participate in lobbying for the necessary interventions to be addressed such as the lack of recognition of prior education degrees of refugees, their economic marginalization and exclusion, as well as their inner city living conditions. These are some of the key structural changes that will benefit everybody including South Africans themselves, and such changes will lay a very important foundation to addressing xenophobia and promoting positive relations between South Africans and the foreigners living amongst them.

With regard to the issue of media reporting on refugees:

- The media is a powerful instrument for disseminating information and influencing communities' perceptions. It is extremely difficult or even impossible for local integration to be a lasting solution for refugees as long as they are still represented as a burden and a threat to the local community. Although not every South African sees refugees as threatening or a burdensome to already strained resources, those who are supportive or appreciative of refugees are not in significant numbers to have the ability to persuade popular perceptions conveyed by the media. The media should not enjoy its press freedom at the expense of refugees' rights and should avoid being the potential instigator of social disturbances such as xenophobia.

With regard to further research:

- There is certainly a need for further research into all the issues highlighted by the participants in this study. Research that has a strong intervention focus and can contribute therefore to the emerging field of social work with refugees in South Africa is especially required.
- The findings of this study suggest that there is a particularly urgent need to investigate ways in which contact between refugees and South Africans may boost, rather than undermine, levels of trust between refugees and host communities. This may provide the basis for a social work that promotes positive inter-group relationships, enhance social cohesion and curb xenophobic hostilities.

It will not be an easy job to improve the situation of this study's participants and the over 58,000 refugees living in South Africa within the prevailing situation of on-going xenophobia, but it is possible with the efforts of all stake holders including the media, politicians, public servants, and social workers to educate and create awareness among local people as to who refugees are, and what it means to respect human rights. As contended by Naiker and Nair (2000:2), "refugee rights are human rights. In respecting the rights of refugees, South Africans will relay a broader message to the rest of the world that the abuse of rights in Africa will not be tolerated". It is hoped that this study will encourage everyone concerned with the refugees' integration in South Africa to set up concrete means contributing to the attainment of a successful local integration of refugees and enabling them to have access to quality life.

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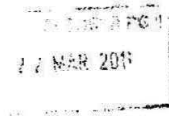
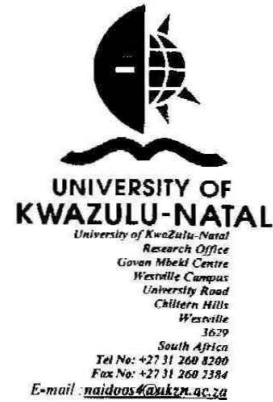
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APPENDIX 1: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



08 February 2011

Mrs C Mujawamariya
School of Social Work and Community Development
HOWARD COLLEGE CAMPUS

HSSSW

Dear Mrs Mujawamariya

PROTOCOL: "Living with xenophobia: Understanding the lived experiences of Burundian and Rwandese refugees in Durban (South Africa)"
ETHICAL APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/0061/2011 M: Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences

In response to your application dated 04 February 2011, Student Number: 203515966 the Humanities & Social Sciences Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been given **FULL APPROVAL**.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Professor Steve Collings (Chair)
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES ETHICS COMMITTEE

SC/sn

cc: Ms D Hölscher (Supervisor)
cc: Ms. S van der Westhuizen

Postal Address:
Telephone: Facsimile: Email: Website: www.ukzn.ac.za
Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

APPENDIX 2: CONSENT FORM

This information should be provided in the language the respondent can understand.

1. NAME

My name is Consolée Mujawamariya. I am a Masters student in the Social Work Program of the School of Social Work and Community Development at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

2. NATURE AND PURPOSE

I am conducting a research project that will enable me to complete the Masters degree. The Topic of my research is to investigate the lived experiences and coping strategies of refugees from Burundi and Rwanda living in Durban Inner city within a xenophobic context. I would like to discuss some of the issues relating to the topic with you.

3. VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

I have to let you know that your participation in this research is voluntary as the participation is your own choice.

4. CONFIDENTIALITY

Your names and identity will be kept confidential by the researcher and will not be divulged to anyone else. The information you share with me will not be only shared with my research supervisor.

5. WITHDRAWAL

You are free to withdraw from the interview at any point, without suffering any penalties or consequences.

6. NOTES AND RECORDINGS

During the discussion, I will be taking notes to keep track of what has been covered, so that I do not miss to ask some of the provided questions. However, as I do not have to worry about getting every word down on paper, I will also be recording the discussion. The recording is only to help me remember in full what was said. As soon as the tape has been transcribed, the tape will be erased, so that no one should have access to the recorded interview. Your name and any other information on your identity (e.g. your household and family) will not appear anywhere in my report.

The respondent should answer questions in this Form to verify that the information in it has been communicated to him/her. S/he can then sign the bottom of the document.	YES	NO
<u>Have the following been explained to your satisfaction;</u>		
The nature and purpose/s of the research		
The identity and institutional association of the researcher and supervisor/project leader and their contact details		

The fact that participation is voluntary		
That responses will be treated in a confidential manner		
Any limits on confidentiality which may apply		
That anonymity will be ensured where appropriate (e.g. coded/ disguised names of participants/ respondents/ institutions)		
The fact that participants are free to withdraw from the research at any time without any negative or undesirable consequences to themselves		
The nature and limits of any benefits participants may receive as a result of their participation in the research		

It will take between forty five minutes and one hour to answer the questions that I have.

If you need further information about this study you can contact Ms Dorothee Holscher of the Social Work Programme in the School of Social Work and Community Development at the University of KwaZulu-Natal on this number: (031) 260 3165.

I agree to participate in this study.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

I _____ have explained the purpose, procedures, benefits and risks in the study to the participant in the language that s/he understands.

DATE

SIGNATURE OF INTERVIEWER

APPENDIX 3: INFORMED CONSENT LETTER TO RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

To whom it may concern

I am currently doing a Masters degree of Social Work at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The aim of the research study is to understand the impact of xenophobia on refugees' lives focusing on refugees from Rwanda and Burundi living in Durban. For the investigation into this research topic, I will be interested in talking to refugees who are wishing to participate. All information acquired will remain confidential and participants will be able to withdraw from the research at any time. I will make arrangements to meet you at any time best will suit you. I will be asking a few questions related to the topic.

I am passionate about working on this topic as I feel this research will benefit participants, the refugees' services providers and the community regarding the stressors put onto refugees and to provide ways to deal with xenophobia.

Thank you so much for your time.

Yours sincerely,

Consolee Mujawamariya

Cell: 0745830485

Email: 203515966@ukzn.ac.za

APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview guide

1. Can you tell me about your journey to South Africa?
2. Can you tell me about your experience of living in South Africa as a refugee?
3. Are there problem/s you are facing because of being refugee?
4. Have you ever experienced any xenophobic treatment? Explain
5. How xenophobic treatments influence your day today's life?
6. How do you cope with xenophobic treatment?
7. What do you think should be done to address the problem of xenophobia? by:
 - a. Refugees,
 - b. South African citizens,
 - c. Local Government/South African government,
 - d. International Community

APPENDIX 5: MAP OF AFRICA



Source: World Atlas: <http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/af.htm>

APPENDIX 6: MAP OF BURUNDI AND RWANDA



Source: Map of the World: <http://www.vidiani.com/?p=9654>

APPENDIX 7: MAP OF AFRICA SHOWING THE ROUTE OF THE PARTICIPANTS



Source: Mongabay.com

————— : Route of the participants

http://www.google.co.za/imgres?imgurl=http://www.mongabay.com/images/african.gif&imgrefurl=http://www.mongabay.com/rates_africa.htm&h=724&w=680&sz=122&tbnid=prYsb8rkm6DanM:&tbnh=83&tbnw=78&prev=/search%3Fq%3Dmap%2Bof%2Bafrica%26tm%3Disch%26tbo%3Du&zoom=1&q=map+of+africa&docid=gDf-H7TQ_Vw2pM&hl=en&sa=X&ei=pU8tT8WGMsLAhAe8sd37Cg&sqi=2&ved=0CF0Q9QEwCA&dur=31