

**Understanding Homelessness and
Migratory Behaviour:
A Case Study of Adult Homelessness in
Durban South Beach Area, South Africa**

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Declaration

The research described in this study was carried out in KwaZulu-Natal, Durban South Beach area, under the supervision of Prof Pranitha Maharaj.

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. It is being submitted for the degree in Masters in Population Studies, in the faculty of Humanities, school of Built Environment and Development Studies, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other University.

Student signature

Date

ABSTRACT

Homelessness often carries negative connotations globally mainly because people do not have accurate knowledge of the phenomenon. A holistic understanding of homelessness in a country is important for government policies aimed at improving the living standards of all its citizens. This research sought to explore and understand homelessness in the Durban South Beach area. The researcher aimed at establishing factors that lead people to homelessness, the reasons why homeless people chose to settle in Durban and their life experiences as the homeless.

The study draws on qualitative data. The sample consisted of fifteen participants staying at a shelter for homeless people in Durban South Beach. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect information on their perspectives and experiences of homelessness.

The majority of the study participants became homeless following loss of employment. Family problems as well as communal factors like gang violence were also cited as contributing factors to homelessness. Participants cited health considerations, convenient access to utilities, safety and affordability among other reasons for settling at the shelter. The study recommends that interventions aimed at eliminating social problems like gangs, better access to education and skills development, and greater investment in rural areas to curb rural-urban migration is designed in order to reduce vulnerability to homelessness.

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My supervisor for her patience, support and guidance; I am short of words to express my gratitude.

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The foregoing research attempted by all means possible to observe the Research Policy of the institution, which in this case is the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The researcher further formalized the requirements for the Research Ethics Committee by signing the relevant documents and observing all the ethics protocol as required by the University by-laws

ACROYNMS

CBD-	Central Business District
FBO-	Faith Based Organization
HSRC-	Human Science Research Council
KZN-	KwaZulu-Natal
NPO-	Non-Profit Organization
RDP-	Reconstruction and Development Programme

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

Homelessness remains a global phenomenon, affecting all parts of the world from the third world to the first world. Its conceptualisation takes different forms as it is more than the mere lack of shelter, and includes street dwellers as well as those in institutions that provide shelter for the homeless. Homelessness is deeply rooted in existing socio-economic dynamics pertinent in most societies. The factors that lead to homelessness are varied in nature and this makes it a challenge to generalise understanding of the homeless subset of the population. To understand the contextual manifestations of homelessness in a society, studies employing qualitative methodology are most suitable.

A comprehensive understanding of homelessness and those affected by it is essential in addressing this phenomenon. This would further eradicate the negativity surrounding this subject as it has not yet received the attention it deserves. Homeless people occupy public spaces and their presence on the streets often carries negative connotations as they are often perceived to be deviant and vagrant (Doherty et al., 2008). However, there is a paucity of academic literature on homelessness especially in South Africa. There is not much attention that has been devoted to understanding the homeless people and their migratory behaviours. This study intends to fill this gap by exploring homelessness in Durban to shed light on the subject, the underlying causal factors, agency in the form of considerations homeless people take to choose an area to settle in, and the life experiences of homeless people.

1.2 Rationale of the study

The motivation of this study derives from the significance of understanding the impact of homelessness on relevant policies for development of the South African society, as the country grapples with socio-economic challenges the population is experiencing. Understanding who the homeless are and their life stories, together with the processes of migration amongst the homeless will offer insights into the intensity of the problem and its influence in population displacement and social change (Clark, 1986). Homeless people can

be viewed as a subset of the population that reflects the socio-economic problems in a country and opportunities for political growth in a maturing democracy like South Africa, inasmuch as the growth of a democracy is reflected in its ability to progressively reduce vulnerability to destitution and homelessness. Furthermore, in a country widely held as having the most progressive constitution centred on the promotion of the rights of the citizens, and the most advanced economy in the African continent, the steady increase in the number of homeless South Africans makes for interesting academic inquiry. Homelessness is affecting people from all population groups and ages in South Africa with both males and females equally susceptible. There is a need for more research on homelessness in the developing world that can contribute to the development of models for studying homelessness especially considering that the majority of existing literature on the subject is based on populations from the developed world.

Homelessness tends to be a very broad concept; defined by authors differently, but the underlying definition captures the lack of adequate and satisfactory shelter. Speaks (2004) observes that between the 1970s to the late 1990s homelessness was associated with personal pathology, placing the responsibility of homelessness on the homeless person. With the advent of social exclusion, there has been a shift from personal pathology (the human agency) to structural causes for homelessness (Speaks, 2004). Argeriou, McCarthy and Mulvey (1995) defines homelessness as a continuous variable described by the coordinates of time and place, conceptualising homelessness to include people living in shelters, on the streets, in abandoned buildings and other places not designated as dwellings for people. Cooper (1995) defines homelessness as a state of deprivation, lacking access to the basic requirements of shelter and the exclusion from social ties. Cooper (1995) further argues that homelessness and its causes are deeply embedded in the social, political and economic systems of a country. This implies that there is a need to contextualise homelessness, and this can be achieved by exploring the phenomenon using the emic view of the homeless people, and understanding the meaning they attach to reality.

Meert, Edgar and Doherty (2004) introduced an operational definition that identifies three domains which constitute a home, and the absence delineates homelessness. These domains include the physical dwelling, the social domain which include family and other social ties and the legal domain that constitutes legal entitlement to ownership or occupation (Meert, Edgar and Doherty, 2004). However these domains were established to investigate

homelessness in the European context. Understanding the context of the study is deemed necessary when studying the homeless as the definition of homelessness is closely tied to the context and its usefulness can be judged if it allows for accurate and reliable identification and classification of homeless people for effective interventions (Amore, Baker and Howden-Chapman, 2011).

Durban was chosen because it is often referred to as one of the fastest growing cities in the world; and it is one of the four major urban industrial centres in South Africa (Maharaj and Moodley, 2000). Since the 1980s there has been rapid increase of migrants from other parts of KwaZulu-Natal into the Durban region. The city of Durban also provides a typical example of many of the socio-economic problems confronting the country, from high unemployment rates to the housing backlogs which often result in the spread of informal settlements and homelessness (Maharaj and Moodley, 2000). The study will focus specifically on Durban South Beach (CBD) because there are many homeless people situated in that part, hence it would be cost effective as there are already established networks with non-government organisations (NGOs) that work closely with homeless people in and around Durban.

1.3 Homelessness in South Africa

Homelessness in South Africa has historically been associated with internal, rural-urban, urban-urban or inter-provincial migration which is rather closely linked to the unfortunate past of apartheid and land dispossessions. To this extent, migration has been seen as a response to the socio-spatial inequalities as people migrate in anticipation of securing better livelihoods, and some of these migratory moves lead to homelessness. In South Africa, homelessness is a manifestation of poverty and other socio-economic problems beyond the individual's control as opposed to developed countries where homelessness is attributable to personal and household circumstances; and also associated with deficiencies in the housing market (Kok, Cross and Roux, 2010; Speak and Tipple, 2004; Tipple and Speak, 2009). Olufemi (2001) identifies homelessness in the South African context to be a manifestation of the housing crisis rooted in economic, political, social and behavioural factors. Meanwhile, Morrow (2010) argues that it is not how homelessness is defined *per se*, but rather the urgency in comprehending factors that constitute the oppressive nature of poverty, which homelessness manifests. Perhaps revisiting history can potentially provide a direction on how

to address this pervasive phenomenon, visible in most South African urban centres. Morrow (2010) argues that South Africa has a long history of state sponsored homelessness from its agenda of separating racial and ethnic groups through the Homeland Act of 1913 and the Group Areas Act of 1950. He indicates that these policies did not directly create absolute homelessness, rather unfavourable conditions that created and perpetuated it. As the South African commercial agriculture was built at the expense of the black peasantry; with land disposessions and relocations to reserves that were later called homelands. Population density and limited livelihood prospects in these communal enclaves paved the way for the out-flow of migrant labours towards urban areas where prospects of earning an income were viable, hence most migratory behaviour was informed by socio-economic motives.

Most South Africa's rural-urban migration shows population movement to be directed by the push and pull factors. Literature indicates that the decision to migrate is often taken as a means to improve rural livelihoods through diversifying income. A study by Morrow (2010) found that homelessness in South Africa has many dimensions as it manifests in social problems resulting from the instability of the rural economy. In this context migration may serve as a response to the social disequilibria given that the sources of homelessness are rooted deeper in socio-economic disparities in societies that fail to accommodate citizens equally. Driven by poverty, most people decide to migrate to cities even though they may be aware of the high risks involved, and an all-or-nothing strategy as job security remains a major challenge. The reality is that most South African big cities are failing to absorb the current available labour supply, mainly due to the changes in labour demands resulting from the shift from manufacturing jobs to the increase in service sector jobs which have reduced the availability of low-skill jobs (Freund, 2001; Freund and Padayachee, 2002 in Schensul, 2008). There is a study by Makiwane, Tamasane and Schneider (2010) that uses case studies to document the life experiences of thirty homeless participants to obtain data on the causes and roots of homelessness for many black South Africans. The study shows the social causes of homelessness include divorce, domestic violence, ill-health, disability and substance abuse. The authors conclude that homelessness in South Africa is a result of rural-urban migration to escape social ills and other factors aligned to poverty (Makiwane et al., 2010).

Rural-urban movement of the population has resulted in the rapid growth of the poor urban population, which has contributed to the overwhelming increase in the homeless population on the streets and homeless shelters. Ravallion (2002) describes the urbanization of poverty

as a phenomenon or a notion whereby the poor urbanises faster than the non-poor population, thus this growth in urban areas is occurring in the context of generally declining economic performance and conditions. This rapid urbanisation often leaves some migrants destitute and without the basic level of housing and security; as a result this process has contributed to the origins of homelessness in urban areas across South Africa. This has further led to the negative perceptions of migration and urbanisation; yet certainly both processes are part and parcel of development. De Haan (2006) maintains that it is impossible to envisage development without migration. In support of his argument; Kok and Collinson (2006) disputes the negative conception of migration and urbanization, arguing that both processes are central to the livelihoods of many South African households. In addition, Kok and Collinson (2006:4) corrects the often held misconception of rural-urban migration being the cause of urban unemployment; arguing that migration of unemployed persons do not cause unemployment by their mere migration, as it is just a simple displacement of unemployed persons; rural-urban migration can cause unemployment if employed rural persons migrate to urban areas and stay there while remaining unemployed. They caution that migration and displacement should not be confused with the notion that these processes are the causes of urban unemployment (Kok and Collinson, 2006). Even though in-migration to urban areas does add to the pressure of the receiving area especially if it is already facing high unemployment, as the new in-coming migrants would add to the unemployed pool and this can directly and indirectly result in homelessness. Accordingly, Morrow (2010) further indicates that the problem of homelessness is part of the larger phenomena of poverty and migration.

The major determinant of urban homelessness tends to arise from failure of the rural sector to provide livelihoods or employment for its inhabitants; and they are often pushed by poverty to migrate to urban areas for better economic prospects. As in most cases migration is driven by economic factors, to maximise family and household income and resources (Kok and Collinson, 2006). Even though not much is known about whether rural development would reduce the urban migration pressure as South Africa presents a unique spatial reality that is greatly informed by its history; furthermore, Cross et al. (2010) identifies a range of complex factors including poverty and unemployment that frustrates development efforts and this harks back to the uneven spatial distribution of people and resources that keeps perpetuating spatial disparities.

1.4 Aims of the study

The general focus of this study is to understand homelessness in South Africa, specifically in the city of Durban through providing homeless people in Durban South Beach a platform where they can share their narratives as homeless persons. These narratives would enable us to draw the linkages with the socio-economic and political spheres of South African society, as perceived by homeless people, leading to their homelessness. The dissertation follows the argument that it is possible to approach the problem of the urban homelessness from the perspective of government and social movements rather than trying to solve the problem from a business and private sector angle, as clearly this is not only an economic problem but also a social one. While attempting to address this social problem, Sanchez (2010) suggests that homelessness is often the final stage of a lifelong series of crises and missed opportunities, which means that the adult homeless poor in urban areas mainly consist of rural migrants who came to urban areas in search of better economic and social opportunities.

The aim of this study seeks to:

- Explore and understand the causes of homelessness,
- Examine the factors homeless people considered in choosing to settle in Durban
- Understand homeless people's experiences of living on the streets or at the shelter.

The study aims to address the following research questions;

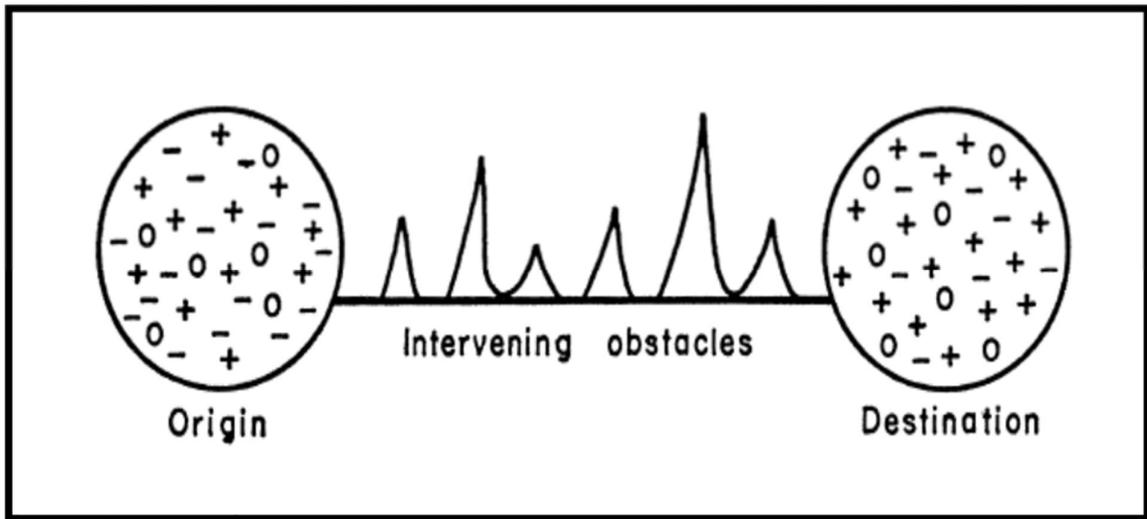
- What factors led the research participants to homelessness?
- What were the participants' considerations when they decided to settle in Durban South Beach area?
- What have been the life experiences of the homeless people living at the shelter or on the streets?

1.5 Theoretical Framework

The principal theoretical framework for this research derives from Everett Lee's theory which looks at the factors that influence the act of migration. According to Lee (1966), there are four factors that influence the act of migration. Factors associated with the place of origin, factors associated with the areas of destination, intervening obstacles, and personal factors. Lee (1966) asserts that migration occurs in response to a set of factors apparent in both the migrant's place of origin and destination. These factors encompass positive, negative and

neutral elements, and the act of migration is likely to occur if there are more negative factors associated with the place of origin and more positives anticipated in the place of destination. However, people's perceptions may differ and much is dependent on the individual's circumstances, personality and their evaluation of the move. The diagram below illustrates the first three factors which are place of origin and destination and the intervening obstacles.

Figure 1.1: Illustration of the origin and destination factors, and intervening obstacles in migration



Source: Lee (1966, 50)

In both origin and destination areas there are bound to be advantages and disadvantages, but overcoming the intervening obstacles is the main deciding factor for the move. Parnwell (1993) claims that intervening obstacles are potential barriers to migration, as in each area there are numerous factors which act to drive people away from the area, or hold people in the area. Furthermore, people usually have better knowledge about the place of origin than of the area of destination, as this knowledge remains seldom and secondary. Parnwell (1993) also maintains that intervening obstacles tend to have a filtering effect on the selectivity of the characteristics of people who are able to migrate, these characteristics may include age, gender, economic status and ethnicity.

Intervening obstacles have to be overcome before the act of migration can occur; such obstacles can include distance, transportation and accommodation. Lee (1966) indicates that

personal factors affect the individual threshold and facilitate or retard migration. Personal factors tend to be highly subjective and individualistic, they may also relate to the stages in the life cycle; as some individuals are resistant to change while others are eager for change. Lee (1966) concludes that the decision to migrate is never completely rational and for some persons they never fully rationalize the infinite possibilities.

Lee's model of origin and destination factors and intervening obstacles in migration drew its stimulation from the Laws of Migration introduced by Ravenstein in 1885 and refined in 1889, and both theorists draw on factors that influence the decision to migrate (Parnwell, 1993). Ravenstein (1885) offers the earliest systematic theory of migration which emphasized tendencies of people to move from densely populated areas to sparsely populated areas. However the opposite can be said about the current migration trend. According to Jackson (1986), the essence of the push-pull model was defined by Ravenstein where he lists a number of propositions including the relationship between migration and distance, and the hypothesis that migration was mainly directed to large urban centres of attraction. Similarly Lee's model of push-pull framework also views migration as a response to repulsive forces in the place of origin and attractive forces in the place of destination. Accordingly, factors in favour of migration would generally have to outweigh substantially those against the act of movement. Although the push-pull model has been criticized for the way it simplifies such a complex process into economic incentives, it still nonetheless remains the starting point in the study of migration.

Studies of migration are important in understanding population growth and distribution, and subsequent societal problems including homelessness (Clark, 1986). This case study will take into account all four factors stipulated in Lee's theory that influence the act of migration. Through in-depth interviews the researcher will be able to distinguish factors that influence their migratory behaviour and if they were homeless prior to their migratory behaviour to establish the cause and effect. Parnwell (1993) argues that the unevenness of development in Third World countries explains the high incidence of population migration hence migration may be seen as a kind of pressure valve through which people escape their survival struggles especially in Third World countries rural-urban dichotomy. Migration remains a key factor in the process of social change and development, and thus frequently occurs as a response to circumstances

1.6 Organisation of Dissertation

In this chapter I begin by describing the background and rationale for the study as well as stating the objectives and the theoretical framework guiding the analysis. Chapter two reviews literature, both international and local (South African) that looks at both homelessness and migration. Chapter three provides a detailed discussion of the methodology of the study. Chapter four outlines the findings of the study. The final chapter includes a discussion of the main findings and the recommendations of the study.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review literature on homelessness and to better understand homelessness more so in the South African context. Agreed, there is no consensus on what constitutes homelessness; hence the study of the homeless population comes with some difficulty. Moreover, homeless people are a highly mobile segment of the population, therefore it becomes difficult to survey or count them accurately as censuses conventionally enumerate households; and the homeless have no fixed regular address and move around in unpredictable ways.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the conceptual definition. After the concept has been discussed in great detail, the focus will shift to the historical context of homelessness in South African, whereby the origins of homelessness will be unpacked and such origins cannot be separated from South Africa's segregated history. Internal migration informed by the rural-urban dichotomy will also be addressed which would lend to a further discussion on the urban bias; and once urbanized some falling off the economic spectrum due to high urban unemployment and as a result may face social exclusion. A comparison will be done between shack dwellers and those living on the street, to investigate reasons why the street homeless did not resort to shack settlement as an option as opposed to living rough on the streets. Lastly literature will be reviewed on the role of various government departments and how government and civil society organisations collaborate to alleviate homelessness.

A short conclusion will then follow, reflecting on all the sections above discussed to draw links and commonalities, with brief recommendations.

2.2 Homelessness: The Concept

Homelessness tends to be very broad and elusive in nature. Definitions of homelessness vary considerably across different contexts, but the underlying definition captures the lack of

adequate and satisfactory shelter (Kok et al., 2010). This section presents various accounts of the concepts, as conceptual clarity would better inform the approach for this study.

Despite the fluid nature of the concept, there is a significant need for a 'robust' definition of homelessness that would form the fundamental basis for understanding this subset of the population. Homelessness tends to have different meanings in different contexts. Particularly, in South Africa, homelessness is attributable to poverty and the socio-spatial displacement of people historically (Kok et al., 2010), as opposed to more developed countries where homelessness is attributable to personal and household circumstances (Tipple and Speak, 2009).

Naidoo (2010) offers a broader view, indicating that homelessness encompasses both the absence and the poor quality of shelter and this is more prevalent in South Africa. Naidoo (2010) further argues that street homelessness means more than just a lack of shelter as it is intimately connected to a range of other social and economic factors. Certainly, homelessness is broader than just a lack of shelter, as it does not only result from the lack of affordable housing but it also includes a range of complex factors including poverty and unemployment (Cross et al., 2010). As most people would leave their homes to be closer to where employment opportunities exist, in essence such people are not homeless, but they however end up without shelter. Blomely (2009) argues that homelessness itself is partly and not entirely produced by lack of property, since property alone does not cause homelessness, but it however remains a crucial and often overlooked factor. According to Doherty et al. (2008), homeless people by definition are unable to access adequate housing of their own, and societal property rules forbid access to property, hence the alternative location for the homeless becomes open public spaces. In addition, they do not only inherit the status of lacking property or shelter but they also experience socio-spatial exclusion. This makes understanding them better a priority, but it is even more important to grasp the conditions that lead to and perpetuate their homeless state.

Moreover, research on homelessness is severely hampered by the lack of an operational definition, as homeless people may include people living in shelters, on the streets, abandoned buildings and other places not designed or intended for dwelling (Argeriou et al., 1995). For this reason, there is a need for an operational definition of homelessness that would allow for differentiation of homeless subgroups and types of homelessness. It is

imperative to first identify factors which constitute a home or the absence thereof, which can be taken to delineate homelessness. Having a home can be understood as having adequate dwelling or space over which a person shares with family and can exercise exclusive possession (physical domain); the ability to maintain privacy and enjoy relations (social domain); and having legal title to occupation (legal domain) (Meert et al., 2004). Therefore an operational definition of homelessness can be divided into three operational domains as discussed by Meert and others.

Johnson (1989) argues that homelessness must be understood in terms of time and place (cited in Argeriou et al., 1995). The duration of homelessness is also important in understanding approaches towards intervention, as early intervention and prevention of homelessness may help reduce the social and economic costs of homelessness. Sanchez (2010) differentiates between economic homelessness and chronic homelessness; whereby the former refers to those with qualifications and some work experience but lack employment, the latter refers to those with mental problems caused by living on the street, drug abuse and lack of esteem. The economic homeless could benefit from early intervention and hopefully be integrated back into society. Another conceptual difficulty lies in the true nature of the homeless person, as not all people on the streets are actually homeless, as some beggars and day strollers live on the streets temporarily for street trading (Sanchez, 2010).

In conclusion homelessness is not a static phenomenon. Hence it becomes a challenge to define it and even harder to measure. Nonetheless a definition of homelessness is essential for accurate and reliable identification and classification of homeless people, which cannot be set apart from its context and historical underpinning.

2.3 Historical Context of Homelessness in South Africa

The history of South Africa forms the basis of this section, as the historical context provides the roots of the racial and socio-spatial reality that prevailed in the country leading to the forceful removals and landlessness of the majority of the population.

In South Africa, historically the occupation, ownership and control of land have been racially contested through Dutch and British colonization and the era of apartheid (Yates, 2011). Under colonial rule, the ruling government forced indigenous black population to live in

designated areas so as to provide Whites with a workforce. During the apartheid years racial segregation intensified moreover in the late 1940s under the leadership of the National Party, which pushed for land dispossession and forced removals between 1964 and 1984 (Yates, 2011).

Morrow (2010) maintains that South Africa has a long history of State sponsored homelessness from its agenda of separating races and ethnic groups through the Land Act of 1913, which was enacted to ensure that black South Africans were denied economic and social access to all but 7 percent of the country's land (Yates, 2011), as well as the Group Areas Act of 1950. Both these apartheid driven policies segregated racial groups, locating the majority of the population whom were mainly black South Africans in overcrowded and environmentally degraded communal enclaves. This made it imperative for labour to flow outwards to the mines, industries and commercial farms owned by white South Africans. As a result, South Africa's commercial agriculture was built on the near destruction of an incipient black peasantry (Morrow, 2010).

Landlessness for blacks increased from 1957 after apartheid spatial policies that led to a vast number of removals, and farm labourers were the worse off as they remained the poorest with the least educated, worst housed and the most isolated. It was particularly the period of severe economic crisis, during the 1930s depression [*economic depression in the 1930s was worldwide, not only in South Africa or United States of America*] which led to large scale rural distress and aggravated the plight of poor white tenant farmers (Morrow, 2010). This large scale white poverty led to the intensification of racially based Afrikaner Nationalism in the 1930s and 1940s which aimed at ending the extreme white poverty whilst leading to the severe disenfranchisement of black South Africans. From the 1970s the National Party began to loosen its grip on the black population which led to more mobility as poor blacks migrated from white owned farms and homelands and established themselves in increasing number of townships which traces back to the origins of homelessness.

The first African townships with family houses in KwaZulu-Natal were Lamontville and Chesterville developed in the 1930s (Smit, 1998). Migration increased during the Second World War boom due to the war related economic growth and the demand to replace skilled labour absorbed by war. This rapid migration resulted in the swift growth of informal

settlements in Cato Manor which subsequently led to forced removals and the development of large townships of KwaMashu and Umlazi in the 1950s and 1960s (Smit, 1998).

In the post-apartheid context, homelessness has intensified as there are no barriers prohibiting people to migrate from one location to the other, also the conditions in many rural areas continue to impel people to migrate to urban centres and the least successful migrants end up on the street being homeless. Cross and Seager (2010) further maintain that the origins of adult homeless people are frequently in rural areas while homeless children on the other hand tend to move a shorter distance and therefore are mostly from urban townships. They also point out that the main determinant of urban homelessness arises from failure of the rural sector to provide livelihood or employment for its inhabitants; and they are pushed by poverty and unemployment to migrate to urban areas for better anticipated socio-economic opportunities. It appears that the street homeless population have become more pronounced in cities and open spaces since the dismantling of apartheid, which came with the freedom of movement and freedom of settlement. This perceptible level of homelessness affects people of different racial groups, although the majority are blacks. Cross et al. (2010) argues that homelessness in South Africa largely descends from the displaced rural vagrant population of the 19th century.

Therefore homelessness in South Africa is a phenomenon often attributable to social inequality, lack of opportunities and unemployment, although the roots causes tend to stem from the apartheid legacy. The situation is exacerbated by the post-apartheid uncoordinated planning, as well as the lack of coherent socio-economic policies and programs dedicated to the homeless to understand factors that push them towards homelessness.

2.4 Internal Migration: Push-Pull factors

Migration and population movements often portray spatial inequalities. Internal migration refers to migration within the borders of the country; South African internal migration is mainly attributable to socio-economic and spatial disequilibrium best informed by its history. It is widely assumed that the migration of the poor is the most likely source of metro homelessness. This section will discuss the spatial disparities that push and pull people into homelessness.

Cross and Seage (2010) identify the origins of homeless people to vary with age; the adult homeless population being mainly of rural origins while the street children are primarily urban born. For the adult homeless, migration may serve as a response to socio-economic disparities in their places of origin. Cross et al. (2010) identify a range of complex factors including poverty and unemployment, which frustrate development efforts. They further argue that most rural areas, particularly former homelands are burdened by limited income prospects and overly degraded land, as a result failure to subsist on rural land often leads to urban migration. Morrow's (2010) study showed that the magnitude of homelessness in South Africa has many dimensions as it manifests in social problems resulting from the instability of the rural economy, which perpetuates urban migration and the shortage of jobs in the urban sector which results in destitution and marginalization of the street population.

Consequently, driven by poverty, most people fail to consider that migration may also be a high risk and an all-or-nothing strategy as job security remains a major challenge (Smit, 1998). The reality is that most South African big cities are failing to absorb their current available labour supply and the hopeful migrants may find themselves in worse conditions than those in rural areas or their places of origin. Despite government's effort to control urban migration, rural-urban movement from the rural parts of KwaZulu-Natal to Durban increased greatly in the 1980s as a result of rural poverty and political violence (Smit, 1998).

Though circular migration continues to be a way of life for many South Africans, as it constitutes a source of livelihood for several rural households, however Todes et al. (2010) warns that urban and rural are not mutually exclusive categories particularly in South Africa.

Therefore spatial disparities are a major contributing factor in homelessness; this is more visible in developing countries as people are in constant pursuit for opportunities that are perceived to lie within the urban centres, and evidently urban centres are heavily overburdened to cater for those that fall into homelessness.

2.4.1 Urban Biases

Approximately 67.3% of the South African population resided in urban areas by the end of 2011 (Republic of South Africa, 2014). Since the 1960's urbanization has been synonymous to industrialization; as many theories connection urbanization with industrialization due to

the notion that conditions in urban areas are more conducive for production as opposed to the poor conditions found in rural areas particularly in developing countries.

Conversely, Brunt and Garcia-Penalosa (2010) have shown that urbanization, as opposed to industrialization forms the key element in the theory of development and they conclude that urbanization is the cause and not the consequence of development. They trace the origins of the first Industrial Revolution that took place in England in 1760, and identify the industrial revolution as a process of structural changes and a shift of labour from farming to industry. Their argument is urban biased, as they viewed the cities to be locations where people are most productive and innovative. Urban areas are platforms through which the transfusion of ideas occurs; for this reason urbanisation creates interactions which are the sources of both innovation and the spread of knowledge.

Equally urban concentration can also be counter-productive in urban environments with deficient urban infrastructures and the lack of access to basic services. According to Castell-Quintana and Royuela (2013) the quality of urban infrastructure strongly determines the growth enhancing benefit of urban concentrations, and when urbanisation occurs as a result of unpleasant social forces and lack of opportunities, it is unlikely to be associated with economic growth. Though if well managed cities offer important opportunities for economic and social development, as they have always been the focal point for economic growth, innovation and employment. Nuade and Krugell (2003) argue that the number and size of cities will depend on the degree of economies in production, the size of the market and the cost of transportation. These authors question whether South African cities are too small or oversized; their enquiry is aroused by the apartheid spatial planning with a spatial economy characterised by inefficient land use and consequently a segmented labour and consumption market. They further argue that South African cities are predominantly urbanised economies rather than localisation economies.

Urbanisation in South Africa can be traced to the 1800s, when the country became integrated into the global economy; after the discovery of diamonds and gold in Kimberly and Johannesburg respectively (Wentzel and Tlabelo, 2006). Turok (2012) refers to this period as the mining boom, which stimulated industrialization and urbanisation in South Africa. This mining boom was labour intensive and the demand for cheap labour grew tremendously. Strategies were devised to form a cheap labour supply through the imposition of hut taxes,

poll and labour (Wentzel and Tlabelo, 2006). It then became necessary for black rural inhabitants to migrate to urban centres to generate livelihoods, more especially with the imposition of various levies, and for remittances. The appalling conditions in the homelands led to a shift from an agrarian to cash based economy and this made it imperative for the outflow of labour to urban centres. Therefore, economic incentives were the main push factors for urbanisation, in addition, these conditions further gave rise to circular migration; a migrant labour system that was central to South Africa's economic development (Todes et al., 2010). Though these migration processes were strictly monitored through influx control through Native Act of 1923, this act stipulated:

“The native should only be allowed to enter the urban areas, which are essentially the White man's main creation, when willing to enter and to minister to the needs of the White man and should depart there from when he ceases so to minister” (Wentzel and Tlabelo, 2006; 84).

This Act gave urban authorities power to control and monitor the movement and stay of blacks within urban areas. Evidently the processes of urbanisation and industrialization were politically motivated along racial lines and the scourge of apartheid and its policies continue to throttle urbanisation and this is still pertinent even after its abolishment. Even with the demise of apartheid, racial divisions in settlement patterns are still evident.

Turok (2012) argues that the post-1994 government has no explicit policy either to support or discourage migration and this neutral stance has neglected the social damage of the past. Equally, Vellem (2014) maintains that there is no clear reconciled policy to guide urbanisation, as South African cities remain divided and the emergence of informal settlements symptomizing a history that defined the majority of South Africans.

Though urban areas remain the mainstay in economic development; however, the fragmentation in resources as well as the ever increasing share of the population living in urban areas and high unemployment levels contributes tremendously to the development of urban poverty. Homelessness is among the many manifestations of urban poverty, and also results in social exclusion and deprivation.

2.5 Homelessness and social exclusion

This section will look at the relationship between homelessness and social exclusion, arguing that poverty is a major cause of both homelessness and social exclusion. It also traces the origins of social exclusion and try to link them to the current occurrence of social exclusion resulting from homelessness.

Both homelessness and social exclusion embrace the absence of financial resources and the isolation from social networks. In actual fact homelessness tends to be an extreme form of social exclusion as it isolates and deprives this segment of the population from societal participation resulting in societal disengagement and isolation. Social exclusion is defined as a process by which someone becomes detached from society and from the morals governing society (Pleace, 1998:48). According to Sen (2000) the concept of social exclusion is relatively recent, 1974 to be exact; it was coined by a French theorist René Lenoir, who argued that the term includes:

mentally and physically handicapped, suicidal people, aged invalids, abused children, substance abusers, delinquents, single parents, multi-problem households, marginal, asocial persons and other social misfits (2000:1).

To link these concepts (homelessness and social exclusion) early explanations of homelessness originate in the liberal economic tradition, with emphasis on individual pathology and their unwillingness to participate in socio-economic activities. These explanations can be traced back to the English utilitarian and liberal ideas of the 19th century about the role of an individual in society; which stipulated that individuals are to take part in the economic activities of society, failure of which most often led to social exclusion (Pleace, 1998). The concept of social exclusion is arguably an umbrella concept, covering a wide range of social and economic deficiencies. Hence, it should be applied with caution, but it nonetheless includes marginalisation and deprivation. Sen (2000) points out that social exclusion is both the cause and consequent of poverty, since poverty has both material and non-material dimensions.

Poverty remains the major contributor to social exclusion and homelessness. Though it is true that poverty underpins much homelessness, however not all poor people are homeless and equally not all homeless people are poor (Tipple and Speak, 2009).

2.6 Comparisons between street homelessness and shack dwellers

The nature and extent of homelessness is highly debatable just as is the definitions of homelessness. Some authors argue that even those living in informal settlements should be included within the category, also those without any form of shelter, the street homeless. This section will discuss the similarities and differences between the street homeless and the shack dwellers, to identify common linkages and missed opportunities among the street homeless.

Access to shelter can be considered an essential human need which ought to be protected by the constitution, yet we still find people living on the streets and those living in shacks. Studies reveal that the most vulnerable population groups in South Africa are shack dwellers and the street homeless. Olufemi (1998) categorizes slums, squatters and the street homeless all to represent a depressed area-sub-section of the population that are not fully integrated socially and economically into the national development process. Furthermore, Cross (2010) and Olufemi (1998) have identified some commonalities between the street homeless and shack dwellers, in their enquiry they have raised the question of why the street homeless population have not resorted to the shack settlement? Indisputably, the homeless segment of the population are visibly separated from the shack population living in informal settlements, as street homeless people are the country's most vulnerable and the poorest, and therefore they are arguably worst off than shack dwellers (Cross et al., 2010). This has led many to argue that the underlying challenges of homelessness are much deeper than the mere lack of (*proper*) shelter and also deeper than the poverty issue.

To address street homelessness, there is an urgent need to verify street dwellers' status by the law, to enable effective monitoring and identification of those needing assistance so they could be re-integrated back to society as they remain worse off than shack dwellers. This can also narrow the gap between them and shack dwellers, as they are assumed to be better off than the street homeless. According to Cross and Seager (2010) the shack population tends to be better educated, strongly attracted to the metropolitan employment market and are therefore capacitated and engaged in economic migration. While the homeless population appears to be less educated, highly mobile and the most unstable population in South Africa, and this further hinder any interventions, like the allocations of housing through the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). Plus, due to the official and standard procedure of housing allocations, shack dwellers receive the most preference from most government departments. Most notably the Department of Housing (*known as the*

Department of Human Settlement) with its housing provision; that is aligned to most government departments whose aim is to combat the inequalities of apartheid. While there has been some observable progress on housing interventions to aid shack dwellers into decent formal RDP houses, not much has been done to respond to street homelessness in South Africa.

2.7 Department of Housing response to homelessness in South Africa

Throughout this paper it has been pointed out that homelessness is not only a housing problem, but an extension of other social ills. Though by definition homelessness appears as a housing problem and can be considered to be a continuum of the housing backlog. This section looks at how the Department of Housing, rather known as the South African Department of Human Settlement responds to street homelessness.

Cross et al. (2010) argue that South Africa has a deep belief in the capacity of society to protect itself, as poor people are provided with free housing and infrastructure to assist those that were affected by apartheid. Among the objectives of the RDP was the provision of one million houses in five years, Wehner (2000) warns that this was a very ambitious goal, given that post-apartheid government inherited a stagnated economy more so along racial lines. Besides, South Africa has limited resources to assist its large proportion of poor people and sees the shack population as a first priority for housing delivery (Department of Housing, 1994 in Cross and Seager, 2010).

Consequently, post-apartheid planning put more effort on those living in informal settlements; as their living conditions were perceived as a direct consequence of apartheid spatial planning. For this reason those identified as living in inadequate shelter were given preference over those without any shelter at all. Yet street homelessness tends to be more serious as they have absolutely no shelter. Cross and Seager (2010) point out that the Department of Housing has made effort and had acquired some success in bringing slum dwellers into settled society; however it has been less successful in finding ways to assist the homeless living in the streets. These authors also argue there are competing demands between people living in informal settlements and those living on the streets. Particularly, when comparing what is known about the informal settlement dweller, to what is known about the homeless; very little is known about the street homeless. As a result, the response of

the Department of Housing has been limited in addressing the issue of homelessness, and these limitations are also apparent in the response of the Department of Social Development to the street homelessness due to the elusiveness nature of the problem (*homelessness*). Furthermore, Cross et al. (2010) argues that South Africa is neither well informed nor prepared for the increasing homeless population, especially when compared to those living in shacks.

Nonetheless, the street homeless population remains South Africa's poorest social sectors as they are worse off than the shack population as they have some form of shelter and access to some social security as opposed to the destitute homeless who lack access to governmental social safety net (Cross et al., 2010; Cross and Seager, 2010). The government could perhaps cater for both populations through the provision of shelter and social assistance to accommodate both shack residents and the street homeless.

Even though a full understanding of the causes of street homelessness is not known, overtly it appears as a housing issue, however housing provision alone may not be the solution to the problem of homelessness, as poverty remains at the core of homelessness. Rather attempts in addressing and preventing further homelessness should focus on eliminating poverty at the grassroots level.

2.8 The response of government and civil society

Internationally homelessness is often seen as either a housing or a poverty issue, but for South Africa, perhaps above housing delivery; the elimination of poverty may remedy the homelessness challenge. This calls for joint ventures between the government and civil society organisations.

Governments of democratic societies exist to provide for the common good of the country concerned (Daly, 1996), and historically government has been obliged to take interest in the homeless and their welfare and to maintain social order (Cross et al., 2010). Naidoo (2010) revisits the White paper on the New Housing and Policy Strategies for South Africa (1994) which stipulates the responsibility of government in ensuring adequate housing for all. Even here much attention was diverted towards those considered to be living in inadequate shelter; the shack dweller as opposed to those without shelter at all. However there is some

collaborative work between government and NGOs working to improve the situation of the homeless through transitional shelters. The province of KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng have a special needs policy through transitional housing which is the provision of housing/ shelter for vulnerable groups (Chenwi, 2007; Naidoo, 2010). The transitional housing framework provides accommodation on a temporary basis; however these provinces tend to target different groups. In Gauteng transitional houses were developed to address homelessness through the provision of temporary shelters for the destitute and the homeless. While in KwaZulu-Natal, transitional housing provides short-term or overnight rental mainly catering for street traders, and low budget tourists (Chenwi, 2007). However the nature of the transitional housing initiative has received criticism for being a short-term relief addressing issues with long-term implications, since homelessness is evidently a manifestation of poverty and unemployment. Lund et al. (2004 cited in Naidoo, 2010) argues for longer term tenure and empowerment through education and job training that would allow re-integration back to society.

A collaborative effort between government and civil society organisations can have a great impact at the local level. Van Rooy (2008) defines civil society as an operative word, which describes an idealistic well-behaved, cooperative and trusted society. This definition excludes groups belonging to the market place, the state and those interested in acquiring political power and for these reasons political parties are not referred to as members of civil society. Civil society includes non-governmental organizations, faith based organizations, social movements, human rights organizations and advocacy groups involved in achieving social change (Van Rooy, 2008). Furthermore civil societies work in alternatives, opposing dominant and mainly oppressive ideologies.

Faith Based Organisations (FBO) as part of civil society organisations have a considerable role to play in addressing homelessness. This is demonstrated in a study done by Sanchez (2010). Sanchez (2010) observes that FBO seem to be better placed than the state to address urban poverty and facilitate grass-roots regeneration and communities in need, as they turn in great numbers to these organizations. A more harmonised approach is raised by Cross et al. (2010); they assert that street homelessness has been of concern to both the state and civil society for hundreds of years as the number of the homeless tends to rise when economic conditions worsens.

Therefore, the impetus lies on the side of both the state and the civil society to ensure positive social change and to provide assistance to those that have fallen out of society. Development policies should further provide guidelines to help both these parties to assist the homeless. Furthermore these policies should be informed by research undertaken to understand the homeless population and the organizations that offer aid to the homeless. Moreover, a culture of care and full involvement of homeless persons to improve their conditions for full societal re-integration; hence addressing homelessness cannot be limited to the housing backlog but other equally significant factors need to be addressed, which result in homelessness.

2.9 Conclusion

It is vital to note that homelessness is a global phenomenon, and only a few if any nations have succeeded in eliminating it completely regardless of the size of the social safety nets (Cross et al., 2010). It is also important to emphasize the role of civil society in alleviating this scourge of homelessness in whichever means possible. They are a crucial alternative, and socially supplement the work that awaits the South African government; more importantly FBOs and social movements are able to raise funds from international and local donors. These funds could be used to ease the work of the public sector as clearly homelessness is a social disturbance.

This chapter has explained the finest details of the definition of homelessness and identified types of homelessness. Various authors hold differing views on the conceptual content of homelessness, but all agree that the South African version is a by-product of racial segregation and spatial dislocation; in addition they further agree that problems associated with rural underdevelopment has worsened the problems in urban areas. A differentiation was drawn between the street homeless and the shack dwellers, whereby shack dwellers have access to the social grants and free housing, while the majority of homeless on the streets have neither. The focus of social movements should then be on the street homeless, who seem to have nobody to care for them, as compared to those in the informal settlements who fall within the social safety nets.

Therefore, this chapter has reviewed literature on homelessness; the concept, the historical context and other factors associated and linked with homelessness. There was also a sub-

section that touched on internal migration, looking at the push and pull factors resulting in urban bias and its consequences.

Chapter Three

Methodology

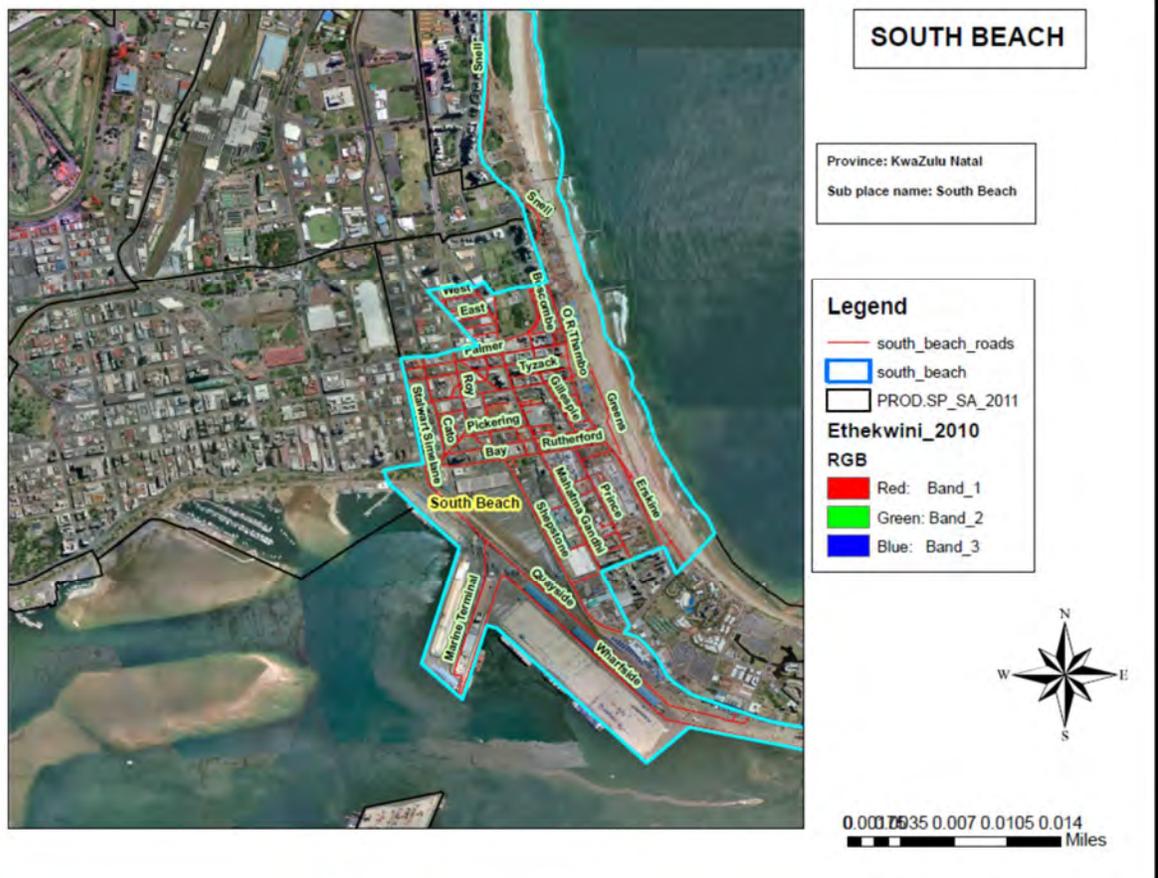
3.1 Introduction

This chapter briefly describes the methodology used in this study. It begins by explaining reasons Durban South Beach was chosen as the study context, which will be followed by a discussion of the research design which will present the philosophical assumptions underlying this research, and this will be followed by a justification for using a qualitative approach to collect the data. The research procedure will also be discussed and there is also a brief description of the sample and how data was collected and analysed. The chapter concludes with an overview of ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

3.2 Study context

The study will focus specifically on Durban South Beach (CBD) because homelessness in Durban South Beach area is a cause for concern, as almost every street is surrounded by homeless people. The research aims at understanding what led them to homelessness in the Durban South Beach area.

Figure3.1: Map Showing Durban South Beach and Surrounding Area



Source: Statistics South Africa (2015)

Durban was selected for the study because it was easily accessible to the researcher as she is based there and could observe the rifeness of homelessness in the city. Furthermore the city of Durban is among the fastest growing cities in the world; and is one of the four major urban industrial centres in South Africa (Maharaj and Moodley, 2000). According to Thompson (2011) Durban is an archetypical apartheid city with severe racial disparities. The city depicts the hallmark of apartheid urban planning that signified the spatial disparity within Durban, as access was limited to the white minority. Facing the sea are the most beautiful hotels and right behind these hotels rests a different reality that is far from all the serenity. Durban South Beach almost illustrates the first and third world in one area, to this extent Durban also denotes many of the socio-economic problems confronting South Africa, from high unemployment rates to the housing backlogs which often result in the spread of informal settlements and homelessness (Maharaj and Moodley, 2000).

With over twenty years of democracy in South Africa; Durban South Beach depicts destitution and homeless across all racial groups and the research participants sampled in this study narrate their experiences on how they ended up homeless and destitute. They all had migrated from somewhere as none of them were born in Durban South Beach area. This study focuses on why and how they ended up in Durban South Beach.

3.3 Research Design

The philosophical assumption of this study is informed by Terre-Blanche and Durrhem (2006) where they introduce research paradigms, stipulating that:

“Paradigms are all-encompassing systems of interrelated practice and thinking that defines for researcher the nature of their enquiry along with three dimensions: the nature of reality (ontology), the relationship between the researcher and what is to be known (epistemology) and how the researcher practically goes about studying whatever they believe can be known (methodology)” (2006; 6)

Paradigms are defined as a set of assumptions or beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality, giving rise to a particular world view (Nieuwenhuis, 2012). Furthermore paradigms serve as a lens by which reality is interpreted. The nature of reality perceived by the researcher influences the direction and assumptions of the study, although all research ought to be based on empirical data. The *ontological* stance of this study seeks to address what is known about homeless people, the nature of their reality and how it functions, taking into account their subject experiences; under the assumption that reality consists of meanings, perceptions and beliefs that motivate certain behaviours. While the *epistemological* stance makes the relationship between the researcher and the participants to take the form an empathetic observer of what stands to represent knowledge pertaining to the social reality under study. The *methodological* stance is qualitative and interpretative, as the researcher aims to understand homeless people's lived experiences, with emphasis on the subjective information given by research participants, that would reflect their frame of reference pertaining to the phenomenon under study; in this case homelessness and migration. The primary objective is to elucidate the subjective reasoning of the homeless population and the perception they hold of themselves, and also factors that have led to their circumstance, and those factors that continue to exacerbate homelessness and their migratory behaviours.

3.4 The Qualitative Method

According to Boeijie (2010) the primary focus of qualitative methods is on the meaning attached by the research participants, hence the approach towards the study tends to be inductive in nature, starting from a vague idea and allowing the research process to inform the speculation as opposed to deductive approach which is dominantly objective and starting with a firm theory to direct the anticipated hypothesis.

Furthermore, Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011) argue that the qualitative approach to research examines people's experiences in detail by utilising specific set of research methods like in-depth interviews, focus groups discussions and observations. This study strives towards a comprehensive and holistic understanding of how homeless people perceive themselves and their situation as homeless people without stable shelter and also hopes to gain an insight on their origins. The justification for using a qualitative method as opposed to a quantitative arises from the primary objective of the study, which is to understand homelessness and the migratory behaviour of homeless people within the Durban South Beach area. The qualitative method permits the interpretation of people's experiences and behaviours and is not limited to quantified measures; to this end there would be a greater insight and understanding of the dynamics of homelessness. Therefore, the utilization of a qualitative method is deemed effective in obtaining specific and contextual information about the homeless population; as this method would allow for open ended and inductive exploration.

Boeijie (2010) further explains qualitative analysis to be a tool that determines the meaning that people give their social world; in addition this would broaden their understanding of the meaning they attach to their reality and their social behaviours. This meaning will be communicated through words, concepts and symbols. Nieuwenhuis (2012) identifies qualitative analysis as tools that communicate meaning that individuals attach to their living spaces. As people's attitudes and behaviours are often influenced by their position in society, which further influences their access to resources or the lack of (Peil, 1982).

Furthermore, qualitative research studies people in their natural setting to identify how their experiences and behaviours are shaped by the context of their lives (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2011). Interviews were conducted at a homeless shelter, called the Nest; it was established in 2002 and currently operates as a non-profit organisation (NPO) providing

shelter to the needy. The shelter provided a suitable locale for the interviews to be administrated as most participants were residing there, and it was recommended to utilize a venue they would find comfortable and this also enabled the researcher to embrace the contextual influences on the research issue.

3.5 Research Procedure

Homelessness within the Durban South Beach and the Durban Central Business District (CBD) is widespread; almost every corner and street is surrounded by homeless people. However an attempt at securing a sample of such a population came with it challenges, given their nomadic nature. It was with the help of an NPO working with homeless people, that the researcher was able to attain participants to take part in the study.

Due to the nature of the population under study, a non-probability sampling method was applied in the form of snowballing sampling. This sampling method was preferred because homeless people are highly mobile and hard to find and recruit. Non-probability sampling is defined as the kind of sampling where the selection of elements is not determined by statistical randomness (Durrheim and Painter, 2006). The lack of statistical randomness will not compromise the quality of the study, as the objective is not to make generalizations, but rather to understand a social phenomenon at a particular place and time. Networking has been a primary method of securing the sample, through snowballing. Peil (1982) observes that snowball sampling is useful in studying social networks and groups that are hard to locate; such as homeless people. The author further states that the initial contact(s) may be chosen randomly, purposively or accidental (Peil, 1982), with this study the researcher began with a database of NGOs working with homeless people within Durban and a referral was made to the shelter that provided day and night accommodation for the homeless. This shelter acted as a gate keeper for obtaining permission to access the targeted sample for the study of homeless people within Durban South Beach.

Upon meeting with the shelter Director, the researcher presented an approach letter which briefly described the study and also contained details of the project supervisor. The researcher went further to explain the study in detail. The meeting proved to be successful; as the Director of the shelter gave permission for the researcher to carry out the study within the shelter, provided that the participants consent to the study. He went further to advice the

researcher to prepare a poster for prospective participants to put down their names to participate in the study. The researcher was also introduced to the homeless people present on the day of the visit at the shelter, and this was an opportunity to make them aware about the study and to encourage their participation. A date was scheduled for the interviews and the turn up was pleasant, as the research participants consisted of men and women from various walks of life whom were willing to share their experiences on being homeless and factors that have contributed towards their migratory behaviours.

In total, 15 interviews were conducted. From the 15 interviewed research participants; the main aim was to capture their demographic profile and the difference between homeless migrants and non-migrants; the demographic variables of interest included age, sex, race and education. As presented on Table 3.1., the ages of the sample ranged from 22- 65 years. The sample was well inclusive of both men and women, and inclusive of all racial groups.

3.6 The Research Participants

Though the initial targeted sample was the street homeless, the feasibility of attaining such sample was limited by various factors, hence the researcher was advised to rather study homeless people residing in shelters.

Table3.1: Characteristics of Sample

	Race	Gender	Age	Education	Province of Origin	Place of Origin
1	White	Female	53	Grade 8	KZN	Durban North
2	Black	Male	51	Grade 2	KZN	Ntuzuma
3	Black	Female	41	Diploma	GP	Soweto
4	Black	Female	51	Grade 11	KZN	Umlazi
5	Black	Male	28	Grade 7	NW	Potchefstrom
6	Coloured	Female	60	Grade 12	WC	Cape Town
7	Indian	Female	65	Grade 7	KZN	Stanger
8	Black	Female	45	Grade 12	KZN	Umkomaas
9	Indian	Male	63	Grade 11	CT	Cape Town

10	Coloured	Male	23	2 nd year UCT	WC	Michelle's Plain
11	White	Male	22	Grade 8	KZN	Durban CBD
12	Black	Female	37	Grade 11	EC	Bizaan
13	White	Female	49	Grade 10	KZN	Glenwood
14	White	Male	28	Grade 9	FS	Bloemfontein
15	Indian	Male	58	Grade 5	KZN	Over port

The research participants consist of 15 homeless people, between the ages of 22 to 65 years, seven of whom were males and eight females. The majority had completed their secondary with only two completing grade 12, while one had a diploma and one had dropped out of a tertiary institution. Most of the participants were from rural and peri-urban parts of KwaZulu-Natal, while three were from the Western Cape, one from Gauteng, one from the North West and one from the Free State and the other from the Eastern Cape. Their racial groups were inclusive of all South African racial groups (Black, White, Coloured and Indian).

From the 15 homeless people only one was street homeless, though he had lived in the shelter prior to his arrest. The majority of the homeless participant had homes that they had to leave due to various circumstances, and these circumstances will be discussed in greater detail in the chapter that follows. Their migratory behaviours were mainly motivated by the prospect of improving their living conditions, while for others it was just to be closer to health care facilities (the nearest was Addington Hospital); whereas for others it was due to behavioural issues and substance abuse.

3.7 Data Collection

Data was collected using a semi-structured interview guide. At the beginning of each interview the researcher read out the consent form and explained the purpose of the study to the research participants in a language they understood, mainly in English and isiZulu. This was to ensure they understood what the study entailed and its objectives. A total of 15 interviews were conducted and the participants were very cooperative and appreciated the platform to share their experiences.

3.7.1 In-depth Interview

In-depth interviews were used to collect data; this data comprised the demographic profile of the sample and the key themes included migration and homelessness. The main focus was on factors that led to their homelessness and their migratory behaviours. The use of in-depth interviewing methods was recommended mainly because homeless people are a very sensitive population group who often remain marginalized and without a voice, this study provided them the chance to be heard.

The key questions seek to understand factors that had resulted in their homelessness and also the migratory history of each participant; here the researcher wanted to capture the estimated number of migratory movements, the number of recent moves and the length of stay in the current location. Migrants are classified according to the length of their stay in Durban South Beach (Durban Central Business District), those with five years or more prior to the time of interview were classified as migrants. It should be noted that migration is limited to the length of stay in Durban (Central Business District, South Beach).

The researcher conducted these interviews with the 15 research participants. Most of the participants had found out about the study through other homeless people residing in the shelter, and these interviews were conducted at the shelter. The researcher utilized an interview guide, consisting of 20 questions grouped into particular themes. The use of a semi-structured interviewing guide assisted the researcher in capturing themes which will be compared and contrasted in the following chapter.

According to Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011) in-depth interviews are best utilized when seeking information on individual personal experiences on specific issues or experiences. The researcher opted for in-depth interviewing techniques because it allowed for an intense discussion of the topics during the one on one session between the interviewer and the interviewees. This questioning technique affords the researcher the platform to motivate the interviewees to share their experiences and perspectives on their homelessness situation and factors that had led to it and also factors that had influenced their migratory behaviours, particularly to the Durban South Beach. The researcher was able to explore their individual perspectives on homelessness and migration as participants were able to recount their experiences.

A voice recorder was utilized, with the permission granted by the participants; the recording was done to enhance the quality of the study by capturing all relevant details

3.8 Data Analysis

The purpose of this analysis was to understand homelessness and the migratory behaviours of homeless people within Durban South Beach area. These migratory behaviours would further shed light on the factors that motivated their movements and the distances they have travelled if any; and factors that have led to their homelessness.

To analyse findings, thematic analysis was used in analysing the content of the interviews to identify themes that emerged in the interviews. Themes that were assessed included their migratory status, reasons for homelessness, and their demographic characteristics. Nieuwenhuis (2011) defines data analysis as the process of understanding and interpreting data collected of people pertaining to the study. This study uses qualitative data analysis that is based on an interpretative philosophy with the aim to examine subjective meaning people attach to their circumstances; using thematic analysis to analyse data, whereby data is categorised by themes. The themes emerged from the responses given by participants, and therefore take a highly inductive approach. Tylor-Powell and Runner (2003) identifies the logic of qualitative analysis as a means of bringing order and understanding of the phenomena under study. This study utilized individual interviews and the data produced was in the form of notes summarising the interviews in a question and answer format.

Patterns and themes that arose from the respondents' subjective experiences form the data source for the data analysis of this study. These themes captured something important about the data in relation to the research question and represent some level of patterned response and meaning in the data set (Braun and Clark, 2006). In this study major emphasis was placed on understanding the experiences of homeless people and their migratory behaviours, in an attempt to comprehend how they perceive their circumstances of being homeless and factors that have led to their present situation. The two major themes of the study are homelessness and migration; both these themes will have sub-themes within them.

The utilization of thematic analysis enabled the researcher to link individual perceptions and shared experiences to create a deeper understanding of homelessness and the migratory behaviour of the homeless.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

In line with the research objectives, the aim of the study was to understand homelessness and the migratory behaviour of homeless people. The researcher fully acknowledges the sensitive nature of the research and its subjects; hence this study complied with all necessary ethical considerations from the proposal stage to data collection and analysis.

Initially, it was a challenge to secure a sample for the study (*street homeless people*). However, networking with relevant gate-keepers assisted the researcher in getting participants for the study. Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011) indicate that when seeking permission to recruit a sample, it is considered good protocol to seek permission from gatekeepers, stakeholders or groups within the community to conduct the research. For this study permission was granted through networking with a shelter working with homeless people; this shelter served as a gatekeeper for recruiting the sample.

During the participant recruitment stage and seeking permission for the research study, the researcher provided adequate information about the research objectives, how the data will be collected and who will have access to the data and finally on how confidentiality and anonymity of the research participants would be ensured to the maximum. The researcher made several visits to the shelter to gain trust from participants and also to encourage their participation.

After permission was granted and prospective participants were identified, then dates were scheduled for the interviews to take place. Throughout the data collection stage and before each interview was conducted the researcher read out the consent form and explained the purpose of the study to the research participants in a language they understood, mainly in isiZulu and English. Upon the research participants' indication that they understood the research and its objectives, they were then requested to sign the consent form to give permission to conduct the interview.

Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011) argues that ethical challenges are more pronounced in qualitative research, by virtue of seeking information about people's experiences. This is certainly the case in seeking to understand the meaning and interpretation they give to reality and their lived experiences and behaviour.

Nonetheless, efforts were made to minimize all possible harm, and not only physical harm but also mental harm in the form of shame and embarrassment, as homelessness tends to be a very sensitive issue. As the process of administering interviews on such a sensitive topic can evoke emotional responses, the researcher was very sensitive and empathetic towards the participants.

3.10 Limitations

The limitation of the study mainly arises from the nature of the population under study; as much as the homeless population tends to be well spread on the streets but to carry out interviews with them comes with numerous challenges. This also influences the sampling technique, which was snowballing as it is highly selective in nature. The sample size was relatively small and therefore may not necessarily represent the whole population of homeless people, but nonetheless it is hoped to have some relevance in similar contexts.

3.11 Summary

This methodology chapter has provided an overview on how the study has been conducted; from the research paradigms, to the justification of using qualitative methods and why it was deemed suitable for this study.

The research process was also explained in detail and also the recruitment of the homeless sample through snowballing. The interviewing technique has also been provided in the form of a semi-structured interview guide using in-depth interviews. Lastly the ethical considerations indicates the researcher's efforts to minimize all possible harm through ensuring transparency and sensitivity towards research participants as homelessness remains a very sensitive topic.

Chapter 4

Results

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this research is to explore and understand the phenomenon of homelessness among a sample of homeless people living in the Durban South Beach area. This was achieved through holding interviews with homeless residents. This chapter presents the findings from the interviews, organised according to particular themes. This chapter describes the main findings of the interviews. However, it is vital to first present the demographic characteristics of the study sample as this is important in getting a snapshot picture of the composition of homeless people living in Durban South Beach area. This is also important for analysis of results as well as discussion on the implications for policy which are presented in the next chapter.

4.2 Characteristics of the sample

The characteristics of the sample reflect the demographic composition of the South African population. This is not to state that the sample was representative, but to imply that homelessness occurs to people of all population groups and sexes. In addition, homelessness occurs to people who migrate to distant places as well as those who do not migrate long distances. Table 4.1 presents frequencies and percentage distribution of the study sample by selected socio-demographic characteristics. The study participants consisted of an almost equal number of males and females. The participants' ages ranged from 22 years to 65 years. Out of the fifteen participants, four were aged between 20 to 29 years. There was only one person aged 30 to 39 years while three were aged 40 to 49 and four were aged 50 to 59 respectively. There were three participants aged above 60 years. There were six Africans, three Coloureds, two Indians and four Whites. The participants came from different provinces across the country but the majority were from KwaZulu-Natal. Out of the fifteen participants, eight were from KwaZulu-Natal and three from Western Cape while Gauteng, North West, Eastern Cape and Free State accounted for only one each. The socio-demographic and geographical characteristics of the study sample are presented in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 Socio-demographic characteristics

Characteristic	Frequency	Distribution (%)
Sex		
Male	7	46.7
Female	8	53.3
Total	15	100.0
Age group		
20-29	4	26.7
30-39	1	6.6
40-49	3	20.0
50-59	4	26.7
60+	3	20.0
Total	15	100.0
Population group		
African	6	40.0
Coloured	3	20.0
Indian	2	13.3
White	4	26.7
Total	15	100.0
Province of origin		
KwaZulu-Natal	8	53.3
Gauteng	1	6.7
North West	1	6.7
Eastern Cape	1	6.7
Western Cape	3	20.0
Free State	1	6.7
Total	15	100.0
Highest educational attainment		
Grade 7 or less	4	26.7
Grade 8-Grade 10	4	26.7
Grade 11-Grade 12	5	33.3
Post matric	2	13.3
Total	15	100.0

As shown in Table 4.1 above, the majority of the participants did not complete matric. There were four who did not complete grade 7, with a further four not completing more than grade 10. Five participants completed their secondary education but did not proceed to the tertiary level. Out of the 15 participants, only two had post matric schooling, one had completed a diploma and the other one had only two years of university education. At the time of the interviews, only one participant was married. The rest were not in marital unions or long-term relationships.

In Table 4.2 I present a detailed description of each participant in terms of age, period spent homeless and source of sustenance. The majority of the participants had been homeless for three years or less. The majority of the participants, 10 out of 15, had at the time of interviews been staying at the shelter for less than three years. Government's social security system in the form of disability grants, pensions and child support grant was the single most important source of income among the participants. Six of the participants, constituting 40 percent of the study sample, depend on government assistance for their survival.

Table 4.2: Participants' age, duration homeless and sources of sustenance.

Participant	Pseudonym	Age	Province of origin	Duration homeless	Source of sustenance
1	Jane*	53 years	KwaZulu-Natal	19 years	Disability grant
2	Sandile*	51 years	KwaZulu-Natal	9 years	Disability grant
3	Sinhle*	41 years	Gauteng	5 months	Selling Avon products, and gambling
4	Sthe*	51 years	KwaZulu-Natal	5 years	Temporary jobs
5	Sipho*	28 years	North West	3 years	Selling cardboard and white paper, street dancing
6	Nicole*	60 years	Western Cape	2 years ^	Disability grant
7	Kritika*	65 years	KwaZulu-Natal	1 year ^	Government pension
8	Hlengiwe*	45 years	KwaZulu-Natal	5 months	Child support grant, piece jobs
9	Steven*	63 years	Western Cape	2 months	Government pension
10	Marlon*	23 years	Western Cape	4 months	Hustles in streets**
11	Joel*	22 years	KwaZulu-Natal	1 year	Employed, assistance from uncle
12	Slindile*	37 years	Eastern Cape	5 years	Handouts
13	Nannetty*	49 years	KwaZulu-Natal	2 years	Car guarding, hair dressing
14	Jake*	28 years	Free State	1 year	Employed**

15	Josam*	58 years	KwaZulu-Natal	7 months	Buying and selling small items
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* Indicates that name was not real

^ Spent part of the period away from the shelter

** Was not willing to specify type of job

None of the participants were employed in a formal job as would be expected among homeless people. As shown in Table 4.2 above, those who were not receiving government grants earned their living through undertaking menial jobs, temporary employment, buying and selling as well as other income generating activities that do not normally earn a stable and dependable revenue. A considerable number of the participants, constituting 47 percent of the sample, were older adults aged above 50 years. This may suggest increased vulnerability to homelessness as one grows older.

4.3 Factors that led to homelessness

4.3.1 Push factors

Drawing back to the theoretical framework, this sub-section aims to link the push factors that were stipulated by Everett Lee that influence the migratory behaviour or decisions of the migrant to migrate. Accordingly the push factors tend to be unpleasant conditions found in the migrants' area of origin and these factors stimulate the decision to move. With the research participants of this study, none of them were homeless prior their migratory move, it was only after moving to Durban South Beach that they became destitute. The factors that were identified by the participants as having led them to homelessness can be classified into different categories. Some factors concerned the individual while others related to family disorganisation and still others are located in the socio-economic system of the country but the factors were largely inter-related. The majority of the participants cited unemployment as the major reason why they were homeless. In fact 10 of the 15 participants referred to loss of employment as the starting point of their transition to homelessness. Participants reported that the loss of jobs rendered them unable to afford rentals and this resulted in them ending up moving to the shelter. In the case of Jane, her journey to homelessness started when she lost her job after her employer passed away. Jane comes from Durban North where she grew up with her family with both parents. She initially left home as a 21 year old young adult moving out to rent her own place as she was working and earning an income. Jane stated that being

independent is highly valued and so she was motivated to have a place of her own once she started working for her father's company. She later worked for her father's friend who operated clothing shops in Durban. When the shop owner passed away, Jane's situation changed for the worse. The situation at her family home did not allow her to move back because her father remarried after her mother died and she did not enjoy a cordial relationship with her step-mother which meant that she did not feel she was welcome at her father's house and as a result, she was not allowed to move back home. When Jane was asked the reason for her being homeless and why she cannot go home, she responded as follows:

"...me being here is due to several reasons. I can say the main thing is that I lost my job when my father's friend who was my employer died and the clothing shops he owned closed...I could not go back home because the situation there didn't make me feel permitted to; my mother had passed away and my father remarried and you know step parents are not always accommodating" (Jane, 53 years).

Jane's story points to socio-economic problems that lead people to homelessness as well as family dynamics that drive people out of their homes. After losing her job as a shop assistant, it was difficult for her to get another job especially given that her educational qualifications did not give her a competitive advantage in the current job market. At first she stayed at her friend's place but, ill-treatment led her to leave and move to a homeless shelter after being referred by police who advised that with her government grant she can afford decent shelter and food. Furthermore, Jane's circumstances reflect the difficulties people experience when one of their parents remarries following the death of a partner. Step-parents may present a challenge to their partner's children with negative life outcomes like homelessness as demonstrated in Jane's case.

Homelessness as a result of the loss of parents was reported by Nannetty. In the interview, Nannetty lamented the loss of her parents and subsequent loss of contact with her brothers. Nannetty is from Glenwood but said she had also stayed in Morningside.

"I am here because both my parents are late [dead]. I am not employed and have no skills, my highest schooling was standard 8 [grade 10] and when my parents passed away no one was willing to take me in. Both of my brothers do not talk to me and so I was left with no

option but to come stay here and I have been here since 2012. The little money I make from car guarding enables me to survive” (Nannetty, 49 years).

Unexpected loss of employment was highlighted as a major factor contributing to homelessness for Slindile who comes from Eastern Cape. Slindile left her home because she had found work in Durban but became destitute after she lost her job in 2009. Slindile worked at a café which was located in one of the supermarkets in Durban and claims that her employer emigrated to Australia resulting in the company shutting down its operations. She recounted her circumstances as follows:

“I became homeless when I lost my job. I worked for a pan cake café which was situated in Pick n Pay. My employer however, emigrated from the country to Australia and the café closed. I tried to hustle (tried to get by) but ended up being destitute that is when I decided to come stay here” (Slindile, 37 years).

While unemployment was mentioned as the reason for being homeless, probing into the background of some of the participants revealed that there were also family issues which pushed them into homelessness; some of which were linked to individual characteristics that played a role in the participants' homelessness. For example, Josam and Joel stated that they were homeless not mainly because they were not employed but their lifestyles and behaviours contributed considerably to their current situation. Josam, who has 8 years of work experience in the construction industry, could not hold his job any longer because of ill health. Prior to losing his job, Josam reported that he abused drugs and engaged in excessive consumption of alcohol. After losing his job, Josam continued to abuse drugs and consume excessive alcohol which led him to constantly quarrelling with his family. The family quarrels culminated in him leaving home for the homeless shelter. Joel also engaged in excessive drinking of alcohol and was disobedient until he was asked to move out by his uncle who provided him with accommodation. Joel worked for a bar while staying with his uncle in an apartment along Smith Street in Durban city. He reported that his uncle had on several occasions advised him to stop excessive consumption of alcohol. His continued drinking problems eventually resulted in Joel's uncle asking him to leave his apartment which led him to move to the homeless shelter. When asked about what led to them being homeless, Josam and Joel responded as follows;

“The trigger point was a family dispute at home but, it was linked to my personal habits and the fact that I was no longer employed...I don’t think I can find another job because I am not educated, I went to school up to grade 5. When I lost my job that’s when problems started at home and that was because of my excessive alcohol abuse. And I also did drugs and my family could not put up with me. I also thought I could not put up with them because they were always on me because of my habits” (Josam, 58 years).

“...well, I can only blame myself for my current situation although I would also like to think that if there was a decent job for me out there I wouldn’t be here. I stayed with my uncle who has a flat in Smith Street here in Durban. He kicked me out because I could not change my drinking habits despite him always advising me to stop”(Joel, 22 years).

From the above quotes it is clear that having a job with a salary enabled them to rent accommodation in residential areas, but Joel would not be homeless if he had stopped abusing alcohol when advised to by his uncle. The same can be stated for Josam.

Nicole, Kritika and Hlengiwe’s push factors to their homeless status were located in the family but their specific backgrounds were not similar. Nicole says she comes from Cape Town, situated in the Western Cape and initially migrated to Durban with her husband. However, she is a German national by birth and does not have many close members of her family in Durban except those from her late husband’s side. The death of her husband in 2012 was followed by constant family disputes which she felt were too much for her and as a result she decided to move out and seek refuge in different shelters. The following is what Nicole had to say about the reasons why she ended up being homeless.

“...things started going bad for me when my husband died in 2012. I don’t have enough close relatives whom I can go live with. When my husband died, his family members were not very kind to me, we did not own our own house so renting became difficult for me. I was born in Germany and came to South Africa with my parents. When my parents died my husband and I had already left Cape Town to come and stay here in Durban. I came to a point when I had to leave all the stressful family quarrelling behind and seek shelter here” (Nicole, 60 years).

Kritika's push factor was the constant abuse she suffered from her 35 year old daughter. She comes from Stanger, does not own a house and has one child only. Kritika reported that she started staying at her daughter's place after her husband retired from his job with a security company. She and her husband had never owned their own house and have been tenants from the time they started their family, and at the time of the interview they were both living at the shelter.

"The place I call home, there is not one really. My husband and I do not own our house, all our lives we have been tenants. We were staying at our daughter's place from the time my husband retired from his work. But she was abusive towards me, she didn't treat me well so I decided enough was enough and left. We took a train from Stanger with my husband and came here" (Kritika, 65 years).

Hlengiwe grew up in uMkomaas, her mother's birth place. She was raised by her mother in the absence of her father whom she does not know. The problems that led to her homelessness originated in a failed marriage to the man with whom she had emigrated from South Africa to Austria. Hlengiwe reported that she decided to escape from the abusive marriage and returned to South Africa where she customarily married another man who died in 2011. When she had problems with her in-laws she decided it was better to seek refuge at the homeless shelter.

"It is a long story. I ran away from my first husband because of too much abuse. I was staying with him in Austria and he was not treating me well so I came back to South Africa in 2006. I married another man customarily, we couldn't get married legally because my previous marriage still exists legally. So when my second husband died in 2011, I had problems with his family members who wanted his possessions including the house where we were staying before he died. So I ended up leaving that house" (Hlengiwe, 45 years).

The case of Marlon, a 23 year old Coloured male from Cape Town speaks to community level social problems of gang violence affecting places like Bellville, familial financial problems and absence of enough protection for young boys against gangs. Marlon is a second year University of Cape Town (UCT) Hospitality and Management drop out who claims that he left his home to run away from gang violence. He reported that his mother died from

physical abuse-related causes. Marlon also reported that his father was involved in violence and would ask him to “do a job” for him and this entailed killing people.

“I left home running away from gang violence. In my hood almost every guy belongs to one gang or another because that way you get protection. When I got a place to study at UCT I thought it would provide me with a way out of gangs but it was difficult because I still stayed at home because my family could not afford residence fees. I could not continue with the violence so I decided to leave and come this far” (Marlon, 23 years).

Marlon hopes to get a stable job which will give him a better platform to mend his life and claims that he still wants to study further. He also claims that he grew up in a family that experienced violence; his mother died from physical abuse related causes as his father was very abusive towards her. He claims that barring gang violence, he would have liked to finish his studies before leaving to start a new life in another province away from his dysfunctional family.

“I would have liked to finish my studies but a combination of financial problems and gang violence pushed me to the limits. I was going to leave home after finishing my schooling because my family is difficult to live with. Both my two older brothers are into gang life. So my wish was to leave home and go somewhere far to start my life afresh away from all the guns and violence” (Marlon, 23 years).

Sandile comes from Ntuzuma township of Durban and grew up with his grandmother. Both his parents died when he was still very young so he was raised by his grandmother from his mother’s side. He claims to have experienced abuse at school which coupled with his grandmother’s inability to afford school fees ended up forcing him to drop out of school in lower primary. When his grandmother died he was adopted by his aunt and her husband but left them aged 16 years because of constant abuse. The reason for him leaving his aunt’s place was to seek family from his father’s side because he felt he was going to be better off with them. However, he encountered more family problems at his father’s homestead which forced him to stay alone when he started working aged 19 years, renting accommodation in Umlazi before moving to Avoca Hill.

“What pushed me was the loss of my job at the end of 2004. I had no one from my father’s side who could help with accommodation so I decided to come here. It has not been easy to find a job especially given my health. At least I have a disability grant but, it is only minimal. I have several children with different mothers, maybe if I got married and settled down I wouldn’t be here” (Sandile, 51 years).

4.3.2 Pull factors

Lee (1966) states that the act of migration is likely to occur if there are more negative factors linked to the place of origin and more positive factors that pull the migrant to the place of destination, in the case Durban South Beach area. The pull factors that have been identified to attract some of the participants were mainly employment prospects and to be nearer to facilities within the Durban Central Business District. Two participants that stood out were Sinhle and Jake, both whom were in-migrants to KZN or rather Durban as they were from Gauteng and the Free State, respectively. Sinhle comes from Soweto, Orlando West she left home to come to Durban for employment. She claims that she decided to stay at the Nest because she wanted to be independent. Sinhle has a National Diploma in Commercial Administration and claims that it was not out of desperation that she came to stay at the Nest since she could be staying in Umlazi with her friend from college, but rather stays at the Nest to save on accommodation costs. She currently makes a living selling beauty products as well as gambling.

“...my contract at Woolworths expired so I was no longer able to afford my rented accommodation so I first went to stay with my former college mate in Umlazi. I decided to leave Umlazi and come here because I just wanted to be independent...I can’t go back home because I have to make some income and send back home for my two kids but, I know when I get a job I will move to somewhere else” (Sinhle, 41 years).

Another participant who stays at the Nest in order to save his income is Jake. Jake’s highest level of education is grade 9. He comes from Bloemfontein, Free State and is a semi-skilled boiler maker. Jake reported that he came to Durban in search of better job opportunities and claims that he chose to stay at the Nest because he does not want to spend most of his income on rentals.

“I am only staying here just because I think it enables me to save on rental costs. I came here for better job opportunities and until I get a better job, I decided to stay here [at the Nest] because it is cheap. In fact, that was my plan before I left home. My only problem is that securing a permanent job has not been easy” (Jake, 28 years).

Sipho is another in-migrant to KZN as he is originally from the North West province, but unlike Sinhle and Jake, the factors that pulled him towards settling in Durban differ. The circumstances surrounding Sipho's homeless status could not be clearly ascertained beyond his claim that it is because he does not have a job to enable him to rent in the residential areas. Sipho's highest grade completed is grade 7. He comes from Potchefstroom, North West and claimed that he initially came to Durban on holiday with his former employer from his home area. He however found employment with a security company as a guard and decided to stay behind when his former employer was returning to Potchefstroom. He left the security job due to non-payment of wages and worked for the Nest as a cleaner, a job which ended when he got arrested although he was not willing to state the reason for his arrest. Sipho sometimes sleeps on the streets because he is not always able to afford the daily prices of the Nest. He currently makes a living from collecting and selling cardboard and white paper. He supplements his income through dancing and acting with chalk painted on his face on the streets.

“It's because I don't have a job that's why I am homeless. If I was employed, I wouldn't be staying here...” (Sipho, 28 years).

Throughout the interview his eyes were filled with tears, as he shared his experience of living on the streets and how each day is a struggle for survival. However, factors that led Sipho to relocate in Durban South Beach were not clearly articulated, he did not mention what had informed his decision to stay in Durban, and this links to Lee's assertion that the act of migration is sometimes never fully rationalized (Lee, 1966).

Steven is also an in-migrant to KZN, originating from Cape Town where he grew up. He claims that he came to Durban because he wanted a new environment away from constant quarrelling at home. When he first came to Durban he slept on the street but later stayed in low cost hotels as he found a job to work in a hotel. Steven had come to stay at the Nest shelter recently because he is left with a government grant as his only source of income. The

contract jobs that used to provide him with enough income to stay in low cost hotels are no longer easily available.

“I left my home in Cape Town because of the constant quarrelling in my family. I wanted to get away from all that and found a place where I can have peace of mind...When I first came here in 2009 I was able to secure some contract jobs which enabled me to afford staying in low cost hotels” (Steven, 63 years)

Others travelled a shorter distance to reach the Nest like Sthe, she claims that she had no choice because she was chased out of her uncle’s house when he died in 2009. Sthe grew up in Umlazi, V Section in her uncle’s house and had stayed there all her life. She lost her job at King George hospital where she was working as a cleaner. She claims that the reason for losing her job was falling pregnant as a temporary employee and that was during apartheid.

“...I am staying here now because my uncle, who provided me with accommodation, passed away in 2009. He has looked after me since I was child because my mother died when I was young. I was forced out of that home and I decided it is better for me to come here. It is better living here in town because I can get some part time jobs which was hard in the township” (Sthe, 51 years).

4.4 Reasons for choosing Durban South Beach area

The research participants had different reasons for choosing a shelter located in the Durban South Beach area. The participants cited health considerations, cost, convenient access to the central business district, safety, and existence of rules and order at the Nest as their reasons for deciding to settle in the area. Some participants cited more than one reason for example, cost and safety, convenient access to town and existence of rules. In this section, I present the participants’ reasons for settling at the shelter in Durban South Beach are based on the categories aforementioned.

4.4.1 Health considerations

The study participants with health problems cited the need to be close to a public health facility (Addington Hospital) as their main reason for settling in Durban South Beach. The

health considerations for choosing to settle in Durban South Beach area, cited by Jane, Sandile, Nicole, and Josam mainly involved the need for convenient collection of medical drugs except for Jane. In the case of Jane, her main reason was so that she could be around people who would help her when she experiences epileptic seizures. Jane suffers from epilepsy and needs to be close to people at all times. Given that she felt that she did not have a trusting, cordial relationship with her stepmother, she decided it would be in her best interests to be around people at a stable shelter. In describing her reasons for choosing the shelter in the Durban South Beach area, Jane had the following to say:

“I am an epileptic person so I wanted a place where I can be close to people at all times. I thought this place would be ideal as there are people who stay here and felt they would assist me during times when my seizures attack...and each time I have been helped” (Jane 53 years).

The above quote shows that homeless people are not passive people whose lives are always resigned to fate. This is not only with respect to Jane but to all the other participants who took part in this study. For example, Sandile, a 51 year old tuberculosis patient highlighted the need to be conveniently close to a hospital for health reasons.

“The reason why I chose to stay in this area [Durban South Beach] is because I wanted to be close to Addington, I collect my medication there regularly so it is easier if I am here than anywhere else. There are of course other hospitals but they are not as conveniently accessible as Addington especially considering that my job is located here in town as well” (Sandile, 51 years).

Sandile is a TB patient and says he has been on treatment for the past 10 years. His job involves collecting paper and selling to recyclers. Staying in the South Beach area is therefore convenient for him both health-wise and job-wise. The health problems for Sandile also include a physical injury to his left arm which he claims was from being attacked by an axe. As a result, the arm no longer functions optimally and becomes very painful, particularly in cold weather. Due to the nature of his ailment which can be treated, Sandile reported that when his health improves the government stops paying him the disability grant and this negatively affects his ability to afford the daily rate for shelter at the Nest. Consequently,

there are times when he sleeps on the street which exacerbates his health condition to a point where he receives a disability grant again.

Nicole is another participant who was concerned about her health needs which led to her settling in the Durban South Beach area. Nicole suffers from arthritis and also has a heart condition. She reported that she has been living with arthritis for the five years prior to the time of the interview and later developed heart problems which eventually forced her to move to the South Beach area closer to Addington hospital. Arthritis is a disease of inflammation of the joints and affects a person's ability to utilise his or her limbs optimally. Combined with heart problems, arthritis severely affects a person's mobility and reduces ability to walk over a long distance. As a result, patients of these diseases need to be close to medical centres if they do not have convenient means of transport. Nicole described her reason for choosing to settle in the Durban South Beach area as follows;

“I wanted to be closer to a hospital. I was staying in Wentworth before I came here and that was not close to a public hospital, walking was becoming a problem for me because of my health problems. Initially I was suffering from arthritis only but when the heart condition developed that is when I decided to come stay in this area because it is close to a hospital” (Nicole, 60 years).

Josam is a cancer patient and goes for regular check-ups at Addington hospital. Besides having cancer, Josam's physical health showed signs of negative effects of prolonged abuse of alcohol and other intoxicating substances. His skin shows signs of ill-health but he mentioned that he still drinks on occasions even though he is aware that it is not good for his health especially with respect to his body's ability to respond to medication.

“For me coming to stay in this shelter was so that it becomes convenient for me to go to Addington hospital. There are other shelters I could have gone to but, they are not conveniently located close to hospitals. I have to go to hospital regularly for my medication and examinations for my cancer” (Josam, 58 years).

It can be understood from the above quotes that Jane, Sandile, Nicole, and Josam considered their health needs in coming to stay at the Nest which is located in the Durban South Beach area.

4.4.2 Cost considerations

Some participants were more concerned about the price of accommodation and this influenced their choice of the shelter. Others were also attracted to the shelter not only because it was affordable but also it was seen as ensuring greater safety as illustrated by the comment below.

“I wanted a place that is affordable and safe because I wanted to save as much as possible the little money I make. Since I started staying here, I was able to have more money to send home for my kids compared to when I was staying in Umlazi. Life here is cheaper when you are hustling (trying to get by) plus you are closer to town” (Sinhle, 41 years).

Sinhle is a mother of two who left Johannesburg for work purposes in Durban. She has five years of working experience in Durban and believes that her current situation will not last for long. Sinhle claimed that she sees herself securing a long-term job that will enable her to move to the residential areas. While Sinhle has a tertiary educational qualification which gives her hope of improving her current standard of living, Siphso, has different life prospect.

Steven stayed in low cost hotels and lodges when he moved to Durban from Cape Town but, mentioned that he slept on the street on his arrival. He claimed that before moving to Durban he was involved in voluntary work in Cape Town with non-governmental organisations particularly those dealing with environmental work. He lives on a government pension but in his early life in Durban, Steven claimed that he worked for a wage at supermarket along Point road, Durban. He was employed in the bakery section of the supermarket and made enough money to afford the costs of staying in low cost hotels. Steven reported that he decided to move to the shelter when his contract based employment ended. He also pointed out that the shelter was located in a safe environment and offers assurances of security in the night given that it has a locked gate.

“Compared to where I was staying, this is cheaper and is safe... I am now surviving on government pension only so it was not going to be possible for me to afford the prices of staying where I was so I had to come here” (Steven, 63 years).

Jake was concerned by the cost of staying at the shelter as well as the convenience of reaching town from the Durban South Beach area. He is one of the few participants who view their stay at the shelter as temporary and indicated that he will relocate to another city or town if he fails to secure a job suitable to his skills. As a semi-skilled boiler maker, Jake claimed that he hopes to obtain a job in Durban which will enable him to improve his current situation. He claimed that he is able to support himself from the activities that he does in town although he was not willing to specify the type of activities. As a result, staying in the Durban South Beach area provides him with cheap and convenient access to the Durban CBD that he needs. When asked why he chose to stay at the shelter located in South Beach, Jake had the following to say;

“I am staying here because flats are too expensive for me, and I cannot afford to stay too far away from town because I will need more money to spend on transport” (Jake, 28 years).

As can be seen in the above, the participants were attracted to staying in the Durban South Beach area because of the locational advantage of the Nest in relation to the Durban CBD as well as its affordability.

4.4.3 Convenient access to town

Some of the study participants namely Sthe, Marlon and Hlengiwe were primarily attracted by the convenient access to town from South Beach. Sthe reported that she regularly does part-time jobs in the CBD area of Durban and thus needs to stay conveniently close to town. When it is not raining, she walks to town and back to the shelter which enables her to save on transport costs. This point was also alluded to by Marlon and Hlengiwe. However, Marlon also highlighted the need to be closer to a hospital as he has a heart condition that requires him to get regular injections. Marlon reported that his heart is smaller than the normal size and so needs regular injections for his heart to function normally.

“Staying here for me is good because I want easy access to town. It is easy for me to walk to town and back here unlike if I was staying in Umlazi or other township. And also the fact that you can get part time jobs in the city than outside” (Sthe, 51 years).

“This place is safe and decent for someone who doesn’t have a home to go to, and for me it is convenient as I have to regularly get an injection at the hospital...I have a heart which is smaller than the normal size...It is also very cheap and I can easily afford it from the little money I make in town” (Marlon, 23 years).

Hlengiwe reported that she regularly works at the flea market located at the Workshop area. Staying in South Beach therefore makes it easy for her walk to her work place and back. She works piece jobs to supplement her Child Support Grant which she earns for her daughter who stays with her mother in uMkomaas. Hlengiwe’s mother earns an old age pension which is higher than her grant and this enables her mother to look after her daughter. In the interview, Hlengiwe mentioned that she also contributes to the upkeep of her daughter. When asked why she decided to settle in the South Beach area, Hlengiwe had the following to say;

“I chose to come and stay this side because it is convenient to go to the Workshop where I mostly get piece jobs to supplement my [Child Support] grant. And when I don’t have money, I can walk...When I am late to come back, it is not difficult because taxis operate even after 8pm because there are many people who stay in this area who work in town (Hlengiwe, 45 years).

4.4.4 Rules, order and home-like environment

Joel, Nannetty and Slindile highlighted the existence of rules, order and a homely environment provided by the Nest as their main reasons for settling in Durban South Beach area. Joel highlighted that the shelter gives adequate protection from rain. Although it cannot be compared to a home, Joel acknowledged that the shelter provides enough protection and gives a living environment that has the hallmarks of order and is home-like.

“I decided to settle here after noticing that this shelter is decent and is safe. You can be here and feel secure like you do not have to worry about the rain. It may not be as good as being home but at least you can’t say you are staying on the street” (Joel, 22 years).

Slindile's reported experiences of living at the shelter showed an appreciation of the church services conducted at the shelter. She was also impressed by the existence of rules and discipline at the shelter with strict adherence to the shelter's rules being promoted. Given the home-like environment, weekly church services and rules, Slindile described the shelter as a good place. Her portrayal of life at the shelter was similar to that of Nannetty. When Nannetty first arrived at the shelter, she was willing to move elsewhere if the Nest turned out to be a disorderly place with no rules. After observing that the shelter promotes strict discipline and that the people living at the shelter were generally respectful of the rules, Nannetty decided to settle.

“This place is good; there are rules, there is order and we have church services. Everybody respects the rules because if you don't you will be told to go find another place somewhere else. That's what made me settle here, it is a decent place” (Slindile, 37 years).

“I decided to settle here after seeing that the people who stay here follow the rules of the shelter. At first I thought maybe the order was not going to be maintained but I found that people respect the rules so I decided I would stay here (Nannetty, 49 years).

The above shows that the research participants actively decided to stay in the Nest located in Durban South Beach area for various reasons. Each participant's reason was related to their interests in terms of what they need most in their lives as well as other considerations that they intend to achieve although they are faced with many barriers.

4.5 Participants' experiences of living on the streets

The research participants revealed different experiences of living on the street. However, not all of them reported having lived on the streets as some went to the shelter either straight from home or from other shelters. Consequently, this section reports both the experiences of the participants about living on the streets as well as at the shelter. With respect to the experience of living at the shelter, the participants generally reported positive experiences. There were few who reported negative experiences. They experienced negative experiences when they first came to the shelter. In the next section, firstly, there will be mention on the positive experiences, mixed experiences and lastly negative experiences.

4.5.1 Positive experiences

The responses of the participants who reported to have never lived on the streets were generally positive. In the case of Jane, she regarded the shelter as being one big family that can depend on each other in times of need. She interacts with almost everybody and has been able to receive help when she needed it; although she acknowledged that there are occasions when she finds it difficult to associate with some members of the 'big family'. Jane's depiction of her experiences living at the shelter is illustrated below.

“Well, I can say it has been nice. I have found people to be helpful and I have managed to have good relations with most people. We are like a big family although you will always have one or two people you don't get along very well” (Jane, 53 years).

Nicole, who values the role the church services play in her life, reported a satisfying stay at the shelter. In comparison to the stressful life she lived prior to moving to the shelter, Nicole mentioned that she has found peace of mind.

“Living here has been enriching spiritually to me. I have peace of mind, there are no family feuds and the church services refresh my soul. Sometimes hardships befall upon you so that you get saved, I believe that's what happened to me. If I wasn't here, I would never have been in a position to appreciate the word of God” (Nicole, 60 years).

Nicole's experiences of living at the Nest were related to those of Kritika who spoke of a pleasant life, helped by the fact that she came to the shelter with her husband. Kritika finds socialising with other homeless people helpful, and has her husband with whom she can share personal aspects of her life, something which other participants did not have. When asked how she would judge her stay at the shelter, Kritika had the following to say;

“I can say it has been a pleasant experience for me. It is not the ideal place to live but the fact that I don't have to live the constant abuse I suffered from my daughter I have peace of mind here. Having my husband around also helps me because I am never lonely. Even though I can spend time with the other women who are here, having someone close to me makes me feel comfortable” (Kritika, 65 years).

Kritika's reflections on her experiences of living at the shelter show that some homeless people view their circumstances in a positive light because of their past experiences in their families. They felt that they did not have to experience abuse from their families and could enjoy some peace and harmony in the shelter.

4.5.2 Mixed experiences

The mixed experiences reported in this section include those of participants who wished they had better living conditions, as well as those who reported having both negative and positive experiences. Participants who can be classified as having had mixed experiences include Sandile, Sthe, Sinhle, Joel and Marlon. Sandile highlighted that living at the shelter was not as good as living at home but, appreciates the stable environment provided by the shelter. He has stayed at the shelter for nine years and, although he wishes he had managed to settle down and have a family of his own, he could not complain about his living experiences at the shelter.

“I can't complain. I have been here for nine years so I can't say it has been bad. You may not get all that you are most likely to get when staying at home but then I can't complain. But that is not to say I don't wish I had a family and a home though” (Sandile, 51 years).

Sthe is another participant who reported a positive experience at the shelter. She however, encounters challenges in relating to people who are strangers. Sthe is one of the participants who have never lived on the streets but showed awareness of the better living conditions at the shelter compared to the streets. She reported her experiences at the shelter as not particularly bad, although characterised with difficulties emanating from living with people from diverse backgrounds.

“I have never lived on the streets but I guess life is way more difficult there compared to here. Although I don't particularly have bad experiences of living in this shelter, I do have challenges. Living with people who come from very different backgrounds as you know is challenging sometimes but I am getting along okay” (Sthe, 51 years).

From Stheo's response it is clear that her experience of living at the shelter has not been entirely satisfying although she could not explicitly state it. Her description of her experiences at the shelter was shared by Sinhle who also cited the difficulty associated with living with a diverse group of people. Sinhle stated that she was not used to living with many people in the same building hence her difficulties interacting with all the residents at the shelter. This is because Sinhle has been at the shelter for just five months and has been a resident there longer than only one other person. She however, highlighted that she sees herself becoming comfortable communicating with the fellow occupants with time.

“The way I have experienced life here has not been too bad. It is fine. My only challenge is I am not used to living with strangers and so that presents me with a communication challenge. I hope with time I will be able to comfortably interact with everybody” (Sinhle, 41 years).

Some participants, like Sandile as can be seen above, wished they had a family and a home. Such misgivings about life experiences at the shelter were also echoed by Hlengiwe, Joel and Marlon with the latter having to spend some nights on the streets when he first arrived in Durban from Cape Town. Hlengiwe admitted to having had a difficult time when she first came to the shelter. Her apprehension about the shelter emanated from not knowing the people she found already staying at the shelter.

“...now it's a bit better because I am slowly getting used to the environment but when I first came it was really hard, all these strange people whom I didn't know. When you come to a place like this one, you don't know the backgrounds of the people you will be staying with and that can be scary. Otherwise it has not been too bad” (Hlengiwe, 45 years).

Joel had similar doubts as Hlengiwe about coping with living at the shelter when he first arrived at the Nest. Although he knew he had no home to go to, he felt that he was not going to be able to settle at the shelter. As time went by, Joel felt comfortable at the shelter and now has the hope that he will turn his life round from abusing alcohol while staying at the shelter.

“It was weird at first, I didn't know if I was going to stay here. But then it's not like I had an option. Given an alternative, I would not have come here...having stayed here for some time

now, I can say it's not that bad, you can actually turn around your life staying here.” (Joel, 22 years).

Marlon had positive experiences living at the shelter but had negative experiences living on the streets when he first arrived in Durban from Cape Town. He had never been to Durban before and was therefore not aware of the location of shelters for homeless people. Marlon mentioned the painful experience of living on the streets and that experience is partly the reason for him to view the shelter in a positive light although he wishes for better conditions.

“I have had two different experiences if I can put it that way. When I first came here (Durban), I had to sleep on the streets and that was a really painful experience. I wouldn't wish that on anyone, especially on rainy days...then I came to stay at this shelter, and things have been okay since. I cannot say it's what I would want but, it's okay, way better than out there (on the streets)” (Marlon, 23 years).

It can be seen in the above that the experiences of Joel, Marlon and Hlengiwe were mixed, containing semblances of both bad and not so bad. Meanwhile, Steven, Slindile, Nannetty, Jake and Josam reported neither very positive nor too negative experiences of living at the shelter. Nannetty, for example, summed up her experiences in basically one word. The responses of these participants are provided below;

“Well, my experiences of living here have been okay. For the price I pay to stay here, I can't complain. At the same time I can't say it's a very good place to be, maybe I can say it's decent for my circumstances” (Steven, 63 years).

“Given what drove me here, it's been okay. Anything less than what it's like so far would have been difficult. Although I feel fine and I am sometimes comfortable with the environment, I wish I can be in a better environment” (Slindile, 37 years).

“‘Okay-ish’, I guess that just about sums it all. I cannot say more, I cannot say less” (Nannetty, 49 years).

“It depends on who you choose to associate with. The people you associate with can influence the way your life goes on here. Personally I’m fine with how things have gone on but am working towards improving my life because I wouldn’t like to lead such a life forever.” (Jake, 28 years).

“...not too bad, not too bad. You wish you could be in a better environment but then you think about your situation and say ‘hey, at least it’s not too bad’ because what if it was worse than this” (Josam, 58 years).

4.5.3 Negative experiences

Sipho who often sleeps on the street and does not seem to have hopes of ever settling at the shelter for any considerable period of time was the only participant to report negative experiences. Sipho does not always have enough money to sleep at the shelter and thus sometimes sleeps on the street. Because of the lack of a stable income, Sipho’s experience as a homeless person has generally been bad. When sleeping on the streets, Sipho reported having problems with the police.

“...my sister, life is hard; I have had many difficulties living here and on the streets. When I am not sleeping here I am on the streets and there we are always being harassed by the metro police. They (police) say we should find hidden places to sleep but even if we find those hidden places they still chase us from there. Here (at the Nest) it is better but I don’t always have the money to sleep here” (Sipho, 28 years).

Amongst all participants, Sipho had the hardest and the most negative experience, others did add to the discomfort of living with strangers and sometimes conflicting personalities. Nonetheless, it is clear from the responses participants that the majority report experiences that can be viewed in a positive light. A few of them reported overly positive experiences while others reported overly poor experiences.

4.6 Factors behind changing places

The majority of the participants reported that they had never changed residence since they came to the shelter. Out of the 15 participants, only three reported that they have moved

around as homeless people. The rest had only stayed at the Nest since becoming homeless. Those who had moved from one place to another while homeless were Jane, Siphon and Nicole. The reasons for moving around can be seen in their responses below;

“I used to move from one shelter to another searching for a decent place. When I came here I found out it was better than the ones I have been to. That’s why I settled here” (Jane, 53 years).

“I change places regularly mainly because I will be running away from police harassment. These days I am without money so I move around a lot. I can’t sleep in one street or area for two consecutive days. And also there are people who stay on the streets and mug people, they harass us also that’s why you have to constantly move to avoid them” (Siphon, 28 years).

This demonstrates the differences in the circumstances of homeless people, that some can be stable in their situations while others’ lives are never settled. While Siphon cannot change shelters, others like Nicole are able to move from one shelter to another.

“I have only moved once. I used to stay at the shelter close by, behind this one (Nest) and I moved from there to here after they increased the rent” (Nicole, 60 years).

The other participants, although reporting having never moved from one shelter to another, highlighted some of the factors encountered by homeless people that make them move from one place to another. These problems, besides the ones mentioned in the above quotes, include problems with the rules of shelters, perceived job opportunities in other places and anticipation of better living conditions. For example, Kritika, Hlengiwe and Sihle reported that they had never changed places as homeless people but were aware of some of the factors that lead to people to migrate.

“Some people are wayward, they don’t want to follow the rules that are agreed by the shelter and you find that when they get into trouble with owners, they are either told to leave or they leave on their own. Others move to other places when they are not able to pay the rent when, their shelter has increased the rent” (Kritika, 65 years).

“Many things can make people move between places. If I find that I have better opportunities of improving my life somewhere else I will move without hesitation....because most of us here are staying here because we don’t have opportunities somewhere else. This is the place we think serves us best otherwise we wouldn’t be here” (Hlengiwe, 45 years).

“...you find that if you think you can have better living conditions in another place, maybe the shelter there is better than your current one so you move. Some people come here from other places, and they say it is because the shelters were very bad so they had to find better ones” (Sinhle, 41 years).

The participants whose responses have not been reported were related to ones cited above. As a result, it suffices to specifically quote Kritika, Hlengiwe and Sinhle and not the others in order to avoid repetition. Although the specific ways in which they phrased their responses were different, the participants omitted in the above quotes all highlighted the same messages as them.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has presented findings from the field work that was conducted to address the research questions which this study sought to explore. The chapter has reported the factors which led to the participants’ homelessness and these factors ranged from socio-economic, family and individual factors. As pointed out in the chapter, the factors were in some cases interrelated. The participants reported that they chose to settle in the Durban South Beach area for various reasons including health considerations, closeness to town as well as convenience. The experiences of the participants from being homeless and staying at the shelter were different. Some like Siphso had hard times while others like Kritika and Slindile were generally satisfied with their stay at the shelter. The participants reported various factors responsible for homeless people’s migratory behaviours and these included perceived job opportunities in other areas, troubles with shelters owners and inability to pay rent.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to gain insights into homelessness and its causes, and also to examine their experiences and factors that led them to consider settling in Durban South Beach. Drawing on a sample of homeless participants residing at the Nest shelter located in the Durban South Beach area, the researcher was able to journey through the lives and experiences of the homeless participants. The study employed a qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews to obtain detailed information about the experiences of homelessness. This chapter provides an outline of the most salient findings and discusses it as well as provides recommendations. The first subsection discusses the main findings; the discussion will explore linkages between existing literature as well as the theoretical framework. The second subsection provides a general conclusion to the study; it will summarise each chapter and ends with an overall statement on the research in terms of what the study suggests based on the findings. The third subsection contains recommendations of the study as well as relevant policies.

5.2 Discussion

This research found evidence consistent with existing literature pertaining to socio-economic factors leading to homelessness. The majority of the research participants highlighted loss of employment and joblessness as the underlying factors behind their homelessness. There is literature which suggests related factors, for instance, Kok et al. (2010) observed that poverty and socio-spatial displacement of people are the main factors leading people to homelessness in South Africa. Poverty in the context of this study can be interpreted in its broad sense to imply lack of opportunities that enable people to afford decent housing, and social safety nets in the form of social networks among relatives that people can find refuge in when confronted by lack of an income and accommodation (Cross et al., 2010). In the South African context, current homelessness among the participants can be interpreted as a microcosm of a national problem emanating from the socio-economic and political history of the country which was driven by a political philosophy based on exclusion and systemic inequality. Consequently, some people are

bound to be homeless because they never had a home from the beginning, for example, Kritika. The circumstances leading to Kritika's homelessness were explored in Naidoo (2010) who observed that homelessness is not only the absence of a home, but also the lack of decent shelter and ownership of a home. Complimentary assertions are also contained in Cross et al. (2010) who note that homelessness is not only an outcome of lack of affordable shelter, but also lack of employment and employment opportunities that enable people to afford available accommodation.

This study found linkages in personal characteristics that negatively impacted on some participants' familial relations which resulted in family conflicts leading to homelessness. An example is Josam who ended up being homeless after losing his job and subsequent family quarrels resulting from his addiction to intoxicating substances which led him to leave home and seek refuge at the shelter. While personal characteristics are usually cited as main factors behind homelessness in the developed world as highlighted in Tripple and Speak (2009), such factors are also important in understanding homelessness in South Africa. However, it is most important to understand the full context of homelessness as a combination of personal, familial and community level factors that can all simultaneously contribute towards a person's transition to homelessness. An example is educational attainment which can be measured at the personal level, but reflects an individual's point of interaction with the community through participation in economic activities that generate an income for the family. It is not surprising that the majority of the research participants have not obtained enough education that would have helped them attain employment and consequently proper homes. The educational levels provide the literacy and skills of the research participants, as these are regarded as indicators that can potentially improve one's chances in the job market. Sanchez-Guerra (2011) argue that educational attainment is generally not considered a serious variable in the study of homelessness yet the lack of formal education can form a barrier in securing employment in the current socio-economic climate. Therefore, with the majority of research participants having not completed their secondary education is shown to be an important factor in understanding the dynamics of homelessness. The lack of a steady and decent income often leads to difficulties in attaining and maintaining a stable household life. Though it cannot be argued that the lack of a decent

education causes homelessness, but the lack of a decent education increases the likelihood of being vulnerable to homelessness (Sanchez-Guerra, 2011).

The lack of sufficient formal education does serve as a major barrier for homeless individuals as it places them in a severe economic disadvantage, particularly with regards to securing employment as studies suggest that employment is highly correlated with higher educational attainment (Sanchez-Guerra, 2011; Metraux, 2014). Nonetheless, it would be false to argue that the lack of educational attainment is the direct cause of homelessness, but it could never be denied that educational attainment plays a significant role in one's life chances and circumstances that might potentially lead to homelessness. At present, the job market is getting tougher in this economic climate and demands a more skilled labour supply which makes it even harder for individuals without qualifications to compete or participate in the labour market. Metraux (2014) argues that better educational attainment increases the chances of a homeless person obtaining employment and subsequently a home. Although Metraux's (2014) study was based in the United States of America where the context of homelessness is different from that of South Africa, it is worth noting that modern South Africa's economic outlook bears resemblance to those of developed nations in being education driven despite different historical backgrounds. The history of South Africa has a bearing on current social problems like homelessness. As urban areas are largely designed for wage based populations, under development in the countryside and the growing importance of money as a medium of exchange imposed upon rural populations through compulsory taxes forced people to migrate into towns creating pressures in the job market in the 1950s (Smit, 1998). As a result, the urban populations had outgrown the carrying capacity of designated residential areas by the time the country had its first democratic elections resulting in greater freedom of movement and settlement inadvertently opening up urban spaces for occupation by those who do not have homes in the townships (Smit, 1998). This partly led Cross et al. (2010) to argue that homelessness in South Africa largely descends from the displaced rural populations of the 19th century.

The fact that members of the white population group were also among the study sample, points to current national problems in the employment sector linked to past gender inequalities with access to education. Some white females are more vulnerable to transitioning to homelessness because they lack labour skills and proper education compared to their male counterparts. This

highlights the importance of educational attainment and quality of education attained in the labour market in South Africa as explored in Anderson et al. (2001). Furthermore, the current problem of homelessness also highlights the differences in economic development among provinces as well as stalled demand for labour in the country (Banerjee et al., 2008). For example, Free State and North West still lag considerably behind other provinces like Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal and can be argued to be evident in the reasons for migrating to Durban cited by participants from the two provinces. It is also worth noting that structural changes in the labour market which currently to a great degree largely excludes the unskilled; and this further increases the risk of people transitioning into poverty including homelessness (Banerjee et al., 2008). While the affected homeless people may find fault in the state, it should also be highlighted that globalisation has had negative effects on the life chances of poor people. In a closed economy, local institutions and businesses invest more in the education of their potential labour force.

The strong representation of older people among the participants highlights the relationship between old age and risk of homelessness especially among people with low socio-economic status. In a country lacking adequate social wages such as those available in the Nordic countries like Norway, growing old pushes people into homelessness particularly those who belong to population groups that are still affected by the legacy of apartheid (Morrow, 2010).

This study found an association between substance abuse and homelessness among some of the participants. Substance abuse has negative impacts on the development of human capital and is often associated with the dropping out of school (Vangeest and Johnson, 2002). In addition, substance abuse negatively affects one's social integration especially in families. As a result, substance abuse increases one's risk of being homeless either directly or indirectly (Orwin et al., 2005; Johnson et al., 1997). Substance abuse gives rise to family feuds and usually result in the person abusing drugs and leaving home thus becoming homeless as observed in this study.

5.3 Conclusion

Based on results of the study, it is plausible to conclude that homelessness among the participants is largely fuelled by unemployment, whether from loss of previous jobs or inability to find first employment because of lack of relevant qualifications. Family problems as well as individual characteristics make it difficult for some people to stick to domesticity and this also push people to homelessness. Homelessness is mostly associated with physical and emotional discomfort as the majority of the participants indicated. The participants actively exercised agency in choosing to settle at the shelter in Durban South Beach area showing that homelessness does not imply lack of reason on the part of affected persons. Another observation noted was that homeless people also consider their health needs just like any citizen, even though their circumstances may sometimes give the impression that they are careless with their health. The findings of this study also highlight the significant role that homeless shelters play in the provision of accommodation and safety for the homeless.

5.4 Recommendations

Personal characteristics call for interventions aimed at family building and socialisation in schools. The most cited factor for homelessness was lack of employment. In this regard, it is recommended that the government and other stakeholders like the corporate world undertake to expand technical skills training so that the academically disadvantaged can acquire technical knowhow and increase their employability. Furthermore, efforts should be made to decentralise job opportunities so that less developed provinces can also offer varied job opportunities in order to reduce provincial migration. This is because the chances of becoming homeless increases when job seeker migrates to another province without securing a job prior to their migration; as opposed to when they have to look for a job while based in their home province. In line with the theoretical framework applied in this study, Lee (1966) asserts factors that influence the act of migration which occur in response to a set of factors identified in both the migrant's place of origin and destination. Contrary to this assertion, this study has revealed that it is factors in the origin that were known but those in the destination remain unknown. Though the act of migration may still be perceived as a response to repulsive forces in the place of origin and the attractiveness of forces anticipated in destination area. Those positive factors expected in the destination area remain unknown and may be influenced by an array of other factors including

employment opportunities, establish social networks and safe tenure; of which most of the research participants fell short of. Furthermore, the findings revealed that homelessness occurred to people who migrated to distant places and also those whom did not migrate long distances, therefore the distance travelled was not a major factor. To reiterate Lee's (1966) conclusion on the rationality of the decision to migrate, he holds that the decision is never completely rational and for some persons they never fully rationalize the infinite possibilities; and Siphos case depicts this assertion.

With respect to old age and homelessness, the findings showed that 47% of the research participants were over the age of 50 years, indicating increased vulnerability with old age. Interventions on family building initiatives must be promoted to strengthen social capital. This can be in the form television programmes aimed at socialising the young generations to place high value in looking after their parents in old age. There is need to increase employment opportunities in the country in order to increase the tax base as well as reducing the dependency ratio. When the dependency ratio is low and employment rate is high, the state will have more revenue which can be used for social spending in pensions for senior citizens. This has gradually been fading from the social fabric with negative outcomes on all levels of the society, from the individual to the national level. It is imperative that familial values are brought back in the South African societies as this will also help curb such social problems such as crime and the culture of gangs which have negatively affected most young people.

The social problem of gangs is strongly present in Cape Town and highlights the urgent need for review of regulations with respect to gun trading. Less restrictive gun control systems such as those existing in United States of America and other South American countries often result in more social problems besides homelessness. Therefore, while recommending for strict gun trading in order to curb the activities of gangs which were cited as a factor leading to homelessness by Marlon, the country also stands to benefit in other spheres like reduced armed robberies. Furthermore, awareness campaigns educating young people on the dangers of gangs should be undertaken particularly in areas affected by youth gangs. There is a need to ensure access to quality education because this is imperative in addressing factors associated with homelessness.

Homelessness shelters have a huge role to play in curbing and addressing homelessness; this study has displayed the benefits of having low-cost shelters like the Nest providing accommodation to the needy. Majority of the research participants have found a home and safety in the shelter, as some have resided there for years. Perhaps more investments on homeless shelter could assist many other people on the verge of homelessness. Possibly, a collaborative effort between government and civil society organisations in renovating dilapidated and neglected buildings around the area can afford many other homeless people access to shelter, as the Durban South Beach Area remains the hub of homelessness.

Therefore, interventions based on the recommendations suggested above should be at all levels of the society. This means that interventions should be addressed at the family level, school level, local or community level, provincial level, national level as well as targeted at homes using different policies and methods of implementing the policies.

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Appendix 1: Interview Guide

Demographic Questions

1. Age
2. Place of origin (nationality); *reasons for leaving*
3. Ethnic origin
4. Highest educational level
5. Work experience

Key Questions

6. What are the factors that led to them living in the streets of Durban
7. What distance did they travel, if any?
8. What are their experiences of living in the street?
9. What are some of the factors that make them to move from one area to another as homeless persons?

Personal Questions

10. What did you do before coming to the City (Durban)?
11. How do you make a living?
12. Where is the main place (four night or more) have you slept in the past week?
13. How long have you lived on the streets/ been homeless?
14. How old were you when you first became homeless?
15. What do you think are the main reasons of your homelessness?

Migration and Homeless

16. How often do you move around?
17. Where were you located five years ago?
18. If it was a different location, what motivated the movement?
19. What would like for the public to know about the homeless population
20. If you could change your current living conditions, what would you do differently?

Appendix 2: Informed consent Form

(To be read out by researcher before the beginning of the interview. One copy of the form to be left with the respondent; one copy to be signed by the respondent and kept by the researcher.)

My name is **Mbalenhle Charity Dube** (student number 209507765) studying a MA in Population Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban. I am doing research on a project entitled **Understanding homelessness & migratory behaviour: A case study of homelessness in the Durban South Beach Area, South Africa**

This project is supervised by **Prof. Pranitha Maharaj** at the School of Built Environment and Development Studies, University of KwaZulu-Natal; should you have any questions or queries her details are:

School of Built Environment and Development Studies, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban. Tel: (+27) 31 260 2243. Email: Maharajp7@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the project. Before we start I would like to emphasize that:

- your participation is entirely voluntary;
- you are free to refuse to answer any question;
- you are free to withdraw at any time.

The interview will be kept strictly confidential and will be available only to members of the research team. Excerpts from the interview may be made part of the final research report. If you give your consent to be part of this study, please sign this form to show that I have read the contents to you.

----- (signed) ----- (date)

----- (print name)

Appendix 3: Gate-Keepers' Approach Letter

To whom it may concern,

Ms Mbalenhle Charity Dube is a student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (student number-209507765). She is currently involved in a research project titled: *“Understanding homelessness & migratory behaviour: A case study of homelessness in the Durban South Beach Area, South Africa”*

This study forms part of her Masters Dissertation in Population Studies. The objective of this study is to understand the migratory behaviour of homeless people, using a case study of street homelessness in Durban South Beach Area. This will be done through conducting interviews with 10-15 homeless people. The study will consist of adult homeless persons between the ages 18 to 60, and whom would be representative of both males and females.

Any assistance in recruiting men and women for the study will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

For any questions or queries, please contact the project supervisor **Prof Pranitha Maharaj** from the University of KwaZulu-Natal; contact details are as follows:

Prof. Pranitha Maharaj

Tel: (+27) 31 260 2243.