

# Former street traders tell their stories

(Narratives in the inner city of Johannesburg)

By:

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# DECLARATION

I declare that this is research report is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for a degree in Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Urban and Regional Planning at the University of the Witwatersrand. It has not been submitted for any other degree or examination in any other University.

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2012

Bachelor of Science in Urban and Regional Planning (Honours)

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# ABSTRACT

This thesis looks at street trading. The focus is on the trajectories of the former street traders on how they used street trading as an entry to the city and the formal labour market. This research draws on the role that street trading played as a safety net during crisis. All the former street traders were trading on the pavements in the inner city of Johannesburg and are now in the formal sector in different parts of Gauteng. The trajectories of the former street traders provided the research with portraits of the former street traders and a typology. Karam and Rubin's entrepreneur model was used to trace the paths that former street traders might have followed to graduate to the formal sector. The path included successes and barriers for former street traders to leave street trading to the formal labour market or continue in a formal shop. A data collection was through life stories which serve to produce the findings.

# LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADF	African Development Foundation (ADF)
SANTRA	South African National Traders Retail Alliance
MTC	Metropolitan Trading Company
DD	Department of Development (DD),
CoJ	City of Johannesburg

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# Chapter 1: Introduction to the study

## 1.1 Background

### Issue of street trading

“You enter a city and you have to survive, you have to have an entry point, and for me selling on the streets was such an entry point. Sure, a country cannot allow people to sell anywhere, but we need to actually give the strength to people to organize so that they don’t litter and they contribute to society. When we came here in ‘97, all of the Ivorians were selling on the streets. Today some are lecturers at Universities, some are medical doctors, I’m an engineer... we are no longer in the street. You need to find a way to just help people to get that entry point. No one wants to stay on the streets, it’s raining on you, you are facing the violence, the criminals... so you don’t want to be on the street for sure but you are obliged because you have to survive. And that, I think our government doesn’t get it.”  
Mkwanazi and Pingo(2011).

The theme of this research was inspired by interests in street trading, the role that informal street trading plays in the lives of people in Johannesburg. It all started with a research done by my fellow colleagues (Mkwanazi and Pingo, 2011) in the Yeoville studio that opened my eyes about the importance of street trading in the inner city of Johannesburg<sup>1</sup>.

In the above text, a community leader and chairperson of the Cote’d Ivorian community states the importance of street trading as an entry to the city. The above text gives a brief overview of how street trading can change the lives of the people by providing an entry point. This really got my attention to conduct a research that would capture the untold stories of how people use street trading as an entry to the city and the formal labour market.

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<sup>1</sup> Yeoville studio is a research and learning initiative from Wits University school of Architecture and Planning (2010-2011), in partnership with Yeoville community organisations. See [www.bit.ly/yeoville](http://www.bit.ly/yeoville).

My interest lies in the struggles of the former street traders who use street trading as an entry to the city and the formal labour market. The research seeks to investigate how former street traders (as a specific subgroup), who now are working in the formal sector (shop owner, assistant hotel supervisor, university lecturer, engineer, marketing director, educator, etc.) have managed to use street trading as an entry to the city and the formal labour market.

## 1.2. Rationale

Looking at the literature on informal trading in general, there seems to be a gap that my research could contribute in addressing. The City of Johannesburg's economic charter (2012) states that:

“In a context of very high unemployment, and limited formal business opportunities for new market entrants, the City of Johannesburg recognises the role of micro-retailing and servicing on the streets of the Inner City in providing a livelihood to thousands of people.”

The City also recognises the important role that the informal sector can play in providing a first platform for the emergence and growth of businesses able to graduate up the rungs of a 'commercial ladder'. The City of Johannesburg's economic development charter acknowledges street trading as a livelihood to thousands of people and as an entry to the city and the formal labour market but fails to understand how people use street trading as an entry to the city and the formal labour market.

Obviously it is very important to note that not all street traders are going to 'make it out of the street'; not all street traders are growing entrepreneurs; actually probably only a minority of them are. But, because it is difficult to find former 'street traders' (they do not publicise it generally and by definition one cannot find them on the street) the stories of those who have 'made it out of the street' are untold.

The research seeks to investigate the different trajectories of different street traders, their struggles, and also to highlight the importance of 'happy endings' that are often under estimated, and therefore lead to a discard on street trade. Getting this kind of information will help support and put in practice the importance of street trading as an entry point to the city and the formal labour market.

All the former street traders that were chosen happened to have traded in the inner city (and that is telling of the opportunities for growth in the inner city). It is important to use Johannesburg's inner city as a study area because most entrants to the city want to locate in the inner city and most of the profitable street trading takes place in the inner city.

### 1.3. Statement of the problem

The research seeks to understand: **How have street traders managed to 'leave the street' and to enter the formal labour market?** The study will be guided by the following sub-questions

1. What were the circumstances that led them to sell in the street? How did they access a space in the city?
2. What were their perspectives when starting trading in the street?
3. What were the main constraints they encountered, while trading in the street, and in order to 'leave the street'?
4. What were their assets/ their strengths that distinguishing them from other street traders, and allowed them to 'leave the street'?
5. What were turning points in their professional paths that made them 'leave the street'? What was important then (capital accumulation, networks, independence)?
6. What role did their experience in street trading play in their current professional position?

The sub questions above will guide the research with the aim of unpacking the different trajectories of former street traders. Getting answers to these questions will allow us to build different typologies, portraits and profiles of the former street traders. The different stories of former street traders will show how the former street traders used street trading as a safety net during crisis and as a ladder to the formal labour market.

## 1.4. Aim

It is important to tell the stories of street traders because street trading plays an important role as safety net and survival mechanism in periods of crisis, and as an entry point to the labour market. The bigger problem is that policy often ignores the role of street trading as a 'buffer' in times of rising unemployment/ personal crises. As a consequence, policy does not make it easy to get in and to get out of street trading, while public support systems for existing street traders is weak. Telling these stories 'success stories' might shed light on this very important function of street trading as a response to crisis and unemployment- not only from a survivalist and poverty alleviation perspective, but also from a local economic development perspective.

Secondly, I hope through a (limited) number of in-depth stories, to be able to explore the conditions and challenges to these successes. While not dwelling on the matters of whether regulating street trading is good or bad I will trace how the former informal traders understand the difference between their stories, how they used street trading as an entry to the city and the opportunity to enter the formal labour market. The main purpose of my research is to tell their stories to influence policy and people's will perception on informal trading.

## 1.5. Research method

This part of the research presents the research design method that will be used, that will be only qualitative.

The qualitative research question is guided by the theoretical understanding of informal trading in Johannesburg .The following are the different qualitative research approaches that will be used.

The first research method is the case study method which is both descriptive and explanatory, because it will help to answer the questions how and why. Robert K. Yin defines the case study research method as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used" (Yin, 1984, p. 23). The case studies were a scattered group of former traders that happened to trade in the inner city (bias in sampling



method certainly; but also relevance of the inner city as space of opportunity). The using of multiple actors will help in unpacking the complexity of the research and will extend experience or add strength to what is already known through previous research.

Interviews as a research method will be used to understand the interviewee's stories on how they used street trading to enter the formal labour market. The qualitative research interview seeks to describe and the meanings of central themes in the life world of the subjects. The main task in interviewing is to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say (Kvale, 1996). Interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind a participant's (former Informal trader) experiences. The interviewer can pursue in-depth information around the topic (McNamara, 1999).

The interviews will reveal the different stories that people tell about their movement from street trading to the formal markets, their stories will be different because of how they used different methods to move to the formal labour markets. Due to the lack of analysis and acknowledgement in the policy of success stories of former street traders there is a need for research that examines this area in particular; there is also a need to explore and capture all the interesting stories told by South African and migrants on how they used street trading as an entry to the city and to the formal labour market in Johannesburg.

My main initial methodological challenge was finding former street traders (other challenges regarding the conduct and analysis of interviews will be dealt with in chapter 3 below).

The main methodological issue was finding the former street traders as they are no longer on the street pavements. I was aiming to interview at least ten people because I am doing a qualitative research and it needs a variety of in-depth stories that will be analysed to help inform the research. At first I had about eight interviewees that I got through several networks would have helped inform my research but I only managed to interview six as other former street traders did not want to be interviewed.

My problem was other former street traders that I managed to trace did not want to tell their stories; I assume that they are not proud of the situation they faced in the

past (see chapter 3 for more analysis on this). Those not telling their stories limited my research as it was very difficult to find former street traders. Most of the street traders that I interviewed were honest and coherent from the start.

In order to address the main methodological issue in finding the former street traders, I used several networks (stories heard, individual cases), migrant networks such as the African Development Foundation (ADF) and street trader that are still on the streets.

Finding former street traders through several networks started with my supervisor Professor Claire Benit Gbaffou who works with the street trader organisations. She gave me four contacts. The first person was Edmund. Claire told me where I can find Edmund Elias who is the chairperson of SANTRA. I went to look for Edmund in downtown Johannesburg. After finding Edmund I told him about my research and he told me he knows Mzitho who used to sell in the street pavements and now owns a shop. I went to Mzitho's shop in Braamfontein, Johannesburg to ask for an interview. He agreed and said I should come back some other time in his shop. The interview was held in his shop.

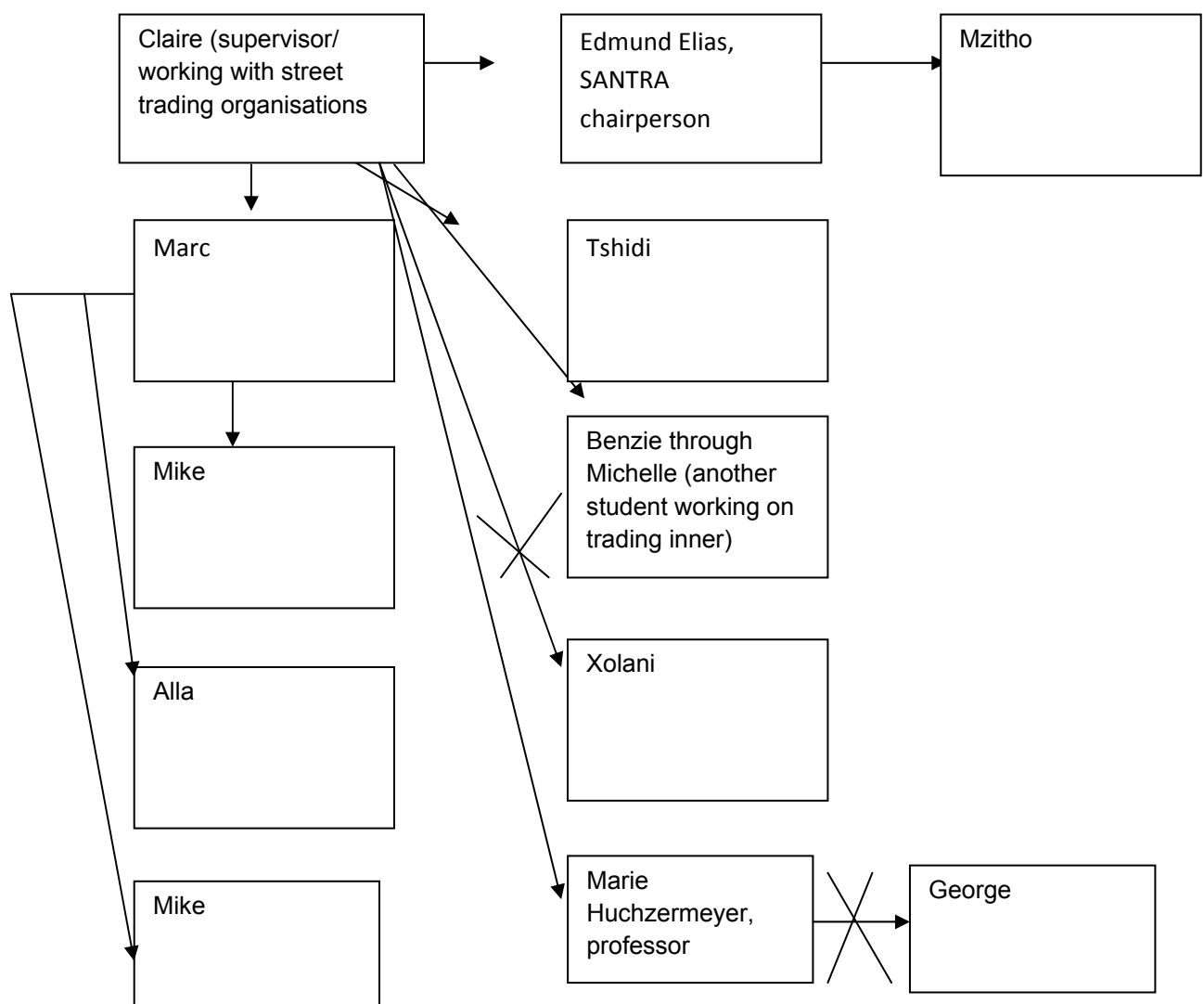
The second person was Benzie. My supervisor told me that she is located somewhere in Ghandi square, Johannesburg. I went to look for her shop and I found it. I asked for an interview and she granted it to me. I went back to her shop and interviewed her. The third person was Xolani. I went to his work place to ask for an interview, and he agreed to be interviewed. On the day of the interview he refused to be interviewed and did not give me a reason behind his refusal. The fourth person was Tshidi, I called her for an interview and she agreed. I interviewed her at her work place in Johannesburg.

Marc was introduced to me in a poster done by my colleagues in Yeoville studio and my supervisor gave me his contacts. I called him to ask for an interview. He agreed to be interviewed and he gave me three more people that he thought I could interview. The first person was Mike, I called him and he agreed to meet with me at Randburg, Johannesburg. The second person was Alla, I called him and he agreed to be interviewed at the school that he is working at in Randburg. The fourth person was Mike. I called him for an interview and he agreed, and when I got to the office he

refused to be interviewed. He refused to be interviewed because he said that the questions were personal.

Marie Huchzermeyer is a professor at the University of the Witwatersrand and is a colleague of my supervisor. She gave me one contact who is George from University of the Witwatersrand. George is a lecturer at the University of Johannesburg. I called George for an interview and he agreed. His schedule was busy and I could not interview him due to time constraints. Figure 1 below shows the networks that I used to find former street traders:

**Figure 1: show the networks that were used to find former street traders**



## 1.6. Chapter breakdown and outline

This research report is divided into six chapters. Chapter one provides a brief introduction of the research aims that it wants to achieve. Chapter two provides a theoretical background to the key concepts and arguments of the research. It reviews the literature on the context of informal trade, the debates of the dual economy and the link between the formal and informal sector and lastly understanding the street traders themselves.

Chapter three details the methodology used to conduct the research. A life story methodology was used and presented some benefits and challenges. Chapter four explores the portraits of the former street traders and a typology that surfaced from the trajectories of the former street traders. Rubin's entrepreneur model in chapter five looks at the paths that former street traders followed to get out of street trading. Former street traders got out of street trading to open their own shops or to join the formal labour market. Chapter six provides concluding remarks and outcomes of the research.

# Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter seeks to find, present and debate relevant literature to understand the importance of street trading as an entry to the city and the formal labour market. My literature review will be divided into two parts: the first part contextualizes informal economy in contemporary cities of the south and the second part is the narrower focus on street traders themselves.

## 2.1. Understanding the ‘informal economy’

### 2.1.1. Defining informal activities

“Informal activities are defined to be small-scale and elusive of governmental requirements such as registration, tax and social security obligations, and health and safety rules”. (Castells and Portes ,989:12) .

“The informal sector was defined as a group of activities which are illegal in the sense that they do not comply with government regulations pertaining to economy, wages, health etc” (City of Johannesburg).

“Informal trading is used to refer to the economic activity undertaken by entrepreneurs who sell legal goods and services within a space deemed to be public or private property, within the informal economy” (City of Cape Town, 2003).

From the definitions above it can be noted that the informal sector takes place in spaces that are not authorized by the state as places of trade and therefore needs to be regulated by the state. The main regulatory tools in the City of Johannesburg are street trading by-laws. There are stakeholders who deal with the regulation of street trading such as the Metropolitan Trading Company (MTC), the Metro police, the Department of Development (DD), the Department of Health, and the Chamber of Commerce. Each stakeholder regulates street trading differently.

In African cities, informal trade and service provision occurs in different parts of the streets and roads with most traders locating themselves at strategic points that have heavy human traffic, and where they can be seen by pedestrians and motorists while others walk from one place to another without official allocation ( Mitullah, 2003).

Most of the street traders from the research done allocated themselves space in the inner city of Johannesburg. The inner city is a strategic location for a street trading business because of the business of the city which also comes with challenges for traders. The problems street traders mainly face in South African cities are outlined as: the lack of infrastructure i.e. water, electricity, refuse removal, sanitation and unorganized trading areas which often leads to conflicts, lack of storage space, lack of transport to and from trading areas, no shelter, crime against traders, and law enforcement (by-laws) (Ligthelm and van Wyk, 2004). Municipal by-laws authorize the act of evicting street traders and confiscating their stock by city authorities. From the field work done, most of these challenges were faced by most of the street traders with police harassment and confiscating of goods being the major challenges.

As stipulated by the city of Johannesburg informal trading includes the following forms of trading without having a license (City of Johannesburg, 2009):

- street trading which comprises the selling of goods or supply for services for reward on public roads;
- selling of goods in linear markets;
- sale of goods or services in a public space;
- mobile trading such as from caravans, and light motor vehicles;
- selling of goods in stalls or kiosks; and
- Selling of goods at special events.

Informal street trade ranges from vegetable and fruit sellers, clothes selling, food cooking, barbers and hairdressers with the following characteristics from Ligthelm and van Wyk (2004), page 4-5)

- Flexible hours;
- Creation of employment;
- Alleviation of hardship and employment;
- Development of entrepreneurial skills;
- Diversity and convenience.

- Hence, it is seen that people living in urban areas turn to the informal sector as a means of survival as it requires very little money for them to start up operations.

## 2.2. The dual economy debate - relationships between formal and informal sector

Many authors have demonstrated that informal activities play a very significant role and contribute to the growth of the economy (Gërxfhandi, 2004). Since the appearance of the informal activities, the debates with its relationship with the formal activities were focused either on regulation (ILO, 1972; de Soto, 1989). The debate has shifted from seeing informal trading as not registered and unregulated economy to the consideration that sees the formal and the informal activities in their inter-relationships. The fundamental task here is to understand the forces that drive those relationships between the two poles, facets, aspects, or dimensions of the same economy.

During his 2003 State of the Nation address, President Mbeki stated, without some controversy, that South Africa is a 'dual economy'.

"President Mbeki has presented a picture of the First and the Second Economies as a double storey house. On the top floor are the rich, living well. Stuck in the bottom floor, with no ladders to access the top floor, are the majority of South Africans who are poor. This depiction calls for investment, for more 'delivery', in education and skills, in economic infrastructure etc. that creates the ladders the poor to join the rich on the top floor" (Reynolds and Johan van Zyl, 2006).

What this image conveys is that the second economy needs reinforced links with the first so that everyone becomes part of the first economy. It is problematic as it sees the 'second economy' as deemed to disappear when the proper support and encouragements are put in place. We all know on the contrary that informal activities are here to stay.

I disagree with the analogy that people on the bottom floor (informal activities) get stuck with no ladders to access the top floor (formal activities). Street trading is used by many migrants (national and international) as an entry point and during times of crisis to survive. Many former street traders used street trading as an entry point and

during crises and are now in the formal sector. Therefore there are existing and multiple links between the first and the second economy.

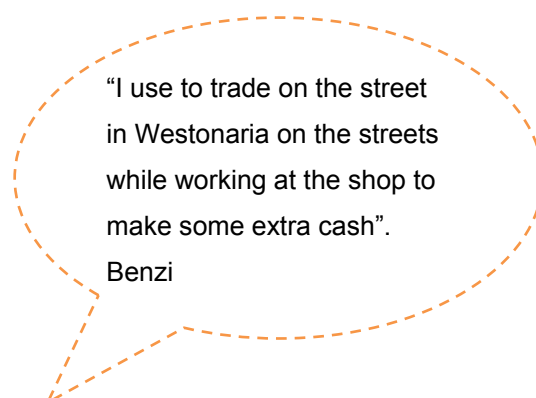
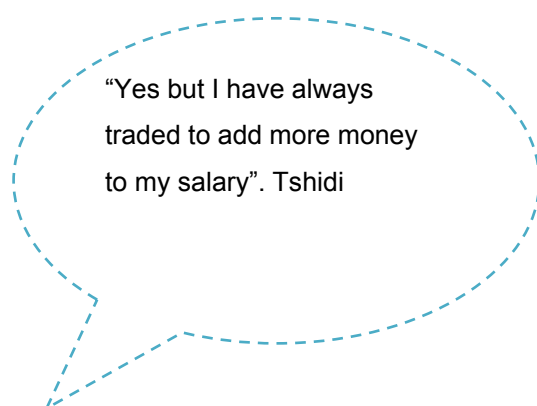
It is evident that there are people who use the informal sector as their entry point to survive while they are bettering their lives. It is difficult to understand how this movement happens because the stories of those that moved from informal activities to formal labour positions are untold. People move from street trading as an entry to the city to a different profession. People tell interesting stories of how they used street trading as an entry to the formal labour market (Mkwanazi and Pingo, 2011). Not all the stories of those that moved from the informal sector to the formal will be told but the few stories that will be told will make a difference.

This dual vision does not leave much room for thinking of different degrees of informality (businesses are more or less formal, not either formal or informal); and different types of informal traders (as my study will illustrate).

Moreover, some street traders participate both in the formal and the informal sector. The participation in multiple economic activities emerged in the 1990's in African cities both in the formal and informal sectors. That brings us to Owusu's (2007) definition of multiple livelihood strategies.

Owusu, 2007:454 defines multiple livelihood strategies "as the practice of relying on more than one source of income".

He argues that contemporary livelihood strategies in many African cities involve participation in multiple economic activities, usually in both the formal and informal sectors. This group is involved in multiple economic activities not only for survival rather more for capital accumulation.





## 2.3. Street traders as agents

### 2.3.1. Who engages in informal trading and why

It is understandable that those who could not get a job in the formal sector must devise a way of obtaining an income (Sethuraman, 1976; Souza and Tokman, 1976; Tokman, 1989). There are different reasons for entering informal trading for both national and international migrants such as:

- Lack of skills/ education;
- Retrenchment/ loss of formal job;
- Lack of social network/ knowledge on local labor markets;
- Lack of documents allowing for entry into formal labor market.

Informal street trading enables people to engage in entrepreneurial activities that give citizens a range of alternatives to have an occupation and also as a safety net for the unemployed (Bromley, 2000).

### 2.3.2. Figure 2 Categorizing informal traders as entrepreneurs

Rogerson (2000) categorized the informal entrepreneurs into different groupings and attempted to describe them

Category of Informal Entrepreneur	Description/Explanation
Survivalist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Very low income</li><li>- Low barriers to entry i.e. little education, little capital investment.</li><li>- Unlikely to burgeon into viable and sustainable business</li></ul>
Micro-Enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Owner run</li><li>- Generally employ family or kin</li><li>- 1-4 employees</li><li>- Limited capital required</li><li>- Low levels of education and training required</li></ul>
Small Enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- large range of activities anything from about 5-100 people</li><li>- can engage in any aspect of business</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- generally viable</li> <li>- require moderate levels of expertise and training to establish</li> </ul> <p>requires capital outlay and good cash-flow to survive</p>
Medium Enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- employment of over a hundred people</li> <li>- generally very viable</li> <li>- often engaged in outsourced work for other large formal companies</li> <li>- requires relatively high levels of training and competence in order to manage and grow</li> <li>- requires large amounts of capital and good cash-flow to survive</li> </ul>

Source: Rogerson (2000) cited in Karam and Rubin 2012

Rogerson (2000), Karam and Rubin (2012) argue that all traders are entrepreneurs but only a few are successful. Rogerson (2000) argues that there is a continuum between these categories (using the ladder model rather than the multiple livelihoods strategies model); many micro-enterprises have the potential to develop and flourish into larger formal small business enterprises, it is obvious from the table. Since there is a continuum between the categories the boundaries might be blurred. Karam and Rubin (2012) see all traders as entrepreneurs and acknowledge that all street traders will not succeed.

In my research the former street traders were all entrepreneurs but only a few are succeeded in thriving as traders and these raises three questions. The first question is what happened to those traders that did not succeed? The second question is what led to them not to succeed? And the last question is what made those that thrived to succeed? Rogerson (2000) argues that there is a continuum between these categories (using the ladder model rather than the multiple livelihoods strategies model); many micro-enterprises have the potential to develop and flourish into larger formal small business enterprises, it is obvious from the table. Since there is a continuum between the categories the boundaries might be blurred.

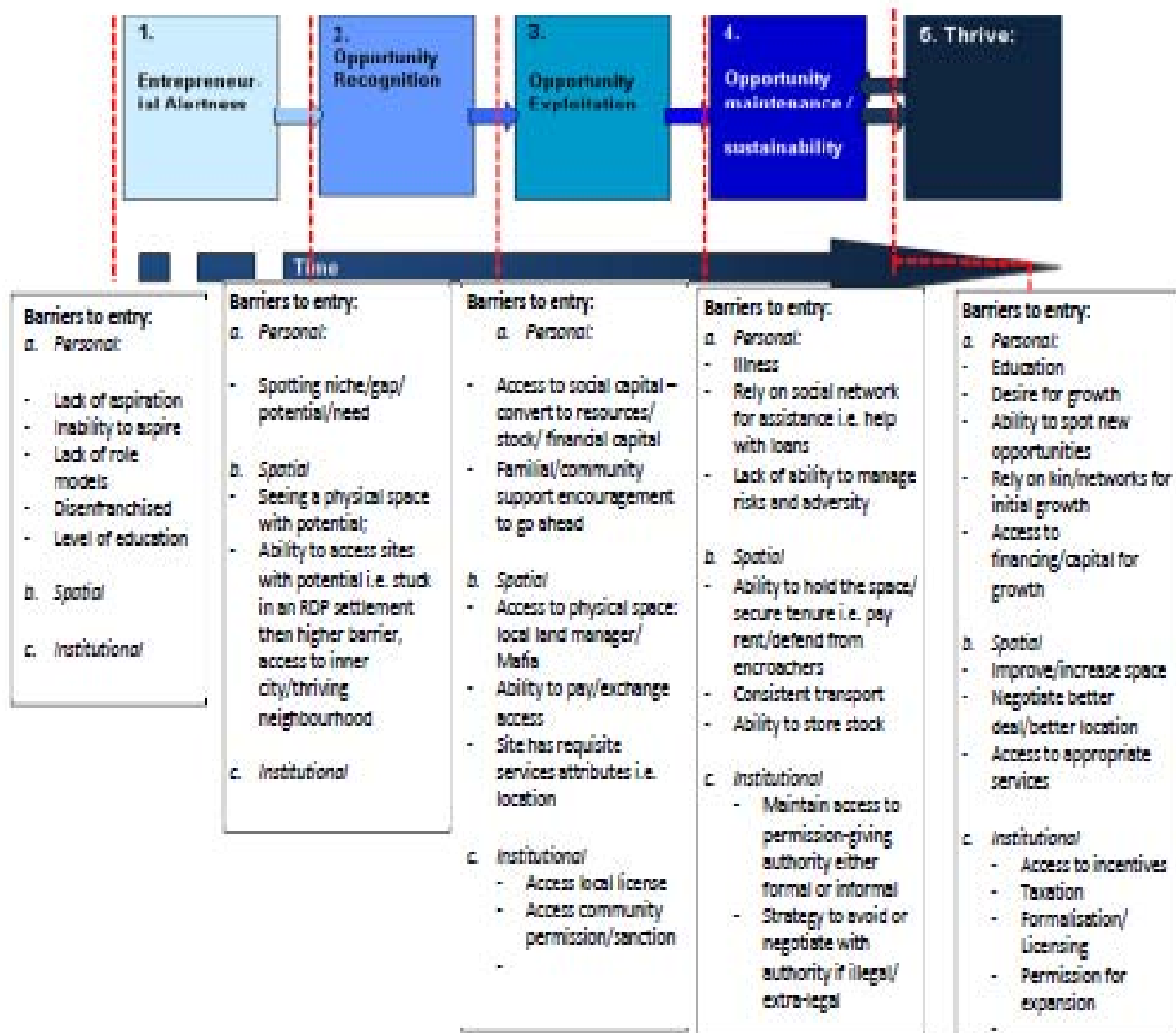
Other researchers such as Karam and Rubin (2012) see all informal traders as entrepreneurs (struggling or thriving) and adopt and adapt entrepreneurial models to informal traders. The entrepreneurial process as described by Bygrave and Hofer

(1991), and Webb et al (2009) (quoted in Karam and Rubin 2012) and with some indirect, but important input from Austin et al (2006) has five main stages.

1. Entrepreneurial Alertness – basically is the precondition for any kind of entrepreneurial activity i.e. the kind of person who is looking for or needs an economic opportunity and is aware of what is potentially possible.
2. Opportunity Recognition – is seen as the ability to respond to one's environment by being able to spot a chance/opening or prospect in which to earn a living or change one's livelihood and livelihood strategy.
3. Opportunity Exploitation – once an opportunity has been recognised, the idea needs to be moved into the realms of reality and actualisation i.e. making the business happen.
4. Opportunity maintenance or sustainability – once the enterprise has been initiated and the first series of hurdles have been successfully leapt over; the next phase is to actually maintain the business on a day-to-day basis, such that the enterprise has enough profit to support the entrepreneur. It is also the phase in which many businesses/activities seem to get stuck.
5. Growth - refers to the ability of the entrepreneur to move the business/activity out of simple maintenance and into the phase of development. It could be moving an activity from a survivalist phase to a one person enterprise, but it should also be noted that there are a series of factors, which may influence the ability of a business to grow and which explain why some businesses stay in the sustainability mode.

The figure 3 below shows the five stages of the entrepreneurial process.

Source: Karam and Rubin (2012).



The entrepreneurial model by Karam and Rubin (2012) will be used to explain the stages that the former street traders followed to become thriving entrepreneurs; to those former street traders that did not thrive the model will provide us with some of the challenges that the former street traders faced that made them not to thrive. In addition the model will help in understanding the paths that former street traders

followed in order to to thrive. The research that will be carried out will help in further developing the model based on the stories of the former street traders.

## 2.4. Conclusion

This chapter by exploring the context of informal trading and looking at the street trader himself concludes that street trading plays an important role as a livelihood strategy, and that there are possibly a variety of livelihood strategies involving informal activities. The different livelihood strategies will be further discussed in chapter 4.

Street trading will always be used by migrants (national and international) as an entry to the city and the formal labour market. Street trading is used as a ladder either through the process of street traders becoming thriving entrepreneurs, or using street trading as a multiple livelihood strategy or using street trading to survive while waiting for a better offer in the formal sector. This proves that some street traders are not stuck in the informal activities. The importance of former street traders becoming thriving entrepreneurs or moving out of street trading completely or trading part time raised three questions. The answers to the questions will be discussed in chapter 5.

Informality trading is a complex issue that cannot be solved by using a single solution. Regulating informality must be done in a way that it does not pose barriers to new entrants to the city and those that want to use the informal sector as a safety net while they are bettering their lives.

# Chapter 3: Life stories as methodology

The chapter will outline the use that I made of the life story methodology, through a set of oral interviews with 6 former street traders<sup>2</sup>. The life story methodology, even though I was not able to employ it fully, inspired me and helped me in understanding the multi-layered stories of the different former street traders.

## 3.1. Why I chose life narratives to answer my questions

“A life story is the story a person chooses to tell about the life that he or she lived, told as completely and as honest as possible, what the person remembers of it and what he or she wants other to know of it, usually as a result of a guided interview by the other” (Atkinson, 1998:125).

From the definition above, the life story methodology will allow me to understand the past of the former street traders through stories told by the former street traders. Researchers have used life stories in academic research from different disciplines from long time ago. The use of a life story interview for serious academic study is considered to have begun in psychology and now different disciplines use it today (Atkinson, 2004).

Narratives were used in the research to understand personal development of former street traders. The terms stories and narrative are ambiguous (Polkinghorne 1988) and often used interchangeably (Riley and Hawe 2005). Life stories as a research methodology have benefits.

One of the benefits of the life story methodology is that it helps to understand the underlying issues of a street trader and how one can use street trading as an entry to the city and the formal labour market. In a course such as town planning, planners come up with policies and developments that they assume will help people to survive; contrary to that people also find ways that will help them to survive. In this

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<sup>2</sup> See chapter 1 where I explain other methodological issues, such as how these 7 former traders were selected.

case street traders opened their own business and know that they can use street trading as an entry to the city and the formal labour market.

I was interested in the many dimensions of street trading and moving out of the street – some having to do with economics and job market, but some about life choices, personalities, luck, networks, personal histories, migration, own businesses, hobbies and not having a choice. There is also the time dimension that is based on memory, reconstruction (not observation and current practice); took place on the long run (it is a professional, social and economic trajectory I am looking at, not a single event).

A trajectory is by definition complex, and is caused by a multiplicity of factors. Plus dimension on how people make sense of their own trajectory (it is a mental construction). These dimensions of street trading can only be revealed properly by listening to the accounts former street traders give of their own trajectories, based on their memories and self-assessments. The stories of former street traders vary greatly; therefore story telling as a methodology helps capture all the important findings that different former street traders presented.

### **3.2. How street traders reacted to the research and telling their life stories**

As a researcher I went to different places to find former street traders and captured their life stories. Their stories are based on their experiences as street traders, both in their struggles and their happy endings. Individual life stories are interesting and very different from each other; every story is unique and that makes it interesting. Their stories serve as a platform for them to tell their experiences. It was very interesting to let their voices be heard, and to let them speak for and about themselves.

#### **3.2.1. Below is a brief explanation of how I felt the informal traders were feeling during their interviews:**

- Tshidi (trader 4) enjoyed being interviewed. She told me her story with confidence and told me to stop her when I do not understand. She told me she was not ashamed of her past and she loves sharing her stories with

people. She was telling her story like it was unfolding in her head. She told her story with passion and made sure that I understood.

- Marc (trader 3) was one of the former street traders that loved telling his story. He believes that his story is unique and people should hear it. He believed that not more than two people can experience what he went through. When he tells his story he tells it with joy on his face and excitement. He loves telling his story and he was not ashamed.
- Mike (trader 5) on the other hand was ashamed of his story. He could not provide answers to some of the questions I asked. He said every time he remembers his past on the streets he gets hurt. He was uncomfortable with the questions and kept on hoping that I finished interviewing him.
- Mzitho (trader 1) was very open about his story. He narrated his story in such a way that it made sense but he was not revealing his financial side of the story. He did not trust me enough to tell me about some of his finances. He said he could not remember.
- Benzi (trader 2) was very shy and told me she did not understand English properly. Her story was limited maybe because she could not express herself well in English. She answered all the questions I asked and at the end she thanked me for listening to her story.
- Alla's (trader 6) the discussion did not flow. It was a painful memory for him and he could only tell about it because he was proud of being out.
- The last interviewee was an official from one of the government's department. He agreed to be interviewed. When I got to his office and explained what the interview was about, he refused to grant me an interview. One of the reasons that he refused to grant me an interview was due to his position at work. He is the head of department and his history as an informal trader does not go well with his current position. He was ashamed and denied that he was an informal trader.

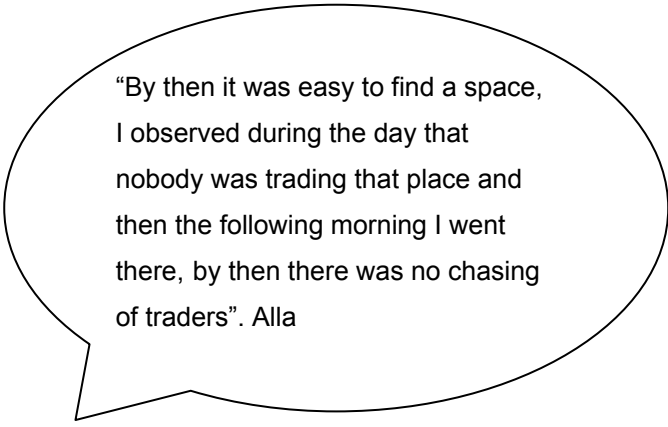


### 3.3. How I analysed life stories as a construct

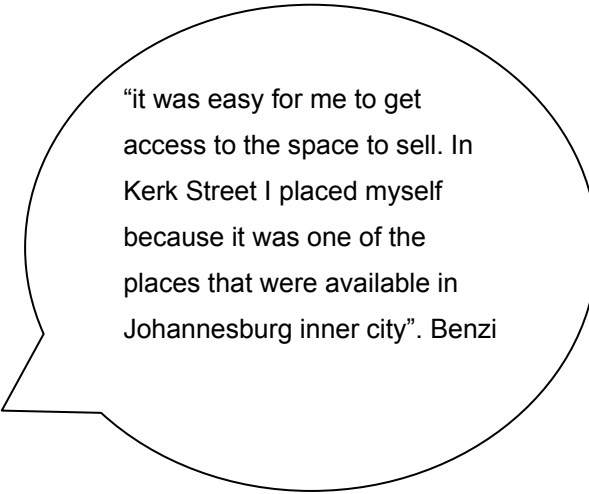
After interviewing the former street traders, I found out that there was a level of shame and pride that street traders showed. The shame and pride was created by different reasons. The below are the reasons why shame and pride occurred in the life of the former street traders when they were still trading on the streets.

On issues such as informal trading, the dominant discourse (especially in contemporary Johannesburg where policies have become more formal and repression of non-registered street trading has become the rule) is the strong condemnation of street traders. They are often considered a nuisance in the streets, and are regarded as criminals (and treated as such by metropolitan police harassment and often corrupt and violent practices).

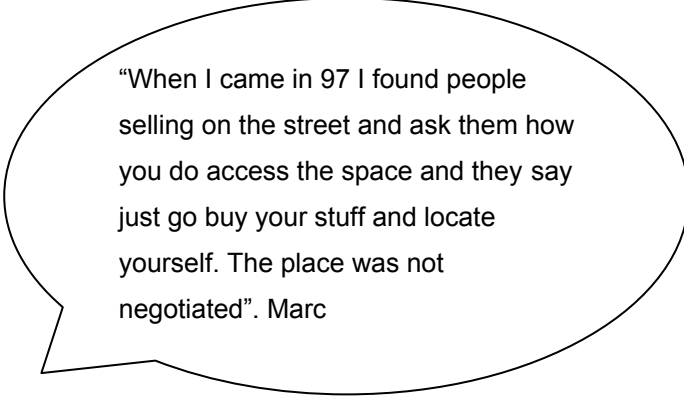
Evidence that metropolitan official discourses and practices have changed (and are more heavily regulating street trading today than they were in the transition period, 1994-2000) is visible through many interviews: I asked Former Street traders how they accessed the space that they were trading at back then. It was obvious from the interviews that most of the former street trader placed themselves and also there were police harassments but they still continued trading.



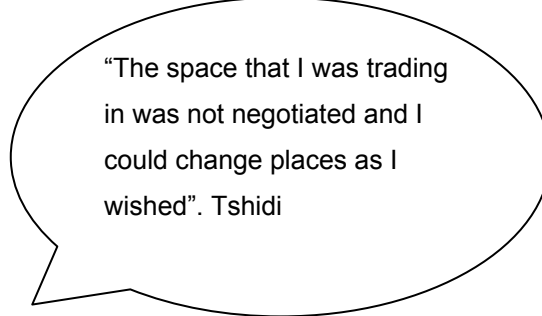
"By then it was easy to find a space, I observed during the day that nobody was trading that place and then the following morning I went there, by then there was no chasing of traders". Alla



"it was easy for me to get access to the space to sell. In Kerk Street I placed myself because it was one of the places that were available in Johannesburg inner city". Benzi



"When I came in 97 I found people selling on the street and ask them how you do access the space and they say just go buy your stuff and locate yourself. The place was not negotiated". Marc



"The space that I was trading in was not negotiated and I could change places as I wished". Tshidi

"Through Marc, I was selling for Marc. He negotiated the space. There was a leader who was a landlord and was part of the body cooperate, he went to her and asked for the space and they agreed". Mike

**Khumo: police harassment?**

Alla: not much from the police.

"No at that time there were bi laws but I forcedly placed myself just like putting a shack in Sandton, you just go and put your shack there and they will come and move you away and all that do you understand, so I was not allocated any space in Braamfontein". Mzitho

"As for police harassments also I needed to get myself a shop".

Benzi

"Police harassment we went to the police station to bail out our goods and we had a relationship with top police man to help us because those who were patrolling they took our stuff". Marc

"The police they always asked for my permit but they did not harass the business". Mike

"I also experienced xenophobia and police threaten. The police use to ask me where my permit is and ask for money". Mike

"Police harassments on the streets, as I have said earlier on things like those you must be streetwise in order to survive on the streets. If they tell you to leave you must intimidate them back.

Mzitho

"I used to trade at the park, at strategic location such as the entrances of the park and that is where business is, you put the clothes nicely so that when the police come you back them nicely and hide them in the suitcase. So street trading was very easy for me". Tshidi

"At that time *neh* there were no allocations of space, it was done later, at a later stage in the CBD"

Mzitho

"You must be street wise and tell them you know one guys maybe he is a police man and you use that guy to intimidate them, tell them you have connections at hill brow police station so if they arrest you, you will be out by tomorrow, you see things like that". Mzitho

(The above quotes that are responses to 'how did you chose your place', and, 'were you harassed by metro police'? often contrast with 'now, today you can't do that).

Another factor of shame is that street trading is often considered the domain of those who are not educated or skilled enough to take any other job. This was not the case for most of the respondents, who all had a basic level of education (and often above); a specific skill (flower selling for instance) or were involved in an educational process. For educated people, especially migrants to the city, selling in the street was often seen as a social downturn, that they were not proud of in itself (they were rather proud of having been able to get out of the street).

"I finished the theory part, I was looking for in service training then while I was looking for in service training I found this advert for teaching physics and then I took it. I moved from street trading to being a security and from security to being a waiter and from waiter to teaching". Alla

"Because I used to work in a flower shop so I considered myself as a florist so I decided to continue with what I know, and anyway I was selling on the streets on weekends and I was working at the shop during the week". Benzi

"I was a student in my country and I don't want to stop so I have to work very hard so that I can pay for my studies". Marc

"I had qualifications and I had a career in marketing so I had knowledge about businesses. It was easy for me to buy more clothing to sell because I was working unlike other traders that only depended on street trading as their income". Tshidi

"I had my own objectives and plus I had my hotel training to attend to when I was trading". Mike

"I was studying and I knew that on streets will not make my life, I was looking at something very far". Marc

(The above quotes – show some level of education or training when the former street traders were on the streets.

### 3.3.1. The factors that led to former street traders having pride and shame about street trading

- Pride: Having been a successful street trader (Tshidi, Mzithos, Benzi) – having found a niche through observation and practice, being successful in selling.

"I was selling alone but because my business was booming I stated employing a cousin of mine in Pietersburg to sell for me that side so that I can make more money". Tshidi

"I had a lot of clothing that I did not use anymore and so I decided to sell my clothing, I realized that I was different from the other traders because my and I clothing was on demand decided to get more". Tshidi

"Selling clothes went so well that I started buying more clothes, shoes, handbags to sell, I was making money". Tshidi

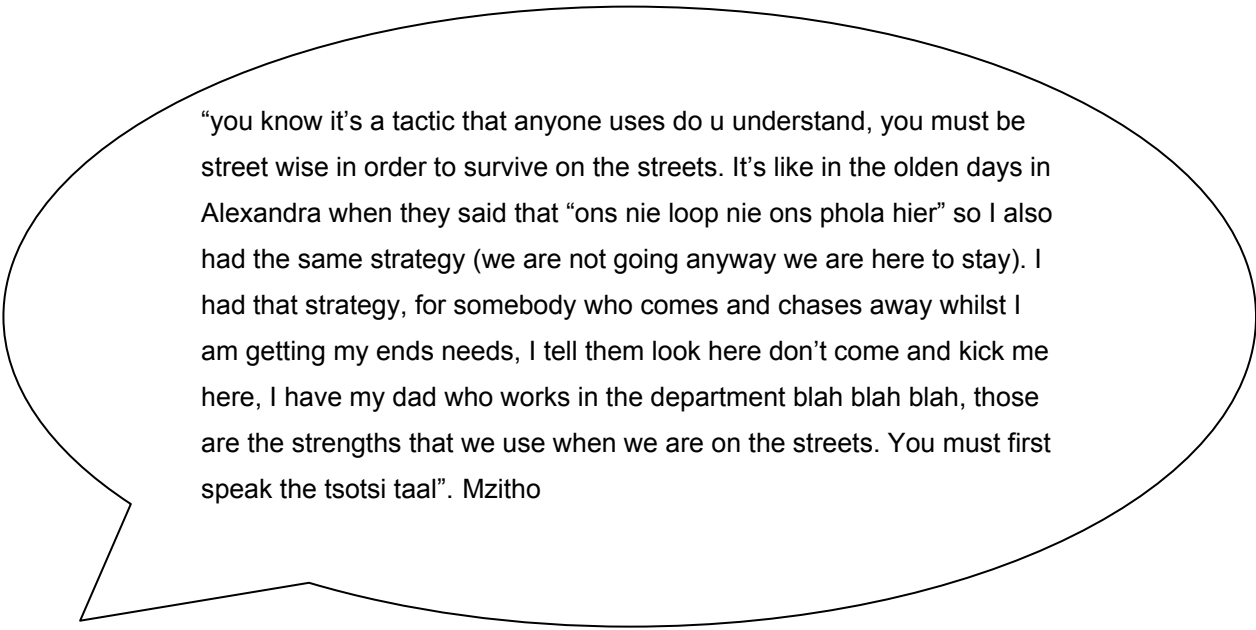
"My business at my shop was booming so I had to leave the street and trade only at the shop. Since I had left over flowers I went back to the street to sell the flowers on the street. After a while I realized I was too busy so I didn't go on the street anymore". Benzi

"Flowers have business on the streets because people can see them while passing and buy them". Benzi

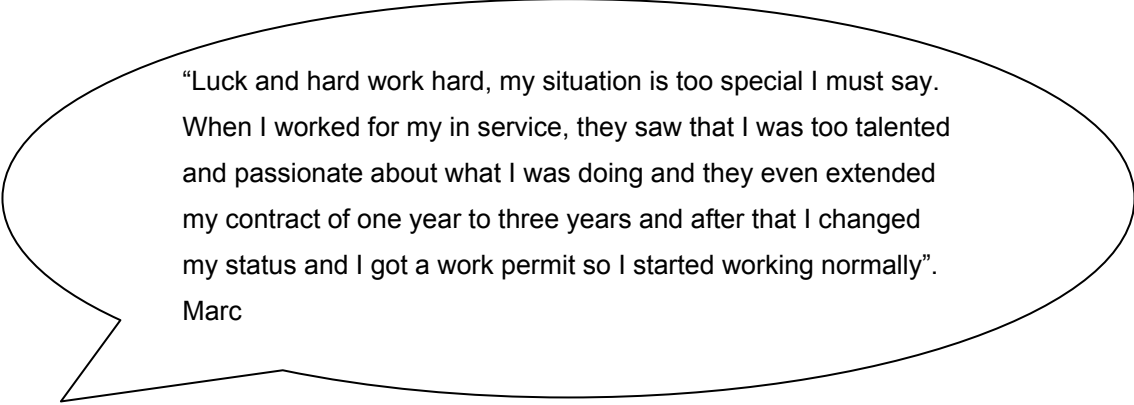
"So I saw that niche and I said let me capitalize on that boerewors roll and at the end of the day it gave of". Mzitho 1

"The officials said to me" if you came here to sell pap and steak here you going to cause chaos because we had long lines that time, you understand, so they said no no no, get yourself a shop" . Mzitho

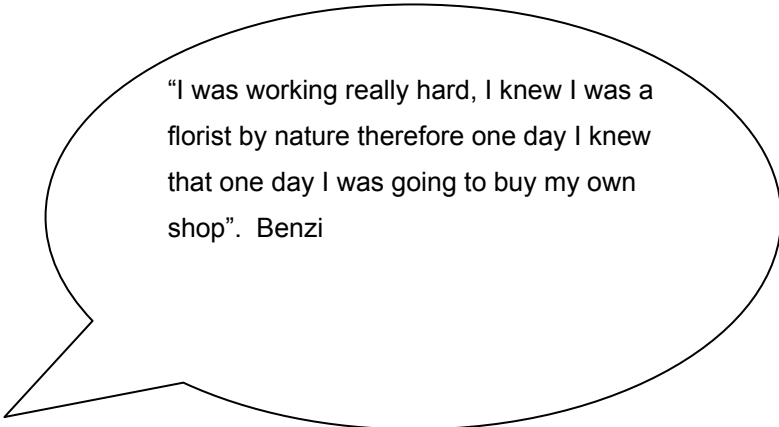
Well I was doing very well on the streets; I could actually save up to R700 or R800 per day for selling on the street. Marc



"you know it's a tactic that anyone uses do u understand, you must be street wise in order to survive on the streets. It's like in the olden days in Alexandra when they said that "ons nie loop nie ons phola hier" so I also had the same strategy (we are not going anyway we are here to stay). I had that strategy, for somebody who comes and chases away whilst I am getting my ends needs, I tell them look here don't come and kick me here, I have my dad who works in the department blah blah blah, those are the strengths that we use when we are on the streets. You must first speak the tsotsi taal". Mzitho



"Luck and hard work hard, my situation is too special I must say. When I worked for my in service, they saw that I was too talented and passionate about what I was doing and they even extended my contract of one year to three years and after that I changed my status and I got a work permit so I started working normally". Marc



"I was working really hard, I knew I was a florist by nature therefore one day I knew that one day I was going to buy my own shop". Benzi

To some extent Marc but he does not take pride in it specifically. On the contrary those who did not do well in trading (Alla and Mike) are less willing to talk (pain/hurt).

"I wanted to leave the street and inspire others to also leave the streets". Tshidi

"After the crime, the rain and the pain I was shaking in the corner very cold and I asked myself why am I here. I wanted to make money so that I can start my hospitality training". Mike

"Safety on the streets, it was not safe by then and also the weather you were not used to the cold weather". Alla

"It was not going well, it's like it was not what I was interested in but it was what most of my people in my community were doing so they advised me to do it. So I didn't have my heart on it, I was just doing it". Alla

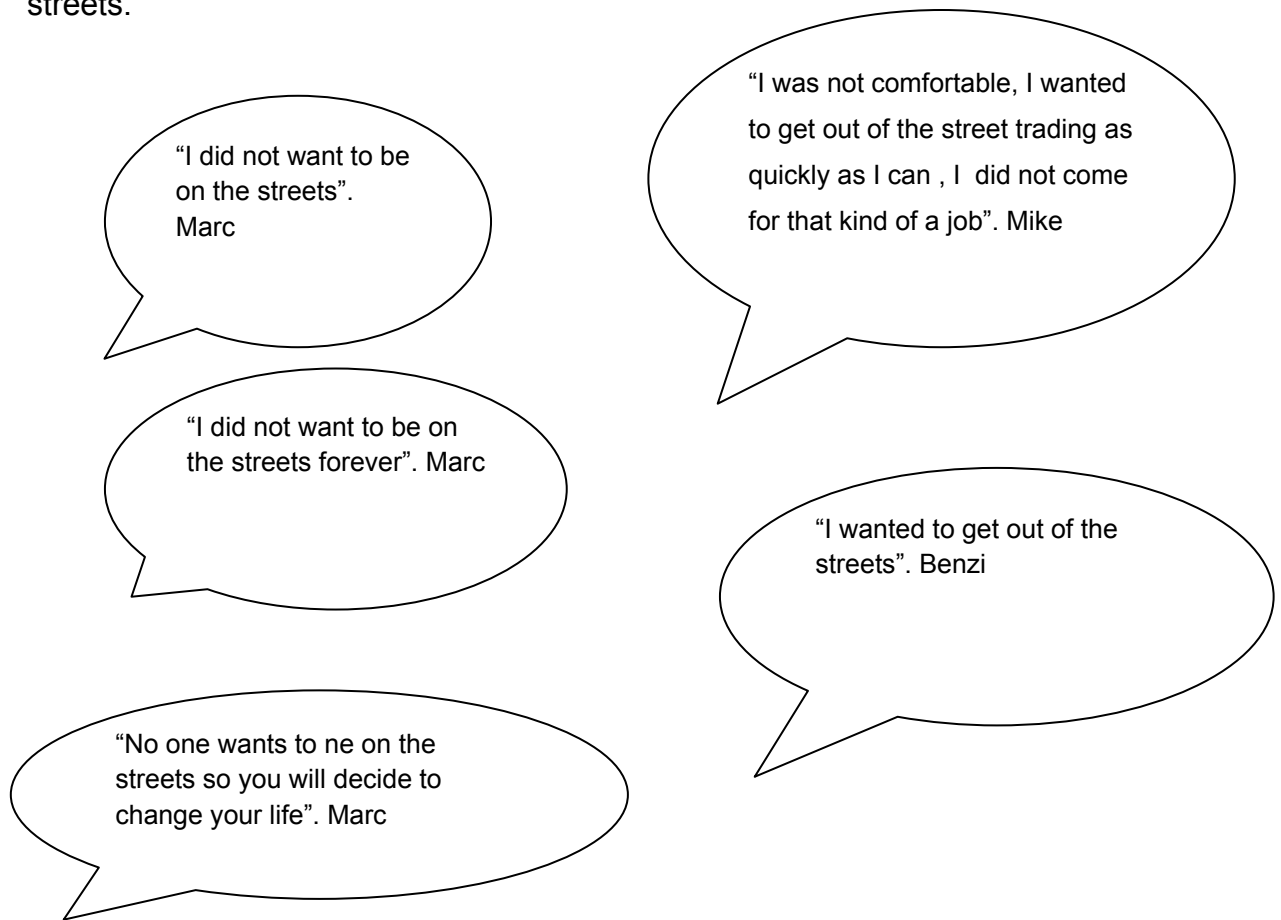
- Having a collective ambition to change things (Marc) - that his story is inspiring to others, that it sets an example for his community (and maybe that it talks to policy, although this is not directly his focus). Few have this interest in making their stories known (beyond the pleasure of telling the story for you and for themselves)

"I don't think that government is taking street trading serious, they just do the best where they can but there is just a lot of work that the government needs to do like educating the street traders not to dirt the place and so on, that we did not see when we were on the street, I don't think that the government is taking it serious". Marc

I used it very wisely, I wanted to change my life, I wanted to go to school and change my status, I did not sleep I could work clockwise to change my life, I wanted to leave the street and inspire others to also leave the streets. Marc

'Someone was open to me so I also wanted to change someone's life'. Marc

- Social shame realized when street traders say they did not want to stay in the streets.



My interest was in the former street traders telling their stories through time and allowing them to see that they have come a long way to get where they are today. I was interested in rejuvenating their hope based on the struggles and their happy endings. The interviewees in this research were seen as storytellers because they were the first people to actually interpret their stories. It is through their experience and the stories they tell about their experiences as street traders that makes up this research.

Their differences in their stories helped the research to construct portraits and typologies. The portraits of former street traders are unique according each former street traders and the typologies help find common ground between the former street traders.



### 3.4. The methodological challenges that I met relating to life story telling

- The biggest challenge relating to life story methodology was the subjectivities of life narratives and the impossibility for the researcher to double check or cross check; it is a long term trajectory and the bulk of the study is set in the past, the use of observation is limited.
- In this research all the street traders presented us with their own stories which are different from each other. Therefore this makes all the street traders objects of the research. It is impossible to cross- check because all the former street traders are telling different stories based on their own trajectories therefore how do I cross check between the different stories if they are all telling the truth about street trading. The following figure 4 shows that all the street traders are objects of street trading making it hard for me to cross-check between their different stories about street trading.

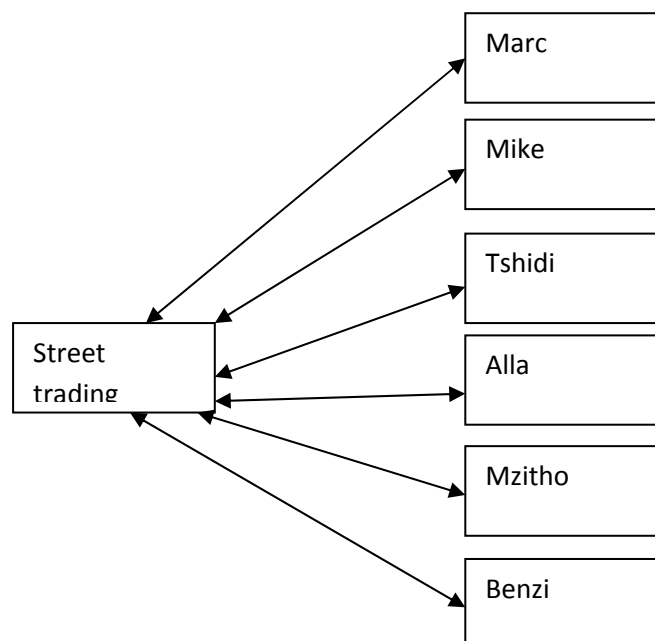


Figure: 4

As a researcher you are definitely not getting the whole truth. You are getting one narrative, one interpretation and one representation of a truth. Obviously it is not 'the whole truth' as the 'whole truth' would take more than one hour to tell. There are biases and even if it is biased it is interesting

- To hear how former traders presented their own stories; to sense their pride/ shame and the mixture of the two feelings;

- Through the diversity of cases different things come out that inform us on diverse trajectories (even if each is not very accurate always) - leading to their stories creating a typology.
- The maximum time it took for an interview was an hour because the former street traders were always busy in their formal jobs compared to when they were trading on the streets. This was a huge limitation and to some extent I cannot claim that my method was a full 'life story' method. The principles guiding the interviews and the challenges met were similar.
- Over estimating individual agency? Most of the street traders claim that they were the only people responsible for their successes as street traders, but when I look through the interviews they received some form of help from someone. Everything 'I' did this 'I' did that.

"The solution was to get out of the streets otherwise no one will change it for you". Marc

'I decided to stop and find myself a shop to work at. I was selling flowers on the streets and decided to look for a place in Johannesburg to trade. I decided to move to Johannesburg and trade at Kerk Street". Benzi

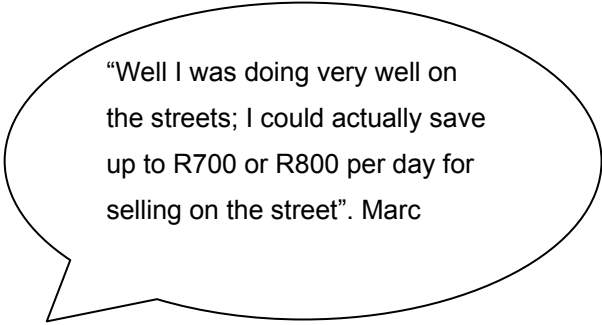
"I realized that I was different from the other traders because my clothing was on demand and I decided to get more". Tshidi

"I avoided that thing to be one of the statistics of unemployed people and people saying "Mzitho is sitting in the townships with no job". Mzitho

- Romanticizing the past? The success?

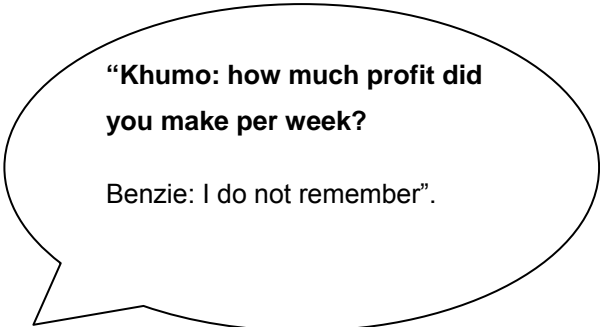
"Right now I do street trading because I love it, it is like a hobby". Tshidi

"Street trading and my current job are the same so I love them both". Benzi



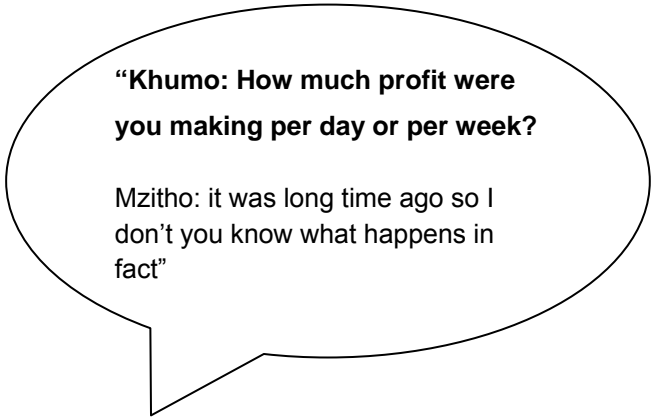
"Well I was doing very well on the streets; I could actually save up to R700 or R800 per day for selling on the street". Marc

- Forgetting some points? Or using loss of memory not to answer some points
- Not being accurate on money/ income/ saving and financial matters?



**"Khumo: how much profit did you make per week?"**

Benzie: I do not remember".



**"Khumo: How much profit were you making per day or per week?"**

Mzitho: it was long time ago so I don't you know what happens in fact"

- Reconstructing, giving a meaning after the experience (it is how memory works, it is selective).

### 3.5. Conclusion

Life stories as a research methodology helps in better understanding the past of the former street traders through story telling. Life stories provide us with a platform to interact with former street traders and allowing me to draw conclusions from their personal reactions and answers. Although life stories are best in providing in depth stories of former street traders, they present a challenge of the interviewees being subjective in their stories.

Life stories are very interesting and make research fascinating. I was very grateful for the different interviewees that I spent my time with listening to their meaningful stories that gave me hope in life. Hearing their stories, understanding them and accepting them without judging them made me a stronger person and showed me that there is always light at the end of the tunnel. Life stories made me to relate with the interviewees emotionally; I let the interviewees instil some level of hard work in me through their struggle when they were on the streets, and their happy endings also had a big impact on me and instilled perseverance in me.

# Chapter 4: Former street traders: from portraits to typology

This chapter explores the portraits of former street traders. Based on these portraits the chapter tries to build a typology of former street traders that is based beyond the individual diversity and uniqueness. Three types of street traders emerged according to my view. The first type are those that used street trading as an entry to a formal business maintained their street trading business and it grew therefore can be classified as thriving entrepreneurs. Type 2 uses street trading money as a safety net, while looking for opportunity and the third type uses street trading as a multiple livelihood strategy.

## 4.1. Explaining portraits

Portraits give a brief background of former street traders; they stress the specificity of their trajectory, personalities and contexts. From these portraits, three types of traders emerged in my view, and this is the typology I propose in the second part of this chapter.

The first type concerns those former street traders who continued trading, but in a formal way (in a shop). They in a way have formalized their business, even if this term does not really account for the transformation the business has undergone through formalization. The second type regroups those who used street trading money as a safety net for survival while they were waiting for formal employment opportunities; they subsequently completely abandoned any form of trading and went on a completely different activity sector.

The third type concerns the former street traders who continue to use street trading money to compliment their income from their current formal jobs. Street trading for them was and is not a business in which they invest much (except their time); it is sufficiently successful financially, and/or attractive as an occupation, for them to continue even when their formal job conditions have improved.

## 4.2. Portraits of former street traders

### 4.2.1 Mzitho



Google earth, 2013

“you know unemployment rate was high so I avoided that thing to be one of the statistics of unemployed people and people saying “Mzitho is sitting in the townships with no job”, so I said to myself let me do something, let me create a job for myself”.

Street trading location: Reserve street in Braamfontein

#### Former street trader 1

Name: Mzitho

Age: Over 55

Gender: male

Place of origin: Soweto

Education level: matric

Current job: owns five shops

Work experience: I worked before I opened my own business

#### Mzitho speaks:

“It paid off, first day I started trading I sold about 5 or 10 boerewors rolls so I became motivated because it was my first day and therefore I recognized that there is a potential, it's like luck, when you sell sweets you starts small and immediately you realize that it works and then you fall for it, do u understand that is how it happens”. you know unemployment rate was high so I avoided that thing to be one of the statistics of unemployed people and people saying “Mzitho is sitting in the townships with no job”, so I said to myself let me do something, let me create a job for myself”.

#### Street trading history

Started trading: 1997

Street trading only: yes and then I moved to a shop.

Moved to the formal shop: 2002

Delivery: bought the goods using a trolley at the Sam's butchery bakery and butchery myself

Get goods from: bakery and butchery in Braamfontein

Trading space: not negotiated

Legal status: no legal status

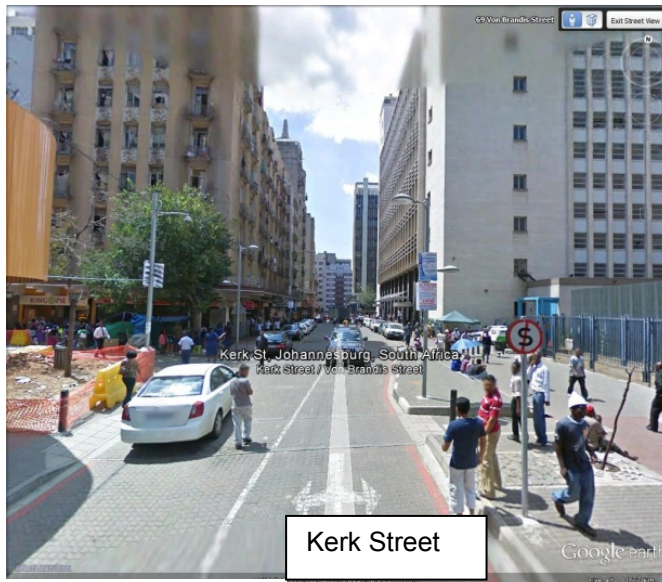
Income from street trading: 50% of what

Trading hours: 09:00am-15:00pm

Goods traded: boerewors rolls and cooked food

“My younger brother owned the stoves and I was unemployed by then, so I took his stoves and vending machines and came on the streets with them and I started there”.

#### 4.2.2. Benzi



Google earth, 2013

"I had to get a shop because my business was not growing because of the weather, flowers do not want to be exposed to the heat, communication between me and my clients because I could not place a phone and a computer on the street pavement and lastly was police harassments and also I was limited to buying only two types of flowers because I did not have a car".

Street trading location: Johannesburg central business district: Kerk street.

##### Former street trader 2

Name: Benzie

Age: Over 54

Gender: female

Place of origin: Mpumalanga

Education level: matric

Current job: owns a shop

Work experience: worked as a florist shop (was retrenched)/ and worked with my husband (also selling flowers in the street (in Westonaria)

##### Street trading history

Started trading: before 1990 and a few months after 1990

Street trading only: street trading and a formal job, after the shop closed I traded only and later bought a shop.

Moved to the formal shop: 1990

Delivery: bought the goods taxis

Get goods from: city deep

Trading space: not negotiated

Legal status: no legal status

Income from street trading: I do not remember

##### Benzie speaks:

"Street trading helped me during the time the shop that I was working for closed. So yes it does help because it helped me, I like street trading a lot".

"I used street trading to get a shop and also because I was around Johannesburg I asked people if they knew about any place where I can rent a shop when I was trading on the streets and this other lady told me about Gandhi square".

"My business at my shop was booming so I had to leave the street and trade only at the shop. Since I had left over flowers I went back to the street to sell the flowers on the street. After a while I realized I was too busy so I didn't go on the street anymore".

Trading hours: full time: 7:00am-7:00pm during the week and part time 03:00pm-7:00pm on weekends

Goods traded: flowers

"my sister because she gave me a trading place meanwhile I was saving money and my husband because he allowed me to trade when I did not have a job and on weekends. My husband also helped me to buy a shop with his money from trading on the streets".



### 4.2.3. Marc



Google earth, 2013

“ I told her that I am not married and I don't have any children and she said, why are you working so hard? And I told her that I was a student in my country and I don't want to stop so I have to work very hard so that I can pay for my studies, when I told her that she came back and told me my husband agree that we pay for your studies”

she asked me again, that now that you are studying you don't sell anymore and where do you get money to survive from? She said ok on weekends you come here and work”.

Street trading location in  
Johannesburg: different streets:  
Oliver, Pretoria and Claim road.

#### Former street trader 3

Name: Marc

Age: 50

Gender: male

Place of origin: Ivory Coast

Education level: food science B tech

Current job: food technologist

#### Street trading history

Started trading: 1997 when I moved to South Africa

Street trading only: street trading and studied at university and when I got a formal job I gave my street trading business to someone.

Moved to the formal shop: no but I moved to the formal labour market when I was a student.

Delivery: bought the goods using taxis

Get goods from: city deep

Trading space: not negotiated

Legal status: no legal status

Income from street trading: more than R1500

#### Marc speaks:

“it is the easiest thing that you can do. In case of an entry for a migrant it is very easy. Street trading by then it was the only job that migrant can have. When you seeking for an asylum you cannot go seeking for a job therefore street trading helps you to survive. Street trading helps you pay for your rent and food.

“I wanted to leave the street and inspire others to also leave the streets”.

Trading hours: 600am-7:00pm everyday

Goods traded: fruits and vegetables



#### 4.2.4. Tshidi



Google earth, 2013

##### **Former street trader 4**

Name: Tshidi

Age: I cannot tell

Gender: female

Place of origin: Pretoria

Education level: university degree

Current job: marketing director

##### **Matshidiso speaks:**

“It was all about putting food on the table. My child had to go to university which I could not afford from my income so I had to make more money so that I can afford to pay for his fees. So I also used street trading money for my child to go to school”.

“Most importantly my goods were on demand because I was one of the few people that sold clothes”.

“I have always traded to add more money to my salary”

“My formal work was becoming too much so I had to drop street trading but I still sell from the office, at home, flea markets and from the boot of my car”.

Street trading location in Johannesburg:  
anywhere where there is business, parks and street pavements and markets

##### **Street trading history**

Started trading: 1990 to 1994

Street trading only: street trading and working at the same time. But now I do not do street trading but sell from the office and at home.

Delivery: bought the goods using taxis

Get goods from: my wardrobe, Dubai and India.

Trading space: not negotiated

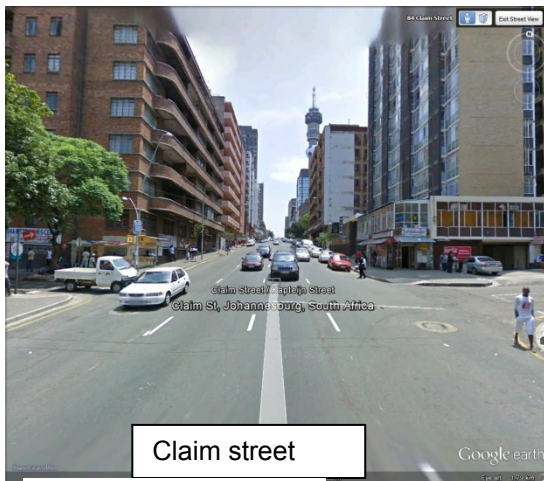
Legal status: street trade permit

Income from street trading: R3000 a day.

Trading hours: 4:00pm-7:00pm everyday

Goods traded: clothing

#### 4.2.5. Mike



Google earth, 2013

“I had my own objectives and plus I had my hotel training to attend to when I was trading”.

Street trading location in  
Johannesburg: Claim street in  
Hillbrow

##### Former street trader 5

Name: Mike

Age: I don't feel comfortable

Gender: male

Place of origin: Ivory Coast

Education level: hotel management qualification

Current job: Executive supervisor

Work experience: I worked at as a street trader before getting the executive supervisor job.

##### Street trading history

Started trading: 1999

Street trading only: employed to do street trading

Delivery: my employee delivered goods for me

Get goods from: city deep

Trading space: negotiated

Legal status: no

Income from street trading: R500 in good times and R200 in Bad times.

##### Mike speaks:

“I had no other option, no job. Street trading was the only way to survive”.

“My intention was to grow up and move to another level. When I first came to South Africa I did not have the right paper, meaning that I was in the process of becoming legal but I had my qualification”.

“I was not comfortable, I wanted to get out of the street trading as quickly as I can, I did not come for that kind of a job”.

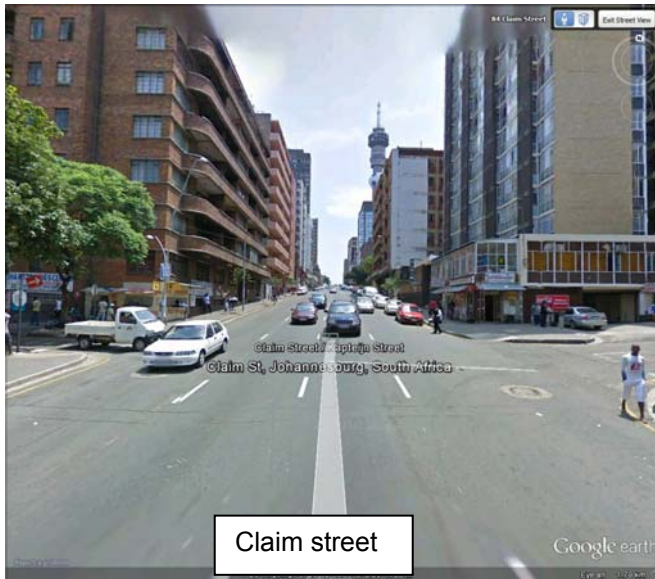
“Solution was to get my permit and get out of the streets”

Trading hours: from 9:00am till sunset

Goods traded: fruits and vegetables

“I was selling for Marc”

#### 4.2.6. Alla



Google earth, 2013

"It was not going well, it's like it was not what I was interested in but it was what most of my people in my community were doing so they advised me to do it. So I didn't have my heart on it, I was just doing it".

Street trading location: Claim street in Hillbrow

##### Former street trader 6

Name: Alla

Age: 43

Gender: male

Place of origin: Ivory Coast

Education level:

Current job: educator

Work experience: street trading was my first job

##### Allah speaks:

"it was my first job because I had some cash when I got here, I had to start my own business".

"It was not going well, it's like it was not what I was interested in but it was what most of my people in my community were doing so they advised me to do it. So I didn't have my heart on it, I was just doing it".

"On my case I did not grow because I was not moving forward that's why I was planning to stop".

"I did various jobs before coming to teaching, I went for security after street trading, and from there I worked as a waiter and from a waiter to teaching".

##### Street trading history

Started trading: 1997

Street trading only

Delivery: bought the goods using taxis

Get goods from: city deep

Trading space: not negotiated

Legal status: no

Income from street trading: per day in good times I would say R150 and bad times R50 or R40.

Trading hours: 6:00am- 6:00pm

Goods traded: fruit and vegetables

### 4.3 Typologies of former street traders

After listening to the stories of the former street traders, three different types of traders emerged in my view.

The first type are those who used street trading as an entry point to open their own formal businesses, these type of traders continued their street trading business into a formal business and moved to a shop. Those that used street trading as an entry to a formal business maintained their street trading business and it grew therefore can be classified as thriving entrepreneurs.

Looking at the above portraits only two street traders moved from street trading and continued trading in a shop. This makes these two former street traders thriving entrepreneurs because their businesses on the street were growing and made them leave the streets. The important part of this first type is to understand how these two former street traders used street trading as an entry to a formal a shop. Only two former street traders out of six former street traders moved to a shop and this raises concerns of what happened to other street traders and how did they make it out of the streets. If only two street traders managed to continue with their business, does that mean that other street traders were survivalist entrepreneurs because their businesses did not thrive to a formal shop?

#### 4.3.1. Type 1: street trading as an entry to a formal shop

It is very important to differentiate between a thriving entrepreneur and a survivalist entrepreneur. Rogerson (2000) categorized the informal entrepreneurs into different groupings and attempted to describe them (see **Error! Reference source not found.** in the literature review). From then on the other categories are entrepreneurs of different scale, but they tend to be closer to success and to characteristics of formal small businesses than their survivalist colleagues.

Looking at Rogerson's (2000) categories of informal entrepreneurs one can say that the categories can help to understand the type of business that thrived into a shop. The description of the business will help in understanding some of the aspects that

turned the street trading business into a success. Rogerson (2000) sees this process as a continuum. The continuum simply says that many micro businesses have potential to develop and flourish into a larger formal small business enterprise. This is explained in the table below using two businesses that used street trading as an entry to the formal labour market.

Looking at table 1 and analysing the first type of traders that moved from the streets to their own shops both the street trading businesses can be classified as Micro-Enterprises because they match the characteristics of a typical micro-enterprise.

### Using Rogerson's informal entrepreneur's categories to describe Mzitho's type of business

Rogerson's micro-enterprise description	Quotes to support Rogerson's informal enterprise category from Mzitho's
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Owner run</li> <li>2. Generally employ family or kin</li> <li>3. 1-4 employees</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "the owner"</li> <li>2. "I had these other cousin of mine selling with me"</li> <li>3. "He was selling on the other stall and I was on the other stall".</li> </ol>

The diagram above describes Mzithos's type of business were Mzitho's grew as an entrepreneur and now owns five shops and provide employment to many people. He continued from street trading to a formal shop were now the above characteristics changed to better his business.

### Using Rogerson's informal entrepreneur's categories to describe Benzie's type of business

Rogerson's micro-enterprise description	Quotes to support Rogerson's informal enterprise category from Benzie's
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Owner run</li> <li>2. Generally employ family or kin</li> <li>3. 1-4 employees</li> <li>4. Low levels of education and training required</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "florist, I owned a shop that sells flowers"</li> <li>2. "in Westonaria I was selling with my husband"</li> <li>3. "in Kerk Street I was selling alone"</li> <li>4. " because I used to work in a flower shop so I considered myself as a florist so I decided to continue with what I know"</li> </ol>

The diagram above describes Benzie's type of business were Benzie's grew as an entrepreneur and now owns one shop and provide employment to two people. She continued from street trading to a formal shop were now the above characteristics changed to better her business.

Using Rogerson's argument to support the first type that states that there is a continuum from that a business that develops from informal to formal businesses. While the gap between survivalist and micro enterprise does not seem that big, the gap between micro and small enterprise is big (might be the issue of education). Whereas entrepreneurs and those involved in small enterprises join the informal economy because they see some kind of opportunity and wish to develop an idea or exploit a gap in the market.

#### **4.3.2. Typology 2: using street trading money as a safety net: the survival strategy**

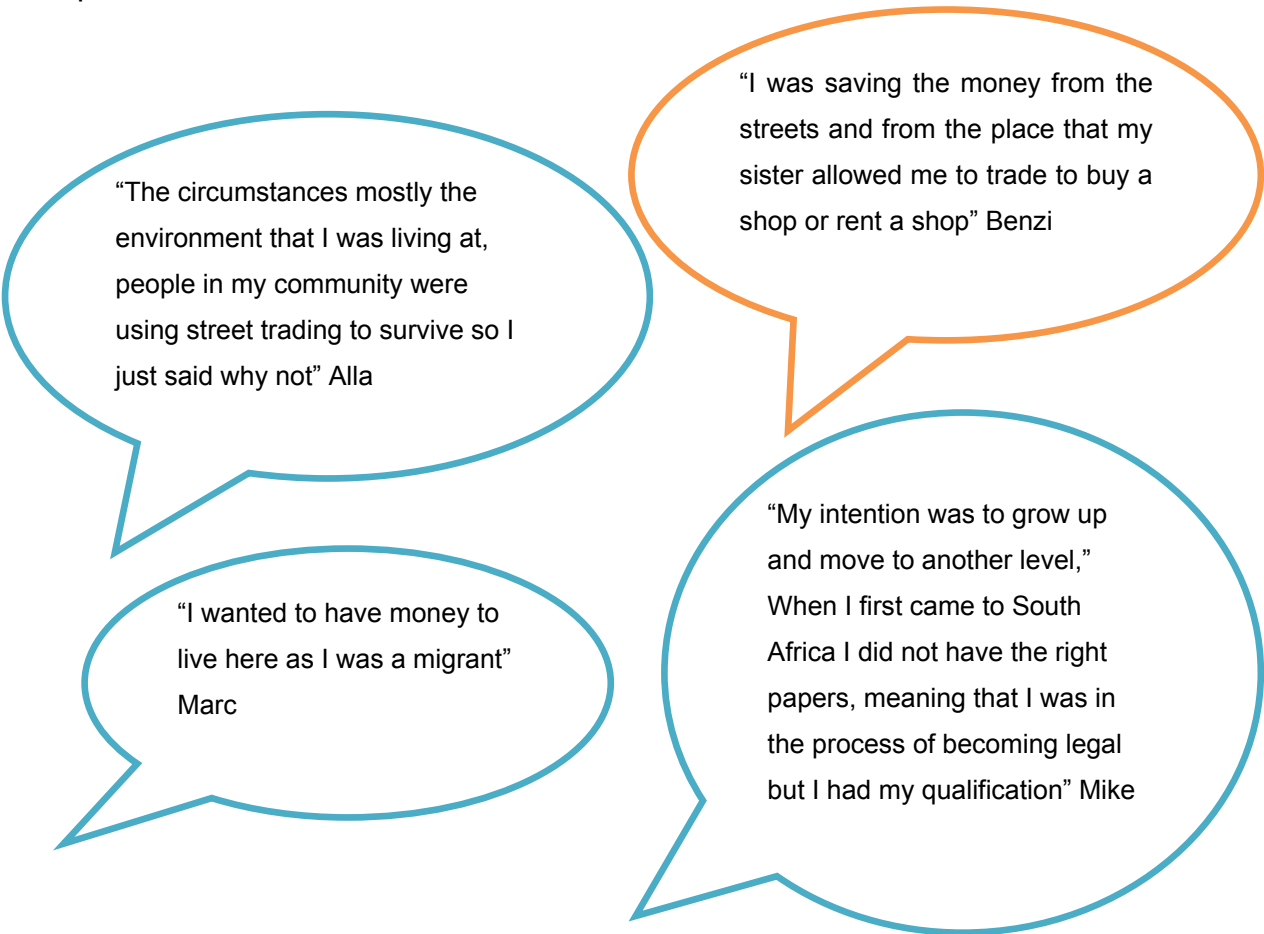
The informal economy in developing countries such as South Africa provides an entry point for persons excluded (through criteria such as education, skills, and poverty) from the formal labour market to pursue business opportunities or to gain employment. It is recognised that there is a great diversity of economic activities through which these persons pursue business and take up employment in informal micro-enterprises (Valodia et al. 2007). Migrants particularly those from West Africa get involved mostly in informal and small businesses within the inner-city of Johannesburg due to barriers that limit them from entering the formal sector (Rogerson 1999:1).

As a result of economic crisis, people use strategic responses to survive. The majority of these entrants, however, either engage in trade, often starting off through selling goods on the street or by working for others doing the same, or provide personal services such as hair care or child minding.

This outlook underpins the 'survivalist' mentality identified in much of the research on the South African informal economy. Unlike classical opportunity driven

entrepreneurship, the objectives of the survivalist micro-entrepreneur is to derive an income as a means of employment, often until such time as a better paying job becomes available, though not (necessarily) to expand the business if growth requires the elimination of competition from other survivalists (their neighbours, in the case of spaza shops) whose situation is no different from theirs (Charman and Piper, 2011).

In the case of the former street traders unlike those that continued their street trading to a formal shop we get former street traders that left street trading completely. In order to understand this type two questions need to be raised. The first question is what was the intention of the former street traders when they started street trading? And the second question is what was important to them when they started street trading. The answers to the above mentioned questions will help in coming up with the second type. Street trading as a safety net can be used for different reasons and amongst them can be street trading as a survival strategy while waiting for formal employment; it can be for savings: education, to buy a shop; survival while waiting for citizenship.



"The circumstances mostly the environment that I was living at, people in my community were using street trading to survive so I just said why not" Alla

"I was saving the money from the streets and from the place that my sister allowed me to trade to buy a shop or rent a shop" Benzi

"I wanted to have money to live here as I was a migrant" Marc

"My intention was to grow up and move to another level," When I first came to South Africa I did not have the right papers, meaning that I was in the process of becoming legal but I had my qualification" Mike





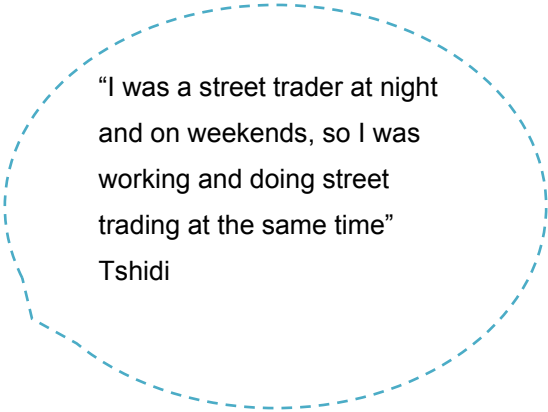
#### 4.3.3 Type 3: street trading used as a multiple livelihood strategy

Many people migrate to big cities such as Johannesburg; when they get to Johannesburg they either generate income from street trading only or they work in both the formal labor market and the informal sector. In this instance where street trading is used to supplement income of a person that works in the formal labour market, street trading is used as a multiple livelihood strategy. Owusu (2007) explains multiple livelihood strategies as the practice of relying on more than one source of income. He argues that contemporary livelihood strategies in many African cities involve participation in multiple economic activities, usually in both the formal and informal sectors.

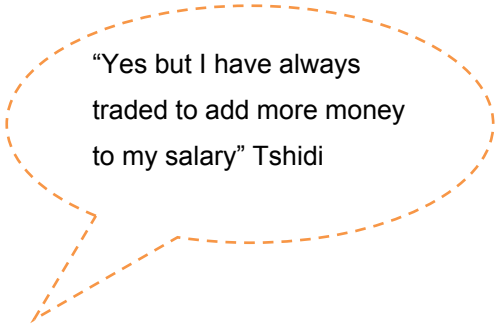
Having looked at the research done some of the street traders use the multiple livelihood strategy to their advantage to survive. The money gained from street trading money was combined with the formal labour market income for survival,



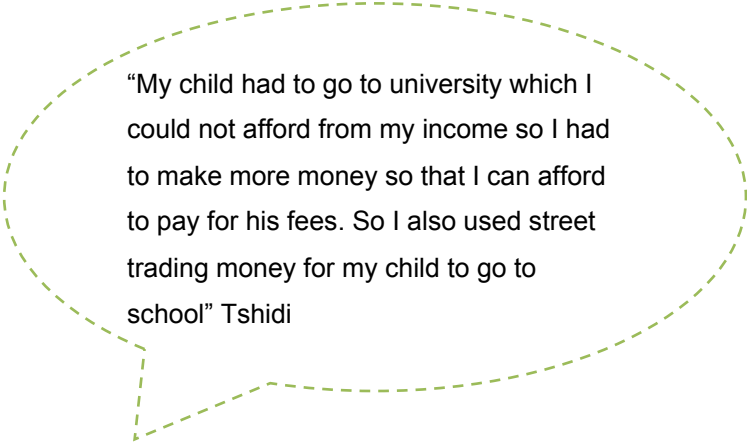
education and also savings. Multiple livelihood strategies provide street traders who also work in the formal sector with a conducive environment to diversify their income while in the mean time they are waiting for a better offer. The following are quotes of how former street traders used street trading to compliment their income.



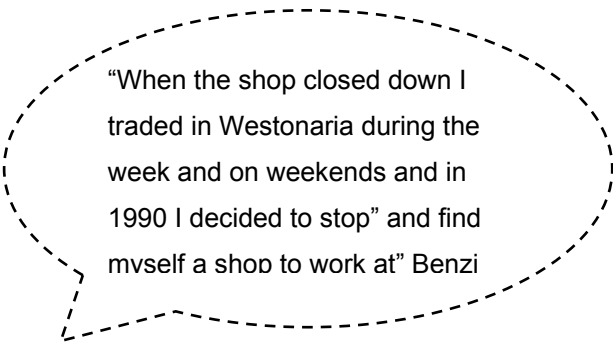
"I was a street trader at night and on weekends, so I was working and doing street trading at the same time"  
Tshidi



"Yes but I have always traded to add more money to my salary" Tshidi



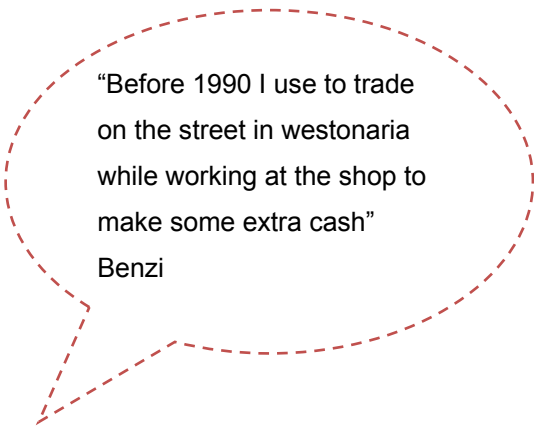
"My child had to go to university which I could not afford from my income so I had to make more money so that I can afford to pay for his fees. So I also used street trading money for my child to go to school" Tshidi



"When the shop closed down I traded in Westonaria during the week and on weekends and in 1990 I decided to stop" and find myself a shop to work at" Benzi



"My business at my shop was booming so I had to leave the street and trade only at the shop. Since I had left over flowers I went back to the street to sell the flowers on the street" Benzi



"Before 1990 I use to trade on the street in westonaria while working at the shop to make some extra cash"  
Benzi

All the above quotes show that the former street traders used both street trading and a formal job to generate income and it brings us to better understand multiple livelihood strategy that was introduced by Owusu (2007). Not only does the multiple livelihood strategy help to generate income but it also helps as a back- up in times of

economic crisis. One of the former street trader that used street trading as a multiple livelihood strategy grew as a trader and bought a shop. In her case street trading was used as a livelihood strategy that helped in changing her life and leaving the streets completely.

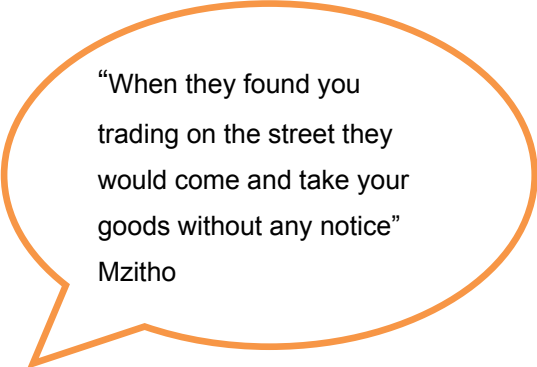
Multiple livelihood strategies serve as a safety net for street traders in terms of supplementing income from a formal job while waiting for a better job. The other trader who used street trading as a multiple livelihood strategy got a better job and did not leave street trading completely. It can be learned that multiple livelihoods strategies serve as a safety net while waiting for a better paying job. Owusu's argument and evidence from Matshidiso (2012) is that it is an ongoing, structural complement to the formal activity. It is flexible and occurs when the person has time / has specific financial needs.

Multiple livelihoods strategies in planning raises the question: how do policy makers ensure that street trading is only used as a multiple livelihood strategy in times when people do not earn enough from their formal jobs? Another question is, how do policy makers ensure that street traders exit street trading as soon as they earn enough from the formal job?

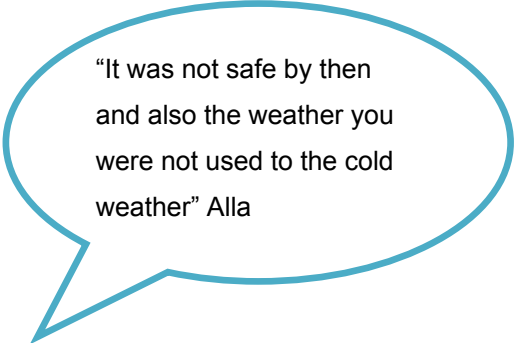
What enabled traders to leave the street?

These are factors that made street trading a very uncomfortable and challenging job.

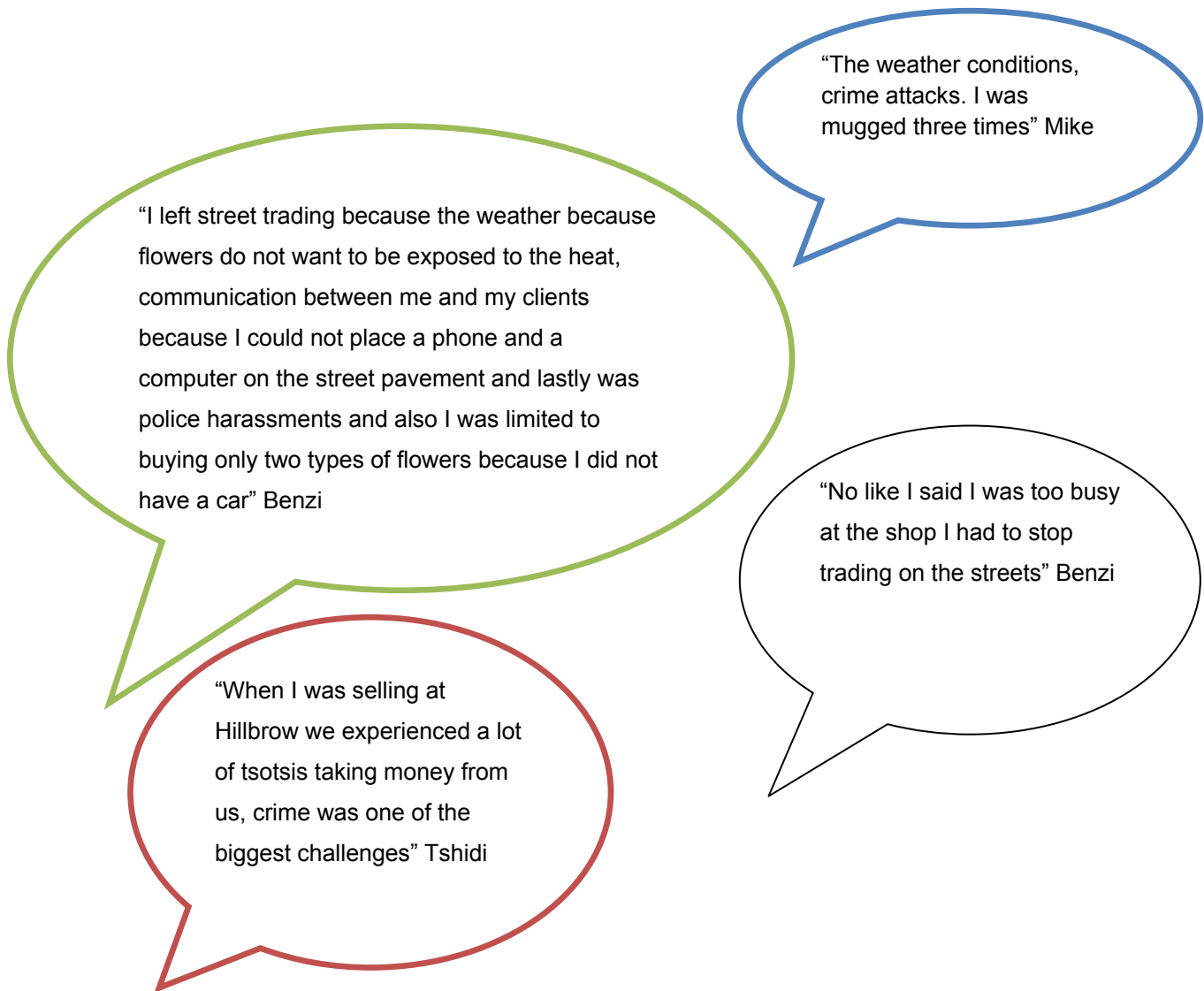
Former street trader used street trading to survive and left the streets. Some of the factors that made the former street traders to leave street trading are crime, police harassments and hush weather conditions. Former street traders resolved factors by either leaving the street trading completely for a formal job or finding a formal shop.



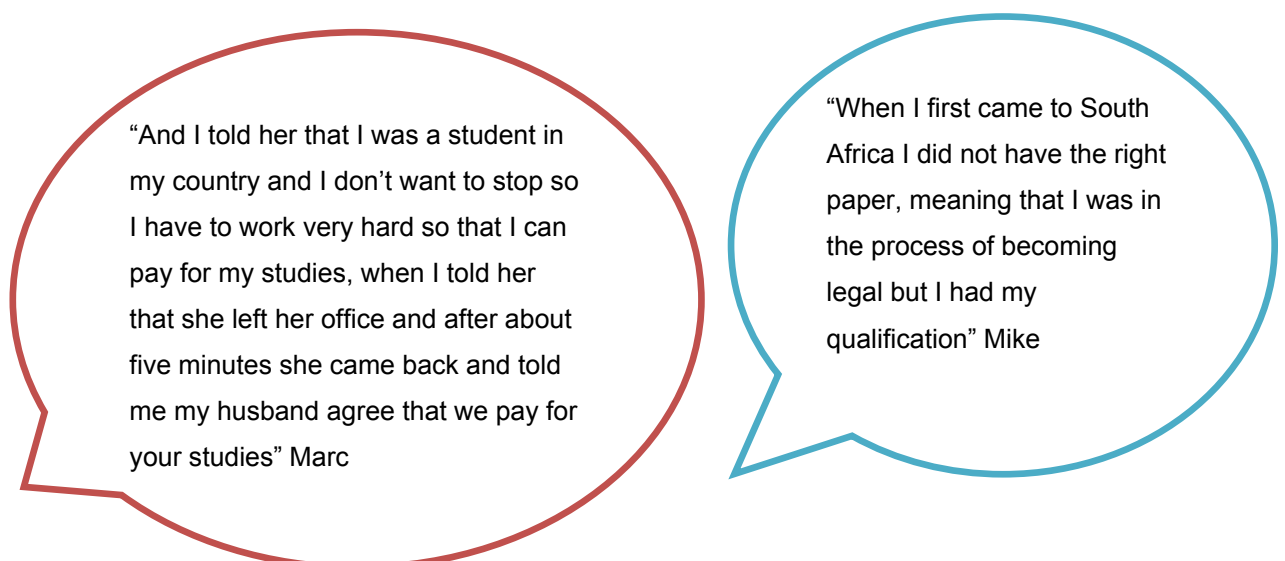
"When they found you trading on the street they would come and take your goods without any notice"  
Mzitho

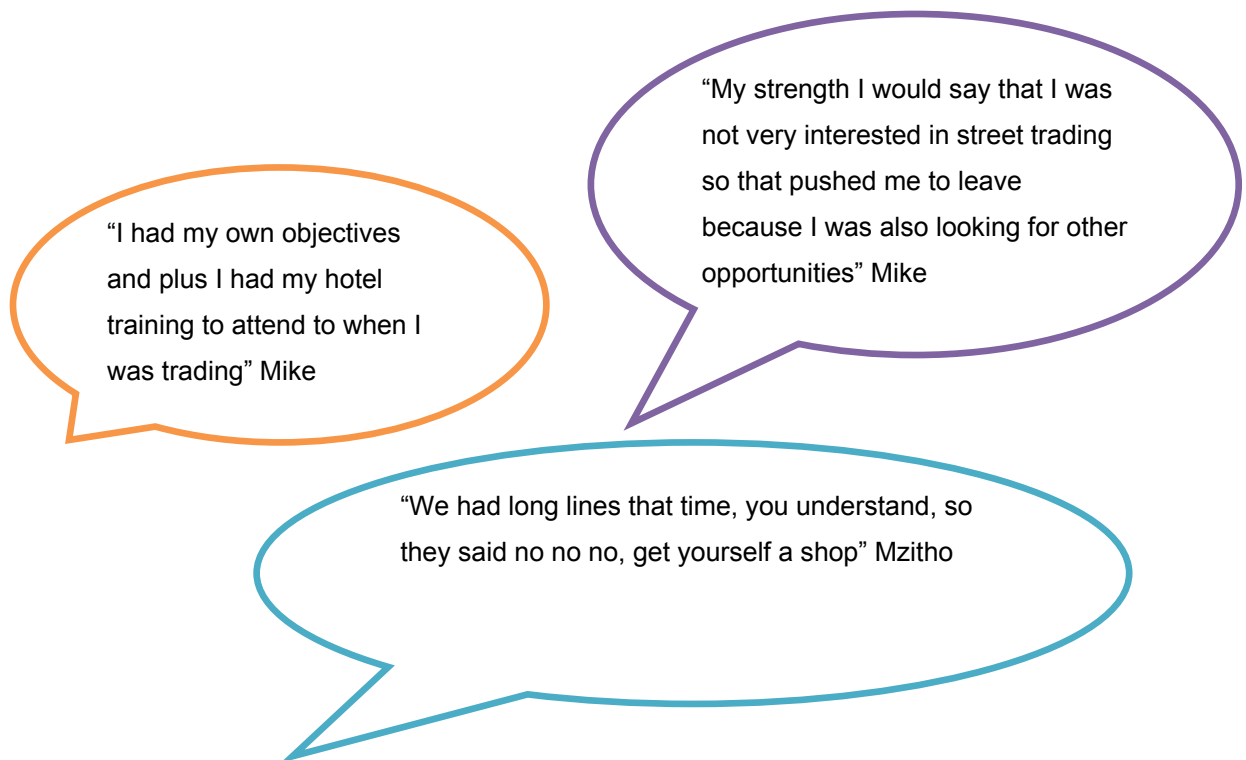


"It was not safe by then and also the weather you were not used to the cold weather" Alla



Adding to the factors above that made former street traders to leave the street to a formal shop or formal job are processes such as education, access legal papers such as work permits, training, a growing informal business and a formal job.





"I had my own objectives and plus I had my hotel training to attend to when I was trading" Mike

"My strength I would say that I was not very interested in street trading so that pushed me to leave because I was also looking for other opportunities" Mike

"We had long lines that time, you understand, so they said no no no, get yourself a shop" Mzitho

Street trading as a safety net teaches us that people use street trading only to survive during crisis meanwhile they are bettering their lives. Street traders engage in street trading because they have no other choice and as soon as something better comes (something that they have been working on) they leave street trading for better opportunities. Using street trading as a safety net shows the functions of street trading as a safety net during crisis.

#### 4.4. Conclusion

The chapter introduced portraits of former street traders in order to improve our understanding of the former street traders. From the portraits, three types of traders emerged: those that use street trading as a ladder to a formal shop. Type 1 of former street traders raised a question whether street traders that did not thrive to a formal shop, can they be regarded as survivalist entrepreneurs?

It is not one is not a thriving/ one has not consolidated street trading into formal trading, in this regard street trading has not performed a very specific function into bringing people in the mainstream economy. Street traders trade for different reasons. The traders that did not qualify to fall under Type 1 did not trade to grow their business but they traded for different reasons. The different reasons they traded for brings us to Type 2 and Type 3 of traders. Type 2 used street trading as a safety net (survival strategy) while they are still waiting for something better. Type 3 used street trading as a multiple livelihood strategy to compliment their current income. The question that Type 3 raised was how do policy makers make sure that street

traders use street trading to compliment their income and exit street trading as soon as they earn enough? This is a very complex question and needs policy makers to establish a good relationship with traders so that they can come up with solutions to address such questions.

# Chapter 5: What matters to get out of street trading

With the use of Karam and Rubin's model (2012), this chapter will use the different trajectories of former street traders to explain how former street traders used street trading as an entry point to the city and the formal labour market.

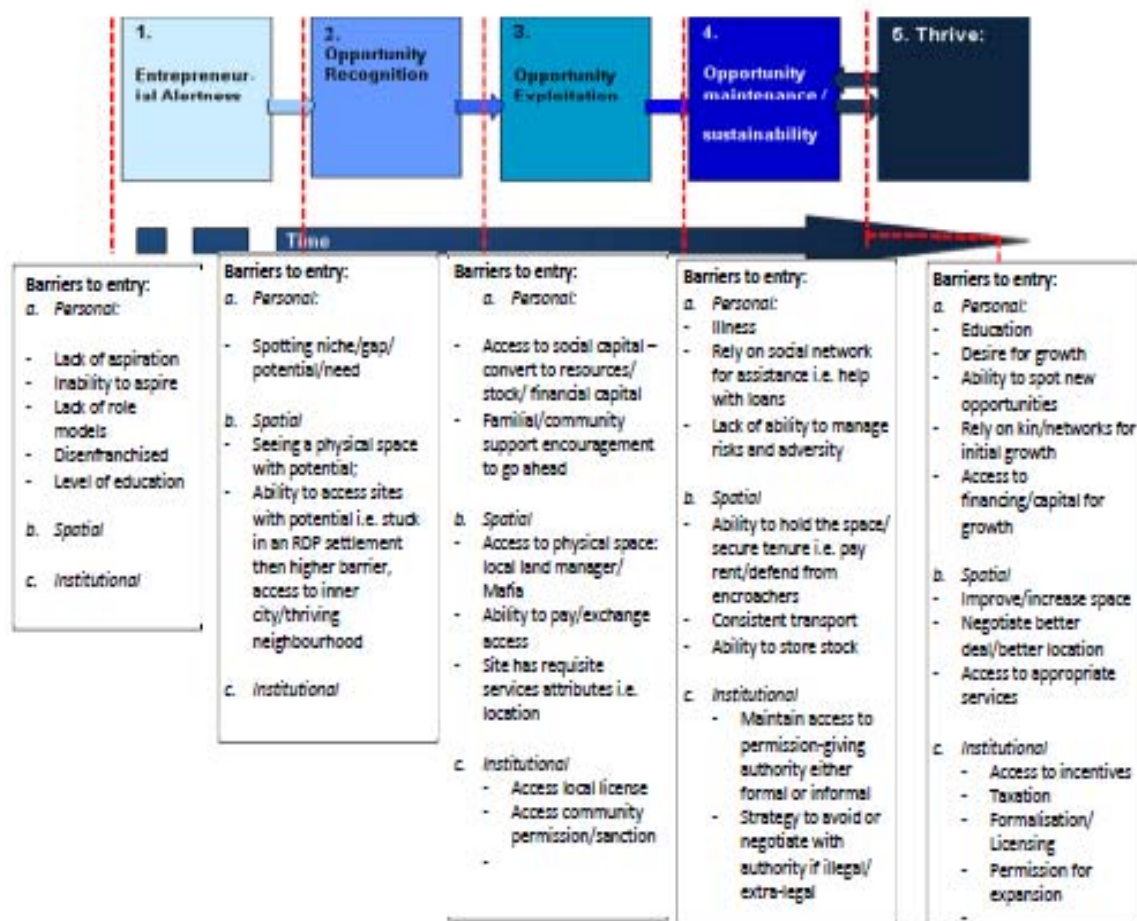


Figure 3: stages of entrepreneurship

The model is used because it shows stages or degrees of entrepreneurship, and relates them to various levels of contexts ranging from personal circumstances and

characteristics, to education and work experience, social networks, and local contexts.

Karam and Rubin's model outlines the stages that may lead to a thriving entrepreneur, with many obstacles of various nature on the way which may lead to an entrepreneur being blocked on the way. It is important to note that Karam and Rubin (2012) see all people in the informal sector as entrepreneurs, where,

“An entrepreneur is someone who perceives an opportunity and creates an organization to pursue it”. (Bygrave and Hofer, 1991:14) and the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (1999:2).

This statement might lead to ambiguities (as the confusion is risky between ‘informal traders as entrepreneurs’ and theories and policies that see all informal traders as potential formal traders De Soto 1989 , as research has shown that most informal traders don't leave the street and do not have the capacity (skills, networks, capital, etc.) to formalize. Nevertheless, I subscribe to it as street trading requires individual action, initiative, drive and consistency. My research encounters with traders has made these features even more salient in my mind.

This chapter will be divided into five parts, following the 5 steps as elaborated by Karam and Rubin (2012). The aim is to test the relevance of the model to my case studies and also to discuss parts on the model based on the cases of the former street traders.

The first part will look at the entrepreneurial alertness of all the street traders. The second part will look at the opportunity recognition of the traders. The third part will look at the opportunity exploitation of the different traders, and the fourth part will discuss how the different traders maintained their businesses and the final part will look at how the street traders thrived and left the streets.

## **5.1. Stage 1: Entrepreneur alertness**

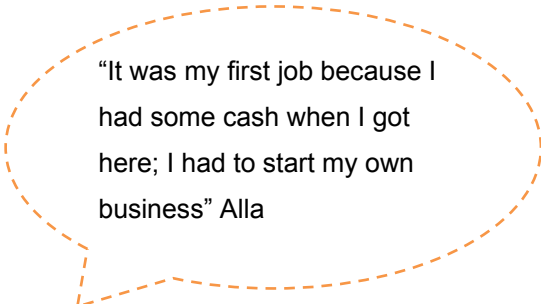
Looking at all the trajectories of the former street traders, almost all the street traders, excluding those that were employed as street traders had an entrepreneurial alertness. Entrepreneurial alertness according to Karam and Rubin (2012) is

“The precondition for any kind of entrepreneurial activity i.e. the kind of person who is looking for or needs an economic opportunity and is aware of what is potentially possible”. Karam and Rubin, 2012:4.

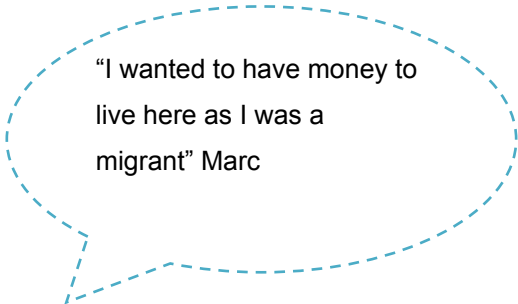
This stage does not apply to those street traders that were employed to trade on the streets because they do not own the business (and behaved more like employees). Since entrepreneurial alertness differs according to different street traders it is important to have different types of street traders based on their trajectories.

### 5.1.1. Entrepreneurial alertness 1: for migrants and new entrants to the city of Johannesburg

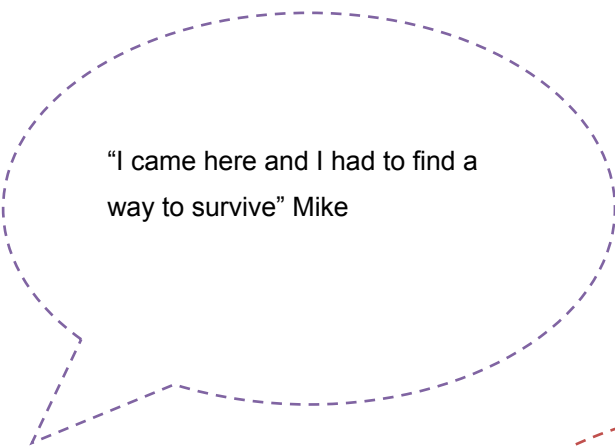
The difference between the different traders entrepreneurial alertness was caused by their different situations. For migrants and new entrants to the city entrepreneurial alertness was caused by their entry to a new city, where they did not have a family and they needed to survive.



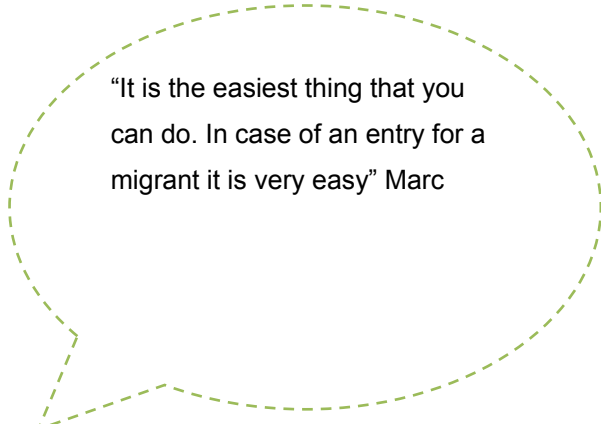
“It was my first job because I had some cash when I got here; I had to start my own business” Alla



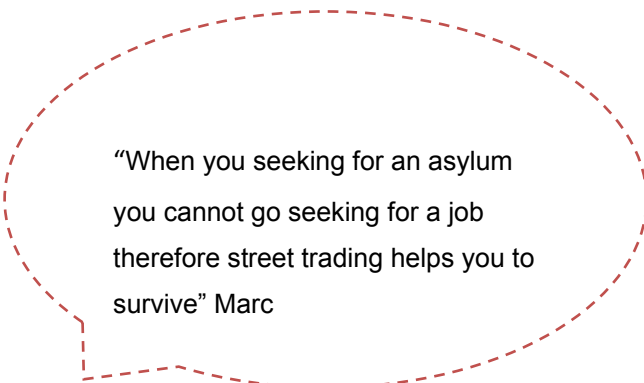
“I wanted to have money to live here as I was a migrant” Marc



“I came here and I had to find a way to survive” Mike




“It is the easiest thing that you can do. In case of an entry for a migrant it is very easy” Marc

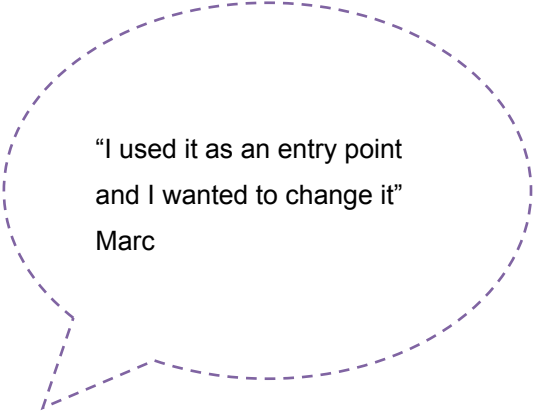


“When you seeking for an asylum you cannot go seeking for a job therefore street trading helps you to survive” Marc





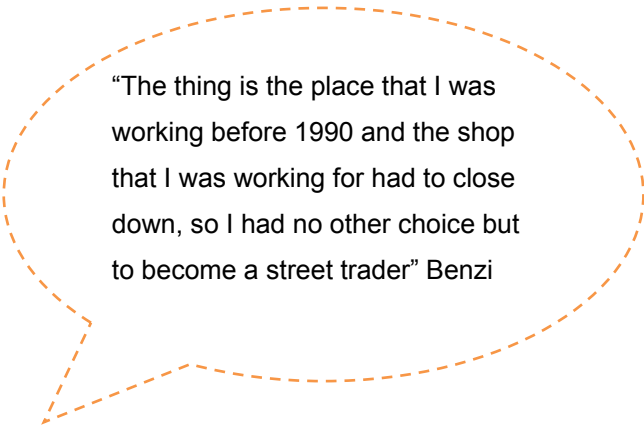
"I was selling flowers on the streets and decided to look for a place in Johannesburg to trade. I decided to move to Johannesburg and trade at Kerk Street." Benzi



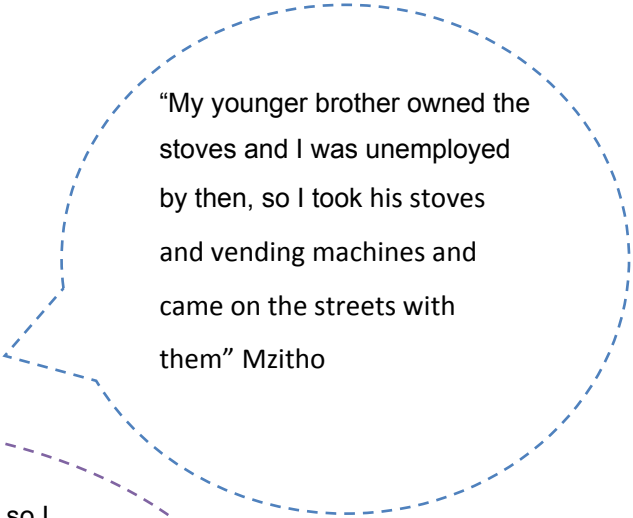
"I used it as an entry point and I wanted to change it"  
Marc

### 5.1.2. Entrepreneurial alertness 2: former street traders that were already located in Johannesburg

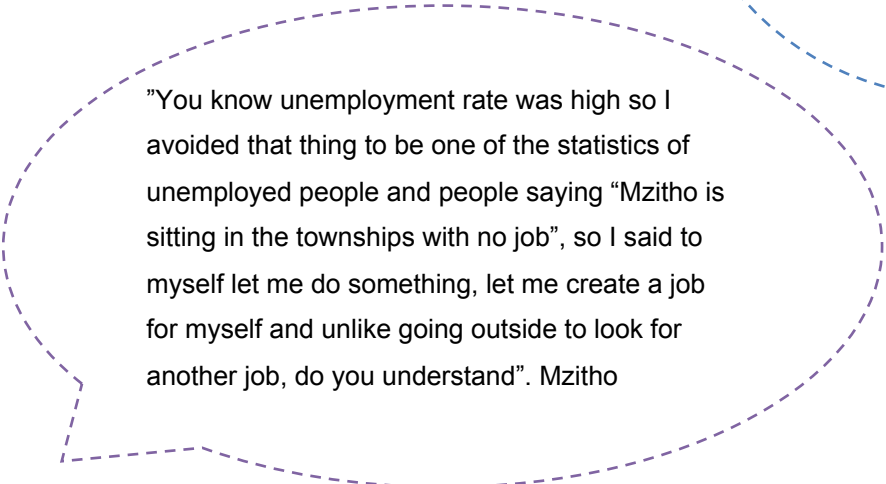
This group of street traders realized their entrepreneurial alertness because of their different situations., Their entrepreneurial alertness mostly was caused by their unemployment circumstances due to retrenchment and less employment opportunities in Johannesburg and secondly by the scarcity of the resources around them.



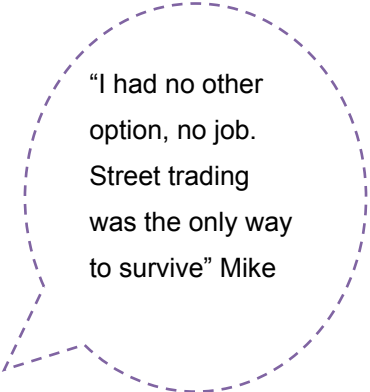
"The thing is the place that I was working before 1990 and the shop that I was working for had to close down, so I had no other choice but to become a street trader" Benzi



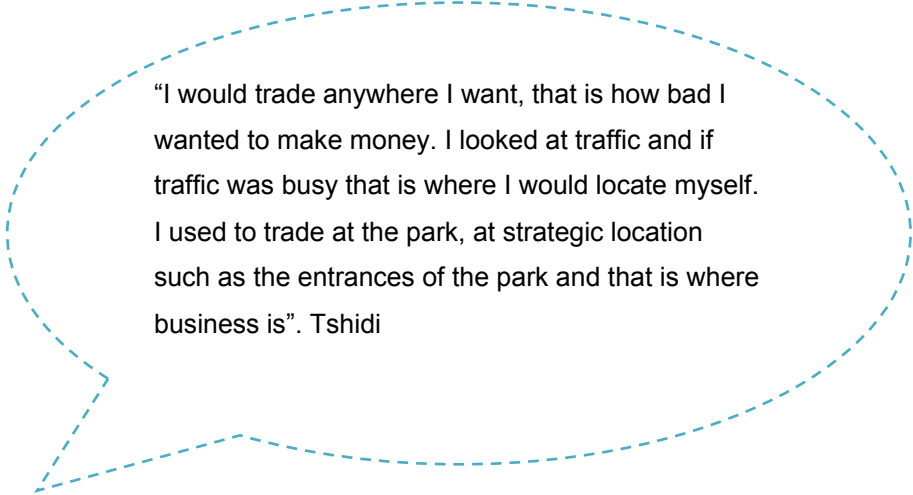
"My younger brother owned the stoves and I was unemployed by then, so I took his stoves and vending machines and came on the streets with them" Mzitho



"You know unemployment rate was high so I avoided that thing to be one of the statistics of unemployed people and people saying "Mzitho is sitting in the townships with no job", so I said to myself let me do something, let me create a job for myself and unlike going outside to look for another job, do you understand". Mzitho



"I had no other option, no job. Street trading was the only way to survive" Mike




"I would trade anywhere I want, that is how bad I wanted to make money. I looked at traffic and if traffic was busy that is where I would locate myself. I used to trade at the park, at strategic location such as the entrances of the park and that is where business is". Tshidi

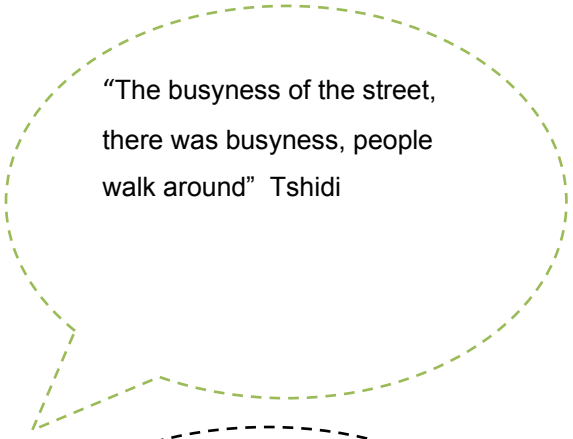
## 5.2. Stage 2: opportunity recognition

"Opportunity recognition is seen as the ability to respond to one's environment by being able to spot a chance/opening or prospect in which to earn a living or change one's livelihood and livelihood strategy". Karam and Rubin, 2012:4.

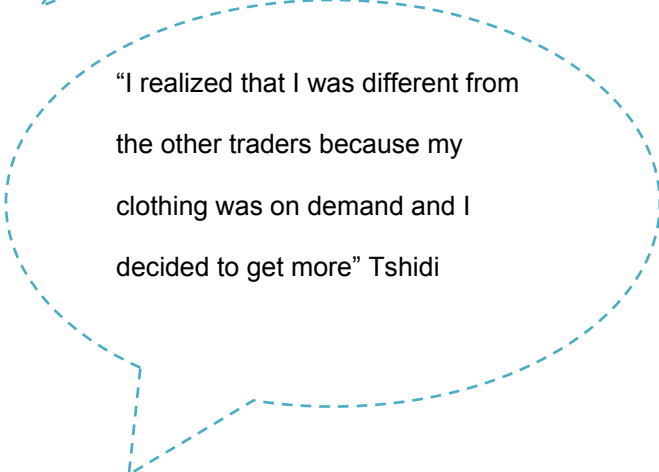
According to the different trajectories some street traders recognised the opportunity and operated their business, employed someone to trade for them and created street trading partnership. From the stories of the street traders, opportunity recognition was mostly based on the demand of the product they were selling and the busyness of the location that they choose. From the model demand was not recognised as one of the important tools of opportunity recognition.



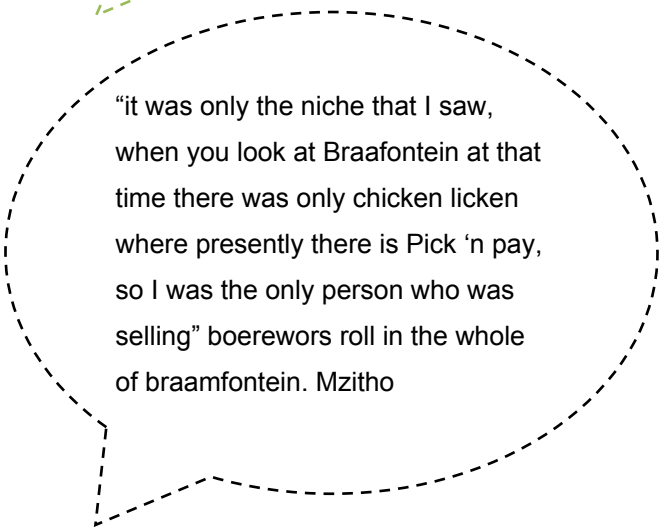
"Flowers have business on the streets because people can see them while passing and buy" them. Benzi



"The busyness of the street, there was busyness, people walk around" Tshidi



"I realized that I was different from the other traders because my clothing was on demand and I decided to get more" Tshidi



"it was only the niche that I saw, when you look at Braamfontein at that time there was only chicken licken where presently there is Pick 'n pay, so I was the only person who was selling" boerewors roll in the whole of braamfontein. Mzitho

**Khumo: why street trading?**

Alla: like I said because the others said I must do it, and they were already doing it.

In Kerk Street I placed myself because it was one of the places that were available in Johannesburg inner city. Benzie

"I observed during the day that nobody was trading that place and then the following morning I went there, by then there was no chasing of traders". Alla

"When I came in 97 I found people selling on the street and ask them how do you access the space and they say just go buy your stuff and locate yourself". Marc

"It was a busy place where you can make money" Mike.

"Most importantly look for busy streets even if it means moving from one place to another, you must be very mobile". Tshidi

"Most importantly look for busy streets even if it means moving from one place to another, you must be very mobile". Tshidi

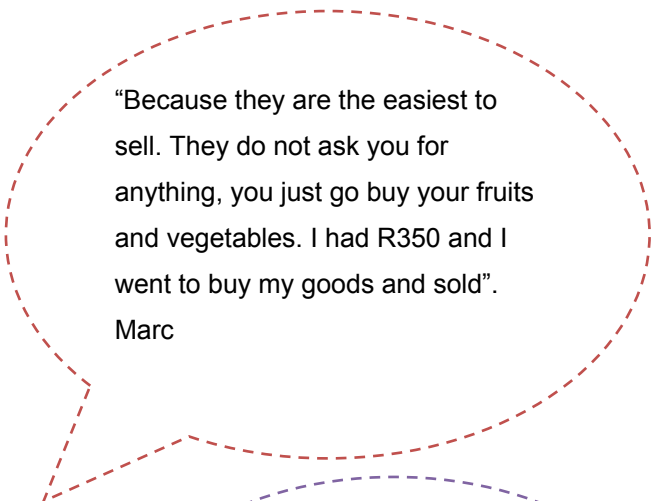
### 5.3. Stage 3: opportunity exploitation

"Once the opportunity has been recognised, the idea needs to be moved into the realms of reality and actualisation i.e. making the business happen. It is here that the entrepreneur needs to leverage a range of items such as finance, support, and capacity etc in order to actually make the business a feasible reality". Karam and Rubin, 2012:4.

In the cases of the former street traders, they all exploited their opportunities and were selling different goods on the street pavement.

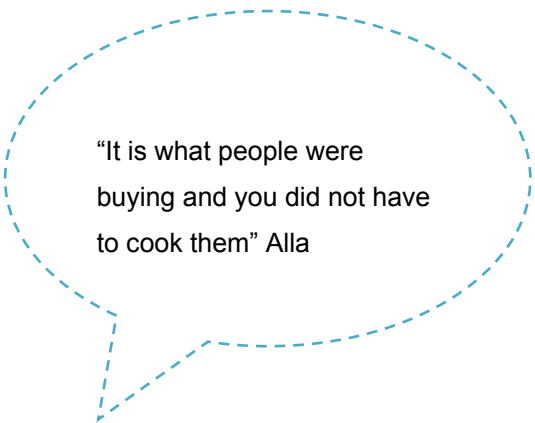
All the street traders were located in the inner city of Johannesburg because it is very busy and there is business. All the traders that needed to buy stock bought it out of their own pockets because for them street trading was easy and did not require much capital; to them street trading had an easy entry. There are also street traders that did not need the starting capital to trade on the streets because they already had their own capital and networks (community and family) to help them start their businesses.

Most street traders sold fruit and vegetables because they were very easy to sell and to buy in small quantities and did not require any cooking. The stock was bought at a fresh food market named City Deep. It is also important to note that one informal trader (Tshidi) had a trading permit to sell in designated areas.

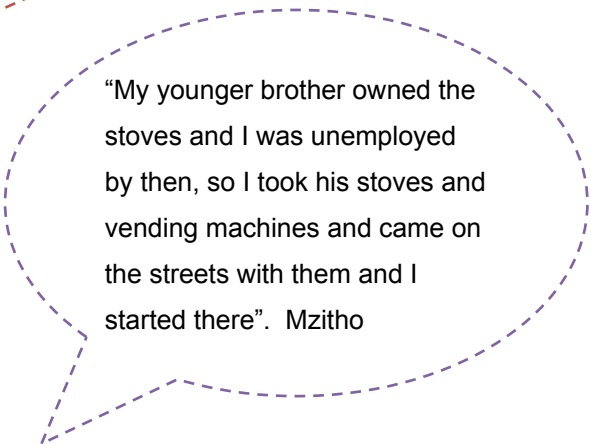


"Because they are the easiest to sell. They do not ask you for anything, you just go buy your fruits and vegetables. I had R350 and I went to buy my goods and sold".

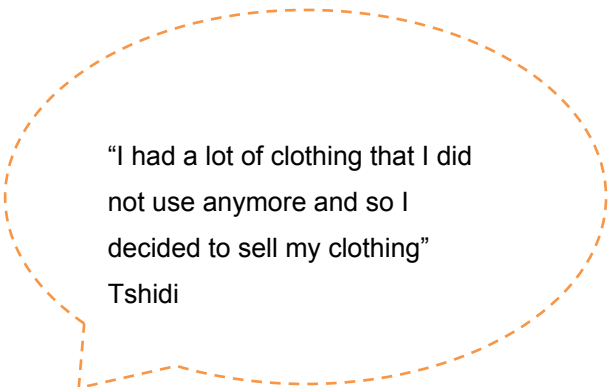
Marc



"It is what people were buying and you did not have to cook them" Alla

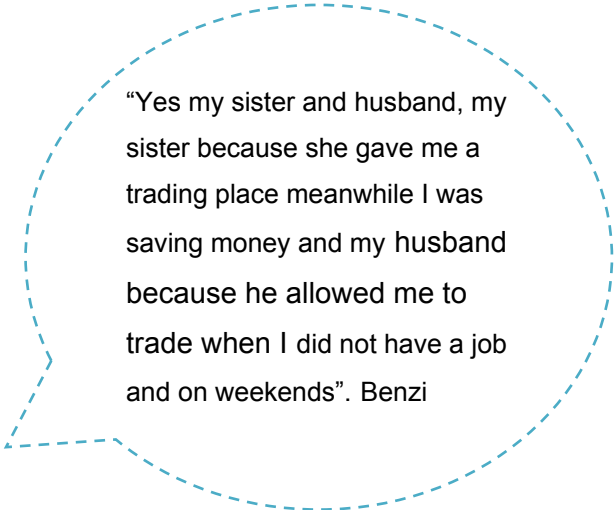


"My younger brother owned the stoves and I was unemployed by then, so I took his stoves and vending machines and came on the streets with them and I started there". Mzitho




"I had a lot of clothing that I did not use anymore and so I decided to sell my clothing"

Tshidi



"Yes my sister and husband, my sister because she gave me a trading place meanwhile I was saving money and my husband because he allowed me to trade when I did not have a job and on weekends". Benzi

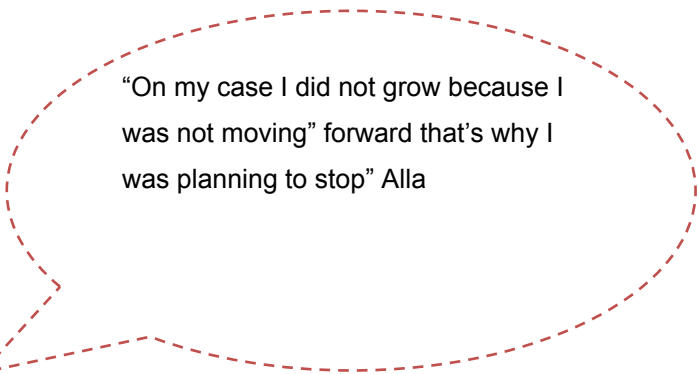


"My perspective was that someone like Marc was making a lot of profit from street trading so that made me to go". Alla

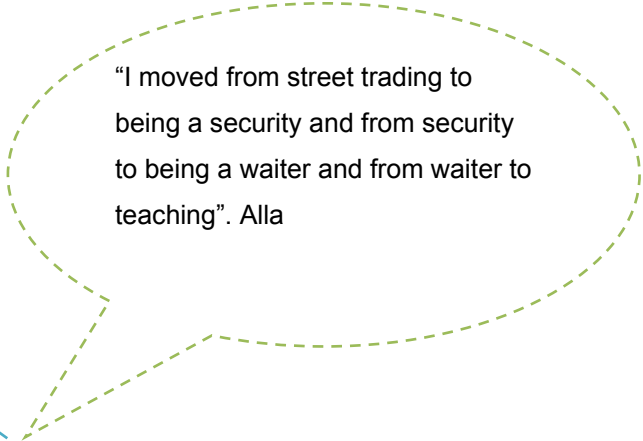
#### 5.4. Stage 4: opportunity maintenance

"Opportunity maintenance occurs once the business has been initiated and the first series of hurdles have been navigated; the next phase to actually maintain the businesses on a day-to-day basis, such that the enterprise has enough profit to support the entrepreneur. It is also the phase in which many businesses/activities seem to get stuck. Karam and Rubin, 2012:4.

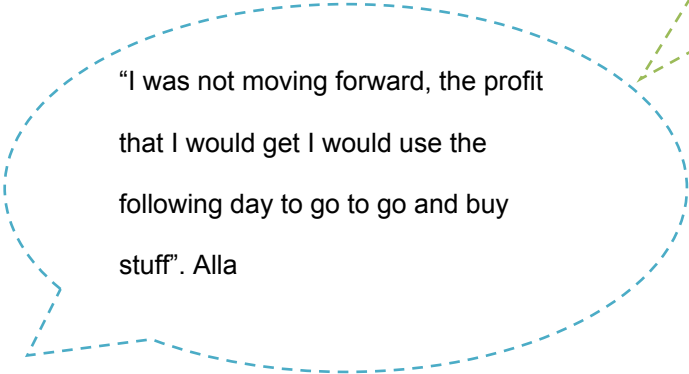
Based on the above description about the opportunity maintenance, it is important to note that some street traders get out of street trading because they cannot maintain their business. Based on the trajectories this phase highlights two different types of street traders, i.e. those that drop out of street trading completely and those that maintain their businesses. This is one of the stages where street traders drop out of the linear cycle because initially they knew that street trading was not something that they preferred but they traded because they were forced by their circumstances. The circumstances may be that they did street trading because they were waiting for a better job.



"On my case I did not grow because I was not moving" forward that's why I was planning to stop" Alla



"I moved from street trading to being a security and from security to being a waiter and from waiter to teaching". Alla



"I was not moving forward, the profit that I would get I would use the following day to go to go and buy stuff". Alla

The other group uses different strategies to maintain their street trading business. Strategies such as opening another business that would help support the street trading initial business, or, a business that will take out the stress off the one on the street. This trader saw that the business on the street was very slow and she rented a place where she can sell the same goods and use the street only during peak time.

"In Kerk Street it was not that busy and I needed another place to push my business. I told my sister that I needed a place to trade while I was on Kerk Street, she offered me a place in her dry clean business, I was trading both at her shop and on Kerk Street". Benzi

"When I using my sister's place I traded on the streets in the afternoon from 3:00pm till 7:00 pm and when I bought a shop I sold left over flowers in the afternoon". Benzi

The money that is saved from both the two places it was used to get a formal shop. The other street trader maintained her business by not sticking to one location but locating at different places at different times of the day depending on where the traffic is and the busyness. One of the street traders was very busy with a formal job and the only way that he could maintain his business was to employ people to take care of the businesses. The right attitude and patience can also help maintain the business because if you believe in your business you will work hard to keep it going. Former street traders also stressed the point of investing more time in a business in order for the business to generate money.

"In Kerk Street it was not that busy and I needed another place to push my business. I told my sister that I needed a place to trade while I was on Kerk Street, I was saving the money from the streets and from the place that my sister allowed me to trade to buy a shop or rent a shop" Benzi

"You know it's a tactic that anyone uses do u understand, you must be street wise in order to survive on the streets"

Mzitho

"I had about four or five stalls where I employed twelve people. I have employed both migrants and South Africans selling for me. Security measures such as employing street kids as security" Marc

"As people we are impatient and we do not know our customers, we want to run our business with a remote. When your business is young you must take care of it like a small baby, don't leave your business until it is stable enough to give you money"

"Police harassments on the streets, as I have said earlier on things like those you must be streetwise in order to survive on the streets. If they tell you to leave you must intimidate them" Mzitho

"You must be street wise and tell the police you know one guys maybe he is a police man and you use that guy to intimidate them, tell them you have connections at hill brow police station so if they arrest you, you will be out by tomorrow, you see things like that. So they will think you are well known, things like that". Mzitho

## 5.5. Stage 5: thrive

"Thrive refers to the ability of the entrepreneur to move the business/activity out of maintenance and into the phase of development". Karam and Rubin, 2012:4.

The thriving stage is very important to street traders because to them thriving is about having a choice to leave the streets.

Thriving for street traders does not only involve buying a formal shop but also to get out of street trading completely. Therefore, based on the trajectories there are three different groups that define thriving differently. The first group of street traders sees thriving as the ability to get a formal shop and leave the streets. The second group of street traders see thriving as leaving street trading completely and joining the formal labor market; street trading for them has done its job and it is time to move on and achieve what they were meant to achieve

### 5.5.1. Thriving group 1:

Street traders see thriving as the ability to get a formal shop and leave the streets. This group of street traders used the street trading money to get a formal shop.

"It was to make money so that I can buy or rent a shop, I wanted to get out of the streets". Alla

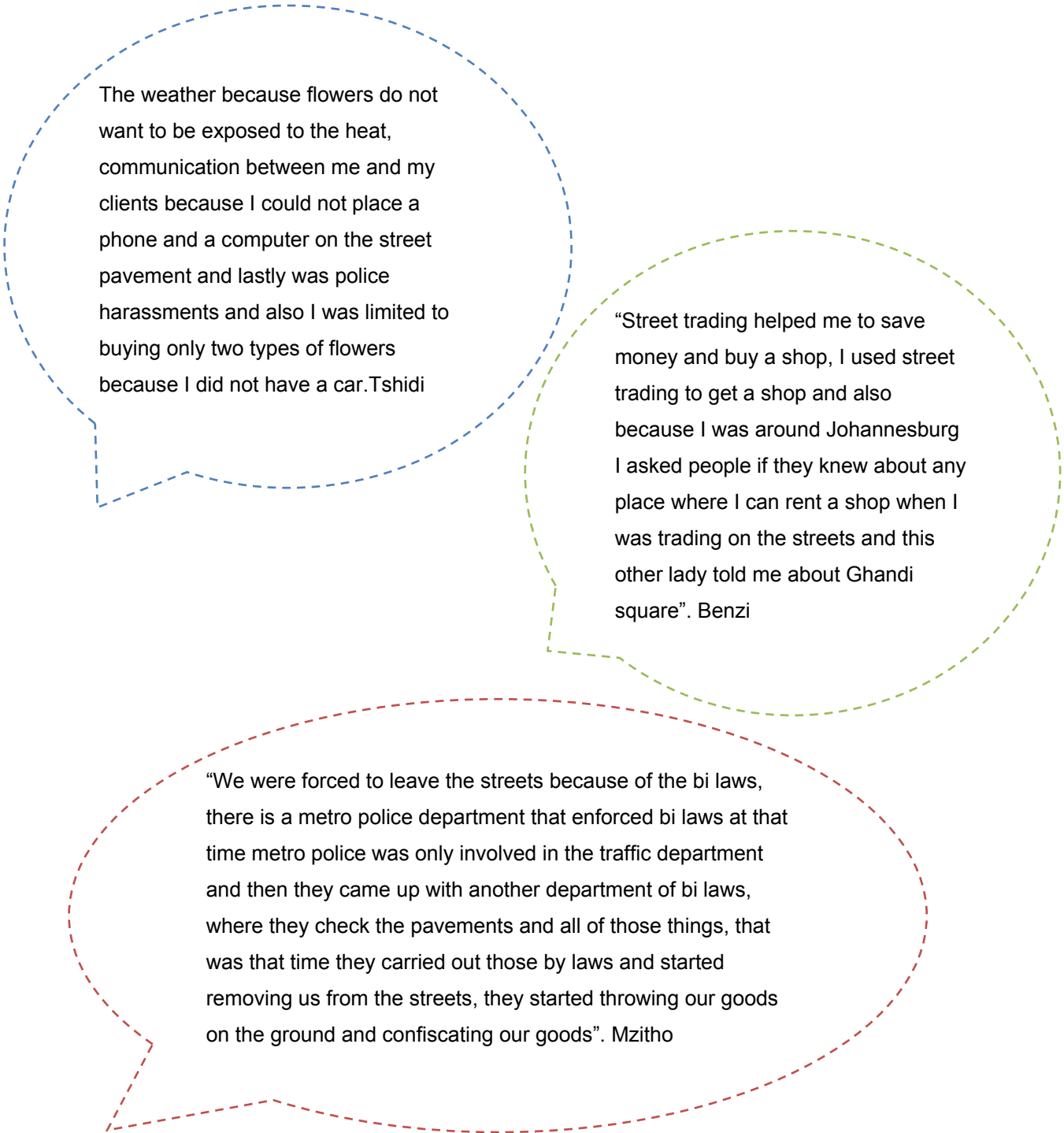
"ja it did a lot that's why I managed to move to a shop. If I was not streetwise I was not going to move to a formal shop, I will not be where I am today". Mzitho

"Trading in a shop and on the streets are two different things. On the streets you did not know how to handle invoices, to do this and that". Mzitho

"On the streets there are no overheads on the street, no water and electricity payments, less staff (interrupted by a customer), no SARS, we were independent, 100% independent on the streets". Mzitho

"The other thing is that on the street you cannot have formal arrangement because there is no place to put a phone and set up a computer so that people can place orders. On the street I was only selling for the passer by. Here at the shop people can place the orders and pay at the end of the month". Benzi





The weather because flowers do not want to be exposed to the heat, communication between me and my clients because I could not place a phone and a computer on the street pavement and lastly was police harassments and also I was limited to buying only two types of flowers because I did not have a car. Tshidi

“Street trading helped me to save money and buy a shop, I used street trading to get a shop and also because I was around Johannesburg I asked people if they knew about any place where I can rent a shop when I was trading on the streets and this other lady told me about Ghandi square”. Benzi

“We were forced to leave the streets because of the bi laws, there is a metro police department that enforced bi laws at that time metro police was only involved in the traffic department and then they came up with another department of bi laws, where they check the pavements and all of those things, that was that time they carried out those by laws and started removing us from the streets, they started throwing our goods on the ground and confiscating our goods”. Mzitho

### 5.5.2. Thriving group 2

Street traders leave street trading completely and join the formal labor market. They used street trading while they were waiting for a better job or waiting to finish up their qualifications. This group does not focus on thriving as entrepreneurs but thriving to

them was being able to use street trading as a safety net whilst they are looking for opportunities to better their live.

“ I was very lucky and I don't know if more than three people had that luck that I had because I started in 97 when I came, I started in Hillbrow selling fruit and vegetables on the street of Hillbrow and it happened that I went to city deep (the fresh food market) where we buy the fruits and vegetables that we sell, I met with the wife of the owner of that place in city deep not the whole of city deep but one of the shops who is an Indian guy. We took our stuff and while we were about to pay she asked me where was my wife and children? I told her that I am not married and I don't have any children and she said, why are you working so hard? And I told her that I was a student in my country and I don't want to stop so I have to work very hard so that I can pay for my studies, when I told her that she left her office and after about five minutes she came back and told me my husband agree that we pay for your studies. She told me that I must go registered whenever I am ready to study and we will give you money to pay. I could not believe it I mean yes you know this lady she cannot lie to me. You could tell that she is very rich but I could not believe that she could say something like that. So that is what happened and we for paid our stuff and left. After that I went to South African qualification authority to do the equivalent of my diploma, especially because Ivory Coast is a French speaking country so I had to put my diploma in English. I went to see the lady and told her I want to register; she counted R15000 and gave it to me to pay my fees. I went to school to pay, and when I was studying I did not go to the market anymore and she asked me again, that now that you are studying you don't sell anymore and where do you get money to survive from? She said ok on weekends you come here and work. So on weekends I went to work for them and she would pay me like I was working the whole week. And then when I did my second year I started with my in service training and the in service training also it was some kind of luck because for me being migrant in the country it happened easy and I was using an asylum seekers paper. I saw that they were looking for students in this company and I went for an interview and the technical manager and she told me that my accent sounds different from South African, she asked me where I am from and I told him Ivory Coast. She said you speaking French in Ivory Coast and I said yes, she said good you are hired”. Marc

"Solution was to get my permit and get out of the streets" Mike

"I moved from street trading to being a security and from security to being a waiter and from waiter to teaching" Alla

"I was studying and I knew that on streets will not make my life, I was looking at something very far which I could not touch at the beginning but I knew it will happen, I did not want to be on the streets. I used it as an entry point and I wanted to change it". Marc

"My intention was to grow up and move to another level. When I first came to South Africa I did not have the right paper, meaning that I was in the process of becoming legal but I had my qualification". Mike

"On my case I did not grow because I was not moving forward that's why I was planning to stop". Alla

### 5.5.3. Thriving group 3

The street traders in this group are part of the formal labour market and trade on a temporary basis. These street traders used street trading to compliment their salaries when the formal job income was not enough. These street traders traded part time either on weekends or in the evening. There are different reasons to complimenting income such as for children's education, for survival and also for savings. After achieving their goals these group of street traders use street trading as a hobby or to sell some of the goods that they were not able to sell in the shop. They left street trading because their formal shops was too demanding.

"I have always traded to add more money to my salary, right now I do street trading because I love it, it is like a hobby. It is not street trading anymore, it is from the boot of my car" Tshidi

"I had children to take care of and the money that I was getting was not enough to take care of me and my family so street trading was a solution to my problem, My child had to go to university which I could not afford from my income so I had to make more money so that I can afford to pay for his fees. So I also used street trading money for my child to go to school". Tshidi

"How the selling started changing was that selling in the streets was like a passion it was calling for me" Tshidi

"Street trading and my current job are the same so I love them both". Benzi.

"Since I had left over flowers I went back to the street to sell the flowers on the street". Benzi

## 5.6 Conclusions

The model was a useful tool to this part of research; it helped classifying my data into different stages and making sense of them.

Most of the former street traders moved through the linear process that the model provided but with reference to the different path that they took some points have to be added to the model. The different trajectories that were used in this part of research pointed out that street trading is not only used by traders for them to become thriving entrepreneurs but to move beyond that and also to participate in street trading based on the ability to choose to become a street trader when one wishes.

It is safe to conclude that every street trader used street trading as an entry to the city and the formal labour market and they wanted to leave street trading at some point. The trajectories of the former street traders offered the model a platform to improve based on the realities that former street traders went through.

The model assumes that each street trader wants to become thriving entrepreneur, which is not necessarily the case – even if thriving the business might be abandoned for other opportunities (Marc- although maybe not abandoned, passed to someone else). The model assumes that exit from the path to thriving entrepreneur is a failure particular to enter formal market – it is not necessarily.

The trajectories of the former street traders highlighted some of the important points that the model left out. Therefore this part of research recommends that the model be improved by adding some points onto the model based on the trajectories of the former street traders.

# Chapter 6: Conclusion

The research report explored the trajectories of how former street traders used street trading as an entry to the city and the formal labour market. The conclusion of the report is divided into three parts. The first part looks at the main findings and the arguments made in the report. The second part gives recommendations of some of the issues uncovered in the report and draws a new model drawn from Karam and Rubin(2012) that is based on the findings. The third part opens to a more general reflection on urban planning.

## 6.1. Lessons learned from the specific typologies for the model and policy makers

Chapter four explored the portraits of the former street trades and a typology surfaced. The typologies that surfaced proved that street trading is not only used by street traders as an entry to the city and the formal labour market. Due to the untold stories it is not possible to find out the different reasons why people use street trading. The findings revealed some of the important points that were likely to be unknown without the trajectories of the former street traders. The first type that is obvious to policy makers is that of a street trader becoming a thriving entrepreneur. These types of street traders move through Karam and Rubin's thriving **entrepreneur model** with few reasons that could be added to the model. The former street traders now own shops around the city.

In addition to the thriving entrepreneur model from the trajectories is that entrepreneur alertness was caused by the circumstances of unemployment, and that the shops that they were working at were closed. Temporary unemployment or the permanent inability to enter specific types of jobs (lack of qualifications) activates most people's entrepreneur alertness.

**Job experience** also played an important part of one of the street traders realizing that he/she could open her own business. **Hard work** and **attitude** can pose barriers to entry for the stage, a hard working entrepreneur with the right attitude have more chances of thriving.

The second stage for the thriving entrepreneurs is opportunity recognition. In the case of these thriving entrepreneurs, they spotted a niche and took an advantage of that. Adding to the third stage street traders exploited their opportunity by recognizing a niche market and taking it (placing their stock on the streets to sell).

Adding to the model's stage three, lack of demand for your product can be a barrier to entry. If you want to be a thriving entrepreneur **demand** plays an important role to grow your business. Demand is recognized by selling a product that is unique and the previous experience by the trader when they were still trading elsewhere.

The fourth stage offered an opportunity for the thriving entrepreneurs to convert their stock to money, a reverse process from stage three into the stock and place them in a place of trading. The barrier to the entry raised by for the thriving entrepreneurs in the fourth stage of maintaining their businesses is the **confiscating of goods by the metro police**. The second barrier was **not being able to reverse the process of changing the stock back into money**. Most the informal traders experienced police harassment for trading on the streets.

Based on the trajectories of the former street trading thriving for them was being able to save money and move into a formal shop. Savings plays an important role for an entrepreneur to **save money** in order for them to grow their business and also to get out of street trading completely. Supply plays an important barrier to entry in order for the business to grow. One of the street traders could not grow because demand for her goods was high but she could not **supply** variety due to transport reasons. She used to carry her stock. Selling one product can also pose as a barrier to entry for a trader to grow, former street traders have mentioned that **selling variety of products** made them thrive. Lastly, it is important for a street trader to locate in a place where he will not have competition. Competition can be seen as a barrier to entry if it is not used to improve the business.

The second type of street traders also raised important points for the model. These former street traders used street trading as a safety net. They used street trading to survive. One of the street traders can be described to be a survivalist entrepreneur because his aim was not to thrive but to survive. From this trader's trajectory it is safe to conclude that he went through stage one, two and three but failed to maintain his business. Barriers to entry that lead to the traders leaving street trading

completely was a **formal job**, a formal job is seen as a relief for a street trader that is not making. Not all people going out are failed entrepreneurs, it depends of their original objectives and it might not always be having a formal shop. The street trader left the model completely and joined the formal labor market. This is also a lesson for policy makers that people use street trading as a safety net to survive whilst they are waiting for better opportunities from the formal labour market. Support of street trading by the state should be encouraged as street trading is used as a safety net during crisis.

A question raised from the situation above is what about the street traders who are employed and are working for a thriving business, and when working as a street trader they get formal employment? This is a lesson for policy makers that street trading does not only employment through the ownership of the business but also through employment in the sector.

The third type contains street traders that practice multiple livelihood strategies. It is a lesson for both policy makers and for the model. This group of informal trader use informal trading to supplement their incomes from the formal labour market. The incomes from street trading help in surviving and supporting families. In this case street trading is not only used as an entry to the formal labour market but as a way to supplement incomes.

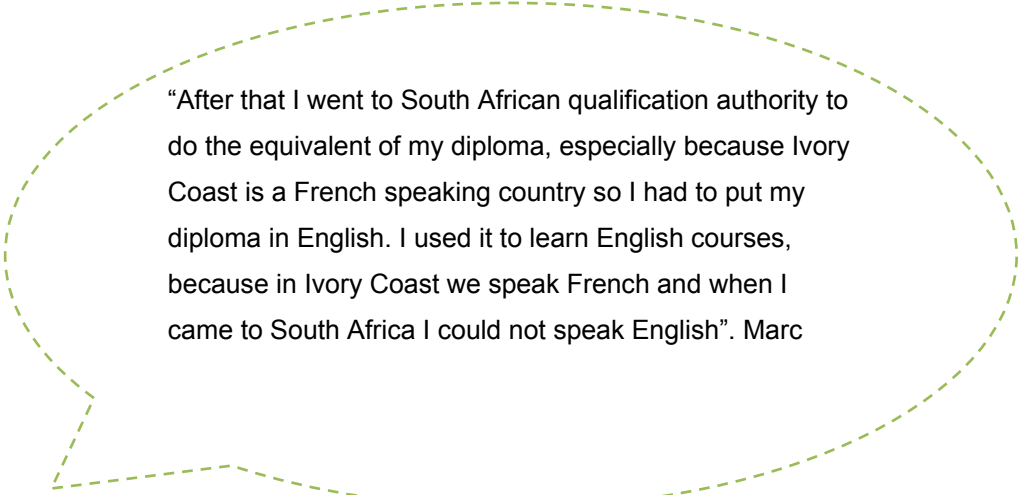
From this point it can be concluded that the assumption that if you are not thriving it is bad does not apply in this situation because there are street traders that trade because they want to supplement income not because they want to be thriving entrepreneurs. As soon as their formal jobs is too demanding and paying well they leave street trading completely. Their objective from the start was to make extra cash that adds onto their income and as soon as their formal job paid well they left the street completely. It proves to the model that reality shows otherwise, you cannot thrive as an entrepreneur because your objective was not to thrive as a street trader but thrive elsewhere.




## 6.2. General lessons to improve the model and for policy makers

These ideas are not exhaustive and not addressing all aspects, but only based on these cases of successful street traders and what they identified as either barriers or conditions for success.

- **Language** and **documentation** of legal stay can be a barrier to entry for migrants; these two issues become barriers or conditions for success. The below quotes are the challenges that the former street trader experienced when they first came to South Africa. They could not get formal jobs because of language barriers and legal documentation. In South Africa English is a requirement when applying for a job.



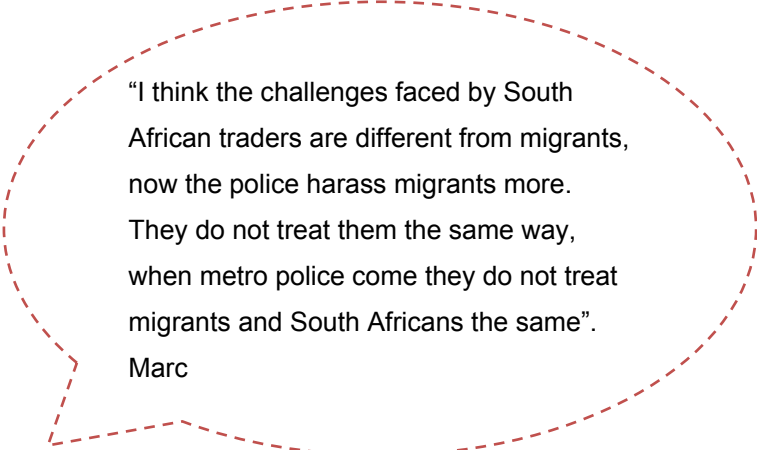
"After that I went to South African qualification authority to do the equivalent of my diploma, especially because Ivory Coast is a French speaking country so I had to put my diploma in English. I used it to learn English courses, because in Ivory Coast we speak French and when I came to South Africa I could not speak English". Marc



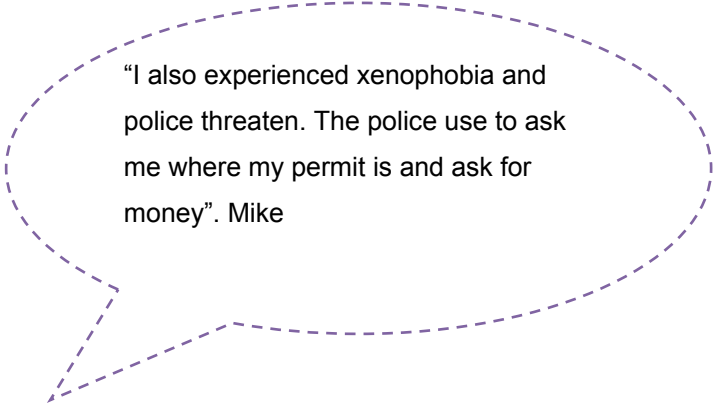
"When I first came to South Africa I did not have the right paper, meaning that I was in the process of becoming legal but I had my qualification". I did not have a permit to work in South Africa, I had a permit to stay but not work in the country, and unlike Australia where you can work and live, bit of language barriers, the beginning was tough,". Mike

- **Xenophobia** and **discrimination** poses a threat for migrant street traders to thrive as entrepreneurs. From the quotes below is evident that former street traders experienced challenges from the state police, they were not able to

move forward because of the way they were treated on the streets. They were scared to sell sometimes because of the way they were treated and had to pay to be on the streets.

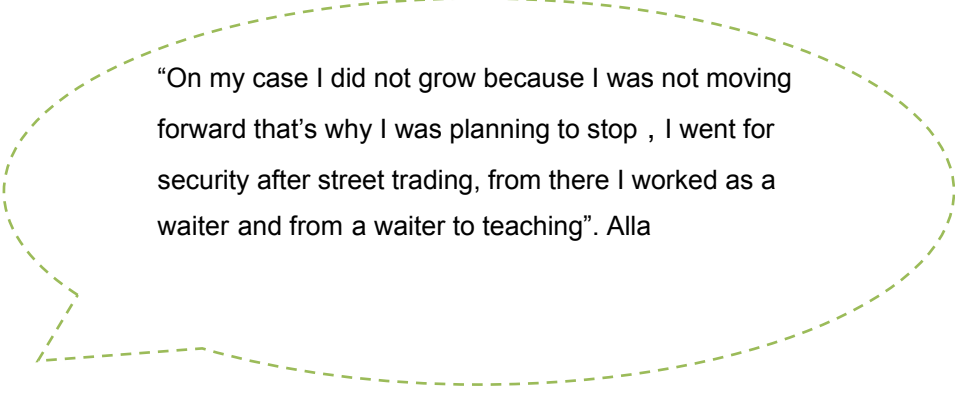


"I think the challenges faced by South African traders are different from migrants, now the police harass migrants more. They do not treat them the same way, when metro police come they do not treat migrants and South Africans the same".  
Marc



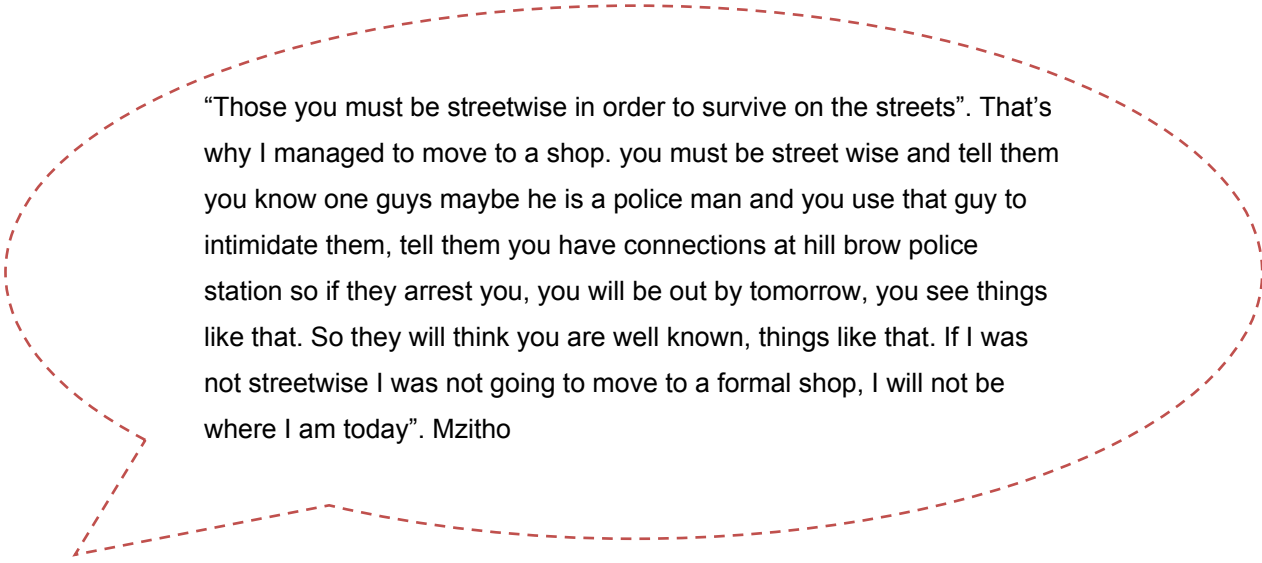
"I also experienced xenophobia and police threaten. The police use to ask me where my permit is and ask for money". Mike

- **Being on the streets itself** can be a barrier to entry if it is not used as an inspiration to thrive. Some of the former street traders were not making profit and this resulted in them leaving street trading completely.

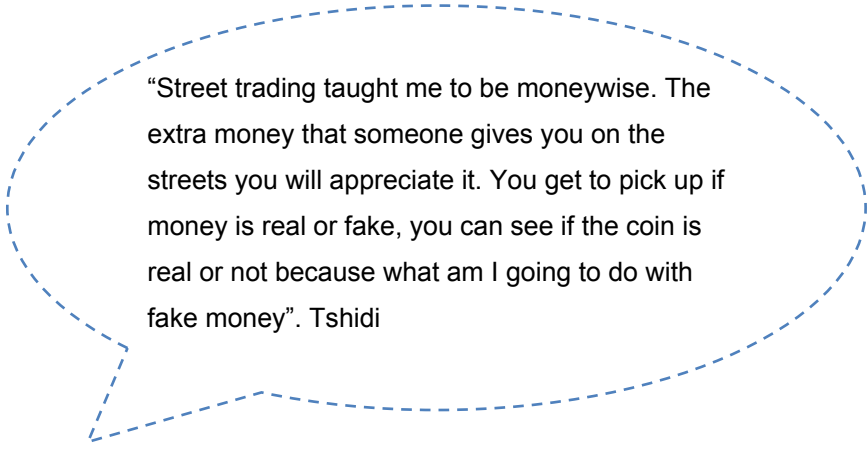


"On my case I did not grow because I was not moving forward that's why I was planning to stop , I went for security after street trading, from there I worked as a waiter and from a waiter to teaching". Alla

- For many street traders, **lack of being streetwise and moneywise** adds to your business thriving not thriving.

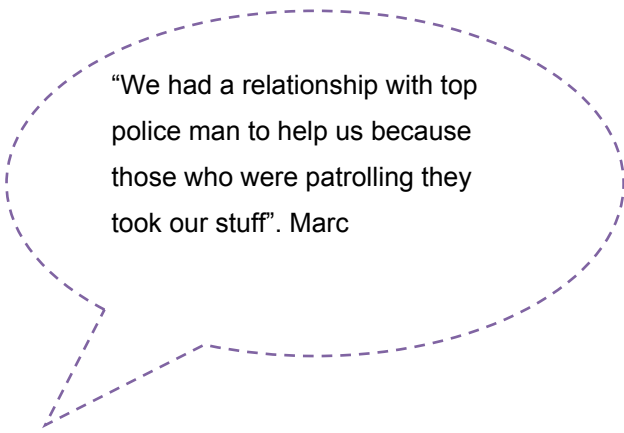


“Those you must be streetwise in order to survive on the streets”. That’s why I managed to move to a shop. you must be street wise and tell them you know one guys maybe he is a police man and you use that guy to intimidate them, tell them you have connections at hill brow police station so if they arrest you, you will be out by tomorrow, you see things like that. So they will think you are well known, things like that. If I was not streetwise I was not going to move to a formal shop, I will not be where I am today”. Mzitho




“Street trading taught me to be moneywise. The extra money that someone gives you on the streets you will appreciate it. You get to pick up if money is real or fake, you can see if the coin is real or not because what am I going to do with fake money”. Tshidi

- **Lack of a good relationship with top police** can be a barrier to entry because on the streets the police are always patrolling for street trading to take away their goods. If you do not have a good relationship with the police you will lose your stock and you will not grow as a trader.

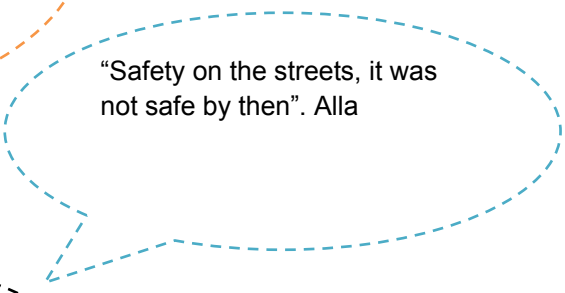


“We had a relationship with top police man to help us because those who were patrolling they took our stuff”. Marc

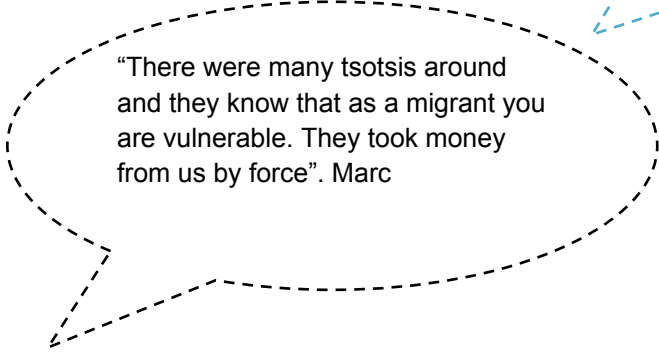
- **Crime** is another factor that can prevent the entrepreneurs from thriving. Street traders complained that they were mugged and the criminals took their day's profit.



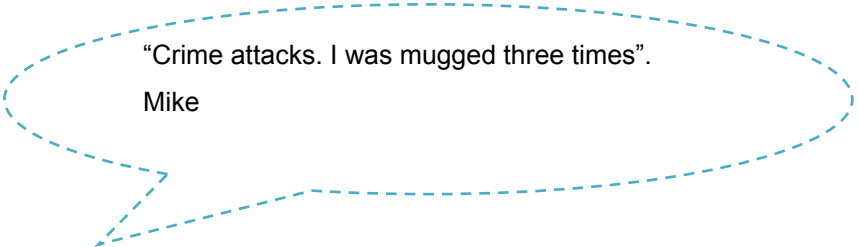
"When I was selling at Hillbrow we experienced a lot of tsotsis taking money from us, crime was one of the biggest challenges" Tshidi.



"Safety on the streets, it was not safe by then". Alla

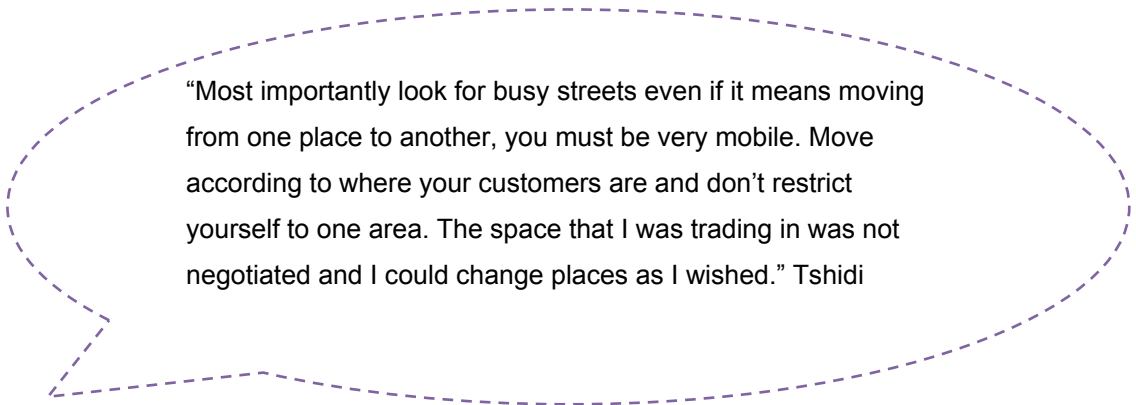


"There were many tsotsis around and they know that as a migrant you are vulnerable. They took money from us by force". Marc



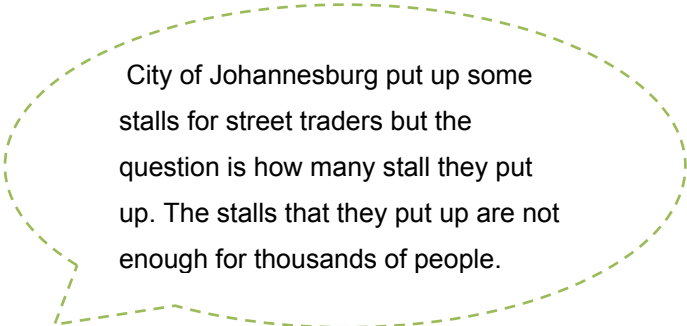
"Crime attacks. I was mugged three times".  
Mike

- **Secluded trading areas** were seen as most street traders as a barrier to grow as a thriving entrepreneur because most street traders say that in order to thrive as a street trader you should be mobile and you must move with the traffic at different times of the day. This is a very crucial point for policy makers. The question is how does a policy makers regulate a mobile street trader who wants to sell in different parts of the city in different times.

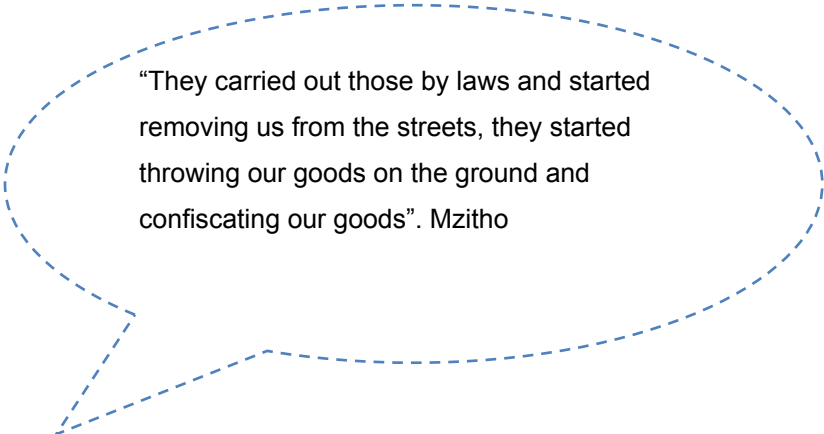


"Most importantly look for busy streets even if it means moving from one place to another, you must be very mobile. Move according to where your customers are and don't restrict yourself to one area. The space that I was trading in was not negotiated and I could change places as I wished." Tshidi

- **Municipal bylaws** are seen by many traders as one of the barriers to entry to thrive as an entrepreneur. By laws may limit the trading space therefore the street trader cannot expand their business. By laws restrict street traders from choosing the trading place that they like or has business.

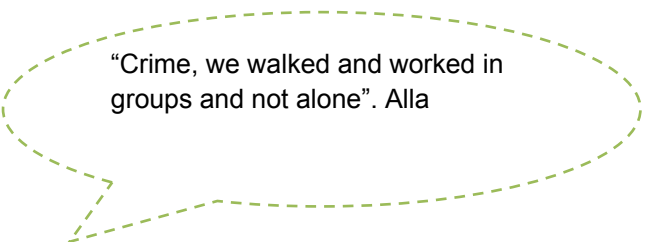


City of Johannesburg put up some stalls for street traders but the question is how many stall they put up. The stalls that they put up are not enough for thousands of people.

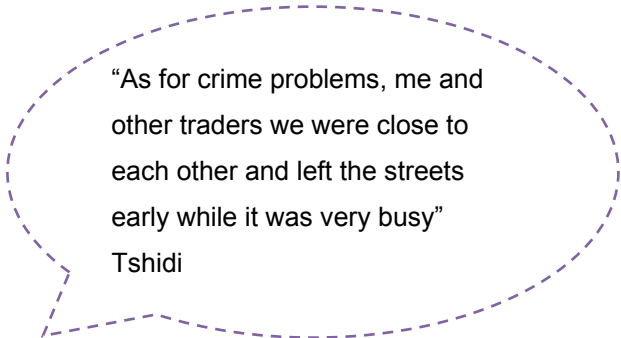


"They carried out those by laws and started removing us from the streets, they started throwing our goods on the ground and confiscating our goods". Mzitho

On the streets in order to survive you have to establish **Networks** with other traders so that they can help you during crime.



"Crime, we walked and worked in groups and not alone". Alla



"As for crime problems, me and other traders we were close to each other and left the streets early while it was very busy"  
Tshidi

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# Annexure A: Transcriptions

01 January 2012

It was a Thursday afternoon at Radley College in Randburg when the interview was conducted. The interview was conducted where he works in a very quite classroom. The environment was very enjoyable because I was able to hear him properly. Before the interview, the interviewee gave me the privilege of attending his science class where he was teaching. The name of the interviewer is Khumo Sello and the interviewee is Alla.

**Khumo: My name is Khumo Sello; I am currently studying at Wits University and doing my research for my honours report. My interest is on the struggles and happy endings of street traders, where street traders (as a specific subgroup) use to sell on the pavements in the inner city of Johannesburg now are working in the formal sector (different sectors). I got your contacts details from Marc.**

## **Profile of the trader**

**Khumo: please give me your name?**

Alla: Alla.

**Khumo: Age?**

Alla: 43.

**Khumo: place of origin please?**

Alla: Ivory Coast.

**Khumo: What is your current job?**

Alla: educator.

**Khumo: where?**

Alla: Radley.

**Khumo: when did you occupy the job?**

Alla: 2005.

**Khumo: so it's been seven years here.**

Alla: yes.

**Khumo: when did you become a street trader?**

Allah: in 1997 when I came here, to South Africa.

**Khumo: it was your first job?**

Alla: it was my first job because I had some cash when I got here; I had to start my own business.

**Khumo: what role did your experience in street trading play in your current professional position?**

Allah: maybe, cause I also teach the math leads and there is a section called financial maths so it can also help about the profit and money.

**Khumo: What was your intention when you became a street trader?**

Allah: it was for the business to grow and maybe buy a shop eventually.

**Khumo: and what happened?**

Allah: it was not going well, it's like it was not what I was interested in but it was what most of my people in my community were doing so they advised me to do it. So I didn't have my heart on it, I was just doing it.

**Khumo: why street trading?**

Alla: like I said because the others said I must do it, and they were already doing it.

**Khumo: trading hours**

Alla: 6:00am- 6:00pm

**Khumo: what was difficult about street trading?**

Alla: mostly when packing the items, the stock in the morning, pushing the trolley. Also packing up in the evening to go to your store room it was very very difficult.

**Khumo: What were the circumstances that led you to sell in the street?**

Alla: the circumstances mostly the environment that I was living at, people in my community were using street trading to survive so I just said why not.

**Khumo: where were you trading?**

Alla: Claim Street in Hillbrow.

**Khumo: how did they access a space in the city?**

Alla: by then it was easy to find a space, I observed during the day that nobody was trading that place and then the following morning I went there, by then there was no chasing of traders.

**Khumo: so the space was not negotiated?**

Alla: no I just placed myself there.

**Khumo: What were your perspectives when starting trading in the street?**

Alla: my perspective was that someone like Marc was making a lot of profit so that made me to go.

**Khumo: what were your assets and strengths that distinguishing you from other street traders, and allowed you to 'leave the street'?**

Alla: my strength I would say that I was not very interested in street trading so that pushed me to leave because I was also looking for other opportunities, I did not have something in mind but anything but trading.

**Khumo: what were you selling?**

Alla: Bananas, oranges, potatoes, apples (vegetables and fruits).

**Khumo: what influenced the choice of products you were selling?**

Alla: it is what people were buying and you did not have to cook them.

**Khumo: were u selling alone or in a group?**

Alla: I was selling alone for myself, I also had a friend who was selling for me, like we had a partnership.

**Khumo: where was your friend selling?**

Alla: he was selling on Kotze Street.

**Khumo: he was selling for you?**

Alla: yes, I employed him and I am the one that financed the business so were sharing the profit.

**Khumo: was the space negotiated?**

Alla: no I placed myself.

**Khumo: where were you buying your products?**

Alla: city deep.

**Khumo: where you buying in bulk?**

;Alla: in bulk I would say because the bananas were coming in boxes.

**Khumo: what influenced the kind of place to sell?**

Alla: place because I was living in Yeoville but there they were not buying too much. Hillbrow was very crowded that's why I was selling in Hillbrow, it was busy.

**Khumo: how did you know you had the ability to sell?**

Alla: because selling is something very simple, you just buy your products and then you sell and make money, it is very simple if you want to do it.

**Khumo: how many stalls did you have to manage?**

Alla: two stalls, the one in Claim and Kotze.

**Khumo: profit made per day/ per week?**

Mike: per day in good times I would say R150 and bad times R50 or R40.

**Khumo: for both stalls?**

Alla: yes for both stalls.

**Khumo: how much were you saving?**

Alla: actually I did not save for a very long period, maybe three months or so. I was getting not much.

**Khumo: how did you grow as a trader?**

Alla: on my case I did not grow because I was not moving forward that's why I was planning to stop.

**Khumo: how did you make it into teaching?**

Alla: I did various jobs before coming to teaching, I went for security after street trading, from there I worked as a waiter and from a waiter to teaching.

**Khumo: so when you came here you had all the qualification?**

Alla: yeah because actually I was studying like Marc at the university in Abidjan, I also came here because one of my friends from the same university came to register at Medunsa, medicine and he was telling us that here there are lots of opportunities.

**Khumo: were you done with your teaching?**

All: at home not yet but there was a long strike at the university, we could strike for two months without going to school so that's why I said no I better come here.

**Khumo: when did you finish your teaching?**

Alla: teaching I did not do a teaching qualification as such I was studying physics and chemistry at the university so when I came here I did not have the finance to register but when did the waiter job I saved some money and registered for chemical engineering by the old Wits tech.

**Khumo: so you are done with that degree?**

Alla: I finished the theory part, I was looking for in service training then while I was looking for in service training I found this advert for teaching physics and then I took it. I moved from street trading to being a security and from security to being a waiter and from waiter to teaching.

**Khumo: how would you say street trading helped you as a teacher?**

Alla: it did not help me much but it helped me to survive.

**Khumo: what were the bigger challenges (language, xenophobia, police, and crime)**

Allah: safety on the streets, it was not safe by then and also the weather you were not used to the cold weather.

**Khumo: police harassment?**

Alla: not much from the police.

**Khumo: xenophobia?**

Alla: mostly it was the Mozambique people.

**Khumo: what were the solutions to the bigger problems?**

Alla: crime, we walked and worked in groups and not alone, for the weather you have to wear heavy clothes.

**Khumo: What were the main constraints you encountered, while trading in the street, and in order to 'leave the street'?**

Alla: because I was not moving forward, the profit that I would get I would use the following day to go to go and buy stuff.

**Khumo: what were your turning points in your professional paths that made you 'leave the street'?**

Alla: I wanted to be independent; I was not asking money from home.

**Khumo: how did you grow the business?**

Allah: no.

**Khumo: when you left street trading what happened to the business that you were managing?**

Alla: I did not sell it because my friend and I went to be securities.

**Khumo: what is your current job?**

Alla: educator.

**Khumo: how long have you worked there?**

Alla: seven years, from 2005.

Alla: no.

**Khumo: what do you like about your current job compared to your street trading job?**

Alla: holidays, but unlike other jobs at home you need to mark papers which also compensate with your holidays, also there is financial security and you know you can rely on your income unlike the streets where u can make no profit in one day.

**Khumo: what did you like about street trading that is absent from your current position?**

Alla: freedom because you are free to go anytime you want and because you are the owner of the business and also you don't report to anyone.

**Khumo: where did you store your goods?**

Alla: underground garage in Berea, so I was pushing them from Hillbrow to Berea, I had my own trolley.

**Khumo: how many hours and days of the week did you trade for?**

Alla: Monday to Saturday, Sunday we were not trading because Hillbrow was quiet, the hours it was 7:30 in the morning to 19:00 in the evening so it was 12 hours trading.

**Khumo: how flexible is trading compared to other occupations?**

Alla: street trading was flexible because if you had to ask a friend to take over and you go to do what you want to do, but you have to give him something, but as a teacher you can't.



**Khumo: would you say street trading serves as a safety net during crisis and new entrants to the city like Johannesburg?**

Alla: yes, yes because when you come here for the first time and no matter your qualifications it is not easy to get a job because of the papers that you don't have, so with street trading if you have some finance you can start without job advertisement and all that stuff.

**The relationship between traders and the state**

**Khumo: did you belong to any trader's organizations?**

Alla: no.

**Khumo: how would you describe the relationship between you and other traders?**

Alla: we were mostly from the same country, we had a good relationship, like Marc we visited each other and talked about the challenges and listened to his advices because he was growing in the business.

**Khumo: what was the relationship between the traders and the state?**

Alla: first traders don't have to pay tax so it is an advantage for the traders and I don't know if now they are paying, they had a good relationship, no no by then they were not, it started recently.

**Khumo: how is the relationship between the traders and the state now?**

Alla: to me it is not a good relationship because they are not slowed to sell wherever they want, which is also good because they are trying to keep the place clean, by then there were no issues between the traders and the state.

**Khumo: were there any issues between the traders and the state?**

Alla: no

**Khumo: was the state supportive when you were trading?**

Alla: supportive maybe when they were patrolling and when the criminals hear the police car they stayed away from harassing the street traders.

**Khumo: did you experience any harassment from the state or police when you were trading?**

Alla: no but very seldom they would come and ask for you papers and staff.

**Khumo: do you think the state acknowledges street trading as an entry to the city and the formal labour market?**

Alla: they do because now they have stores that they have constructed like in Hillbrow the market.

**Khumo: how long have you been staying in Johannesburg?**

Alla: more than 14 years.

**Khumo: did you have family when you first moved in the city?**

Alla: no.

**Khumo: where were you staying when you first moved in the city?**

Alla: Yeoville.

**Khumo: where are you staying now?**

All: killarney

**Khumo: how much were u paying?**

Alla: we were very many in a one bedroom flat, more than 10, we had to split the rent into the number of occupants, so we were not feeling the rent because each one could pay R200 or so.

**Khumo: did you own a car when you first came to the city?**

Alla: no I didn't.

**Khumo: did you buy a car when you were a trader?**

Alla: no.

**Khumo: do you have a car now?**

Allah: yes I bought it in 2005.

**Khumo: how did you use street trading to survive?**

Alla: I used it because the cash that I had, without street trading I was going to finish it easily so street trading stabilized me even though I was not growing in the business at least my finance was kept very good.

**Khumo: how did you use street trading as an entry to the formal labour market?**

Alla: I used the cash to survive for a certain period of time and also to gain the experience and also to be on the street has challenges and I also used that, and the other job will not put me too much under stress

**Khumo: thank you very much for your time.**

Mike: Thank you.

21 November 2012

It was a very hot Tuesday midday at Ghandi square, the interview was conducted in a flower shop located on the ground floor of Ghandi square and it was very quiet.

The interviewer is Khumo Sello a researcher from Wits and the interviewee is a former street trader Benzie who now owns a flower shop at Ghandi square.

**Khumo: My name is Khumo Sello; I am currently studying at Wits University and doing my research for my honors report. My interest is on the struggles and happy endings of street traders, where street traders (as a specific subgroup) use to sell on the pavements in the inner city of Johannesburg now are working in the formal sector (different sectors).**

**Khumo: name?**

Benzie: Benzie.

Benzie: 54.

**Khumo: place of origin please?**

Benzie: Mpumalanga.

**Khumo: how long have you been staying in Johannesburg?**

Benzie: since 1981.

**Khumo: did you have family when you moved to Johannesburg?**

Benzie: no.

**Khumo: where were you staying?**

Benzie: when I was working at the shop and when I was a street trader I was renting in Tembisa and now I moved to Protea Glen in Soweto.

**Khumo: when you moved to Johannesburg was street trading your first job?**

Benzie: no I was a florist at some shop and started street trading when the shop closed.

**Khumo: current job?**

Benzie: florist, I own a shop that sells flowers.

**Khumo: when did you occupy this job?**

Benzie: 1990

**Khumo: when did you become a street trader?**

Benzie: before 1990 and few months after 1990.

**Khumo: what were you selling?**

Benzie: flowers.

**Khumo: what influenced the choice of products you were selling?**

Benzie: because I used to work in a flower shop so I considered myself as a florist so I decided to continue with what I know, and anyway I was selling on the streets on weekends and I was working at the shop during the week.

**Khumo: did you work anywhere else between your current job and street trading?**

Benzie: no.

**Khumo: what do you like about your current job compared to street trading?**

Benzie: I have shelter for my flowers, I have a computer and a landline, I have people helping me with my job, I am making more money compared to when I was on the streets, I do not have to carry my flowers home every day and every morning.

**Khumo: what skills and knowledge did you get from your job as a street trader?**

Benzie: patience, treating people well and also working hard towards my goal.

**Khumo: what did you like about street trading that is absent from your current job?**

Benzie: street trading and my current job are the same so I love them both.

**Khumo: what were the circumstances that led you to be a street trader?**

Benzie: the thing is the place that I was working before 1990 and the shop that I was working for had to close down, so I had no other choice but to become a street trader. Before 1990 I use to trade on the street in westonaria on the streets while working at the shop to make some extra cash. I traded on the streets on weekends at Westonaria and work at a shop during the week. When the shop closed down I traded in Westonaria during the week and on weekends and in 1990 I decided to stop and find myself a shop to work at. I was selling flowers on the streets and decided to look for a place in Johannesburg to trade. I decided to move to Johannesburg and trade at Kerk Street. In Kerk Street it was not that busy and I needed another place to push my business. I told my sister that I needed a place to trade while I was on Kerk Street, she offered me a place in her dry clean business, I was trading both at her shop and on Kerk Street. I was saving the money from the streets and from the place that my sister allowed me to trade to buy a shop or rent a shop. One day I came to ghandi square to enquire about the trading place or a shop that I can use. There was no vacant shop but there was a small passage that could be used as a shop wants it is closed off. The manager agreed to me building myself a shop. My business at my shop was booming so I had to leave the street and trade only at the shop. Since I had left over flowers I went back to the street to sell the flowers on the street. After a while I realized I was too busy so I didn't go on the street anymore.

**Khumo: how many hours did you trade for per week?**

Benzie: when I was working at the shop I was trading on weekends in the afternoon from 3:00pm till 7:00pm. When I was trading full time I traded everyday from 7:00am till 7:00pm. When I using my sister's place I traded on the streets in the afternoon from 3:00pm till 7:00 pm and when I bought a shop I sold left over flowers in the afternoon.

**Khumo: how flexible was street trading compared to the current job?**

Benzie: I own the business so it is flexible for me.

**Khumo: when you left the streets were you able to sell your business?**

Benzie: no like I said I was too busy at the shop I had to stop trading on the streets.

**Khumo: would you say someone helped you to leave the street?**

Benzie: yes my sister and husband, my sister because she gave me a trading place meanwhile I was saving money and my husband because he allowed me to trade when I did not have a job and on weekends. My husband also helped me to buy a shop with his money from trading on the streets.

**Khumo: Why street trading?**

Benzie: because street trading was easy and I knew that I can sell on the streets and make money to survive. It was the next easy job that I could do. Flowers have business on the streets because people can see them while passing and buy them.

**Khumo: what were your perspectives when starting street trading?**

Benzie: I knew that I can survive by trading flowers on the streets because that was the only job that I know although being on the streets was very hard.

**Khumo: what was hard about street trading?**

Benzie: Trading flowers on the streets can be hard because of the sun, roses do not like to be exposed to the sun because they die so you must have a place where you can put your flowers to protect them from the sun and make sure that the place is open for people to see while you are also protecting the flowers from the sun. The other thing is that on the street you cannot have formal arrangement because there is no place to put a phone and set up a computer so that people can place orders. On the street I was only selling for the passer by. Here at the shop people can place the orders and pay at the end of the months.

**Khumo: what were your assets and strengths that distinguished you from other street traders and allowed you to leave the streets?**

In my case it was my sister who helped me by allowing me to use her shop to trade my flowers and save that money for buying a shop, another thing is that I was working really hard, I knew I was a florist by nature therefore one day I knew that one day I was going to buy my own shop.

**Khumo: what was important then?**

Benzie: it was to make money so that I can buy or rent a shop, I wanted to get out of the streets. Another thing is that I used the street trading money to add onto my salary when I was working and when I did not have a formal job anymore I used the street trading money to survive and save some so that I can buy or rent a shop.

**Khumo: where were you buying the flowers?**

Benzie: I was buying the flowers in city deep, almost every morning I would catch a taxi to go get fresh flowers for my business. When I was working in Westonaria my husband went to city deep every morning to buy the flowers. When I moved to Johannesburg (Kerk street ) and my sisters shop I bought the flowers from city deep myself.

**Khumo: were you buying the flowers in bulk?**

Benzie: not really in bulk like when you have a shop and a car, I only two types of flowers the roses and the carnations, it was hard for me to buy variety of flowers because I was buying alone and I did not have a car.

**Khumo: why specially did you choice the two flowers that you were selling?**

Benzie: because those were the famous flowers that people knew so they were very easy to sell. So now since I moved to the shop I can buy variety and sell them all because people place orders unlike on the streets.

**Khumo: where were you storing your goods?**

Benzie: at home, I used to carry my left over flowers at home and in the morning catch a taxi to city deep to buy more.

**Khumo: were you selling alone?**

Benzie: in Westonaria I was selling with my husband and in Kerk Street I was selling alone. In the shop I have employed two people to help me.

**Khumo: how much profit did you make per week?**

Benzie: I do not remember.

**Khumo: did you grow as a trader**



Benzie: yes because I managed to get a shop but I believe that I still need to grow further.

**Khumo: how much did you pay for rent when you first moved to the shop?**

Benzie: R3500

**Khumo: how much are you paying now?**

Benzie: R9400.

**Khumo: how many stalls were you managing?**

Benzie: One stall both in Westonaria and in Kerk Street.

**Khumo: what influenced the choice of place to sell?**

Benzie: in Westonaria there was a lot of business and my husband was already selling there so it was easy for me to get access to the space to sell. In Kerk Street I placed myself because it was one of the places that were available in Johannesburg inner city.

**Khumo: were the spaces negotiated?**

Benzie: no, you just move around and you will see that the spaces are empty so you will occupy them. Like I said in Westonaria my husband was already selling there and in Johannesburg I looked for the place myself and I placed myself.

**Khumo: what were your bigger challenges when you were trading?**

Benzie: the weather because flowers do not want to be exposed to the heat, communication between me and my clients because I could not place a phone and a computer on the street pavement and lastly was police harassments and also I was limited to buying only two types of flowers because I did not have a car.

**Khumo: what were the solutions to the bigger challenges?**

Benzie: was to get a shop and a car. As for police harassments also I needed to get myself a shop.

**Khumo: did you belong to any trader's organization?**

Benzie: no.

**Khumo: and now?**

Benzie: no.

**Khumo: how would you describe the relationship between you and the other traders when you were on the streets?**

Benzie: I was selling alone in Kerk Street so there was no one to talk to.

**Khumo: what was the relationship between the traders and the state?**

Benzie: the police always harassed us, they took our flowers and the state was not helping us. So there was no good relation.

**Khumo: what were the main opportunities?**

Benzie: I realized that no one was selling flowers and I took that opportunity.

**Khumo: why did you leave the street?**

Benzie: because I needed a place for my business and I wanted to overcome my challenged that I have mentioned, I had a bigger dream and I knew I needed to grow and become a business woman.

**Khumo: would you say street trading serves as a safety net during crisis and new entrants to the city?**

Benzie: yes it does a lot, it helped me to save money and buy a shop, and it helped me during the time the shop that I was working for closed. So yes it does help because it helped me, I like street trading a lot. I used street trading to get a shop and also because I was around Johannesburg I asked people if they knew about any place where I can rent a shop when I was trading on the streets and this other lady told me about Ghandi square.

**Khumo: thank you.**

1 December 2012

The interview was conducted in Yeoville in a very quiet office; it was a rainy Saturday afternoon when I met up with the interviewee. The interviewer is Khumo Sello and the interviewee is a former street trader Marc.

Khumo: My name is Khumo Sello, I am currently studying at Wits university and doing my research for my honours report. My interest is on the struggles and happy endings of street traders, where street traders (as a specific subgroup) use to sell on the pavements in the inner city of Johannesburg now are working in the formal sector (different sectors). I got your contacts from Claire Gbaffou.

### **Profile of the trader**

**Khumo: please give me your name?**

Marc: Marc

**Khumo: Age?**

Marc: 40

**Khumo: place of origin please?**

Marc: Ivory Coast.

**Khumo: What is your current job?**

Marc: food technologist which happen to be food science now.

**Khumo: where?**

Marc: Nicola-Jason, they have created this flavor house, we create flavor found in any food product like juices, and we create what nature cannot provide for people. We want to create food using chemistry to replace what nature cannot create for us and being able to feed the amount of people that nature cannot feed naturally. Basically what we do is that we create new food for them, we extending the supply of food products, we create food that are safe to be consumed by people.

**Khumo: when did you occupy this job?**

Marc: I have been working for about 9 years.

**Khumo: when did you become a street trader?**

Marc: well I came here in south Africa in 97 and then I had to actually first struggle to pay my studies because am from Ivory coast and I was doing my second year in chemistry and I left the country because of political issues, at the university of Abujan, and the government started to arrest all the leaders on campus so we had to find our way out of the country so that's what I did in 97 I left. When I came here I wanted to do something which is close to chemistry and it happened that I met a pastor who actually advised me to saying that if I don't want to waste my time I have to do food chemistry that is why I registered food technologist.

**Khumo: what were you selling?**

Marc: fruits and vegetables.

**Khumo: what influenced the type of goods you were selling?**

Marc: because they are the easiest to sell. They do not ask you for anything, you just go buy your fruits and vegetables. I had R350 and I went to buy my goods and sold.

**Khumo: how long have you been in Johannesburg?**

Marc: since 97, Johannesburg is the center of South Africa, for migrants and for myself you need to live and survive so you need a central place to connect. You cannot go to a place where you are isolated and no one can get hold of you.

**Khumo: where were you staying when you first moved in?**

Marc: I was staying in Yeoville and then I moved to Hillbrow, and later on when I was a student I came back to Yeoville because one of my friends that I was studying with was staying in Yeoville. From 2004 I left and stayed in Rossentenville, in 2006 I went to park town.

**Khumo: how much were you paying?**

Marc: we were sharing in Yeoville so we paid R350-R400.

**Khumo: when you moved to Johannesburg did you have family?**

Marc: no. the oppression in my country was big that I did not even think I will have a bigger oppression in South Africa. My uncle told me to leave before they arrest me so I packed my bags and left.

**Khumo: where were you studying?**

Marc: at UJ, it was Wits technikon by then. When I came here I started first year again in food science that's why I registered for food technology.

**Khumo: what was our intention when you became a street trader?**

Marc: I wanted to have money to live here as I was a migrant and my father was very angry with me when I was leaving ivory coast, because he told me not to be involved in any political things, he was actually representing in my country side, he was representing the ruling party so there was so they were selling the ruling party's cards and I was against that so when he heard that I was favoring the opposition by then he did not like it, he did not like what I was doing and he said I don't want to study I must go out of the country and take care of yourself. So I came here and I had to find a way to survive. But I was very lucky and I don't know if more than three people had that luck that I had because I started in 97 when I came, I started in Hillbrow selling fruit and vegetables on the street of Hillbrow and it happened that I went to city deep (the fresh food market) where we buy the fruits and vegetables that we sell, I met with the wife of the owner of that place in city deep not the whole of city deep but one of the shops who is an Indian guy. We took our stuff and while we were about to pay she asked me where was my wife and children? I told her that I am not married and I don't have any children and she said, why are you working so hard? And I told her that I was a student in my country and I don't want to stop so I have to work very hard so that I can pay for my studies, when I told her that she left her office and after about five minutes she came back and told me my husband agree that we pay for your studies. She told me that I must go registered whenever I am ready to study and we will give you money to pay. I could not believe it I mean yes you know this lady she cannot lie to me. You could tell that she is very rich but I could not believe that she could say something like that. So that is what happened and we for paid our stuff and left. After that I went to South African qualification authority to do the equivalent of my diploma, especially because Ivory Coast is a French speaking country so I had to put my diploma in English. I went to see the

lady and told her I want to register; she counted R15000 and gave it to me to pay my fees. I went to school to pay, and when I was studying I did not go to the market anymore and she asked me again, that now that you are studying you don't sell anymore and where do you get money to survive from? She said ok on weekends you come here and work. So on weekends I went to work for them and she would pay me like I was working the whole week. And then when I did my second year I started with my in service training and the in service training also it was some kind of luck because for me being migrant in the country it happened easy and I was using an asylum seekers paper. I saw that they were looking for students in this company and I went for an interview and the technical manager and she told me that my accent sounds different from South African, she asked me where I am from and I told him Ivory Coast. She said you speaking French in Ivory Coast and I said yes, she said good you are hired. She said there is one guy here who is from Congo is my assistant and the guy feels lonely and he needs someone to talk to.

**Khumo: why specifically street trading?**

Marc: it is the easiest thing that you can do. In case of an entry for a migrant it is very easy. Street trading by then it was the only job that migrant can have. When you seeking for an asylum you cannot go seeking for a job therefore street trading helps you to survive. Street trading helps you pay for your rent and food.

**Khumo: how long does it take to get an asylum and when you have it are you allowed to work?**

Marc: well you have to have a status that says you are legal in the country, and by then when we came to the country it was not difficult to get an asylum, when you go to the home affairs to seek for an asylum they issue you with a certificate that you have to renew every three months depending on how long they give you. It does not take long.

**Khumo: what distinguished you from other street traders and made you leave the streets?**

Marc: luck and hard work hard, my situation is too special I must say. When I worked for my in service, they saw that I was too talented and passionate about what I was

doing and they even extended my contract of one year to three years and after that I changed my status and I got a work permit so I started working normally.

**Khumo: what was the name of the company and where did you move to after working for them?**

Marc: I was working for international flavor fragrance and I moved to mullins' food and after a year before I moved to mullins' I wanted to change my status, I didn't like to continue being an asylum seeker but to have a work permit, from mullins' I went to work for a nutritional food company and I left for Nicola-Jason. By then you don't have a choice or not to become a street trader but one thing I have learned is that while I was on the streets I have employed many migrants; I had about four or five stalls where I employed twelve people. I have employed both migrants and South Africans selling for me. I have employed people who are medical doctors today, people who are no longer on the streets and doing good business today, that's what I always tell myself that no one wants to be on the streets so you will decide to change your life. Well I was doing very well on the streets; I could actually save up to R700 or R800 per day for selling on the street.

**Khumo: the money that you saved how did you use it to leave the streets?**

Marc: I used it to learn English courses, because in ivory coast we speak French and when I came to south Africa I could not speak English.

**Khumo: how did you communicate with your customers?**

Marc: I knew the business basic such as 'how much'.

**Khumo: how much were you making per day?**

Marc: more than R1500.

**Khumo: what was making you stronger than other street traders?**

Marc: I knew what I wanted to do, I wanted to change my status of being on the streets, I did not want to be on the streets forever. I was studying and I knew that on streets will not make my life, I was looking at something very far which I could not touch at the beginning but I knew it will happen, I did not want to be on the streets. I used it as an entry point and I wanted to change it.

**Khumo: when did you start street trading?**

Marc: in 97 I had one stall and later on I had more stalls (4 more) and employed people.

**khumo: so you think you grew as a trader?**

Marc: yes I did. Yes for me I open one stall and extend to five I grew.

**Khumo: where were the stalls located?**

Marc: all in Hillbrow in the Pretoria street, Oliver street and Klein street.

**Khumo: what influenced the choice of place?**

Marc: the busyness of the street, there was busyness, people walk around.

**Khumo: how did you access the space?**

Marc: when I came in 97 I found people selling on the street and ask them how do you access the space and they say just go buy your stuff and locate yourself. The place was not negotiated.

**Khumo: how did you know you had the ability to sell?**

Marc: the ability is to know the currency of the country and change, the willingness of doing something and the ability. I told myself that I have to do it.

**Khumo: where did you store your goods?**

Marc: Oliver road

**Khumo: what were your bigger challenges when you were trading?**

Marc: in 97 South Africa was open to the rest of the world and there were many tsotsis around and they know that as a migrant you are vulnerable. They took money from us by force and also the trolley that we were using to collect our stuff from storage was from shoprite so when the shoprite trucks passed by and they saw the trolleys they took them and threw our things on the ground.

**Khumo: and police harassment:**



Marc: a lot.

**Khumo: what was the solution to the problems?**

Marc: there was no solution; the solution was to get out of the streets otherwise no one will change it for you. Police harassment we went to the police station to bail out our goods and we had a relationship with top police man to help us because those who were patrolling they took our stuff.

**Khumo: when you left the street what happened to your businesses?**

Marc: I gave them to one of the people that were working for me, I did not sell the businesses they I gave them away. Because the guy worked for me more than a year and he was reliable so the day I decided to leave I gave him the businesses, from what I have told you, someone was open to me so I also wanted to change someone's life.

**Khumo: where were you storing your goods?**

Marc: on Oliver Street. I collected everything from all the stalls at around 7:00pm and took it to the storage.

**Khumo: were you paying rent and how much was it?**

Marc: it was R500 per month; I store in the evening and collect in the morning and distribute to different stalls every day.

**Khumo: how many hours were you trading per week?**

Marc: every single day, from 6:00am to 7:00pm. You have to go to city deep almost every day besides Sunday.

**Khumo: how flexible was street trading compared to your current job?**

Marc: street trading is only flexible when it comes to waking up, no one will ask you why are you not awake and working. I love my current job because of the financial security it comes with, I know I will get a fixed income and it is very easy because you get a lot of money from just mixing a formulae. Street trading if you did not wake up to go get fruits you will not get money.

**Khumo: do you think street trading serves as a safety net during crisis?**

Marc: many times I saw citizens marching against migrants saying that they are taking their jobs and they are referring to street trading, so you can tell that it serves as a safety net to new entrants to the city and during crisis. When I came to South Africa in 97 80% of migrants were selling on the streets to survive so yes.

**Khumo: did you belong to any trader's organization?**

Marc: no.

**Khumo: now?**

Marc: no, like when we were on the streets we were trying to survive and we did not even have time to organize ourselves.

**Khumo: how was the relationship between you and other traders?**

Marc: we were buying at the same place; we knew each other so were very close. I don't think government recognizes trading, they don't take it serious, I don't think the state think street trading help people on the street, but now I think the challenges faced by south African traders are different from migrants, now the police harass migrants more. They do not treat them the same way, when metro police come they do not treat migrants and South Africans the same. I don't think government recognizes street trading as a safety net to new entrants to the city and during crisis. Government even took the trading off the street; they did not think what the people do on the streets help them survive. The government does not think that both educated and not educated people use street trading to survive while waiting for a better job.

**Khumo: do you think the government acknowledges street trading as an entry to the formal labour market?**

Marc: no, because government removes people from the streets, in some parts of the city, City of Johannesburg put up some stalls for street traders but the question is how many stall they put up. The stalls that they put up are not enough for thousands of people. I don't think that government is taking street trading serious, they just do the best where they can but there is just a lot of work that the government needs to

do like educating the street traders not to dirt the place and so on, that we did not see when we were on the street, I don't think that the government is taking it serious.

**Khumo: how did you use street trading as an entry to the formal labour market?**

Marc: I used it very wisely, I wanted to change my life, I wanted to go to school and change my status, I did not sleep I could work clockwise to change my life, I wanted to leave the street and inspire others to also leave the streets.

05 December 2012

It was a very cold Wednesday morning in Johannesburg, the interview was conducted at the City of Johannesburg offices in a very quite environment. The offices are located in 158 civic Boulevard, Metro centre 11<sup>th</sup> floor. The interviewer's name is Khumo Sello a student from Wits and the interviewee's name is tshidi.

**Khumo: My name is Khumo Sello; I am currently studying at Wits University and doing my research for my honors report. My interest is on the struggles and happy endings of street traders, where street traders (as a specific subgroup) use to sell on the pavements in the inner city of Johannesburg now are working in the formal sector (different sectors). I got your contacts details from Professor Claire Gbaffou.**

**Khumo: please give me your name?**

Tshidi: Tshidi

**Khumo: Age?**

Tshidi: no I cannot tell you.

**Khumo: place of origin please?**

Tshidi: Pretoria

**Khumo: did you have any family when you first moved to Johannesburg?**

Tshidi: no I had to rent a flat.

**Khumo: where were you staying when you were a street trader?**

Tshidi: in Hillbrow and that is where I was selling too.

**Khumo: how much was your rent?**

Tshidi: I was staying alone and paying R3000 per month.

**Khumo: did you own a car when you were trading?**

Tshidi: no I was using taxis.

**Khumo: where are you staying now?**

Tshidi: orange grove.

**Khumo: What is your current job?**

Tshidi: marketing director.

**Khumo: where?**

Tshidi: City of Johannesburg.

**Khumo: when did you become a street trader?**

Tshidi: it was longtime ago in 1990 to 1994, I was a street trader at night and on weekends, so I was working and doing street trading at the same time.

**Khumo: so since 1994 till today you have never traded?**

Tshidi: I have but not as I used to, right now I do street trading because I love it, it is like a hobby. It is not street trading anymore, it is from the boot of my car.

**Khumo: did you work anywhere between your street trading job and now?**

Tshidi: yes but I have always traded to add more money to my salary.

**Khumo: what role and experience did you get from street trading that you can apply on your current job?**

Tshidi: more negotiating, more bargaining and also refusing to take a price, and it makes you very careful, even in the shop you become extra careful about your change, you always check your slip to see if it makes sense and if not you complain, from the street you learn that every cent counts because you have worked so hard for the money. I have learned to be smart because if you are not smart you will lose your money. Street trading makes you aware of prices. Street trading taught me to be moneywise. The extra money that someone gives you on the streets you will appreciate it. You get to pick up if money is real or fake, you can see if the coin is real or not because what am I going to do with fake money.

**Khumo: what were your intentions when you started street trading?**

Tshidi: I was poor I needed money, I had children to take care of and the money that I was getting was not enough to take care of me and my family so street trading was a solution to my problem. It was all about putting food on the table. My child had to go to university which I could not afford from my income so I had to make more money so that I can afford to pay for his fees. So I also used street trading money for my child to go to school.

**Khumo: why street trading?**

Tshidi: it is easy and it is after hours I can manage it and I realized that it does not even have a lot of costs. It does not have a lot of costs; your cost is to buy the goods that you are selling. How the selling started changing was that selling in the streets was like a passion it was calling for me. As I started getting better jobs that came with more responsibility I started trading only on weekends and not in the evening and it happened that I had a lot of responsibilities at work so I stopped street trading. I stopped for a while but I realized I miss trading so that is when I started trading from my boot again and from the office. Now I get my clothes from India when I visit, now I sell leather clothes from India, I order the clothes or buy them when I visit India.

**Khumo: what did you like about street trading compared to your job?**

Tshidi: flexibility, you can decide not to wake up and no one will ask you anything.

**Khumo: what were your main constraints that made you leave the streets?**

Tshidi: time, I did not have time as things at work became hectic.

**Khumo: what were your turning points in your professional path that made you leave the streets?**

Tshidi: my formal work was becoming too much so I had to drop street trading but I still sell from the office, at home, flea markets and from the boot of my car.

**Khumo: what made you stronger than other traders?**

Tshidi: I had qualifications and I had a career in marketing so I had knowledge about businesses. It was easy for me to buy more clothing to sell because I was working unlike other traders that only depended on street trading as their income. So I was

trading when I was free and I was doing it because I also loved it, my other job made me stronger than other traders and I had connections of getting more clothing to help grow my business, Dubai was my connection and later I got a connection in India. Most importantly my goods were on demand because I was one of the few people that sold clothes.

**Khumo: what were you selling?**

Tshidi: Clothing, clothes you just lay them there and people will see them. Selling became my second nature that I started selling my furniture. Selling clothes went so well that I started buying more clothes, shoes, handbags to sell, I was making money.

**Khumo: what influenced the type of goods you were selling?**

Tshidi: I had a lot of clothing that I did not use anymore and so I decided to sell my clothing, I realized that I was different from the other traders because my clothing was on demand and I decided to get more.

**Khumo: how much were you making?**

Tshidi: close to R3000 a day.

**Khumo: who were you selling with?**

Tshidi: I was selling alone but because my business was booming I stated employing a cousin of mine in Pietersburg to sell for me that side so that I can make more money.

**Khumo: second hand clothes or were you selling new clothes as well?**

When I started I was selling second hand clothes that were mine that I did not need anymore and as time went by I started selling both my clothes and new clothes because business was good and I was growing as a trader. I remember when my business started booming I went to stock up clothes from Dubai and sold on the streets from my boot. I still sell clothes from my boot and at the office.

**Khumo: when you left the streets did you sell your business?**

Tshidi: no I continued selling at home, from the office, flea markets and from the boot of my car.

**Khumo: when you were trading on the streets where were you buying your clothes?**

Tshidi: I was buying my clothes from Dubai.

**Khumo: what was difficult about street trading?**

Tshidi: when I was trading I had a trading permit so I was not illegal I was allowed to trade on the streets. I could trade anywhere; I could wake up and trade anywhere. The permit said we must trade in certain areas but I would not adhere to that, I would trade anywhere I want, that is how bad I wanted to make money. I looked at traffic and if traffic was busy that is where I would locate myself. I used to trade at the park, at strategic location such as the entrances of the park and that is where business is, you put the clothes nicely so that when the police come you back them nicely and hide them in the suitcase. So street trading was very easy for me.

**Khumo: how do you see reasons for success as a street trader?**

Tshidi: hard work and taking risks, most importantly look for busy streets even if it means moving from one place to another, you must be very mobile. Move according to where your customers are and don't restrict yourself to one area. You must also look for what people really want and what is not supplied in the streets by other traders.

**Khumo: what was your bigger challenge when you were trading?**

Tshidi: it was carrying the clothes from one point to another. When I was selling at Hillbrow we experienced a lot of tsotsis taking money from us, crime was one of the biggest challenges.

**Khumo: and the police?**

Tshidi: there were police around but they did not harass us because we had trading permits, I have never experienced any harassment from the police.

**Khumo: what was your solution to your bigger challenges?**



Tshidi: I bought a car so that I don't have to carry my clothing and as for crime problems, me and other traders we were close to each other and left the streets early while it was very busy.

**Khumo: how would you describe the relationship between you and the other traders?**

Tshidi: we were very close to each other because of crime in the inner city.

**Khumo: what were your trading hours?**

Tshidi: after work it was from 4:00pm till 7:00pm and on weekends it was from 7:00am till 4:00pm.

**Khumo: where were you trading?**

Tshidi: at Hillbrow, the main street in Hillbrow there used to be a market there and close to Essellen in Hillbrow there was a place that was secluded for trading and from Hillbrow I moved to Berea and then I started trading in both Berea and Hillbrow. Saturday I would go to Hillbrow and Sunday I would go to the park. The space that I was trading in was not negotiated and I could change places as I wished. Even at the flea market I traded where I wanted, the only place that I was restricted to trade where I wanted was at Brumer because the stalls had your name on them. I was also trading at rosebank and I was not paying.

**Khumo: what were your perspectives when started street trading?**

Tshidi: when I started trading I looked at my clothes and then I thought to myself I do not want this things anymore so I will sell them and make money out of them, even some of my furnisher, my little things I sold them. Part of my furnisher that I could not take to the streets I call you into my house and if you like it I was selling it to you.

**Khumo: would you say street trading serves as a safety net during crisis and new entrants to the city like Johannesburg?**

Tshidi: yes it helped to add to my salary, I used my money to survive and support my children. I also saved the money from street trading for my child's education. When I came to the inner city street trading saved as a safety net and help me to be stable when the money from formal job was not enough.

**Khumo: did you belong to any trader's organization?**

Tshidi: no.

**Khumo: how was the relationship between the traders and the state?**

Tshidi: the state did not care about street trading back then; they did not see it as a problem ok at least for me. It was so easy to apply for a trading permit. Unlike today the state takes street trading serious, they have bi laws on street trading to show that it is a problem. I do not blame the state for having bi laws because when I was trading we were looking after the streets, we would clean the places that we traded at, if you come first in the morning you were responsible for cleaning for everyone you are close to, but the street traders this days they make the streets dirty and do not clean. The problem I have with the state nowadays is that they have demarcated stalls isolated from customers and also the stalls are not enough to accommodate all the traders and this has a strain on street traders and causing them to be harassed by the police.

**Khumo: do you think the state acknowledges street trading as an entry to the formal labour market?**

Tshidi: yes because they build areas for street trading although they cannot accommodate every street trader but they show some effort. A good example is the Yeoville market where the state build a structure to accommodate informal traders and to try and organize informal trading but the only problem is that the market cannot accommodate all the traders in Yeoville. To a certain extended the state does help informal traders, the state also has programs to help the people in informal trading to grow and better themselves.

01 November 2012

It was a sunny Thursday afternoon in Randburg central business district. The interview was at 12:15 in Randburg square in very quiet shop.

**Khumo: My name is Khumo Sello, I am currently studying at Wits University and doing my research for my honours report. My interest is on the struggles and happy endings of street traders, where street traders(as a specific subgroup) use to sell on the pavements in the inner city of Johannesburg now are working in the formal sector(different sectors). I got your contacts from Marc. The interviewer is Khumo Sello and the interviewee is a former street trader Mike.**

**Khumo: please give me your name?**

Mike: Mike

**Khumo: Age?**

Mike: I don't feel comfortable with that.

**Khumo: it's ok. Place of origin please?**

Mike: Ivory Coast.

**Khumo: What is your current job?**

Mike: hotel hospitality.

**Khumo: where?**

Mike: Hilton Hotel.

**Khumo: when did you become a street trader?**

Mike: 1999.

**Khumo: what role did their experience in street trading play in your current professional position?**

Mike: street trading made me strong, especially the weather, it was cold, and raining so I experienced all kinds of weather. Secondly the people, different customer

relationships I experienced, the way they treat you. You get different attitudes, rude and friendly and even met the councillor of the municipality of Johannesburg.

**Khumo: What was your intention when you became a street trader?**

Mike: my intention was to grow up and move to another level. When I first came to South Africa I did not have the right paper, meaning that I was in the process of becoming legal but I had my qualification.

**Khumo: what qualification?**

Mike: hotel management from Ivory Coast.

**Khumo: why street trading?**

Mike: I had no other option, no job. Street trading was the only way to survive.

**Khumo: what was difficult about street trading?**

Mike: the weather conditions, crime attacks. I was mugged three times.

**Khumo: what did they take?**

Mike: they took my stock.

**Khumo: What were the circumstances that led you to sell in the street?**

Mike: I did not have a permit to work in South Africa, I had a permit to stay but not work in the country, and unlike Australia where you can work and live.

**Khumo: where were you trading?**

Mike: Hillbrow and Berea but I was selling in Claim Street in Hillbrow.

**Khumo: how did they access a space in the city?**

Mike: through Marc, I was selling for Marc. He negotiated the space. There was a leader who was a landlord and was part of the body cooperate, he went to her and asked for the space and they agreed.

**Khumo: What were your perspectives when starting trading in the street?**

Mike: I was not comfortable, I wanted to get out of the street trading as quickly as I can, I did not come for that kind of a job.

**Khumo: what were your assets and strengths that distinguishing you from other street traders, and allowed you to 'leave the street'?**

Mike: my hospitality towards people, the way I talked to them. I understood when they were shot and I told them they can take credit and pay when they have money.

**Khumo: what was important then (capital accumulation, networks, independence)?**

Mike: capital accumulation for my hotel training.

**Khumo: What made you leave the streets?**

Mike: I had my own objectives and plus I had my hotel training to attend to when I was trading.

**Khumo: what influenced the choice of the products you sold?**

Mike: what people need, the daily stuff that people need.

**Khumo: were you selling in a group or alone? Working for yourself or not?**

Mike: selling alone, that's why I was a target for the tsotsis, like I said I was working for Marc.

**Khumo: where were you buying products?**

Mike: City deep, Marc was buying.

**Khumo: were you buying alone or in bulk?**

Mike: yeah in bulk to make more profit.

**Khumo: where did you sell your goods?**

Mike: Claim Street in Hillbrow.

**Khumo: why there?**

Mike: it was a busy place where you can make money.

**Khumo: how did you know you had the ability to sell?**

Mike: because I had my own business back at home. I had a job where I was selling stuff for the tailors, I was selling the things that the tailor needs to sew clothes.

**Khumo: how many stalls did you have to manage?**

Mike: One big stall.

**Khumo: what were you selling?**

Mike: Fruits and vegetables.

**Khumo: profit made per day/ per week?**

Mike: per week I was making R500 in good times and R200 in Bad times.

**Khumo: what were the bigger challenges (language, xenophobia, police, and crime)?**

Mike: crime and a bit of language barriers, the beginning was tough, I also experienced xenophobia and police threaten. The police use to ask me where my permit is and ask for money.

**Khumo: what were the solutions to the bigger problems?**

Mike: solution was to get my permit and get out of the streets

**Khumo: What were the main constraints you encountered, while trading in the street, and in order to 'leave the street'?**

Mike: because I needed to get out, I needed a better life and a better job.

**Khumo: what were your turning points in your professional paths that made you 'leave the street'?**

Mike: after the crime, the rain and the pain I was shaking in the corner very cold and I asked myself why am I here. I wanted to make money so that I can start my hospitality training.

**Khumo: how did you grow the business?**

Mike: by making money.

**Khumo: when you left street trading what happened to the business that you were managing?**

Mike: someone replaced me, someone from my home country, we had people from Mozambique but they did not last because they were stealing money.

**Khumo: how do you see reasons for success as a street trader?**

Mike: you need to be strong, passionate, and open to customers' needs.

**How have street traders managed to 'leave the street' and to enter the formal labour market?**

**Khumo: what is your current job?**

Mike: Executive supervisor.

**Khumo: how long have you worked there?**

Mike: 10 years.

**Khumo: how long were you a street trader?**

Mike: 1998-1999, one year.

**Khumo: did you work anywhere else between your street trading job and now?**

Mike: no.

**Khumo: what do you like about your current job compared to your street trading job?**

Mike: better, I have my own office, my freedom, the people, the customers, we like a family. This job has benefits, freedom, medical aid.

**Khumo: when you moved to Johannesburg was street trading your first job or business?**

Mike: yes.

**Khumo: what was your previous job before you became a street trader?**

Mike: my own boss at home and it was closed down because of bankruptcy, I was a salesman.

**Khumo: where did you store your goods?**

Mike: stored at a place we were renting in Berea but I was trading in Hillbrow.

**Khumo: how many hours and days of the week did you trade for?**

Mike: from 9:00am till sunset.

**Khumo: how flexible is trading compared to other occupations?**

Mike: my current job is more flexible.

**Khumo: would you say street trading serves as a safety net during crisis and new entrants to the city like Johannesburg?**

Mike: yes because for me there was no other job to do.

**Khumo: did you belong to any trader's organizations?**

Mike: no.

**Khumo: how would you describe the relationship between you and other traders?**

Mike: friends and colleagues.

**Khumo: what was the relationship between the traders and the state?**

Mike: The state was chasing the traders from the streets. The state was not allowing any traders but was soft to them because the state knew that people had to do street trading at that area. The state itself needed street traders or used them.

**Khumo: how is the relationship between the traders and the state now?**



Mike: the state is trying to push the traders to a different area, the state is building areas for traders, like Randburg and the traders rent the area and security is provided.

**Khumo: were there any issues between the traders and the state?**

Mike: no

**Khumo: was the state supportive when you were trading?**

Mike? The state was not involved, it was just there.

**Khumo: did you experience any harassment from the state or police when you were trading?**

Mike: no. but from the police. They always asked for my permit but they did not harass the business.

**Khumo: do you think the state acknowledges street trading as an entry to the city and the formal labour market?**

Mike: yes they have. They are also using the products and because now they are building areas that contain traders.

**Khumo: how long have you been staying in Johannesburg?**

**Mike: 14 years.**

**Khumo: did you have family when you first moved in the city?**

Mike: no.

**Khumo: where were you staying when you first moved in the city?**

Mike: Joubertpark, a flat.

**Khumo: Where were you staying when you were a trader?**

Mike: Joubertpark in a flat.

**Khumo: how much were u paying?**

Mike: R250 per person that time we were sharing.

**Khumo: did you own a car when you first came to the city?**

Mike: no.

**Khumo: did you buy a car when you were a trader?**

Mike: no.

**Khumo: do you have a car now?**

Mike: yes.

**Khumo: how did you use street trading?**

Mike: I used the money to pay for my hotel training.

**Khumo: thank you very much for your time.**

Mike: Thank you.

05 January 2012

It was a sunny Monday afternoon at 15:00pm in Braamfontein where the interview was conducted. The interview was conducted outside Mzitho's shop where his customers sit for lunch. It was noisy because the shop is located close to a busy road of Jorisson. The name of the interviewer is Khumo Sello and the interviewee is Pecc mzizi Mzitho.

**Khumo: My name is Khumo Sello; I am currently studying at Wits University and doing my research for my honours report. My interest is on the struggles and happy endings of street traders, where street traders (as a specific subgroup) use to sell on the pavements in the inner city of Johannesburg now are working in the formal sector (different sectors).**

Mzitho: Like mzithos *neh?*

**Khumo: yes like you Mzithos. I got your contacts from Edmund. I have done some little research about you and I noticed that you have franchises around Johannesburg.**

Mzitho: no they are not franchises but branches, *ha ha ha ha*.

**Khumo: ohk thanks for correcting me. Please give me your full name?**

Mzitho: Pecc Mzizi Mzitho.

**Khumo: age?**

Mzitho: over 50, actually over 55.

**Khumo: place of origin?**

Mzitho: South Africa.

**Khumo: which province?**

Mzitho: Gauteng

**Khumo: where specifically?**

Mzitho: Soweto.

**Khumo: where in Soweto.**

Mzitho: Around Soweto

**Khumo: What is your current job here?**

Mzitho: the owner.

**Khumo: you are the owner, you are an entrepreneur.**

Mzitho: something like that.

**Khumo: when did you start occupying your current job?**

Mzitho: *errrrrr* I think it's about 10 or 12 years.

**Khumo: ok**

Mzitho: plus minus 12 years.

**Khumo: and when did you become a street trader?**

Mzitho: *iyi* I think it was about I think it was about 3 years before I came in here.

**Khumo: when did you come here? Do u still remember the specific year you came here?**

Mzitho: *errrrrrrr* I cannot remember the date.

Mzitho: but it was 12 years and then the year. I can't remember the year but I think it was 2002 if I am not mistaken.

**Khumo: 2002, you were a street trader before?**

Mzitho: yes yes.

**Khumo: so you have been a street trader before and then you moved here?**

Mzitho: *ja*. I have moved to this shop since 2002.

**Khumo: since you were a street trader experiences did you gain from trading on the streets to having your own business?**

Mzitho: it is a vast difference, I would say it is a very very vast difference because at a shop like this one you have overheads, you have staff you have, you have lots of things, you have SARS, you have overheads where you must pay staff and electricity, water rates, services, it's unlike on the streets. On the streets we don't have those things, do you understand, *ja* on the streets you only pay your VAT when you go buy your stock, but with this one it is completely different.

**Khumo: what was your intention when you became a street trader?**

Mzitho: no I was doing it for a living, it was nothing, nothing that I was expecting a gain out of it. I was just doing it to get bread on the table and that's it do you understand. You were not thinking that you are creating jobs and all of those things. It was just to put *(he was destructed because he had to greet a customer)*.

**Khumo: why specifically street trading, what made you decide that you know what I am going on the street to trade rather than getting a job, or working under someone?**

Mzitho: you know unemployment rate was high so I avoided that thing to be one of the statistics of unemployed people and people saying "Mzitho is sitting in the townships with no job", so I said to myself let me do something, let me create a job for myself and unlike going outside to look for another job, do you understand. At the age of 30 or 40 you knock at different doors looking for a job, I told myself let me

**Khumo: what was difficult about street trading.**

Mzitho: You know with street trading it is fine but there are bi laws in street trading, where you are not allowed to obstruct people by trading on their way, you must be 2 or 3 meters from the pavements, the cleanliness you understand the smoke because I used to sell boerewors rolls and all that do you understand. You encounter lots of problems.

**Khumo: you were selling the same goods that you are selling now?**

Mzitho: no, on the streets I was selling boerewors rolls so what happened when I was selling boerewors rolls is someone approached me and said Mzitho "can't you organize like a small pap for me, I will have my wors with pap and not with bread", do you understand, so that's how we sold pap, I came with a small pot for pap, and the

other guys came through and said “hai Mzitho we can’t eat pap and wors everyday” so we started off with two pieces of steak, it went on and on that’s when they started implementing bi laws, they said this is no longer informal trade this is now a real business, do you understand. The officials said to me” if you came here to sell pap and steak here you going to cause chaos because we had long lines that time, you understand, so they said no no no, get yourself a shop, it is that time when they removed all the street vendors in Braamfontein.

**Khumo: so you were selling in Braamfontein?**

Mzitho: yes.

**Khumo: which specific street?**

Mzitho: Biccard next to the post office, the other stall was next to the FNB bank.

**Khumo: oh so you had different places.**

Mzitho: we had two stalls.

**Khumo: how did you access the space in the city?**

Mzitho: the shop?

**Khumo: No the place where you had your stalls**

Mzitho: no at that time there were bi laws but I forcedly placed myself just like putting a shack in Sandton, you just go and put your shack there and they will come and move you away and all that do you understand, so I was not allocated any space in Braamfontein.

**Khumo: You allocated yourself a space?**

Mzitho: yes I saw a space and then I took my trolley.

**Khumo: Very interesting, I had my own assumptions were I thought someone allocated you space.**

Mzitho: **Khumo: As a trader what made you different from other traders, what were your assets and strengths? That made you decide that you are leaving the streets and getting your own shop?**

Mzitho: you know it's a tactic that anyone uses do u understand, you must be street wise in order to survive on the streets. It's like in the olden days in Alexandra when they said that "ons nie loop nie ons phola hier" so I also had the same strategy (we are not going anyway we are here to stay). I had that strategy, for somebody who comes and chases away whilst I am getting my ends needs, I tell them look here don't come and kick me here, I have my dad who works in the department blah blah blah, those are the strengths that we use when we are on the streets. You must first speak the tsotsi taal.

**Khumo: So as a street trader what was important, you wanted to make money or you wanted to be in depended or was it because you had networks around the city so that you knew that you going to trade?**

Mzitho: it is not that you knew people at higher places or what, your stomach pushes you, your kids pushes you do u understand. At home there is no bread, u will always make a plan saying let me start making a leaving, when you are hungry it is either you go and steal or you look for a job or you create a job for yourself, that was my motivation.

**Khumo: You started selling boerewors rolls, what influenced you not to sell other goods such as vegetables but what you were selling?**

Mzitho: there was nothing in particular for me to choose that road, it was only the niche that I saw, when you look at braamfontein at that time there was was only chicken licken where presently there is Pick 'n pay, so I was the only person who was selling boerewors roll in the whole of braamfontein. So I saw that niche and I said let me capitalize on that boerewors roll and at the end of the day it gave of because we diverted from boerewors roll because immediately that time when were selling boerewors roll, we had these outlets like KFC coming to sell burgers and whatever and so the is a possibility that their products must sell and that is when they removed us from the streets.

**Khumo: Since you said you had 2 stalls were you selling alone or you had other people selling with you?**

Mzitho: I had these other cousin of mine selling with me, I was selling on the other stall and I was on the other stall.

**Khumo: The other one was on Biccard and where was the other stall located?**

Mzitho: the other one was on Market Street.

**Khumo: The products that you were selling where were you buying them?**

Mzitho: *(Interrupted by a customer saying good bye)* I bought the meat at Sam's butchery , there was a butchery on Rissik street opposite labour department on Rissik street, I used to but my boerewors there and the rolls then I used to buy them anywhere in a bakery.

**Khumo: Where you buying in bulk?**

Mzitho: yes.

**Khumo: how much was one boerewors roll?**

Mzitho: it was cheaper; it was about R3 at that time.

**Khumo: How much profit were you making per day or per week?**

Mzitho: it was long time ago so I don't you know what happens in fact, my younger brother owned the stoves and I was unemployed by then, so I took his stoves and vending machines and came on the streets with them and I started there. It paid off, first day I started trading I sold about 5 or 10 boerewors rolls so I became motivated because it was my first day and therefore I recognized that there is a potential, it's like luck, when you sell sweets you starts small and immediately you realize that it works and then you fall for it, do u understand that is how it happens. remember, but I was not making much, I think it was about 50% profit at that time.

**Khumo: Do you think you have grown as a trader and how much do u rate yourself out of ten?**

Mzitho: it is ten out of ten comparing it to when I was a street trader because here you learn a lot of things. It is like formal trading do you understand.

**Khumo: What made you make it?**

Mzitho: perseverance, hard work and hands on.



**Khumo: What were your challenges as a street trader (language, xenophobia, police, and crime)?**

Mzitho: police harassments on the streets, as I have said earlier on things like those you must be streetwise in order to survive on the streets. If they tell you to leave you must intimidate them back.

**Khumo: and how do you intimidate them?**

Mzitho: you must be street wise and tell them you know one guys maybe he is a police man and you use that guy to intimidate them, tell them you have connections at hill brow police station so if they arrest you, you will be out by tomorrow, you see things like that. So they will think you are well known, things like that.

**Khumo: what were your solutions to those problems such as police harassments, so you believe your street wise knowledge helped you a lot?**

Mzitho: *ja* it did a lot that's why I managed to move to a shop. If I was not streetwise I was not going to move to a formal shop, I will not be where I am today.

**Khumo: so you did not leave the streets because you were forced?**

Mzitho: we were forced to leave the streets because of the bylaws, there is a metro police department that enforced bylaws at that time metro police was only involved in the traffic department and then they came up with another department of bylaws, where they check the pavements and all of those things, that was that time they carried out those bylaws and started removing us from the streets, they started throwing our goods on the ground and confiscating our goods.

**Khumo: how long have you been trading in the shop?**

Mzitho: about 10- 12 years.

**Khumo: did you work anywhere else between street trading and now?**

Mzitho: no but I worked before I was as trader at a company in Elandsfontein, I was a rap.

**Khumo: and what pushed you to become a street trader?**

Mzitho: I was unemployed before I became a street trader.

**Khumo: what skills did you gain from street trading?**

Mzitho: there is nothing that I gained from the streets do you understand, there is nothing whereby you say this I have gained from the streets and I am taking it to the shop because trading in a shop and on the streets are two different things. On the streets you did not know how to handle invoices, to do this and that.

**Khumo: what did you like about street trading?**

Mzitho: there are no overheads on the street, no water and electricity payments, less staff (interrupted by a customer), no SARS, we were independent, 100% independent on the streets.

**Khumo: where did you store your goods when you were trading in Braamfontein**

Mzitho: in a petrol station, corner Bertha and Jorrison, shell garage close to wits. I used to store my trolleys there that time.

**Khumo: did you pay rent for storage?**

Mzitho: No, that Guy John Bosseyne was a family friend, so he gave me space to store my goods.

**Khumo: how many hours per day were you trading?**

Mzitho: I am not sure because we started at 09:00am and leave at 15:00pm.

**Khumo: how flexible was street trading compared to being in a shop?**

Mzitho: it was more flexible because when I was in the streets I did not work on weekends.

**Khumo: what are the reasons behind you not working on weekends?**

Mzitho: there was no business.

**Khumo: do you think street trading serves as a buffer zone during crisis and to new entrants to the city?**

Mzitho: you know what is happening, informal trading it is alright it is good to the economy of the country only government allocated spaces to street traders and make street traders pay about R1000 a month per stall and check so that if they find dirt around your stall they must issue you a ticket and control trading. I think it can work, look at unemployment now and look at the malls, all the malls are in Soweto so what will happen to people who own spaza shops in Soweto, so if the government allocates people stall they will be creating jobs.

**Khumo: as a street trader you do not mind paying for your space?**

Mzitho: yes, at that time we did not mind

**Khumo: but the thing is with government it does not allow street traders to have a say?**

Mzitho: we do have a say but it falls into gas ears, you discuss with them today, look here allocate us a space blah blah blah and they will agree but at the end of the day they do not keep their word.

**Khumo: as a trader did you belong to any trader organization?**

Mzitho: no there was an organization, I forgot its name and it was not registered, it was an informal gathering.

**Khumo: and now do you belong to any trader's organization?**

Mzitho: no

Khumo: how would you describe your relationship with other traders when you were a street trader?

Mzitho: it was very good.

**Khumo: the relationship between the traders and the state?**

Mzitho: it was worse at that time, it was worse, because when they found you trading on the street they would come and take your goods without any notice or anything they just take your stock and sometimes you bribe them so that they don't take your stock, those were the encounters that we got on the streets.

**Khumo: who was taking your stock?**

Mzitho: it was the very same JMPD but it did not have recognized bi laws to take our stuff.

**Khumo: and they still harassed traders on the streets?**

Mzitho: yes yes.

**Khumo: and how do you think the relationship between the traders and the state is right now?**

Mzitho: at the moment I don't know because I am no longer on the streets.

**Khumo: so you think the state was not supportive?**

Mzitho: nothing at all, instead they were fighting against street traders.

**Khumo: did you experience any harassment by the police?**

Mzitho: Yeah I did.

**Khumo: do you remember a specific event when you were harassed by the police?**

Mzitho: many times, they did not like me because I was doing very well on the streets. They would come and harass me telling me the bank says your smoke goes inside the bank can you remove your stall now, so I had to over the weekend maybe on Sundays come and clean the windows at the bank. So this is some of the things I was experiencing.

**Khumo: so you do not think the state acknowledges street trading as a entry to the city and helping other people during the times of unemployment?**

Mzitho: they knew there are street traders but they did not want to accept it, they did not want us on the streets, so that is why they took our stuff and caused chaos.

**Khumo: what do you think let to the state not wanting you on the streets?**

Mzitho: some of us we neglected our trading spaces, that time you get a street vendor who sells a banana to a customer and the customer just throws the banana

pill on the street and they wouldn't clean do you understand, that might be the cause that led them not wanting us on the streets.

**Khumo: so how long have you been staying in Johannesburg?**

Mzitho: I was born and bred here.

**Khumo: when you were traders where did you stay?**

Mzitho: at home I used to travel everyday to the city.

**Khumo: were you paying rent at home?**

Mzitho: I was paying rent, at that time I was staying in my own house.

**Khumo: when you moved from your formal work to street trading you already owned a house?**

Mzitho: Yes so I was using the street trading money to pay rent.

**Khumo: how much was rent?**

Mzitho: I think it was R25 at that time.

**Khumo: did you own a car?**

Mzitho: I did not have a car at that time, I had an old 1400, a small van and a friend of mine fixed it for me and I started trading with it and the stoves that I was using I carried them with a van and when I did not have a car I would push the trolleys myself, as soon as I made something out of street trading I fixed my car.

**Khumo: how much profit did you make in bad times?**

Mzitho: I did not have bad times instead my business was growing.

**Khumo: as a trader you did not experience any bad times?**

Mzitho: no it was going up the ladder.

**Khumo: what did you use your street trading money for?**

Mzitho: I used the money to survive and to get a shop.

**Khumo: you own the shop?**

Mzitho: no I am renting.

**Khumo: how much are you paying for the shop?**

Mzitho: over R25000 a month.

**Khumo: why you renting and not buying it?**

Mzitho: you can't buy the shop alone; you have to but the whole building.

**Khumo: so you have been renting since?**

Mzitho: yes.

**Khumo: how much was rent back then when you first got the shop?**

Mzitho: about R7000, this is nothing my other branch in close to Ghandi square that one I am paying R43 000 a month, I am talking about rent and not including water and electricity.\

**Khumo: how many shops do you have around the city?**

Mzitho: I started as a street trader and now I own 4 shops (Rissik, Braamfontein, COSATU house and Gandhi)

**Khumo: you pay rent for all of them**

Mzitho: yes

**Khumo: which one was the first?**

Mzitho: Braamfontein and then followed by the one in Pretoria then Rissik, Ghandi and Booysens.

**Khumo: you can say you are growing and you are there?**

Mzitho: no I am not there yet, I am getting there.

**Khumo: what is your last conclusion from your experience as a trader?**

Mzitho: as people we are impatient and we do not know our customers, we want to run our business with a remote. When your business is young you must take care of it like a small baby, don't leave your business until it is stable enough to give you money.

**Khumo: thank you very very very much.**

