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Executive Summary

The purpose of this study is to provide greater insight to the issue of foreign migrants from elsewhere in Africa settling in the urban areas of the Western Cape – people who are referred to by a variety of names such as refugees, illegal aliens, refugees, undocumented migrants, asylum seekers and amakwerekwere. Although the study is more descriptive than analytical in content, it does raise a number of policy questions that need to be addressed at provincial government level.

A number of research questions are posed concerning the economic, demographic and social profile of African foreigners residing in the Western Cape. The study also deals with the question of xenophobia which predominates in the written material on the subject. Information is obtained from three major sources – published articles, interviews with public officials and others dealing with migrants in Cape Town and other towns in the Western Cape and a questionnaire survey of sixty South African locals in three low-income residential areas. Due to time and cost considerations, it was not possible to interview any foreigners which would have added another perspective to the study.

The report is divided into seven sections dealing with: legal, policy and political aspects; the demographic profile and extent of migration to the Western Cape; the economic activities of foreigners; living arrangements, migration patterns and social interaction; local attitudes towards foreigners and the issue of xenophobia; field survey results; and summary of findings.

The study provides a number of findings, many of which go beyond the research questions initially posed. Some of the more important findings are provided in point form below - the reader must consult the final section of the report for a more detailed description of each item and for other findings:

- The ‘problem’ aspect of foreign migrants is overstated and that in many ways the presence of these migrants contributes positively to the economic and cultural development of the region

- Foreigners are viewed in a positive light by most local residents but not necessarily by administrating officials

- There is considerable contradiction between official government policy on foreigners and public pronouncements by politicians

- A rough estimate of the number of foreign migrants in the Western Cape is 20 000 to 30 000 people – a small proportion of the total population when compared with the nation as a whole

- Relatively few migrants live in the small towns, having moved to Cape Town due to waning economic opportunities
• Most migrants are men between the ages 20 to 30 years

• Housing conditions for those living in multi-unit buildings belonging to slumlords are particularly poor

• Migrants may be differentiated into ‘big-time’ operators whose activities are often of a criminal nature versus ‘small-time’ entrepreneurs who operate legitimate and quasi-legitimate businesses.

• Foreigners are better equipped than the locals with respect to skills, education, work ethic and entrepreneurship

• Foreigners generate income for locals on a significant scale

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Scope of Study

South Africa and the Western Cape have become the destination of increasing numbers of migrants from elsewhere in Africa – a trend that has been increasing with declining economies and escalating political upheaval elsewhere in Africa. Whereas previously most migrants came from SADC countries, many are now coming from African countries further afield.

A great deal of information is available regarding the presence of African foreigners in South Africa. Most of this information, however, is not disaggregated on a provincial basis. This study is aimed at providing greater insight to the foreigner question with respect specifically to the Western Cape. While migrants to South Africa from elsewhere in Africa may be catagorised in a number of ways, the emphasis in this study is on those foreigners who have made the decision to migrate out of economic or political necessity and who, generally, are looking for ‘a better life’. The study is confined to those issues which, in government policy terms, may be regarded as a problem.

The focus of this study is on African foreigner migrants in the urban areas of the Western Cape. Excluded from this study are the relatively large numbers of foreigners who come to this country to study.

1.2 Terminology

In the literature, a number of words are used to describe what has, in this study, been termed ‘foreigner’; these include, non-citizens, African migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, undocumented migrants, illegal migrants and illegal aliens (SAMP, 2001). Amongst the low-income community, the word ‘amakwerekwere’ is often used to describe foreigners – an onomatopoeic word that originally referred to people who spoke a strange language that could not be understood. The word has increasingly been used as a derogatory reference to unwanted foreigners (Sunday Independent, 2000).

The word ‘refugee’ is defined by the U.N.1951 Convention as:

‘Any person who … owing to a well found fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.’

The South African government has formally subscribed to this definition. The Human Rights Watch (2001) is of the view that ‘asylum-seekers should be
considered to have the same rights as refugees, until such time as it is fairly determined that they do not have refugee status.’

1.3 Research Questions and Methodology

In this study the following questions are addressed:

- In broad terms, what is the extent (including growth trends) of foreign settlement in the Western Cape?
- Gender and age breakdown?
- From which countries have these people migrated?
- Where is the settlement taking place?
- How has this settlement pattern developed historically?
- Into what category do these residents fit: refugees, people seeking employment opportunities, people seeking business opportunities, or any other?
- Is the nature of their migration from other countries permanent, temporary of circulatory?
- What are the living conditions of these people – particularly with respect to housing, health and education?
- How well are they integrated or assimilated into local communities?
- How strong are links with the countries from which they migrated?
- What are the attitudes of local residents towards these foreigners?

Although these questions formed the thrust of the enquiry, predictably many of the findings fell outside of this predetermined framework.

Written documentation on the subject (including newspapers) has been a major source of information used in this study. This is augmented by a survey of local residents conducted in the following three low-income, low-density areas of metropolitan Cape Town: Philippi East, Site ‘C’ Khayelitsha and Delft.

In each area, 20 residents were sampled on a random basis (i.e., a total of 60 respondents). These three areas were selected after establishing that a substantial number of foreigners are resident in each place. An open questionnaire format was employed where respondents were encouraged to talk freely about those foreigners living in their areas. A Xhosa-speaking
fieldworker was used for all the interviews. In all cases community leaders were approached prior to the survey in order to explain the purpose of the study and to obtain their support. While residents showed some apprehension on first being approached, this disappeared once the fieldworker explained the purpose of the interview and that the survey was sanctioned by community leaders.

In addition, questionnaire interviews were carried out with twelve persons who are directly involved with the foreigner issue. Representatives from the following institutions were interviewed:

- Cape Town International Airport Police Service
- Beaufort West Informal Traders Association (2 persons)
- Blaauberg Municipal Administration
- Chamber of Commerce, Beaufort West
- Department of Home Affairs
- Department of Social Anthropology, University of Cape Town
- George Multi-Purpose Centre
- IDASA – Institute for Democracy in South Africa
- South Peninsula Municipal Administration
- Sea Border Police Unit, Cape Town
- Tygerberg Municipal Administration
- Cape Town Refugee Centre

### 1.4 Limitations of the Research

Due to time and budgetary constraints, it was not possible to interview foreigners; the sensitivity of the issues involved would have made it extremely difficult, and possibly dangerous, to carry out such a survey. To be able to discuss issues directly with foreigners would obviously have provided greater insight to the dynamics of foreigner migration together with more quantitative, ‘factual’ information. Ideal data where foreigners in the Western Cape have been interviewed directly is not available.

An important methodological consideration in this study is the fact that a great deal of the information collected is from non-objective sources such as interviews with people working in this field, local residents and on newspaper reports. The problem of perceptions or myths being created by the news media amongst those interviewed in this study also needs to be taken into consideration. The findings of the study must be viewed with this in mind. It is the view of the writer, however, that the approach adopted has produced useful findings with respect to the fundamental dynamics at play in this sector notwithstanding the misperceptions that exist with regard to foreign migrants.

For these reasons, it is necessary to regard this report as a pilot study which should be followed up by a more comprehensive investigation where more hard data is collected and the viewpoint of foreigners is obtained directly.
2. LEGAL, POLICY AND POLITICAL ASPECTS

The Immigration Bill (2001) is the latest piece of legislation controlling migration to this country. This bill augments and updates the Aliens Control Act (1991), the Aliens Control Amendment Act (1995), the South African Citizenship Act (1995) and the Refugees Act (1998). The Immigration Bill deals with, *inter alia*, conditions relating to temporary and permanent residence. Of importance to this study are the conditions under which temporary resident permits are issued; these are:

'(1) Upon admission, a foreigner may enter and sojourn in the republic only if in possession of a temporary residence permit.
(2) Subject to the Act, upon application and upon prescribed examination at the port of entry, one of the (14) temporary residence permits may be issued to a foreigner.
(3) If issued outside the Republic, a temporary residence permit is deemed to be of force and effect only after admission.
(4) A temporary residence permit is to be issued on condition that the holder is not or does not become a prohibited or undesirable person.
(5) For good cause, as prescribed, the Department may attach reasonable individual terms and conditions to a temporary residence permit.
(6) Subject to the Act, a foreigner may change his or her status while in the Republic.’

Of the fourteen temporary residence permits available, the ‘general entry permit’ is the most applicable in terms of the subject of this study. This permit may not exceed three months and may only be renewed once. The holder of this permit may not ‘conduct work’ nor may the holder be admitted more than once although exceptions may be made in the case of ‘prescribed foreign countries’. This bill also makes provision for illegal foreigners receiving general entry permits.

A significant proportion of African foreigners migrating to the Western Cape are refugees from conflict situations prevailing in many countries in Africa. The Refugees Act (1998) makes provision for foreigners to seek asylum. In terms of Section 21 of this act; formal application for asylum must be made. Once a foreigner has made such application, ‘no proceedings may be instituted or continued against any person in respect of his or her unlawful entry into or presence within the Republic’. Section 22 of the act allows for the issuing of a asylum seeker permit pending the outcome of an application for asylum. The period of this permit may be extended by a Refugee Reception Officer from time to time. Such a permit supersedes any permit issued under the Aliens Control Act (1991)

In 2000 there appears to have been a major change in official policy. In the press it was stated that; ‘Because of the backlog many people come into the country and apply for asylum and are granted a section 22 permit which
entitles them to work until their cases are processed. In terms of the new Home affairs system, applicants will no longer be issued with Section 41 permits. Instead they will get a new section 22 permit, which prohibits their working until their refugee status has been approved’. (Saturday Star, 2000)

The government is faced with the dilemma of wanting to attract people with the right skills to the country while at the same time keeping out those who are unlikely to benefit the economy. Government policy on immigration is summed up in the statement by the Minister with regard to the draft Immigration Bill: “the Immigration Bill is aimed at keeping out foreigners we do not want and deporting those who are in the country illegally while making it easier for foreigners who have skills needed by the economy to enter and stay in the country.” (Star, 2000). The field research conducted in this study indicates that many migrants who set themselves up as informal traders, employ local people to do the actual selling while they play more of a managerial role. This occurs when there are language difficulties or where customers are suspicious of dealing directly with foreigners. Many foreigners still hold Section 41 permits in terms of the Aliens Control Act (1991). These have now been superseded by the Section 22 permits prescribed by the Refugees Act (1998)

A source of considerable frustration to the police is the way in which the legislation creates a certain amount of confusion. It was stated in the press that, ‘permits for refugees appear to last three months but can take up to two years to obtain. It would appear, however, that if they are arrested by the police for not having a permit, they are immediately released when Home Affairs officials confirm that they have applied for permits’. (Cape Argus, 1999a). A number of African foreigners enter the country as stowaways. If they are caught they are repatriated or, their embassy confirms their citizenship, and asylum is given.

Notwithstanding a number of political statements and legislation on the subject of foreign migrants to this country, there appears to be some confusion as to exactly what government policy is on this matter. It is reported in the press that ‘on the one hand, some government ministers have spoken out unequivocally against xenophobia. On the other, many of them speak of the threat of “floods” of refugees pouring across the country’s borders to drain the country’s resources’. (Sunday Independent, 2001a)

The desperate need to seek economic opportunities in South Africa by people living elsewhere in Africa has resulted in many instances of fraud or misuse of the system. For example, in 1999 police in Guateng uncovered a multi-million rand scam in which Home Affairs documents were being manufactured on a huge scale in a dressing salon. The ringleader was a Nigerian. (Cape Argus, 1999a). A spokesman for the police’s illegal alien unit said that ‘people entering SA illegally and who wanted to work here were introduced to a “slick” syndicate which arranged false identification and travelling documents at certain Cape Flats offices. Members of the syndicate allegedly acted as middlemen between the immigrants and corrupt home affairs officials’ (Cape Argus, 1995). Mr Leslie Mashokwe, a home affairs spokesman is quoted as
saying;’ marriages of convenience to gain SA citizenship were becoming an enormous social problem. The department is presently investigating a number of cases, especially in the Western Cape …the offenders, mostly from Nigeria, Egypt and Morocco, were fined R1500 and sent home at their own expense’. (Cape Times, 2001a).

Implementation of the legislation has, in many cases, produced a bureaucracy which has made things difficult for foreign migrants. It was recently reported that, for refugees and asylum seekers, life in SA consists of an interminable paper chase. Since the implementation of the 1998 Refugees Act, which is generally regarded as a progressive piece of legislation, asylum-seekers have had to renew their Section 22 permits every three months and are not allowed to work or study while their applications for refugee status are being processed, which can take up to a year’. (Sunday Independent, 2001). This situation forces foreigners into the informal sector or into illegal employment as a means of survival. It was pointed out to the writer by a senior NGO researcher that; ‘while the Refugees Act (1998) was very positive and embraced solid democratic principles, the regulations were written in such a way as to contradict the good intentions of the Act.’ A major problem slowing up the political asylum procedure is the fact that a large number of migrants seeking asylum – in particular Nigerians – are people seeking economic opportunities who do not face any political threat in their home country which results in the saturation of the legal process by these people.

In addition to South African legislation related to refugees and immigration, there is the question of the rights of migrants under international law. According to a report by the Human Rights Watch (1998), ‘All persons in South Africa share a certain set of human rights under international law and the principle that persons should not be returned to a country where they fear persecution on the grounds of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, or which they are compelled to leave owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order’.

Section 2 of the Refugees Act (1998) extends these rights by stating:

‘…no person may be refused entry into the Republic, expelled, extradited or returned to any other country or be subject to any similar measure, if as a result of such refusal, expulsion, extradition, return or other measure, such person is compelled to return to or remain in a country where –

(a) he or she may be subjected to persecution on account of his or her race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group; or
(b) his or her life, physical safety or freedom would be threatened on account of external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or other events seriously disturbing or disrupting public order in either part or the whole of that country’
In a Migration Policy Series report (1999), McDonald, et al. construct the following general profile from a sample of 501 migrants in Guateng, Western Cape and Kwa-Zulu-Natal:

- ‘The vast majority of migrants are legal and in spite of significant difficulties obtaining official documentation, most have entered South Africa through designated customs points, using formal modes of transport, and have pre-arranged accommodation.
- Migrants feel strongly that they should be offered the same social and economic rights as South African citizens (e.g., opportunities for a job, same access to medical services), but should not necessarily be allowed to vote in South African elections.
- Migrants take borders seriously and support immigration policy if it is fair and applied humanely.
- Most migrants feel that South Africa has a moral obligation to the African countries that took up positions against apartheid, and therefore should embrace and welcome foreign migrants.’

Attitudes and perceptions held by public officials, when compared with these findings, indicates a totally different viewpoint. Migrants, in many cases, are seen as a problem and that the country would be better off without them.

The policy implications of the study by McDonald et al., (1999), which are pertinent to this study, are as follows:

- ‘Migration would appear to be a highly regularized and legalized process conducted by responsible people, and it is important that South Africa build on this process rather than forcing migrants and migration into more clandestine modes of operation
- New immigration legislation should address human rights abuses and make immigration policy more consistent with the Bill of Rights in the South African Constitution
- Immigration and security authorities should address human rights abuses at a more practical level with their staff in terms of education and discipline.
- Immigration policy-makers and practitioners should recognize the importance of cross-border movement for socio-economic stability in the region (and beyond) as well as the need to address the more micro-economic impacts that migration policy can have on household opportunities
- Migration into South Africa is now truly a pan-African phenomenon and will become increasingly so. It is important that policy-makers are sensitive to the regional differences in migration into the country, and that they acknowledge the new role that South Africa has begun to play with respect to the movement of people on the continent as a whole.’

Although this was written in 1999 and notwithstanding the changes brought about by the introduction of the Immigration Bill in 2001, these policy recommendations still need to be addressed.
3. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE AND EXTENT OF MIGRATION TO THE WESTERN CAPE

The Western Cape, being at the Southern tip of the continent, is probably less attractive as a destination for African foreigners than most other urban areas in South Africa. One would not expect foreigners with scarce resources to find the way down to the Cape very easily. However, the presence of a port and the opportunity of finding illegal passage on a ship down the West coast of Africa would obviously be appealing to many potential migrants; although some migrants arrive via Cape Town’s port, the number is not significant - a figure of no more than 1% of migrants was given by one respondent. A number of migrants are to be found in the port area, but these are persons hoping to find a passage (illegally) to elsewhere in the world.

Due to the fact that a large proportion of African migrants to the Western Cape are illegal it is not easy to establish the exact number of migrants presently living in this province. For this reason it is also not possible to establish quantitatively the trend since 1994. It is, however, possible to obtain some qualitative information from people who work in this field on a daily basis.

The Cape Town Refugee Centre (2002) estimated there to be 19,000 refugees living in the Western Cape and 69,000 in the country as a whole in 2002. In 1999 it was reported that 14,000 had applied for political asylum in the Western Cape since 1994. (Cape Argus 1999a). Statistics released by the Cape Town Refugee Forum in 1999 indicated that there were more than 11,900 refugees in Cape Town. (Cape Argus, 1999b). In a recent press statement, Cape Town is said to have 25,000 refugees of whom 3,000 are from Somalia. (Cape Times, 2001b). The 1996 census indicates a far lower figure for all foreign born migrants of 4,600. It is the view of the writer that census figures are likely to be understated due to the reluctance most illegal foreigners would have with formally acknowledging their status in this way. These numbers do not, of course, include non-refugee foreigners nor persons living in urban areas other than Cape Town. Dorrington (2002), working on census data and other sources estimates the number to be between 60,000 and 80,000 for the Western Cape. Interviews with local authority officials indicate that the number of foreigners living in the Western Cape has escalated considerably since 1994 which is not surprising considering the new political dispensation. Some respondents have indicated that 5% to 10% of the African population in their areas is foreign. It must be borne in mind that this figure is only a perception held by some respondents in only three settlements of Cape Town.

From this, often contradictory, information it is reasonable to estimate that the number of African foreigners coming to the Western Cape looking for a ‘better life’ and presently living here to be of the order of 30,000 to 50,000 people. This number is relatively small compared to the country as a whole if a 1995 press report which gave a figure of between 5 million and 10 million people living illegally in the country is to be believed. (Cape Argus, 1995). This number does, however, include all non-South Africans living in this country.
and clearly does not reflect the situation with respect to African foreigners. The figures provided by the Cape Town Refugees Forum of 19,000 refugees in the Western Cape and 69,000 in the country as a whole in 2002 would suggest that the Western Cape has a very high proportion of the country’s foreign migrants – 28% - in relation to its overall population.

Most African foreigners in the Western Cape are single males although some public officials interviewed believed that they came as families. Statistics released by the Cape Town Refugee Forum in 1999 estimate that of the 11,900 refugees in Cape Town, 10,000 are male, 1,000 women and 900 children. (cited in Cape Argus, 1999). Interviews with the Cape Town Refugee Centre in 2002 confirm this high proportion of single males. It was, however, reported in two interviews with officials that Ethiopians tend to arrive in the Western Cape with their families. Most of these men, according to those public officials interviewed, appear to be in the age group 30 to 40 years. Dorrington (2002), once again relying on 1996 census data, believes the proportion of females to be closer to one third. The 1996 census indicates that 50% of males are in the age group 20 to 30.
4. **ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF FOREIGNERS**

While many African migrants are initially driven to South Africa and the Western Cape due to political unrest in their own countries, i.e., refugees, economic prospects, together with the better life that this is perceived to bring, is clearly a major ‘pull factor’ for these people. Many, of course, are attracted here because of the economic opportunities rather than being driven from their own countries by political turmoil. The relatively good health and education services available in this country are also an attraction. In this section the manner in which migrants survive economically and, in many cases, prosper in the Western Cape is examined.

Foreign migrants may be divided into two types with regard to the economic activities that they pursue. On the one hand, there are those who engage in legal and quasi-legal activities such as street vending. Although they usually make a reasonable living, they may be regarded as ‘small time’ entrepreneurs. On the other hand, there are the ‘big time’ entrepreneurs who often indulge in illegal activities; these include the druglords, car stealing syndicates, false document producers, pimps, arms dealers, protection rackets and seafood smuggling syndicates. While these two groups appear to operate independently, very often the ‘big timers’ force the ‘small timers’ out of trading areas or housing.

Another feature of the activities in which migrants engage is the level of specialisation with respect to nationality. The Somalians, for example, are almost exclusively active, and successful, as street vendors or hawkers. This may be attributable to the fact that Somalians are, almost without exception, Muslims. There are of, course, Muslim migrants from countries other than Somalia but of lesser proportions. In Table1 a breakdown of economic activities and the practitioners by country is given. Clearly, the information presented here is a generalisation and applies to South Africa as a whole; the present study, however, did not in any way contradict these findings.
### Table 1: Types of Economic Opportunities and Predominant Country of Origin of Practitioners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Source Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. LABOURERS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>SADC residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farms</td>
<td>Mozambique, Zimbabwe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic workers</td>
<td>Malawi, Swaziland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mines</td>
<td>Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. ENTREPRENEURS &amp; ARTISANS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft</td>
<td>Malawi, Zimbabwe, Swaziland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grey good (electronic)</td>
<td>India, Pakistan, Nigeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cigarettes, sweets</td>
<td>Somalia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imitation labeled goods</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Angola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other businesses run by migrants: Hairdressing saloons, car repair, clothing shops, import-export</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. SHADOW ECONOMIES</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>Nigerian, Morocco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharkfin/perlemoen poaching</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passport rackets</td>
<td>Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prostitution</td>
<td>Mozambican women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection rackets (night clubs)</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tele-shops (run from houses)</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: adapted from Mail & Guardian (1998)

Newspaper reports, together with fieldwork interviews of public officials and residents, indicate that African migrants to the Western Cape differ in many ways to the local population in the manner in which they operate in the economic environment. They show a high degree of enterprise in identifying and taking advantage of economic opportunities. As employees, they tend to be far more reliable and hardworking than the locals. They are also prepared to take on unpopular jobs and to work at lower wages than the locals. Perhaps this is not surprising given the economic vulnerability of these migrants. The attitude of the locals to this ‘competition’ is considered in a later section. Some quotations from the local press, illustrating this point, are given below:

‘.... some employers who employ immigrants legally say they have good work ethics and, in some case, exceptional skills. However, their enterprise has made them unpopular with local South Africans.’ (Cape Argus, 1999)
‘... many foreigners who have applied for asylum are running successful businesses – particularly in the informal sector. In the Western Cape some of the most efficient street-market stallholders are immigrants from other African countries.’ (Cape Argus, 1999)

Since most foreigners have Section 22 permits, they are not permitted to find legal work and for this reason are forced into a variety of work opportunities in the informal sector. ‘Most refugees living in townships survive as informal hairdressers and shoemakers. In town they run pavement stalls, selling anything from shoes and clothes to woodwork and curios. Others drive taxis on the Wynberg-Claremont-Mowbray-Cape Town route’. (Cape Argus, 1999)

An often ignored aspect of foreigners operating as street vendors (hawkers) is the work opportunities that they create for the local population. Very often this is done in order to overcome language problems and to overcome some of the prejudices of local customers with regard to dealing with foreigners. Because of the very low wages, this work is usually only done by women – the local unemployed men being reluctant to accept such low wages.

Rogerson (1997), writing in the Migration Policy Series about Johannesburg’s foreign entrepreneurs, established that new immigrant businesses are run by single, young, males who work on average a 64-hour week; their employees work similar hours. He also established that there is a considerable difference between small businesses operated by SADC and non-SADC migrants; these differences include financing methods – the non-SADC businesses using finance brought in from other countries whereas SADC businesses used finance generated from within the country; support networks – the non-SADC businesses have international connections while the SADC businesses have more local networks; levels of education – non-SADC entrepreneurs are better educated and have broader strategic horizons; job creation – the non-SADC businesses created more jobs per business than the SADC businesses. While the above study concentrated on migrant run businesses in Johannesburg, there is no reason to believe that the situation should be any different in the Western Cape.

It was the view of one local authority official that these foreigners, while being very entrepreneurial, were also very careful about keeping their piece of pavement clean and of keeping on good terms with the locals by being very polite. The attitude held mainly by shopowners that the activities of these vendors leads to littering and the consequent dereliction of an area is, in his view, completely false. It is also completely safe to walk around in these areas – the foreign vendors do their own policing.

The manner in which foreign street vendors operate varies. In small towns it was found that foreign vendors would send one of their group to either Cape Town or Johannesburg to buy their stock where they could get very low prices. In this way they were able to charge much lower prices than the locals which caused considerable resentment. This practice is probably not as prevalent amongst the local vendors because of the absence of the strong bond (social capital) that usually exists within foreigner communities. In some
cases, usually with respect to curios, vendors obtained their stock from outside of the country – mainly Zimbabwe. In one town it was found that a few successful foreign vendors had moved off the street into permanent shops.

Of course many of these informal traders experience problems with respect to the law. An indication of some of the problems experienced by foreign entrepreneurs is illustrated in the following press interview with a Somali refugee: ‘In Cape Town he used R400 from the UN High Commission for Refugees to set up one of the first stalls on the Bellville market. But his livelihood dried up when the municipality shut down most of the foreigners who ran 90% of the stalls and issued locals with permits to trade in their places. The locals pay R50 a month for a permit and offer to sell these to foreigners for up to R2000.’ (Cape Times, 2001).

Foreign street vendors appear to locate in pockets where presumably they are able to enjoy mutual support. For example, in the Bellville CBD the writer was told that foreigner vendors outnumbered locals by about two to one whereas in Parow there are far fewer foreigners due to the hostile attitude of the local vendors.

Of course there are many other ways in which foreigners are able to make a living that are not discussed here. For example, ‘Restaurants and fishing industry major culprits in employing illegal aliens’. (Cape Argus, 1995). Many foreigners are employed at building sites. A number of respondents indicated that ‘they had heard about’ Nigerians being involved in the drugs industry on a large scale. In another study (Boaden and Karam, 2001), it was found that these druglords were partly involved in manipulating the low-income housing market. Pimping is another activity in which foreigners are said to be engaged. The running of shebeens is also a known activity of migrants.

Poor economic conditions in recent years have resulted in street vendors in the smaller towns of the Western Cape decreasing as foreigners move to Cape Town where they expect to find more ‘survival chances’. One respondent indicated that a number of foreign street vendors move from small town to small town in a circulatory manner – never staying longer than a few months – contributing, perhaps, to some negative feelings towards them.

The findings by McDonald et al. (1999) and Peberdy (2000) that migrants are motivated to come to South Africa largely, but not entirely, by economic opportunities and that they are motivated, educated, skilled and enterprising and that they find work easily but are poorly paid, are corroborated by this study.

While it is not possible to establish the extent, many migrants send money back to their homelands to support families that have been left behind. This, of course, represents a loss of spending power locally. This is more than offset by the export earnings resulting from foreigners purchasing local goods for sale in their home countries – a point made by Peberdy (2000) in her study of cross-border trading.
5. LIVING ARRANGEMENTS, MIGRATION PATTERNS AND SOCIAL 
INTERACTION

5.1 Living Arrangements

Here again, foreign migrants may be divided into two groups with regard to 
living arrangements. On the one hand, there are those living in multi-unit 
buildings in places such as Sea Point, the CBD and Muizenberg where they 
pay rent to a slumlord who may or may not be a foreigner. Very often these 
people are from West Africa. A whole building or neighbourhood can, in this 
way, become dominated by people of a particular foreign nationality. On the 
other hand, there are those living in low income suburbs and informal 
settlements throughout the Western Cape. They live in formal houses, rooms 
or shacks that they rent from the locals. Very often, a group of migrants will 
rent more than one house in a neighbourhood to the extent that the area 
becomes dominated by a particular foreign nationality. This can also happen 
at the level of two or three houses (usually built with a government subsidy) 
being purchased informally by a group of migrants who offer the owner an 
amount well below the construction costs – from R8 000 to R12 000 for a 
house costing about R18 000. The occupier of the house, who received the 
subsidised house at no cost and who may be desperate for the money, is very 
often happy to sell.

In the case of those living in blocks of flats, these buildings are often derelict 
with the owner spending little or nothing on the upkeep of the building while at 
the same time taking in more and more tenants by subdividing the flats into 
smaller and smaller units to the extent that the overcrowding becomes 
excessive which, in itself, brings on health, crime and a number of other social 
problems. This process of slumlord exploitation, which occurs throughout the 
world, results in the rapid deterioration of a neighbourhood as the negative 
externalities occasioned by the taking over of one building impacts on 
adjacent buildings and a knock-on effect is generated. The living conditions in 
these buildings are extremely poor. It must be said, however, that these high 
density living environments provide the necessary thresholds for numerous 
economic initiatives, both legal and illegal, to take place. A micro economy is 
created where cash inflows are provided by those earning money outside of 
the area who then spend this money locally. In many cases, migrants have to 
live and work in these unpleasant environments simply to survive.

For those living in formal or shack houses or rooms, living conditions are 
possibly better although this might mean living some distance from where 
they earn a living. This living situation is usually accompanied by a high level 
of group support or social capital. As enclaves of migrants from particular 
African countries establish themselves this mutual support increases and 
results in more and more persons from those countries arriving at these 
locations. This, of course, results in greater isolation of these foreigners from 
the local population which spawns higher levels of suspicion and xenophobia.

Locals obviously benefit economically from the presence of foreigners either 
through the rentals that they pay or the cash that they receive when they 
purchase the dwellings. It is not known to what extent foreigners are exploited
by locals in the overcharging of rent due to the shortage of accommodation that exists for foreigners.

In many cases street vendors try to live as close to their vending site as possible not only because of convenience but also to ensure that they claim their spot first in the morning. In some instances vendors sleep with their goods at their vending position to prevent pilfering. The absence of lock-up facilities is clearly an important factor in this regard. Some people sleep in cars for the same reason.

5.2 Migration Patterns and Motivation

While exact figures are not available, the Western Cape is attracting foreign migrants from almost every country in Africa not only from SADC countries as was previously the case. The majority of migrants come to the Western Cape via Namibia and Zimbabwe. The incidence of foreigners arriving by sea either legally or as stowaways is small. Those who enter the country as stowaways, if they are caught, are repatriated or their embassy confirms their citizenship and asylum is given. A number of migrants do, however, attempt to leave illegally from the Cape Town port with Europe as their intended destination.

In the past most migrants came to the Western Cape by way of Johannesburg. In recent years word has got around throughout Africa that Johannesburg and Gauteng ‘are saturated with foreigners looking for economic opportunities’; for this reason foreign migrants are now coming directly to the Cape – both to Cape Town and to the small towns. Many migrants follow friends and relatives who send word back home regarding prospects in the Western Cape. It is not often, however, that families follow in the wake of their menfolk. It would seem to be more a case of young men seeking a new life in a foreign country with good prospects. The high incidence of youngish men unaccompanied by females has resulted in a high incidence of fraternisation with local females which has led to accusations that ‘these foreigners are stealing our women’. Another aspect of this is the increasing number of marriages of convenience which give foreigners legal status, the right to work or access to housing subsidies. Very often these brides are ‘bought’ from local families for very high prices. The Somalians, who are far more religious and insular, do not participate in these practices.

Although many migrants come to the Western Cape with the view of returning when things improve in their own countries, most see themselves as being here permanently for the next few years.

5.3 Interaction Within and Between Migrant Groups

It is evident from the responses received that there is a strong support structure existing within settled groups of migrants from the same country. This support, or social capital, makes it possible for new arrivals to establish themselves and to become self-sufficient. It also results in foreign migrants living in clusters and militates against integration with the local population.
The Somalians have a particularly strong support structure which, as discussed later, is reinforced by local Muslims – particularly when they first arrive. It would seem that their religion and culture is a very strong unifying factor which enables them, as a group, to adapt to their new home much better than most other migrant groups.

With respect to different groups of foreigners, a number of respondents indicated that considerable competition existed sometimes resulting in violence. On the one hand, migrants from a particular country would act together against migrants from another country which is understandable in a situation where there is fierce competition for resources. On the other hand, however, it was found that many of the political and economic differences that existed in their homelands were continued in this country and that considerable enmity existed between groups from the same country but of different persuasions.

With respect to international animosity, the Somalians appear to suffer the most in that they appear to attract the most ill-will from other migrants as well as from the locals. There are a number of reasons for this. The Somalians are particularly successful (and visible) in their street vending activities and therefore there is an element of competitive envy and cries of ‘unfair competition’ – particularly insofar as they appear to be able to underprice all other vendors. They are very distinctive in their dress and in their religious customs – with almost all being Muslims. The Somalians also appear to have a much stronger support network than other nationalities. Being Muslims, they also have the advantage of local Muslim organisations – for example, the Muslim Judicial Council in Athlone - providing support for them when they first arrive in the Western Cape.

In a unpublished study by Bekker and Leilde (2001), a focus group of five foreigners from Rwanda and Congo were asked why they chose to live in ‘coloured’ areas rather than in the black ‘townships’. They felt that it was much safer and that they were less likely to be ostracised or subject to criminal activities which is often the case when living amongst African people. In ‘coloured’ areas. According to the respondents, the locals know that if a person is black that they must be foreign because local blacks would not elect to live amongst ‘coloureds’ and therefore locals would be more friendly towards these foreigners since they were suspicious of South African blacks.
6. LOCAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS FOREIGNERS AND THE ISSUE OF XENOPHOBIA

It is clear from press reports and other written material that xenophobia exists to a significant extent in the Western Cape. It manifests itself in a number of basic forms, such as:

i) the attitude of law enforcement officials and the manner in which they enforce the law
ii) the actions taken by local informal business owners towards competing businesses operated by foreigners
iii) the disposition of local residents towards foreigners who live in their communities
iv) public statements made by different politicians
v) the attitude of the general population towards African immigrants
vi) the underlying ethos of legislation and, in particular, the regulations

Xenophobia raises the important issue of human rights and much of the literature discusses this social phenomenon in this context. The official viewpoint with respect to xenophobia may be found in the following statement by President Mbeki:

‘Our intimate relationship with the rest of our Continent is illustrated by the significant number of fellow Africans who have sought to settle in South Africa since 1994. Undoubtedly, this trend will continue, adding a new richness to our society. Many of these new immigrants bring with them important skills that our country needs. Many of them are also people who are creative, full of initiative and driven by an enterprising spirit. The more they impart these characteristics to us as well, the better we will be as a people and a society. Necessarily, we must continue to be vigilant against any evidence of xenophobia against the African immigrants. It is fundamentally wrong and unacceptable that we should treat people who come to us as friends as though they are our enemies. We should also never forget that the same peoples welcomed us to their own countries when many of our citizens had to go into exile as a result of the brutality of the apartheid system. To express the critical importance of Africa to ourselves, both black and white, we should say that we are African or we are nothing’. (ANC Today, May 2001, cited in SAMP, 2001)

Notwithstanding this statement and the accompanying legislation, xenophobia is a major issue facing African migrants to this country. In many ways this is not surprising given the state of the economy and the shortage of social and economic resources. SAMP (2001) has produced an important and comprehensive report dealing, inter alia, with the attitude of South Africans to the volume of immigration, a comparison of attitudes held by South Africans with those held elsewhere in the world, attitudes towards amnesty, perceived threats from immigration, attitudes towards government policing measures and the likelihood of people taking action against foreigners in their
communities or in the workplace. Some of the major findings, of relevance to this study, are as follows:

- **South Africans as a whole are not tolerant of outsiders (from anywhere) living in the country**
- **South Africans, in general, do not support the idea of immigration amnesties with white respondents (76%) being more antagonistic than Blacks (40%)**
- **The majority of South Africans currently believe that immigration impacts unfavourably on the country**
- **South Africans favour forceful approaches to controlling immigration on the country’s borders**
- **A third of respondents indicated that they personally would try to prevent migrants from neighbouring SADC countries from moving into their neighbourhood, operating a business, becoming a fellow worker or having their children in the same classroom**
- **A large proportion of respondents were opposed to African foreigners enjoying the same access to health and educational services (40%) or access to housing (54%) although 47% felt that they should be allowed to vote in elections**

What follows are a number of quotations from several newspapers illustrating some popular perceptions of the problem.

‘there is a fine line between xenophobia and crime related incidents in Langa, as criminal activities are often driven by xenophobic sentiments. This means criminals direct their violence towards the most vulnerable groups of people in the community’. (representative of the CT Refugee Forum cited in Cape Argus, 2000a)

‘In a study by SAMP (2001), it was shown that South Africans display distinctly negative reactions to foreigners from African countries – asked to choose, citizens of all races showed a definite preference for European and North American immigrants. About 40% of respondents were opposed to Africans from elsewhere enjoying equal access to basic services. (cited in Mail and Guardian, 2001a)

‘According to the Cape Town Refugee Forum, between June 1998 and January 1999 more than 30 incomers were killed – for the crime of looking different or not speaking local languages well. Some refugees are pushed from trains. Others have been shot at. In the townships they are accused of stealing women from their boyfriends and spreading HIV/AIDS’. (Cape Argus, 1999)

‘Earlier this year it was reported that 30 refugees had been chased from their homes and businesses in Du Noon (a new housing project) which forced the local authority to house them temporarily in tents. The majority of homes vacated by the refugees (both formal and informal) were subsequently occupied by Du Noon locals’. (Cape Argus, 2001).
‘Foreigners even have to worry about the way they dress. An immigrant from the Ivory Coast was quoted as saying: “rolled up shirt sleeves or trousers that were long enough to hit your shoes and cover your socks were dead giveaways, singling him out as a foreigner. You even had to be careful about the way you shaved and you couldn’t speak French in the streets”’.(Sunday Independent, 2001a)

‘Some foreigners have indicated that, by living in close proximity with South Africans, they have been able to educate locals about there reasons for being here and have managed to forge better relationships with them. In their view the real problem is ‘institutionalised xenophobia’ where the harassment, disrespect and blatant hostility was displayed to foreigners by the police, officials in the department of home affairs and at state hospitals. A study by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation suggests that foreigners “are frequently treated as an homogeneous category of illegal aliens”. Officials tended to tar refugees, asylum-seekers and foreigners legally and illegally in SA with the same brush, treating them as real or potential criminals, job snatchers and wooers of local women. According to this study, corruption and xenophobic discrimination mark the institutional interface between foreigners and South African officials.(Sunday Independent, 2001a). In a subsequent article, Zonke Majodina, from the SA Human Rights commission, discusses this phenomenon of “official xenophobia” in greater depth. (Sunday Independent, 2001b)

Notwithstanding the above report, xenophobia by local residents does appear to persist. A recent newspaper report gives details of physical attacks on foreigners, many of which have resulted in death, on the Cape Flats. (Cape Argus, 2001b)

Police dog attacks on Somalis are reported in the press. (Cape Times, 2001)


The harassing treatment handed out to African foreigners by officials, contrasted with the more positive treatment of non-African foreigners is discussed in a recent article by Khadija Magardie entitled ‘the Pale Strangers’. (Mail and Guardian, 2001b)

Newspapers clearly play an important part in influencing public attitudes towards African migrants - usually in a negative way. According to SAMP (2001b) only a very small proportion of South Africans actually come into contact with African foreigners – 80% of respondents having little or no contact. The following headlines, taken from Cape Town newspapers, illustrates this point:

- Relentless refugee tide sweeping into SA
- Illegal immigration alarming
- Thousands of refugees make city their home
- Africa’s flood of misery pours into Cape Town
- Africa floods into Cape Town
- City haven for victims of Africa's wars and woes
- Western Cape paying plenty to deport aliens
7. THE VIEWS OF LOCAL RESIDENTS: FIELD SURVEY RESULTS

7.1 Survey Method

In this section, the results of the field survey that was conducted in three existing settlements are presented. These results are then compared with the findings obtained from the reading and from interviews with government officials, the police and NGOs. The settlements included in the study are typical ‘one plot/one house’ developments; these are: Philippi East – a site and service development, Site ‘C’ in Khayelitsha – also a site and service development, and Delft – a newly built, formal township. In these three areas, respondents live in either formal or informal structures at relatively low densities.

Of the three settlements, Delft is the most poorly located with respect to access to economic activities and Philippi East is the best located. A sample of twenty respondents was selected randomly from each settlement. An open-ended questionnaire was administered. Interviews were conducted mainly in Xhosa in the three settlements. The survey process was difficult to conduct in the three settlements due to the need to obtain the permission of community leaders to conduct the study. The fieldworker was treated, initially, with considerable suspicion.

It is important to note that the findings from the field surveys are based on a small sample of settlements and that the situation prevailing in other settlements in the Western Cape might result in local residents having a totally different perception of foreign migrants.

The sample statistics are given in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Sample Respondent Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Male %</th>
<th>Formally Employed %</th>
<th>Living Situation</th>
<th>Formally Dwelling %</th>
<th>Informal Dwelling %</th>
<th>Flat %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Philippi East</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site ‘C’</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delft</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All respondents were twenty five years of age or older.

7.2 Results of Survey

- *To what extent are foreigners living in your settlement?*

Typical responses were: ‘there are many’, ‘there are too many’, ‘quite a lot’. Clearly there is a significant number of foreigners in all settlements but never
in the majority. A number of respondents indicated that this was an increasing number with ‘more and more new faces each day’. Respondents in Delft were more inclined to say ‘we have a few’ rather than ‘there are many’ as in the case of Philippi East and Site ‘C’ indicating possibly that Delft has a fewer number of foreigners. The ‘too many’ response that occurred many times in Philippi East and Site ‘C’ reveals the xenophobic attitude of many residents.

- **Where do these foreigners come from?**

Respondents were well informed when it came to this question with almost no ‘do not know’ answers. Table 3 below indicates the frequency of countries mentioned:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Times Mentioned as a %</th>
<th>Times Mentioned</th>
<th>Proportion by Sample Area</th>
<th></th>
<th>Philippi East %</th>
<th>Site ‘C’ %</th>
<th>Delft %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>23,9</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>19,3</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17,5</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8,8</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8,8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8,2</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7,0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2,9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,8</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1,1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1,1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Size</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A number of interesting points arise from this table.

i) the absence of Somalians from the three areas sampled, notwithstanding their prominence as street vendors. It would appear that they make a living closer to their work opportunities which are not in the ‘townships’ or they, being Muslim, are more likely to be living in ‘coloured’ areas where most Muslims live.

ii) it is surprising that Nigerians are so common in these areas. Discussions with government officials and others had indicated that they were more likely to be found residing in high density areas such as Sea Point and Muizenberg rather out on the periphery of the city.

iii) that there is a complete absence of Mozambicans. It would appear that the large numbers that are known to be in the country are confined to other areas.
– particularly Guateng notwithstanding the fact that they were mentioned constantly in earlier interviews with government officials and others

e) the complete absence of migrants from Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland; perhaps they are not seen by the locals as foreigners

vi) that the differences between the three areas is, in many cases, very considerable

It should be noted that the above figures do not represent the actual proportions of foreign migrants in each area but, rather, the perceptions that local residents have of the source of these people.

• **What sort of work do they do?**

Respondents in this case were not always clear as to the types of activities foreigners are involved in. Many said that they are involved in ‘business’. What did come across in a few responses was the somewhat surprised view that these foreigners were very business minded and very skilled at what they did. Eight activities were mentioned repeatedly; these are:

- # Street vending mainly in clothes, cigarettes and sweets
- # Shoe repairs
- # Handcrafts – manufacture and sales
- # Barbershops
- # Car repairs including panel beating
- # Security firms
- # Cell phone franchises
- # Restaurant workers

• **Do the men come first followed by their families?**

In all three areas, men were reported to be by far in the majority and were only rarely followed by their families. In many cases these men linked up with, and sometimes married, the local women. Foreign women, who did live locally were those who dealt in handcrafts and old clothes. Foreign women, mainly Somalians, were also seen ‘in town’.

• **Do they go back to where they come from and then return again?**

The general opinion here was that this happened but not very frequently. One of the reasons for the reluctance of foreigners to go back was that, having entered the country illegally, they might experience problems getting back into South Africa again. An attitude that came out in some of the interviews was: why would they want to go back – they have it so good here? Fear of the wars ranging in some of the countries was also given as a reason for them not making the trip. It was generally thought that ‘these foreigners are here permanently’; that they have given up hope of ever going back. A number of respondents replied that some foreigners who left went on to countries overseas such as America.
• How did they get a place to live?

and

• Do they live in shacks or formal houses?

The survey showed that there were no particular differences between the three areas with respect to how foreigners were housed and how they obtained this accommodation. Respondents indicated that migrants live both in shacks and formal houses. In both cases they pay rental. The following methods of obtaining a place to live predominate:

- renting a formal house or a shack and moving in with other foreigners
- building one’s own shack
- moving in with a local girlfriend
- buying a house – both formally and informally
- entering into a marriage of convenience and obtaining a subsidy to build a house

Although in all three settlements foreigners would not be eligible for state subsidies and therefore could not be the initial owners of the properties, a recent study (Boaden and Karam, 2001) has shown that foreigners very often purchase properties both formally and informally from their original owners who are in desperate need of cash. It was clear from the responses that foreigners preferred living in formal houses and that in most cases they could afford to do so. One resident mentioned that ‘they stay anywhere as long as they can hide their faces at night’ – suggesting, perhaps, that foreigners are afraid to be seen at night in these areas.

Some welfare organisations help migrants to find accommodation. It would seem, however, that local residents come forward with offers of accommodation in order to earn extra money. One local indicated that he looked for accommodation for them because ‘he has good relations with most of them’. One respondent mentioned that foreigners sometimes ‘hired people to buy on their behalf’. This must happen where the legal position of the foreigner is in doubt.

A common mode of operation appears to be that one foreigner finds a house to rent and then brings in other male foreigners to share the rent.

• Do they get on well with the local residents?

and

• What do the local people feel about these foreigners?

In some cases the personal attitude towards foreigners influenced the way people answered this question. The majority opinion was that they personally got on well with foreigners but that other people disliked them. Male respondents in particular gave an almost 100% ‘yes’ answer to the first question while the Philippi East survey got a large negative response from females only (55% of females answering ‘no’ to the first question).
Reasons given for foreigners not getting on well with locals included:

- they treat us women like prostitutes
- they accept low wages and are therefore employed first
- they steal the local men’s girlfriends
- they do not speak our language

Reasons given for getting on well with locals:

+ they give us jobs
+ they are nice people
+ they try to speak Xhosa
+ workshops that were held to encourage us to welcome foreigners

In a number of cases respondents were of the opinion that, while they personally got on well with migrants, they faced negative attitudes from others in the community and elsewhere. Although not mentioned in the survey, much of the positive attitude towards migrants could be based on the fact that they pay rental to some of the locals as well as providing informal jobs and are therefore seen in a positive light.

- Do they tend to settle near or with other foreigners?
and
- Do they stick to themselves?
and
- Do they support/help one another a lot?

As one would expect foreigners tend to settle in groups within the local community. This does not mean, however, that they isolate themselves. There appears to be a fair amount of conversation and other interaction with the locals. Although relationships with local women is often resented, it is likely that this creates linkages once these relationships have been ‘sanctioned’ by friends and relatives.

Foreigners, according to some of the respondents, tend to move around in groups, they do not walk about on their own – possibly for security reasons. They are to be found in shebeens in groups. These groups are defined usually by nationality with different nationalities rarely mixing. Anti-social behaviour within these groups results in the transgressor being ‘thrown out’.

The mutual support that exists between foreigners is particularly strong. This support takes the form of providing food, clothes finding accommodation and paying the rent for those who have just arrived or who are suffering from lack of income. An example was given of foreigners sharing clothes to the extent that they would buy large-sized pairs of shoes so that a number of them could use them when required. People with successful businesses are particularly supportive in providing jobs and setting others up in business. One respondent made the point that ‘unlike us, they help those who are suffering’.
• **Do you think that they add to the crime in the area? In what way?**

Feelings over this issue are a little ambiguous. About 50% maintained that they did add to crime in the area, 45% thought not and 5% did not know. From the way people responded, it was clear that very few people had any personal knowledge or experience of foreigners committing crime but that, rather, they had seen something on TV or it was a perception concerning the whole of Cape Town rather than their own areas. There were no significant differences between areas or by gender.

The types of crimes mentioned frequently were:

- drug sales by syndicates – by far the most frequently mentioned activity
- fraudulent use of Telkom telephones
- false ID documents including the theft of ID documents
- illegal weapons dealing
- unlicensed shebeens
- general burglary
- invalid cheques

There was no mention of car theft. The only nationality mentioned frequently were the Nigerians who were accused of being mainly involved in drug-dealing. Respondents were quick to mention that not all foreigners were criminals. Interestingly, little animosity was shown by respondents towards foreigners regarding the crimes that they committed. It was almost as if this was expected of people who are struggling to make a living – the drug-dealing of Nigerians, however, was the exception.

It was suggested that fear of reprisals by the locals obviated the perpetration of illegal activities by foreigners. One respondent even suggested that *it is us who rob them*.

Despite the frequent references to illegal activities on the part of migrants, it can be concluded that locals do not see foreigners in a particularly negative light when it comes to criminal activities in their neighbourhoods. A few respondents did express the opinion that the criminals amongst them should be sent home.

• **What is your final view on the foreigner question?**

The findings here were as follows:

- Respondents were overwhelmingly positive towards foreigners in their neighbourhoods with 72% being positive, 14% negative and 14% both positive and negative. The provision of employment opportunities for locals is clearly a major factor in bringing about this positive attitude.
- A number of respondents called for a better understanding of these people and for ‘us to learn from the skills that they bring rather than for locals to exploit them’. There was the implication in some responses that foreigners should be used as a role model for the locals.

- Causes of resentment are acceptance of low wages, the leading astray of local girls with smart cars and money and foreigners not sharing their skills.

- One respondent mentioned that they were good people to borrow from in that they were not too forceful in obtaining repayment. This was the only time that this relationship with foreigners came up. It is conceivable that the positive attitude of locals towards foreigners is partly because of this factor.

- Only one respondent mention the HIV/AIDS risk that foreigners created – particular with respect to their relationship with local girls.

7.3 Comparison of Community Survey Results with Findings from other Sources

Bearing in mind that much of the information contained in Section 3 to 6 based on newspaper reports, interviews with public officials and NGOs and other published sources, it is necessary to contrast these perspectives with those of low-income residents surveyed who live in close proximity to foreigners. In these sections some of these differences are highlighted:

- the level of ill-feeling or xenophobia towards foreigners by local residents is considerably less than that suggested by other sources; this is not to suggest that xenophobia does not exist – particularly from locals running competing businesses; press releases on the subject of foreigners possibly over-emphasise the xenophobia issue since it provides more sensational reading

- the Nigerians, as alleged drug-dealers and as residents, appear to be far more involved in low density residential areas, such as the three surveyed, than was thought; other sources of information seem to suggest that they live and conduct their illegal businesses only in high density areas such as Sea Point

- Somalians, although identified constantly in news items and elsewhere as a major foreigner group, were hardly mentioned in the field survey; they clearly do not live in the three low-density areas surveyed for reasons that have not come out in the study – perhaps the need to live closer to their street vending enterprises and to other Muslim communities, i.e., in ‘coloured’ residential areas

- although only mentioned once in the field survey, the role of foreigners as money lenders to the locals is not raised by other sources in the study
which is surprising since it is very possible that it happens on a significant scale

• the respect shown by local residents towards foreigners because of their skills and apparent success was a finding that did not surface from other information sources

• the importance of foreigners in local communities due to the jobs that they create and the rental that they pay is a factor that is not highlighted in other sources; the manner in which foreigner men seduce young, local females with money also contributes to the local economy

• the absence of any mention of Mozambicans by respondents in these three settlements was surprising since they appear to be very common elsewhere in the country – particularly Guateng; this is probably due to an historic association of Mozambicans with the gold mines
8. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Conclusions are firstly discussed in terms of the research questions set out in the introduction to this report and, secondly, according to findings that emerged that are not covered by these questions.

- **In broad terms, what is the extent (including growth trends) of foreign settlement in the Western Cape?**

  While it was not possible to obtain accurate figures, it is clear that there a significant number of African foreigners in the Western Cape – probably between 30 000 and 50 000. Numbers have grown consistently since 1994. Based on one source, the Western Cape, with approximately 10% of the country’s population, has about 28% of foreign refugees. This figure, however, may vary considerably for all foreign migrants.

- **Gender and age breakdown?**

  The overwhelming majority of foreign African migrants are males between the ages of 20 and 30. Families from their home countries very seldom join foreign migrants.

- **From which countries have these people migrated?**

  Here again exact figures are not available. All SADC countries are well represented except Mozambique, Swaziland, Lesotho and Botswana which provide very few migrants. From elsewhere in Africa, Nigeria, Somalia, Angola, Congo, Kenya and Tanzania are the most frequently mentioned. It was interesting to note that Somalians, although not as numerous as other nationalities, receive a lot of attention in newspaper reports and in the interviews held.

- **Where is the settlement taking place?**

  Mostly in Cape Town but also in many small towns in the province. However, in recent years, with the decline in the economy people have been moving from these towns to Cape Town.

- **Into what category do these residents fit: refugees, people seeking employment opportunities, people seeking business opportunities, or any other?**

  Most migrants are here seeking business and employment opportunities. However, in order to obtain legitimacy many foreigners who continue to stay here illegally seek asylum which gives them the refugee status which entitles them to obtain work..
Is the nature of their migration from other countries permanent, temporary or circulatory?

In most cases it is permanent possibly due to the large distances involved. In some cases, however, people see their stay in the Western Cape as temporary while they seek means of obtaining passage to countries overseas.

What are the living conditions of these people – particularly with respect to housing, health and education?

Housing conditions are reasonable for those living in the lower-density areas where they usually rent either a house or a shack and live together in groups. In higher-density areas such as Sea Point and Muizenberg, living conditions are particularly bad where they are subject to exploitative practices such as gross overcrowding by slumlords. With regard to health and education, conditions are as good as those for the locals since they have full access to both. They do, however, experience problems with xenophobic attitudes of administration officials when first trying to access these two social services.

How well are they integrated or assimilated into local communities?

Apart from problems experienced with local owners of competing businesses, foreigners appear to integrate well with local communities while remaining in their groups and retaining their cultural identities.

How strong are links with the countries from which they migrated?

Due to the fact that a special questionnaire survey of foreigners was not conducted, this question is not answered in this study. It was ascertained that money was sent back and that on occasions families followed the menfolk to this country.

What are the attitudes of local residents towards these foreigners?

Discussion with local residents indicated a relatively high level of goodwill and respect towards foreigners particularly with regard to their skills and apparent success. This finding is in contrast to the xenophobic outlook usually portrayed in the news media.

Other findings are as follows:
• While problems definitely exist with respect to foreign migrants in the Western Cape, it would appear that the ‘problem’ aspect is overstated and that in many ways the presence of these migrants contributes positively to the economic and cultural development of the region. Ways and means must be found to build on the positive aspects of foreigner migration rather than to adopt a reactionary approach as is presently the case.

• Legislation affecting immigrants to this country, in particular the Refugees Act (1998), is far-sighted and based on democratic principles. However, the regulations and the administration of them by government officials is not always sympathetic to foreigners. There does appear to be a contradiction between government policy, as portrayed in the legislation, and public pronouncements by politicians. These contradictions lead to frustrations on the part of those attempting to apply the legislation. The legislation has also resulted in the emergence of a large and expensive bureaucracy concerned solely with this issue.

• There are two types of business activity that divide foreigners into two distinct groups. The one group, which is legal and quasi-legal, such as street vending, is run by small-time entrepreneurs versus big-time entrepreneurs or criminals who engage in drug-dealing, car-stealing, false document production, pimps, arms dealers, protection rackets and seafood smuggling. It was not possible in this study to identify the proportion of migrants involved in each of these two types of business.

• Foreigners are, in many ways, able to out-compete the locals for scarce resources. In the main, they appear to be better equipped with respect to skills, education, work ethic and entrepreneurship. This superiority is well known and understood by the locals, some of whom view them as role models; in other cases it fuels attitudes of xenophobia.

• The number of foreigners living in smaller towns, taken together, is very few compared with metropolitan Cape Town. Over the past five years many of these migrants have moved to Cape Town due to declining economic opportunities in these towns.

• Foreigners create work opportunities for locals on a significant scale. They also pay rent and purchase dwelling units and, in isolated cases provide loans. Their relative success at wealth creation results in additional spending power in residential neighbourhoods.

• There are two basic types of living arrangement which separate migrants into two distinct groups. There are those who live in low-density, subsidised housing and shacks versus those who live at the behest of slumlords in older, higher density areas such as Sea Point.

• Foreigners now come directly to Cape Town rather than via Johannesburg since Johannesburg is regarded as being over-saturated and therefore more competitive.
For some foreigners living in ‘coloured’ areas is preferable to living in the black ‘townships’ because they are treated better by the locals and there is less crime.

Fraternisation and marriage with local women are a source of much distress amongst locals – particularly insofar as the those foreigners who are relatively wealthy are able to seduce the local women with money. Another major source of anger is the ability of foreign entrepreneurs to underprice the locals and to accept much lower wages for their labour.

Strong support structures exist within foreigner groups although conflict sometimes occurs between foreigner groups – not necessarily according to nationality.

Negative and sensational newspaper reporting would appear to contribute to the xenophobic attitude held by some – particularly since so few people have actually met these foreign migrants.

Surprisingly, the threat of HIV/AIDS posed by foreign migrants to the Western Cape did not feature as an issue in this study – particularly from amongst the local residents surveyed notwithstanding the fact that they were offended by foreigners fraternising with and marrying the local young women.
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