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Migration Context and Contestations

Introduction

Migration to South Africa, especially from the rest of Africa, increased tremendously after 1994 (Adepoju 2003, 2010). Census data (Statistics South Africa 2003, 2012) suggest significant increases in the number of immigrants from African countries, which illustrates that South Africa continues to be a destination of choice on the African continent which is plagued by a litany of economic and political crises (World Migration Report 2000; Comaroff and Comaroff 2001; Adepoju 2003; Crush et al. 2006; Campell 2010; Kalitanyi and Visser 2010). The increase in the number of immigrants has led to tension (Crush and Frayne 2010; Krieger 2010; McGregor 2010a). As is the case in many parts of the world (Mawadza and Crush 2010), the tension between immigrants and citizens of the host country is topical in South Africa, precisely because of the anti-immigration debate and the contestations that it generates.

A number of researchers (Crush 2000; Neocosmos 2006, 2008; Nyamnjoh 2006, 2007; Laher 2010; Mawadza and Crush 2010) have focused their research on the anti-immigration debate and how it is

aimed more at African immigrants, as opposed to other groups of immigrants—it is this debate that is important in this book. This debate shows that there is the perception that African immigrants are not valuable members of South African society (Mawadza and Crush 2010; Laher 2010). Their presence is associated with a number of problems within the host country (Neocosmos 2006, 2008; Nyamnjoh 2006, 2007, 2010; Crush 2008a; Campell 2010). Given the often negative debate around African immigrants within South Africa, the result is that these immigrants battle to find employment within the formal sector. Despite their legal status, some African immigrants are subjected to exclusion and discrimination (Landau 2010) and cannot access social services (*The Star*, 25 October 2012), such as health care (Crush and Tawodzera 2014). These immigrants are often subjected to arrest, detention and deportation, which lowers their ability to successfully enter the formal employment sector (Landau 2010). For this reason, immigrants who are not able to access formal employment tend to rely on self-employment (Landau 2010) in the form of small, sometimes informal businesses in order to generate an income to sustain them within South Africa.

Although the phenomenon of African immigrants within South Africa is well documented in terms of the perception of these immigrants, little research has been done on the types and nature of African immigrant traders, nor has much research been undertaken on the contribution that these traders have made to the social and economic milieu of the Johannesburg inner city. This book is therefore based on a study of the nature and type of trading ventures that have been established by African immigrants in the Johannesburg inner city using a deconstructionist approach. The overarching aim is to evaluate the contribution made to the Johannesburg inner city by these African immigrant traders.

The Contestation

A Southern African Migration Project study undertaken in 2006 found that South Africa is a highly intolerant and hostile country to foreign nationals, more so than any other country in the world (Crush 2008a).

This observation confirms earlier research by several scholars such as: Crush (1996, 1997, 1998; 2001a, b), Crush and McDonald (2001), Crush and Williams (2001), Mattes et al. (2002), Dodson (2002) and Crush and Pendleton (2004). Foreigners, typically African immigrants, are blamed for taking jobs away from South Africans (Laher 2010), engaging in criminal activities and draining the country's resources (Mattes et al. 2002; Landau 2009). Such views are also held by government officials, some South African citizens, the police and private organisations (Mattes et al. 2002; Landau 2005, 2006, 2007, 2010).

This anti-foreigner context, especially against African immigrants, provides the basis for actions which can be interpreted as victimisation and harassment of these immigrants. For example, the 2003 City of Johannesburg and Department of Home Affairs, so-called crime fighting operation, whose real intention was to get rid of African immigrants (Landau 2006). The same can be said about Operation Buyelekhaya (Operation Go Back Home), which was organised in Alexandra Township with the calculated purpose of expelling African immigrants from South Africa, soon after 1994 (Palmary et al. 2002). A study by Peberdy and Majodina (2000) suggests that Somali children faced challenges of access to education in South Africa. Research by Crush and Tawodzera (2011) found that Zimbabwean children faced obstacles in accessing education in public schools. African immigrants were excluded and discriminated against in health facilities (Crush and Tawodzera 2014). In the recent past, Somali shops were specifically targeted and attacked (Brooke 2012, 2013; Ivier 2013b, c; *The Star* 19 May 2011: 6; *The Star* 31 October 2013a: 2, 2013b: 13, 2013c: 13) and some of the Somalis were even killed in May 2013 (*The Star* 29 May 2013b: 4) and in September 2013 (Ivier 2013c). The attacks on African immigrants were on the increase (Ivier 2013b; *The Star* 31 October 2013b: 13) and in April 2015 escalated into a full xenophobic rage, which started in the South African province of KwaZulu-Natal and soon spread to other provinces, such as Gauteng (*Sowetan* 13 April 2015b, 15 April 2015a; *Sunday Times*, 5 April 2015a, 12 April 2015b, 19 April 2015c). These attacks left a 22-year-old Ethiopian shop owner dead on 10 April 2015 from burn wounds suffered after their shop in

Umlazi, Durban, was torched (*Sunday Times* 12 April 2015b). In the Durban Central Business District (CBD), there were violent and bloody confrontations between South Africans and African migrants (*Sowetan* 15 April 2015a; *The Citizen* 15 April 2015). As these attacks spread to Johannesburg in Gauteng Province, there was mayhem and destruction. African migrants were attacked and displaced in areas near Germiston in the East Rand (*Sowetan* 20 April 2015c). Shops owned by African migrants were looted in Jeppestown (De Klerk 2015; Hawker 2015). Similar incidents were reported in Alexandra, Johannesburg (Aboobaker 2015), which led to the brutal murder of a 35-year-old Mozambican vendor on 18 April 2015, by four South African men. Clearly, the issue of African immigrants in contemporary South Africa is of geographical relevance, because it illustrates the contestation between African immigrants and South African citizens, which demonstrates the dynamics between people, space, place and the environment. The desire to expel and/or murder African immigrants is founded on the myth that they are the threatening other—the problem that must be gotten rid of.

Theorising African Immigrants as the Threatening Other

Michlic (2006) explored how Poles, in the different stages of the development of the Polish nation-state, have constructed and perceived Jews, with whom they have lived for many years, as the threatening other. They have done this by projecting the ‘Jew as the chief harmful alien’ (Michlic 2006: 76). For example, since the 1880s, the myth of the Jew as the threatening other has been sustained and led to the anti-Jewish violence between 1918 and 1939. From 1939 to 1945, there was an increase in Polish exclusivist ethno-nationalism (Michlic 2006). Various political parties promoted different forms of virulent anti-Semitic rhetoric and idioms. The result is that they led to discrimination and violence against Jews and even their death (Michlic 2006). In the name and will of the Polish nation-state, politicians and other writers have used exclusivist ethno-nationalist language, with some political parties even opposed to the ‘inclusion of Jews in the definition of the Polish

state' (Michlic 2006: 182). Informed by the work of Michlic (2006), which shows how Jews have always been unfairly blamed for Poland's economic, political and social problems (the threatening other)—leading to their exclusion and murder—I invoke this concept in order to conceptually frame how African immigrants are perceived as the threatening other in contemporary South Africa.

Based on a survey of the popular press from about 2008 up to 2012, it became clear to me that some newspapers attempted to objectively report on African immigrants in South Africa in terms of what these immigrants did and contributed. In the same context, I noted that some newspapers regretted the precarious existence of African immigrants as a result of xenophobic attacks. Examples include an article in *The Citizen*, (20 July 2010a: 6), titled 'Fellow Africans worry over threats', which describes the manner in which African immigrants were being threatened and in some cases attacked. In the same vein, *The Citizen* (15 July 2010b: 13), in an article titled 'Rainbow nation's dark side', castigated xenophobic attacks.

Another report in the *Sunday Times* (2 January 2011a: 21), titled, 'A living to be made from fear and loathing, so they say', states that African immigrants are not liked, even though, through their shops, provided a service to South African consumers. This idea is corroborated by the *Sunday Times* (29 January 2012: 12). *The Sowetan* (14 July 2010: 13) carried an article titled, 'Criminals are behind xenophobia', which argued that xenophobia is caused by criminals. In addition, *The Sowetan* (25 May 2011: 12) reported that 'Talks can stop thugs causing xenophobia', by claiming that, although local businesses complained that African immigrant traders were taking away their livelihood, the accused immigrants argued that they were doing business legally.

Even though there is an attempt at positive reporting on what the African immigrants do and bring to South Africa, the majority of reports, transmit the idea that African immigrants are a problem in South Africa. An article from the *Daily Sun* (17 April 2008: 8) gives the impression that African immigrants are a problem because 'too many South Africans are walking around unemployed while many foreigners, often prepared to work for less money have jobs. Job creation has not kept up with reality in our country'. Another article from the *Daily Sun* (17 April 2008: 1) displayed the headlines: 'Bob's Tsunami', suggesting

that Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa were a tsunami. Yet another *Daily Sun* article (14 April 2008: 3) asserted that 'many of us live in fear of foreign gangsters and conmen. Much terror has been caused by gangs of armed Zimbabweans, Mozambicans and others', and the *Sunday Times* (18 May 2008: 6) declared in its editorial that 'Poor people feel the competition first-hand. They see the limited benefits of the liberation for which they struggled hard being usurped by newcomers'. In this way, the media 'makes up the numbers' of African migrants in South Africa 'for alarmist effect' (Crush and Tevera 2010: 4). This alarmist effect may be targeted at reaching the general South African populace, and it may not be a flawed argument to suggest that the media frames popular perceptions. That being the case, Mawadza and Crush (2010: 372) have further argued that the role of the media in 'actively shaping South African popular opinion on migration is incontrovertible'. In this way, the media fails, first to be objective and second exonerates the South African population from xenophobia. Regarding the first point, 'the media is distinctly uncomfortable with the reality that xenophobia is pervasive and deep-rooted phenomenon in South Africa' and this is so because 'it is impossible to answer the question "Why are South Africans xenophobic" without addressing the issue of the culpability of the media'. For this reason, 'that the media are not simply responding to events but actively shaping South African popular opinion on migration is incontrovertible' (Mawadza and Crush 2010: 372).

Hence, a comment still relevant today but made over a decade ago by Crush (2000: 12) that 'unfortunately, South Africa's long history of cross-border migrations seems to have faded from public view and myopia is everywhere evident, particularly in the more popular media with historical attention deficit', is telling of how the media has sensationalised and overdramatised the invasion of South Africa by immigrants, especially from African countries. Another article from the *Sunday Times* (2 January 2011b) amplifies this idea in an article titled, 'Our future needs tough calls' by arguing that, 'South Africa, like any other civilised country, must look after its own interests if it wants to guarantee its citizens prosperity and protect its national security'. This is because 'given the poor state of many African economies, it is not surprising that large numbers of Africans have entered South Africa

illegally'. For this cause, 'South Africa—now and in the near future—will have to cope with three internal threats: overextension of its limited human financial and other resources, social, political, economic and ecological instability and a renewed spate of xenophobia'. According to this report, what is disturbing is that 'the presence of many undocumented foreign nationals in the country surely exacerbates the problem of food security. These foreigners can threaten the national security on many fronts. Locally these foreign nationals form stakeholder organisations, which they use to demand their own rights in the country as per the dictates of our constitution'. This situation 'is something that also requires decisive action from the government because South Africa could, in the long run, encounter situations similar to the one that led to civil strife in Ivory Coast' (*Sunday Times* 2 January 2011: 21).

Several *Daily Sun* issues consistently publish dramatic and sensational stories which portray African immigrants in a negative light. Many examples abound, for example: 'They wait for darkness before they attack! Aliens use muthi to steal our cattle' (*Daily Sun* 9 May 2008: 11); 'War against aliens! Thousands forced to flee Alex' (*Daily Sun* 14 May 2008: 2); 'Blood and flames! Aliens killed and injured as new attacks stoke flames of hatred' (*Daily Sun* 19 May 2008: 3) and 'The Alien Terror! Helicopter chases warring crowds! Fleeing the mighty wind! Going home to Moz' (*Daily Sun* 20 May 2008: 3). The idea propagated in these reports is that African immigrants deserve this terror, they deserve to be pushed out of South Africa for causing problems, ranging from the use of magical powers to theft of livestock (*Daily Sun* 9 May 2008: 11) to promiscuity as suggested by this heading: 'Bloody end of alien lover' (*Daily Sun* 9 May 2008: 2).

Furthermore, *The Sowetan* (2 June 2010: 3) urged the government to 'Control the borders', highlighting and justifying the deployment of the army at the Mozambican and Zimbabwean borders with South Africa, and because not only were immigrants entering South Africa illegally but South African citizens and farmers in these areas should be protected from criminal activities. Again, *The Sowetan* (14 November 2011: 9), in an article titled 'Making sense of xenophobia', argued that African immigrants were worsening the South African problems, by stating that 'South Africa has its own serious social and economic problems which

include poverty, a high rate of unemployment, high levels of illiteracy, homelessness and a myriad of socio-economic challenges'. The tone of this article is basically that African immigrants are a problem.

In addition, *The Sowetan* (2 May 2012), in an article titled 'Foreigners do not benefit South Africa', expressed the feeling that those South Africans who 'engaged in civil unrest, service delivery protests or xenophobic attacks saying that foreigners are taking their jobs are not as wrong as many people would like to believe. Just go to any restaurant, supermarket, construction site, petrol station and any other workplace to see this'. The article proceeded to blame unemployment on African immigrants by asserting that 'for every unskilled job that a foreigner holds, the unemployment rate rises and crime by South Africans motivated by hunger increases. How can a Zimbabwean, Nigerian, Ethiopian or Mozambican be a refugee if there is no war in their countries?' (*The Sowetan* 2 May 2012: 12).

Furthermore, Nyamnjoh (2010: 61) has shown that the media in South Africa has succeeded in projecting African immigrants in the country as '*cam-no-gos*— thereby likening them to a stubborn skin rash that itches terribly'. The media in South Africa sustains the image that there is a deluge or tide of immigrants that is flooding into South Africa (McDonald 2000; Fine and Bird 2006; Vigneswaran 2007; Nyamnjoh 2010). This representation or misrepresentation of African immigrants makes them a problem; they are a threat to South Africa. Linked to this media tendency, African immigrants are victimised for having foreign names and even misperceptions are widespread (Nyamnjoh 2006). There is one case where a foreigner 'was arrested for walking like a Mozambican' and accused of being an illegal immigrant (Nyamnjoh 2006: 51).

Firstly, based on the above reporting by the popular press, it appears as if African immigrants are often depicted as the threatening other. Secondly, the idea is widespread that South Africa is separated from the rest of Africa (Mamdani 1996; Dyers and Wankah 2012), which yields dark-skinned (Nyamnjoh 2006) backward and primitive people (Muzondidya 2010) who are making efforts to attain civilisation (Nyamnjoh 2006). Thirdly, this insinuation amounts to the depersonalisation of these immigrants. Indeed, the recent comments by the South African President, Mr Jacob Zuma that the roads in Johannesburg

needed to be paid for because ‘We can’t think like Africans, in Africa, generally. We are in Johannesburg, this is Johannesburg. It’s not some national road in Malawi’ (Ivier 2013d) were interpreted by many African immigrants as not only rude, but indeed a confirmation of the idea that South Africa is separated from the rest of backward Africa. A political scientist, Ralph Mathekga, cited by Ndenze and Seale (2013), argued that: You can’t clarify that unfortunately. And my view is very simple. It was an expression of Afro-pessimism and he made a clear emphasis. We can’t have afro-pessimism coming from the highest office in the land. The comments were ‘beyond undiplomatic’ and fed into the perception that South Africans thought highly of themselves in relation to their fellow Africans. (Ndenze and Seale 2013)

The popular press in South Africa—from about 2008 to 2012—suggested to me that African immigrants are oftentimes regarded and portrayed as a burden in contemporary South Africa. Even though there is an attempt at positive reporting, two issues emerge. Firstly, I could not find thorough and extensive attempts to clearly highlight the positives which African immigrants actually and potentially bring. Secondly, the same newspapers that attempted to objectively report on African immigrants also print accounts that transmit the views that African immigrants are a problem in South Africa.

Furthermore, articles from some of these newspapers (such as *The Sowetan* 14 July 2010: 13) also deny the existence of xenophobia by apportioning the blame on criminals. Hence, there is no inherent contradiction to the suggestion that while there is some positive reporting, the insinuation that African immigrants are a problem in South Africa still prevails; there being a threatening other is still sustained more than the actual and potential positives. It appears that media tendency towards African immigrants is negative. Consequently, and in the final analysis, African immigrants are seen as people who: take away jobs from South Africans (*Daily Sun* 17 April 2008: 8; *The Sowetan* 14 November 2011: 9). They invade and generally take over from South Africans and do not bring and/or add value to the economy (*The Sowetan* 14 November 2011: 9; *Sunday Times* 2 January 2011: 21; *The Sowetan* 2 May 2012: 12). They are accused of being responsible for criminal and other anti-social activities (*Sunday Times* 18 May 2008: 6; *Daily Sun* 9 May 2008: 11; *The Sowetan* 2 June 2010: 3), exploiting

and destroying the social and physical infrastructure and are a burden on South Africa and its patrimony (*Daily Sun* 17 April 2008: 1). Furthermore, they are seen as swamping the South African health services (Crush and Tawodzera 2014: 656) and also bring competition for resources (Crush 1996, 2001a, 2008; *Sunday Times* 2 January 2011: 21). They do not benefit South Africa (*The Sowetan* 2 May 2012: 12) and deserve to be harassed, arrested and deported (*Daily Sun* 20 May 2008: 3; *The Sowetan* 2 May 2012: 12). This is how the concept of the threatening other is framed, located and will be adopted in this book.

Deconstruction

Deconstruction is ‘an analytical strategy which exposes multiple ways through which discourse can be interpreted and it is able to reveal ideological assumptions in a way that is sensitive to the suppressed interests of members of disempowered, marginalised groups’ (Martin 1990: 340, cited in Boje 2001: 19), it is ‘openness to the other’ (Gormley 2012: 375) and this constitutes ‘Enlightenment without conditions’ (McQuillan 2009: ix). It also involves ‘unconditional critical liveliness to the world around us, its histories and its futures’ (McQuillan 2009: xi). Royle (2000:11 cited in Royle 2003: 25) defines deconstruction as ‘what remains to be thought’. Deconstruction seeks to attain a ‘critical perspective above and beyond the consensus beliefs in place’ (Lyotard 1984 cited in Norris 2007: 30). It does this by celebrating difference and paying close attention and ‘maximum fidelity’ to research (Wylie 2006: 301). This is because deconstruction is sensitive to the fact that any discourse excludes and legitimates a central point of view and ideology (Boje 2001). Deconstruction is a strategy and not a method (Boje 2001; Biesta 2010), which makes less visible aspects more clear, because the idea of deconstruction is ‘to see both images, to do a double vision’ (Boje 2001: 29). Deconstruction challenges those discourses that are taken for granted (Burman and MacLure 2005) and enables the exposure of micro-discourses within the macro-discourses. Wylie (2006: 3003) amplifies the above point by noting that ‘deconstruction hauntingly demands questioning of normalised assumptions and procedures,

and perhaps above all entails a rethink of how academics such as geographers write'. Given that this book aims to deconstruct the view that African immigrants in South Africa are threatening other, the Derridean deconstructionist approach comes in, because 'deconstruction does not consist in passing from one conceptual order to another, but in overturning and displacing a conceptual order as well as the non-conceptual order with which the conceptual order is articulated' (Derrida in *Margins of Philosophy* 1982: 329 cited in Stocker 2006: 189).

I do not delve into the philosophical application of the term deconstruction, but will accept its inherent analytical logic. That is because, this is a geographical analysis, which employs a philosophical tool to enhance an interpretation. On this point, Wylie (2006: 299) observes that deconstruction can be deployed within research on any topic because it conveys a sense of analysis or scrutiny of the topic. This is because deconstruction aims to undermine and oppose any claims to 'truth, certainty, and authority'. Deconstruction dismantles (Cheng 2012) and 'destabilizes notions of truth, clarity and certainty through a spectral logic: it differentiates, disturbs, and unsettles' (Wylie 2006: 299–300), which helps to achieve a deeper understanding of social reality (Sanchez-Prada and Beyebach 2014) by reaching 'other layers of meaning, layers that are different from the supposedly present' (Frers 2013: 433). It is an approach that 'interprets interpretation and shatters the logic of main discourses through their interrogation, shaking up, dislocating and transforming the verbal, conceptual and other landscapes' (Royle 2003: 25). By deploying the Derridean deconstructionist approach, I should be able to show that 'knowledge is always insufficient or incomplete without the alternative representations' (Burman and MacLure 2005: 287) and this suggests that the widespread view of African immigrants as the threatening other, may be incomplete knowledge and this work should be able to add the other part.

I am intimately aware that the concept of deconstruction is hotly contested in philosophical circles, with some authors such as Wolfreys (1998) denying its existence as an analytical framework. However, surveyed literature (Derrida 1981; Boje 2001; Royle 2003; Burman and MacLure 2005; Wylie 2006; Stocker 2006; Norris 2007; Biesta 2009, 2010; Cheng 2012; Gormley 2012; Frers 2013; Sanchez-Prada

and Beyebach 2014) suggests that deconstruction is an accepted analytical strategy or approach to the extent that it stimulates new lines of thought about given discourses, an assumption that would apply to the issue of African immigrants in South Africa. Although I am also aware of the debates around and the variants of deconstruction, it is not the focus of this work to interrogate the merits of these contestations. The deconstruction guidelines developed by Boje and Dennehy (1993 cited in Boje 2001: 21) and applied in this book are: reinterpreting the hierarchy, recognising rebel voices, looking at the other side of the story, denying the plot, tracing what is not said and resituating the hierarchy (Fig. 2.1). By reinterpreting the hierarchy, the book posits that the dominant discourse that African immigrants are the threatening other is not correct. There is the assumption that this discourse is 'the Real and the Good, while the oppressed or excluded becomes the Unreal and

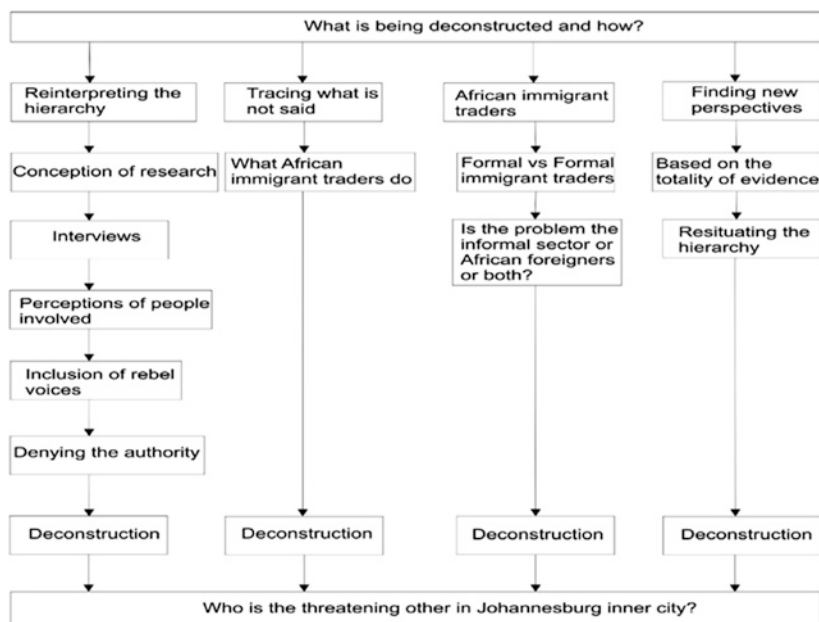


Fig. 2.1 The nature and scope of deconstruction. Source Drawn by author, July 2014

the Bad, something to be burned at the stake' (Boje 2001: 24). In fact, questioning the hierarchy began when this work was conceived based on the portrayal of African immigrants as the *doppelgänger* anti-citizens in South Africa. Writing this book is still a process of reinterpreting the hierarchy. This is the first point of deconstruction.

It is mostly the media, politicians and some South African citizens who negatively label the African immigrants. I probe this particular notion by advancing the argument that the media, politicians and indeed certain sections of the South African citizenry do not know much or are not in regular contact with these immigrants. These negative labels are contested by interviewing African immigrant traders themselves and their South African counterparts, with whom they are in daily or otherwise regular contact. Statements from the newspapers and politicians may not be trusted absolutely, but the information from the people who participate actively in the scene can be considered more valuable in understanding whether indeed they are the threatening other. A study of African immigrant traders, together with their South African counterparts, represents examining social reality in its natural setting; this is regarded as more trustworthy than, for example, the print media. This is because the media does not portray the views of African immigrants themselves together with those of South Africans who interact with these immigrants.

This is the second act of the actual deconstruction, being the nucleus of this book. By asking those involved what they think and do, amounts to, 'denying the authority' (Boje 2001: 21) of one dominant discourse and in the process producing a counter-discourse that includes a 'rebel voice' that would expose marginal perspectives (Boje and Dennehy 1993 cited in Boje 2001: 27)—what and if African immigrant traders contribute to the Johannesburg's inner city. Based on the findings of interviews, this work can 'trace what is not said' and 'fill in the blanks' (Boje 2001: 21), which will provide the grounds on which to 'deny the plot' (Boje 2001: 21) (Fig. 2.1). The plot at the moment is that South Africa is infested with an invading flood of needy and criminal African immigrants (Laher 2010). The plot spells disaster for South Africa on account of the deluge of the African immigrants. This is what is said in the media and public and political discourses (Nyamnjoh 2006, 2007; Neocosmos 2006, 2008; Crush 2008a).

The positives that the African immigrants bring to South Africa are not adequately described; in this regard I trace what is not said and fill in the gaps. Based on employment creation, revenue generation and other social and economic facets, I challenge the discourse of African immigrants being the threatening other, people who are needy (Landau 2008; *The Sowetan* 14 November 2011: 9), criminal (*Sunday Times* 18 May 2008: 6; *Daily Sun* 9 May 2008b: 11; *The Sowetan* 2 June 2010: 3; Muzondidya 2010) and prey on the South African economy (Nyamnjoh 2006, 2007; Neocosmos 2006, 2008; *Sunday Times* 2 January 2011: 21). In this way, the third point of deconstruction is based on what the African immigrants actually do that makes them be or not be the threatening other.

The fourth and final item for deconstruction is finding new perspectives, what Boje (2001: 21) calls 'resituating'. The objective is to re-author the discourse so that 'the hierarchy is resituated and a new balance of views is attained' (Boje 2001: 21). According to the Derridean deconstructionist approach, the questions raised in this book seek to establish whether there are opposing views to one of the African immigrants being the threatening other. This is important because, as Royle (2003), Stocker (2006), Norris (2007) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009) contend, deconstruction necessarily involves reconstruction, which suggests that, from the investigation of the threatening other, the research should achieve a new and objective view (Fig. 2.1).

African Immigrant Traders and Humanistic Geography

The term 'African immigrant traders' is used in this book, to refer to Africans who are not South African citizens, regardless of their immigration status; for example, asylum seekers, refugees, temporary or permanent residents. This clarification is relevant because South Africans are Africans too. Humanistic geography is a critical geographic approach which explores human actions (Nayak and Jeffery 2011) based on their experiences and meanings which they attach to social reality (Entrekin

and Tepple 2006; Nayak and Jeffery 2011). ‘Humanism can be seen as a practice, an interrogative orientation which is integral to modes of both co-existence and critical intellectual engagement’ (Simonsen 2012: 24); it involves understanding and expressing human agency in social reality (Christensen 2014).

A humanist approach in Geography emphasises the human subject (Entrekin and Tepple 2006; Simonsen 2012). This suggests that meaning is not found in objects, but from human subjects as ‘places are not spatial categories but proceed from the on-going dynamic’ of human beings attempting to make Earth their home and create their world (Tuan 1991 cited in Entrekin and Tepple 2006: 32). In this regard, the geographical study of migration is more than a simplistic origin and destination exploration of push-pull factors, but includes an understanding of ‘human experiences of attachment, dislocation, alienation and exile as they are constitutive of the experiential reality and integral parts of migration’ (Entrekin and Tepple 2006: 32).

Accordingly, probing the portrayal of African immigrants as the threatening other is a humanistic geographical and deconstructionist approach because of its ‘challenging, interrupting and interrogating aspects of reality that are so central or entrenched in our understanding of what is normal, that we can come to take them for granted’ (Cheek, 2000 cited in Cheek and Gough 2005: 305). It also involves remaining open to other perspectives, not ‘airbrushing the unrepresentable out of the picture’ and remaining open ‘is inherently geographical by being more sensitive to difference and differentiation to (s)pace than geography ever was’ (Doel 1999; Soja and Hooper 1993 cited in Clarke 2006: 114). Consequently, a humanistic geography ‘deconstructs the orderly lineaments of Euclidean, non-Euclidean and n-dimensional spaces and totalisation and becomes dissimulatory—a conduit for difference, otherness, heterogeneity’ (Doel 1999: 70–71 cited in Clarke 2006: 114); ‘it effects a possible place of difference and alterity’ (Easthope 2002: 4 cited in Clarke 2006: 114). This ‘gives new eyes to see spaces and places in other ways’ (Clarke 2006: 114). Thus, deconstruction is situated at the centre of the humanistic perspective, which drives this work. In an attempt to deconstruct the view that African immigrants are

the threatening other, the people involved in the scene are considered in order to understand the deeper meanings of their lived worlds, 'in terms of the meanings people bring to them' (Denzin and Lincoln 2000: 3). Based on the scope of humanistic geography, this is how and why deconstruction is deployed in this book as an analytical strategy.

For this cause, in-depth interviews were administered in three rounds or phases between 2012 and 2013. In the first round of interviews, from June to September 2012, 40 African immigrant and 40 South African traders were interviewed. African immigrant and South African traders chosen were those who were operating from stalls and shops and were chosen by their willingness to do the interviews. In the second round of interviews from October to December 2012, ten African immigrant and ten South African traders were targeted. Finally, a third round of in-depth interviews, which assumed the status of 'conversations' more than interviews, was undertaken from January to February 2013 and focused on both African immigrant and South African traders. In the third phase, a total of six interviewees were selected: three African immigrant traders and the same number of South African traders.

Regarding the size of the sample, what becomes important is that the chosen respondents provided cases that were carefully examined to illuminate the argument in this book. The issue becomes the extent to which the chosen respondents represented cases, which, through an 'orientation towards the in-depth multi-aspect and holistic investigation of one or a small number of instances' (Iosifides 2011: 202) and 'a holistic description through an iterative process' (Easton 2010: 119), shed light on the issue of the threatening other. In all the phases, South African traders were purposefully sampled for in-depth interviews based on the need to gather their views on and the meanings of African immigrant traders in Johannesburg rather than interviewing ordinary South African citizens who may not know any better than popular opinion. As people who actively interacted with African immigrants, their views and experiences, were considered vital in a book, which attempts to access alternative views on the basis of which deconstruction could be achieved.

Repeated interviews were deployed because they can be regarded as a 'quasi-experimental design' (Kazi 2003: 59), which could serve the

purpose of generating new and deeper insights, on the basis of which theoretical abstractions can be made (Iosifides 2011). Interviews were deployed because they are ‘a means of gathering critical information about the social world’ as they facilitate accessing ‘possible underlying, causal mechanisms’ (Iosifides 2011: 179). In addition, through interviews, ‘the interaction among structural, cultural and agential emergent powers can be grasped’ (Iosifides 2011: 179). They ‘can be powerful means for interpretative understanding of participants’ points of view, lived experiences, preferences and perceptions’ (Iosifides 2011: 178). This is because ‘interview data may be appropriate not only for understanding agential perspectives but also for explaining them’. Interview data can also be related to the ‘wider social contexts [and] to identify causal mechanisms operating at different levels of social reality’. Such data ‘always tell us something about social reality and its real casual powers’ (Iosifides 2011: 179).

Interviews can easily capture the more subjective and value-laden aspects of this work. The subjective and value-laden aspects relate to how African immigrant traders locate themselves in South Africa and the actual and potential contribution that they make to Johannesburg’s inner city, and also how their South African counterparts regard them. The way that both African immigrant and South African traders understand and interpret the perception of the threatening other, should yield useful information. The fact that knowledge or evidence is subjective does not make it insignificant or untrue, because it can be used to shed light on the world of the people being interviewed. That the views of the people are subjective does not make such information less valuable, because ‘when we try to elicit someone’s subjective beliefs, we could say that we are trying to objectively represent their subjectivity’. The fact ‘that something is my subjective belief does not entail that it cannot be true. Subjectivity also refers to the subjective quality of all knowledge—that it can be of and for subjects, and is situated and embodied, even though it is mostly about objects’ (Sayer 2000: 60).

It follows that the value of interviews is that they can assist this analysis to ‘access intense and intimate emotions and experiences that go far beyond words’ (DeLyser and Sui 2014: 295). In addition, Iosifides (2011: 79) states that interviews are also ‘capable of producing data

about agential interpretations, meanings, perspectives, social situations, relations, practices and actions that can be adequately understood and explained'. The data gathered from these interviews were manually analysed by reading through all the data, identifying and establishing themes and descriptions, interrelating themes and descriptions and interpreting the meaning of themes and descriptions, a method recommended by Creswell (2009).

Johannesburg Inner City

Since this book is based on Johannesburg inner city, a quick comment is necessary. The area is spatially broad. It includes, Newtown, Braamfontein, Hillbrow and Joubert Park, Bertrams, Fairview, Jeppestown, Jeppestown Berea, Yeoville, Pageview, Vrededorp, Bellevue, Bellevue East, Observatory; Troyeville, Highlands, Lorentzville, Judith's Paarl, Bezuidenhout Valley; Doornfontein and New Doornfontein, Fairview; Betram's, Kensington; Marshalltown, City and Suburban, Ferreirasdorp and Droste Park, Fordsburg, Burgersdorp, City West, Westgate, Selby Extension and Crown North Extension, Village Main and Wemmer (City of Joburg Guide to Inner City Urban Development Zone 2006: 2). Johannesburg inner city is located in the City of Johannesburg, the largest city in South Africa and has a population of about 4,434,827 (City of Johannesburg-Statistics South Africa 2013). It is the capital city of Gauteng which, according to Wray (2014), is the richest province in South Africa. In addition, 7.1% of the population in the province is made up of immigrants (Statistic South Africa 2012), of whom 82% are from the SADC (Transport trends in the GCR—GCRO Gauteng City-Region 2013).

As Johannesburg is the biggest city in South Africa, this could explain why it is a major attraction for immigrants, and hence described as a city of in-migration (OECD 2011) or 'a quintessentially migrant city', but also 'one of the least-immigrant-friendly cities in the world' (Crush 2008b: 280). Murray (2010: 145) estimates that a quarter of the population of Johannesburg inner city is made up of immigrants 'from virtually everywhere in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly

Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Congo, Ethiopia and Somalia'. It is estimated that there are about '7000 to 10,000 traders' in the Johannesburg inner city (Regional Spatial Development Framework for Region F, 2010–2011: 17). Within the Johannesburg inner city, the concentration of African immigrant traders is not uniform; the highest concentration of African immigrant traders were identified in City and Suburban, Kensington, Jeppestown, Fairview, Troyeville, Highlands, Lorentzville, Judith's Paarl, Bezuidenhout Valley, Yeoville, Bellevue/Observatory, Berea, Hillbrow, Doornfontein, Betrams and Newtown.

Conclusion

This chapter has defined and outlined the nature and dynamic of the contestation between African immigrants and the various sections of the South African society. In particular, the discussion on how and why the targeting of African immigrants is deliberate, if nothing else calculated, is intended to show why this book has elected to focus on these immigrants. The chapter also discussed concepts on which this book is anchored. These include deconstruction, humanistic geographic approach, and the threatening other.

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Deconstructing the Threatening 'Other'

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