# EXAMINING THE CHALLENGES OF RAISING A FAMILY AS A REFUGEE PARENT IN SOUTH AFRICA: A CASE STUDY OF SOMALI REFUGEES IN CAPE TOWN

A mini-thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

## MASTER'S IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

**Bahja Ali Mohamud**

Student Number: 3783450

Institute for Social Development
Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences
University of the Western Cape

**Supervisor: Professor Mulugeta F. Dinbabo**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation entitled *the challenges of raising a family as a refugee parent in South Africa: A case study of Somali refugees in Cape Town,* is my own work. Neither the whole work nor any portion of it has been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university, and all the sources that I have used or quoted have been acknowledged properly and the full references exhibited in the paper.

**Bahja Ali Mohamud**

Signed by:

Date: 20 May 2020

**DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to my beloved parents, Ali Mohamud and Lul Omar, who raised me with the best values possible.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# ABSTRACT

This research foregrounds the experiences of raising a family as a refugee parent in Cape Town, using a case study of Somali refugee parents. Global reports have shown that international migrants make up 3.5% of the world's population, an estimated 272 million people. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 88.9% of international migrants have been displaced and reside within the Sub-Saharan African countries. Somali migrants arrived in South Africa due to a civil war that ravaged Somalia for over 20 years. Several studies investigated the migrants' experiences in the host country. These studies identified housing, employment, legal status, and language barriers as among the main challenges for refugees raising children in the host country. In South Africa, similar challenges were identified, illuminating the challenges of refugees and their expected well-being in South Africa. However, these challenges were not specific to refugee parents raising families in South Africa. In pursuance of this research goal, this study reviews the existing academic literature on the challenges of raising children as a refugee parent in a new context. Moreover, a mixed methodology approach was employed for data collection and analysis. In quantitative research, 50 participants were purposively selected to complete questionnaires, while another 12 were also purposively selected to participate in focus group interviews. As a theoretical framework, the acculturation and social capital theories were applied to this study in order to understand the causes of parents' challenges and their coping strategies in the destination country. However, the empirical data revealed that housing, financial difficulties, documentation, language barriers, fear of losing a child's religious values and a change of parenting roles are the biggest challenges experienced by the Somali refugee parents in South Africa, particularly in Cape Town. The strategies to cope with these challenges include a strong community network and integration. Finally, the study makes recommendations for future policy programs for refugee families residing in South Africa.

*Keywords:* challenges, family, raising, refugees, parents, Somali, Cape Town

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

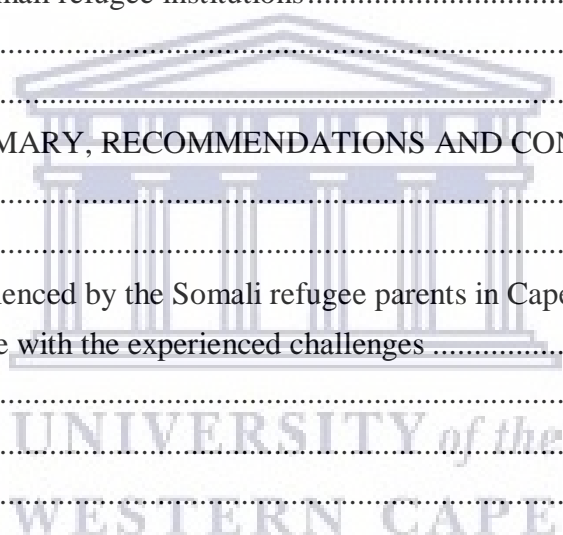| | |
|---|---|
| DHA | Department of Home Affairs |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| IOM | International Organization for Migration |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| SADC | Southern African Development Community |
| StatsSA | Statistics South Africa |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNDESA | United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |

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## 1.0. CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

### 1.1. Introduction

Migration is a global phenomenon. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2019), the migration rate globally is currently at its highest. The preliminary data of international migrants shows a rapid increase in migration flows over recent years. According to the latest United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees report (UNHCR, 2019), an estimated 272 million international migrants live worldwide, increased to 221 million in 2010 from 174 million in 2000. Globally, international migrants make up 3.5% of the world's population (IOM, 2019). The first and second largest number of these international migrants are hosted by Europe and North America, followed by North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America, which host the remaining millions of international migrants (UNDESA, 2019). Furthermore, recent data published by the IOM (2019) highlights that 74% of all international migrants around the globe are of working-age – between the ages of 20 to 64 – with 52% of them being male and the rest (48%) female.

International migration also happens between countries within the same region (UNDESA, 2019). For instance, most international migrants in Sub-Saharan Africa essentially originated from another country in the same region. UNDESA (2019) estimates that 88.9% of international migrants in Sub-Saharan Africa were displaced from one country and reside in another country in the same Sub-Saharan Africa region. As reports show, the Sub-Saharan African region has the highest intra-regional migration compared to any other region in the world.

International migrants move for different reasons, including political and economic instability, poverty, civil wars and environmental degradation (Greyling, 2016). The United Nations (UN, 2013) stated that the reasons for migration could be forced migration such as wars, religious or political persecution, natural disasters or other drivers such as searching for jobs and better living conditions. Migration publications also identified push and pull factors of migration. Push factors refer to the disadvantaged conditions that migrants experience during pre-migration periods. These include drought, famine, civil wars, lack of job opportunities and political or religious oppression. The pull factors refer to the attractive factors that the destination area offers, such as economic

opportunities and effective service delivery (Dinbabo and Carciotto, 2015; Sithole and Dinbabo, 2016; Dinbabo, 2017; Dinbabo, Belebema and Mensah, 2017; Majee et al., 2019).

Black et al. (2006) argue that the extreme global inequality between countries could be the main cause of large international migration as millions of workers in the world's poorest nations live under extreme conditions of poverty while societies in developed countries experience better standards of living conditions. From Black et al.'s (2006) perspective, the massive movement took place from poor undeveloped regions to more favorable regions in developed or developing countries, because of global economic inequality. Women and children, who make up a large proportion of such movements, are vulnerable and become victims both during and post-migration.

Over the last decades, South Africa has been one of the destinations for many international migrants, particularly from Sub-Saharan African countries (Hassan, 2019). The economic and political instability that many African countries are experiencing directly shifted the migration rate to South Africa. For example, the civil wars in Somalia, Rwanda, Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, some of them lasting for decades, increased the intra-regional migration rate (Gundel, 2002; Raimundo, 2009; Lischer, 2011; Nackoney et al., 2014). According to StatsSA (2018), South Africa is home to roughly four million international migrants, 47.5% of them residing in Gauteng. The Gauteng province is considered as the main economic hub of South Africa.

This dissertation provides an in-depth understanding of Somali refugee parents' experiences in Cape Town. The paper first introduces the study, provides an overview of the study area and the research background. The following chapter summarizes the available academic literature on the challenges of refugee parents, while identifying the research gap. The theoretical and conceptual framework chapter then follows, explaining the concepts of the research and demonstrating two fundamental theories in the study. The methodology and research design are discussed in the next chapter, outlining the study's methods, reasons for choosing the research technique as well as the sample size and criteria. The empirical data is presented and analyzed in the fifth chapter and the last chapter summarizes the study's findings and concludes the paper.

### 1.2. Background of the study

Migration is a complex global phenomenon. It impacts global policies as well as economic, political, social and cultural aspects of life. (McAuliffe and Ruhs, 2018). In the past, human displacement was viewed as a means to escape human insecurity and poverty. In contrast, during the recent decades, massive human displacement has occurred due to the ongoing conflicts, persecutions and environmental degradation in many countries. This widespread movement improved many people's lives in both origin and destination countries (McAuliffe and Ruhs, 2018). Therefore, the density of migration and its effects worldwide shaped a major area in the academic field and brought about a number of publications (Dinbabo and Carciotto, 2015; Majee et al., 2019; Sithole and Dinbabo, 2016). The academic publications acknowledged both the positive and negative implications of international migration on the world's development.

International migration refers to the millions of people who cross international boundaries to seek a better life and reside in a host country for a fixed period (Maddala and Kajal, 2009). The literature shows that the majority of the world's international migrants are from Africa, Asia, and Latin America (see for example Black et al., 2016). International migration also happens from continent to continent or within the same continent or region. Hassan (2019) shows that Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest intra-regional migration compared to any other region in the world. According to Dinbabo and Carciotto (2015), Africa has a long history of human mobility. The intra-regional migration movement is higher than in Europe with 65% of the migrant population having moved from one African country to another African country. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA, 2019) estimates that 88.9% of international migrants in the Sub-Saharan African region moved from one country and settled in another country in the same region in 2019.

The intra-regional migration of Sub-Saharan Africa has different causes. Political instability, economic decline, poverty, civil wars, environmental degradation, and population growth are the major drivers behind the international African migration (Massey and Taylor, 2004). Besides these factors, Massey and Taylor (2004) pointed out that the root cause of migration in Africa is the high unemployment rate on the continent. Both high fertility rates and poor economic growth are identified as the primary reasons why people seek alternative areas to live in, which offer better

job opportunities and higher standards of living. It is also acknowledged by Dinbabo and Carciotto (2015) that many African nations' improvements, economic growth and poverty reduction significantly lead to an increased level of intra-regional migration. The sustained growth of the region demands human capital that contributes towards mining, agriculture, and infrastructure improvement activities. Consequently, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth of such countries enhances human development and a better quality of living. Therefore, these employment offers and potential better quality of life boost people's aspiration to move from one place to another (Dinbabo and Carciotto, 2015; Dinbabo, Belebema and Mensah, 2017; Dinbabo, Mensah and Belebema, 2017; Sithole and Dinbabo, 2016).

In South Africa, the discovery of diamonds and gold was the beginning of the influx of labor migrants (Crush et al., 2005). The Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries including Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, and Malawi started sending labor migrants to work on the South African mines (Kok et al., 2006). After 1994, when apartheid ended, South Africa's democratic political transformation increased the number of migrants from other African countries. Reed (2013) argues that, for the recent decades, South Africa has become one of the largest African economic hubs and most developed countries compared to other African countries, which is attractive to a large number of international migrants from the continent.

## 1.3. Overview of the case study area

Cape Town, a port city in the Western Cape province, is the legislative capital of South Africa. The Western Cape province is situated in the south-western region of South Africa. The Western Cape is the fourth largest of the country's nine provinces. In terms of both area and population it has an estimated area of 129,449 km$^2$ with 5.8 million inhabitants (CoCT, 2017). Of these inhabitants, the City of Cape Town has an estimated population of 4.2 million (CoCT, 2017).

Figure 1. 1. Cape Town location
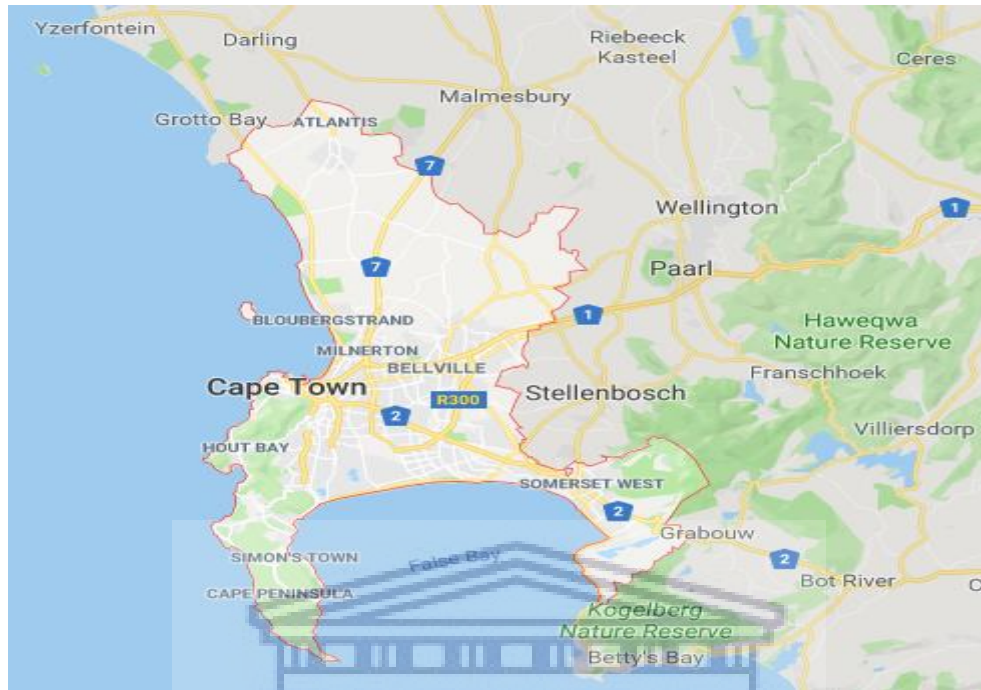


Source: Google Maps[1]

Cape Town is one of the most multicultural cities in the world and a popular destination for international migrants (World Population Review, 2019). Cape Town has tertiary institutions, healthcare facilities, businesses, and financial hubs. The primary tertiary institutions include the University of Cape Town, University of Stellenbosch, the University of the Western Cape, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Northlink College, and several other smaller ones. The main healthcare centers include Groot Schuur, Tygerberg and Karl Bremer hospitals. Cape Town also has the second busiest airport in South Africa, named Cape Town International Airport. Furthermore, StatsSA (2019) revealed that the city of Cape Town has an unemployment rate of 21.2% and 69.2% labor force participation rate in 2019.

Statistically, when estimating the population of South Africa, migration is an important demographic factor to consider. According to StatsSA (2019), Gauteng and the Western Cape are assessed to have the largest inflow of migrants. The Western Cape had an estimated 106,227 migrants from outside of South Africa in 2016 and it is projected to have 120,420 migrants in 2021. Most migrants, both asylum-seekers and refugees, engage in the informal business sector.

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[1] https://www.google.com/maps/place/Cape+Town/

A survey on the informal sector revealed that 48% of 1,132 informal businesses in Cape Town and Johannesburg are run by international migrants (Crush et al., 2017). The international migrants in South Africa play a vital role in accessing consumable foods for low-income communities in rural and urban areas. Moreover, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2018) highlights that the impact of immigration on South Africa's GDP per capita is positive. Immigrants are well-integrated and more likely to be employed in the labor market, mainly through informal businesses, compared to the native-born South Africans. Nevertheless, the OECD (2018) again highlights that there is a relatively high unemployment rate among immigrant workers due to the nature of the high unemployment rate in South Africa.

## 1.4. Rationale of the study

After the civil war broke out in Somalia in 1991, when the tyrannical government collapsed, South Africa and many other parts of the world saw a large influx of Somali migrants. The Department of Home Affairs (DHA, 2017) identified Somali immigrants as one of the largest groups of international migrants living in South Africa. The majority of immigrants in South Africa are from Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly the countries of Zimbabwe, Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, Somalia, Rwanda, and Malawi. South Africa is a preferred destination for many African migrants, including Somalis, because South Africa is a middle-income country that has market opportunities (OECD/ILO, 2018). However, migrants have to deal with many challenges in South Africa such as competition over limited resources, unemployment, social service delivery and xenophobia.

Some of these challenges in South Africa have already been broadly discussed by Greyling (2016). However, there is also a need for systematic empirical research for the particular challenges that refugee families experience in South Africa regarding the raising of children. To fill this research gap, this study examines the experiences of Somali refugee parents in Cape Town, regarding the raising of children. The information generated from this research is important in terms of understanding how the challenges of refugee families can be improved through governmental institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This research used a range of different locations in Cape Town for data collection, in order to get useful data that could represent the conditions experienced by the Somali refugee families in Cape Town. The research establishes a

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basic understanding of parenting challenges as a refugee in South Africa, that might hinder effective child-raising. Moreover, the data that was collected, analyzed and interpreted, could be valuable for further researchers, policymakers, government officials, NGOs and practitioners of social development.

## 1.5. Problem statement

A range of literature (Dinbabo, Belebema and Mensah, 2017; Dinbabo, and Carciotto, 2015; Dinbabo, and Nyasulu, 2015) refers to refugees as people who were displaced by threatening conditions in their origin countries such as racial conflict, religious persecution and political unrest. Globally, an estimated 70.8 million refugees lived in different parts of the world in 2018 (IOM, 2019). Of these, South Africa hosts approximately four million migrants, according to UNDESA (2019).

As immigrants typically include women, children, and families who are vulnerable, most research refers to the challenges refugees generally encounter in their new environments. Few studies focus on the challenges of refugee families and their living conditions with established communities in South Africa. Most of the researchers examined the general challenges that refugees experienced in terms of living and working conditions. For instance, Greyling (2016) investigated the general challenges of refugees and their expected well-being in South Africa, while Greenburg and Polzer (2008) and Morare (2017) scrutinized the refugees and challenges of housing, which were not specifically targeted at refugee families. Therefore, this study covers the research gap with its focus on family dynamics within refugee and asylum-seeker households. Unlike in the South African context, Roer et al. (2005), Teixeira (2008), Wilkinson (2008), and Osborne and Carter (2009) present specific studies on the challenges of refugee parents regarding the raising of children, but in another context.

The pre-migration trauma and the cultural changes have negatively impacted some parents' ability to raise and care for their children properly. The changes in culture, environment, and language may also add trauma and stress on parents when attempting to raise their families. Additionally, the lack of enough finance, documentation and shelter, add to the refugee parents' struggles in the destination country. Raising children is a difficult task and if parents are challenged by the host country's environment then it is going to be a far worse situation. Therefore, the main aim of this

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study is to investigate the living challenges that refugee families encounter in Cape Town. This research addresses these problems through conducting interviews and compiling questionnaires to gather information from the refugee parents. The study also observes the coping strategies and structural support that are available to refugee families in Cape Town.

### 1.6. Research aim and objectives

The main aim of this study is to examine the challenges experienced by Somali refugee parents when raising a family in South Africa. The specific objectives of the research are to:

➢ assess the socio-economic status of Somali refugee parents in Cape Town;

➢ examine the challenges that refugee parents experience when raising children in Cape Town;

➢ identify the strategies and support structures available to refugee families; and

➢ provide policy recommendations to improve the lives of refugee families.

### 1.7. Research questions

➢ What are the socio-economic statuses of Somali refugee parents in Cape Town?

➢ What are the challenges that refugee parents experience when raising children in Cape Town?

➢ What are the strategies and structural support available to refugee families?

➢ What are the policy recommendations that can improve the lives of refugee families?

### 1.8. The scope and limitations of the study

This study is based only in Cape Town. The target population includes only biological family households – husband, wife and their children. If the household comprises an extended family or household members who are not born to the parents, they are not allowed to participate in the research. Moreover, this study is limited only to investigate the challenges of raising children in Cape Town although there are many challenges that refugee parents might have. Also, it is acknowledged that the challenges of refugee families in other cities of South Africa might be different from conditions and experiences in Cape Town.

## 1.9. Outline of the chapters

The chapters of this mini-thesis are organized into six chapters. The first chapter covers an introduction of the topic, contextual background of the study and demographic overview of the case study. It also explores the research problem, research questions, research objectives and the rationale of the study. The chapter lastly outlines the structure of all chapters in the thesis.

The second chapter provides a detailed literature review on the challenges experienced by refugee parents when raising children in a new environment and culture. The chapter contains a clear analysis of the literature study that demonstrates knowledge of interpretive and conceptual tasks required in the study. It looks at the global studies that have been done on the examining research field, then it narrows down to the national and ultimately to the study area.

Chapter three provides an in-depth explanation and justification for the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study. The theoretical framework adopts two fundamental theories – acculturation and social capital theories. It specifies the theoretical grounds and assumptions underlying the research topic by providing a better understanding of the causes of refugee challenges and coping strategies of the experienced challenges by the refugees. The last section of the chapter identifies the key concepts and terms of the study; this is the conceptual framework.

Chapter four presents the research design, process, and methodology used in this study. It first explains the common research methodological types – quantitative and qualitative methodologies, or the use of a mixed-method approach. Secondly, it identifies sampling methods, techniques and size as well as the logical reasons behind choosing them. Lastly, the chapter illuminates the ethical considerations that guided the research process and data collection methods. Overall, this chapter provides the core methodological arguments with supportive details.

Chapter five is the main section of the research report and constitutes the central point of the thesis. It presents and analyzes the findings from the collected data during the empirical stage of the study. The empirical assessment and evaluation of refugee respondents and the reflections on the literature are analyzed and discussed in detail. The chapter is divided into thematic sub-sections based on the research questions. Figures, tables and graphs are used in the quantitative data presentation, while vignettes and quotes are used in the qualitative data presentation.

Lastly, chapter six concludes the thesis by summarizing the study's findings. The chapter further provides relevant recommendations on the research topic. Those recommendations will be of particular use to academics, local government officials, the Department of Home Affairs and policymakers.

## 2.0. CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Introduction

To understand the challenges of refugee parents, regarding the raising of children in a new environment, this chapter is important to critically investigate and evaluate the existing literature. The chapter reviews the available literature on the challenges of refugee parents, regarding child-raising in the host country. The review provides academic perspectives and opinions about this issue. The key identified challenges of refugee families around the world and in South Africa are organized into themes and discussed in detail. The chapter finally summarizes the reviewed literature and concludes the chapter.

### 2.2. The status of migration in South Africa

Accurate data on international migrants in South Africa is difficult to find. Only StatsSA presents an overview of data on international migration in South Africa. Other comprehensive data such as socio-economic characteristics of migrants remains extremely challenging to find. However, the Department of Home Affairs (DHA, 2017) indicates that South Africa received a high volume of international migrants between 2009 and 2012 with an estimated number between 106,904 and 223,324 each year. The majority of these migrants originated from Sub-Saharan Africa, in particular Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Somalia, DRC, Nigeria, and Malawi. Other sources pointed out that 68% of these migrants moved from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region (World Bank, 2018a).

Additionally, according to the Migration Data Portal (2017), the influx of international migrants to South Africa increased from 2005 until 2017. The Migration Data Portal also confirms that South Africa received the highest number of immigrants after 2008. Furthermore, StatsSA (2019) recently presented South Africa's net-international migration, showing 916,346 between 2011 and 2016. This number was projected to rise to 1 039 749 until the year 2021. However, according to the DHA (2017), the majority of South Africa's immigrants currently hold an asylum-seeker permit, and a small percentage of people hold refugee status. The DHA also highlights that the majority of asylum-seekers, 983,473, have no valid papers, while only 78,339 asylum-seekers had

valid papers in 2017. Similarly, Morare (2017) confirms that the DHA issued permanent refugee status to only 10% of the international migrants in South Africa.

Furthermore, different South Africans experience migration to varying extents. The greatest proportion of the migrant population is received by Gauteng province, the main economic hub of South Africa, followed by the Western Cape province, which has been ranked as the second greatest in terms of migrant numbers (StatsSA, 2019). The Gauteng and Western Cape provinces receive the highest migrant numbers for all periods. Additionally, the World Bank (2018b) suggests that, based on the 2011 census, 39.8% of the international migrants in South Africa were women, 27% of migrant households were headed by women, 63% of migrants were employed (mainly in the informal sector), and 23% of migrants fell below the national poverty income level.

In 2008, xenophobia started in Alexandra Township and rapidly spread nationwide as a response to the increased migration rate (McConnell, 2009). At the time, South Africa received a high volume of immigrants from the Sub-Saharan African region. Tens of thousands of migrants were expelled from their homes, others were killed and foreign-owned businesses were looted during the attacks (McConnell, 2009).

## 2.3. The key challenges for refugee families

### 2.3.1. Access to housing

Housing is a primary need and an existing challenge for all refugees around the world. A Canadian study has examined the barriers and outcomes in the housing searches for new immigrants and refugee families in Toronto. Like Cape Town, Toronto is a port city with a multicultural population and it has some of the most expensive housing in Canada (Teixeira, 2008). The study investigated rental housing experiences and housing search processes for new immigrants and refugees. The research evidence revealed that most respondents, especially black Africans, encountered racial discrimination by landlords in their housing search, unfriendly neighborhoods and low quality and unaffordable housing (Teixeira, 2008). Carter and Osborne (2009) further emphasized that 70% of refugee households from the origin countries of Ethiopia, Somalia, Colombia, Afghanistan, and Eritrea also experience discrimination and difficulty when trying to access housing and upon searching for a house in Winnipeg. Unlike Teixeira (2008), the study of Carter and Osborne (2009)

indicated that refugees did not have a positive living environment; they received affordable houses but older and of a poor quality.

Peberdy and Majodina (2000) indicated that housing in South African cities like Johannesburg and Cape Town is scarce and costly. Cape Town is a multicultural city and home to many immigrants. A study revealed that Cape Town is experiencing housing shortages for refugees and most migrants, especially the ordinary working people, do not have access to housing. Not only can they not afford to pay for adequate housing, but also their uncertain legal status restricts them from having housing access (Greenburg and Polzer, 2008; Morare, 2017). The difficult part is that landlords usually expect from all people, including migrants, to have a South African identity document for all transactions of renting or owning a house. The problem is that migrants have no other forms of documentation except the refugee or asylum-seeker status.

Greenburg and Polzer (2008) examined the key problems of migrants' housing experience in South Africa. The evidence showed that the challenges of housing include a threat of eviction for no documents, or being a foreigner, or being forced to pay higher rents. Therefore, refugee families around the world struggle to get their ideal houses or the existing standard accommodation in the destination country (Archambault, 2012). Bolzoni et al. (2015) consider access of housing for refugees as an essential step for integration and social inclusion. It is also a precondition of full rights and enjoyment of social services in the destination country.

### *2.3.2. Employment opportunities*

Roer et al. (2005) conducted a study on the impact of immigration and the role of fathers through in-depth individual interviews with 54 immigrant fathers. The study examined immigrant fathers from different countries who migrated to Canada and Israel. The findings showed several opportunities were available to immigrant fathers in Canada, including having a better life for their children, education, healthcare, safety, and security as well as the opportunity to learn about parenting and child development. Unlike Canada, immigrant fathers in Israel narrated the challenges of fatherhood, and indicated that the lack of employment was the biggest barrier to effective fathering. Moreover, immigrant parents experienced a language barrier and lack of understanding of the country's system, which limited their employment opportunities (Roer et al., 2005).

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Furthermore, Broadway (2007), Wilkinson (2008) and Carter and Osborne (2009) examined the difficulties of household refugees with regard to their sources of income. Limited educational backgrounds and poor language skills of refugees were found to contribute to poor employee performance and led to high unemployment and poverty levels among refugees. In the context of South Africa, South Africa's unemployment rate is fairly high – close to 29% in 2019 among residents (StatsSA, 2019) – and unemployment is also very high among migrants. The World Bank (2018b) highlights that international migrants, including refugees and asylum-seekers, have difficulties accessing the South African labor market where locals are also struggling to seek employment and secure better livelihoods. Most refugees in South Africa are either unemployed or involved in informal businesses.

Employment opportunities for refugees in the formal sector are limited in South Africa. Most employers in the formal sector require South African citizenship to hire someone (Barbera and Ochse, 2009). Refugees and asylum-seekers are legally allowed to work but because of labor market discrimination, most migrants are self-employed or employed usually with little pay and job insecurity. It makes no difference what kind of professional qualifications they obtained from their origin country; if they do not have citizenship, jobs are hard to secure. Hence, the lack of employment opportunities remains a challenge among refugee parents in Cape Town.

### 2.3.3. Legal documentation

Across the world, migrants have a problem with obtaining the required legal documentation. The study of Martins (2009) sheds the light on the struggle of immigrants regarding the legal documents in Europe and Israel. Some countries are not ready to welcome international immigrants, therefore there are large numbers of undocumented migrants found in those countries. Similarly, according to Morare (2017), South Africa's Department of Home Affairs often takes time to process and provide the appropriate documentation for immigrants, which results in many migrants either having no documents at all, or having temporary documents. Therefore, getting the right documentation remains a challenge among refugees in Cape Town (Zhou, 2018).

Barbera and Ochse (2009) discussed particularly the difficulties of refugees' uncertain documents in accessing social services such as banking. Some of the current banks provide banking services only to the people with permanent residency documentation and South African citizens, while

refugees and asylum-seekers are not allowed to open bank accounts without the signature of a guarantor, and they are only allowed to open a savings account.

### 2.3.4. Change of parenting roles

Challenges to parenting in a new culture were explored by Lewig et al. (2010). Their findings indicated that a large number of Middle Eastern and African migrant families experienced significant challenges concerning parenting in a new culture. Their study, which was based in Australia, examined the challenges of raising children in a new culture and revealed that refugee parents had the challenges of a change of parenting roles and expectations for refugee children. Parents felt frustrated and disempowered by the growing independence of their children since they came from an area where children were taught to respect their parents and the parents had full power to control them. Lack of support in the parenting roles, tensions between Australian laws and cultural norms, and traditional cultural parenting beliefs and practices were also noted in the challenges explored by Lewig et al. (2010). In developed countries particularly, significant challenges are posed for refugee parents regarding the raising of children according to family culture and tradition.

In South Africa, the research on a change of parenting roles of refugee parents is paid less attention, but a few studies showed Muslim migrants' experiences in South Africa. Muslims are a minority group in South Africa. Bhayat (2006) examined the Muslim parenting challenges in South Africa and found that Muslim parents face tremendous challenges regarding parenting roles when raising children. The study found that the media and television programs have a strong impact on children's behavior with their parents, as television programs broadcast value systems that differ from the Muslim family values. Moreover, the school environment is another challenge that has an impact on children. In this regard, peer pressure at schools has a negative impact on children's belief systems, practice, dress code, daily habits and other requirements. The study further highlighted that Muslim parents have a great fear of social ills such as drugs, doping and sexual practices (Bhayat, 2006).

### 2.3.5. Language barriers

Language is essential for communication. The language barrier is a challenge that many refugee parents experience while raising children in South Africa. Access to social and public services is especially difficult due to the language barriers. Hunter-Adams and Rother (2017) investigated language and communication barriers that migrants experience in the healthcare centers. Evidence from the study revealed that being unable to speak one of the local South African languages or English makes it difficult to access proper healthcare for children and mothers. The refugee participants in the study indicated that they have a fear of unwanted medical procedures during pregnancy. Refugees noted that poor language skills and resultant low self-esteem were significant barriers when they migrated to a new environment.

Additionally, the challenges of parenting related to the healthcare services, as noted by Barbera and Ochse (2009) included a long waiting-list, the language barrier and low educational backgrounds among refugees in Cape Town. The language barrier is particularly relevant in health services because it is very fundamental for refugee parents to explain the disease symptoms or previous diagnoses. The lack of interpreters in Cape Town clinics makes access to healthcare services more difficult. However, Barbera and Ochse (2009) claim that the problem of the language barrier for refugees in South Africa is obvious. South Africa has eleven official languages. In the Western Cape two languages are mainly spoken – English and Afrikaans – which are not commonly spoken in many parts of Africa. Not speaking one of these languages presents difficulties for refugees when accessing social services.

Moreover, the language barrier makes parenting even more difficult regarding the parent's involvement in a child's schooling, not only in the healthcare or employment sector. Tadesse (2014) investigates barriers between refugee parents and school relationships in Australia. The communication and relationship between refugee parents and teachers become weak when parents experience a language barrier. The success of children depends on mutual positive support from parents and teachers. Therefore, the study suggests that children from refugee families have special academic and psychological needs.

Another study of Turney and Kao (2009) investigated immigrant parents' barriers to school involvement. It found that immigrant parents have more barriers to school involvement compared

to native-born parents in the United States. Refugee parents are less likely to be involved in their children's schools because of their low language ability. Studies have shown that parental involvement has important implications for children's academic achievement and behavioral outcomes (Turney and Kao, 2009; Fan, 2010). Moreover, a study conducted by Rah et al. (2009) in the United States noted the barriers to refugee parents' involvement in schools. Language proficiency, time constraints due to the family's socio-economic status and the traditional family structure were some of the barriers. The study provides a strategy to overcome this challenge, arguing that the host country should provide parent education programs.

In South Africa, Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2010) report on the importance of parental involvement in a student's homework. The parent's involvement in homework influences student outcomes and brings a positive difference. Parents contribute to developing student-learning strategies by structuring their homework performance. However, among the refugee parents, this is not only a language problem but it also depends on the parents' educational level. Because parental school involvement is multidimensional, participation in school activities, relationships with teachers and tutoring children's homework are among them.

## 2.4. Conclusion

International migrants come to South Africa to seek a better standard of living and to secure a place to live. They make up 4.2% of South Africa's total population. Thus, like many migrants in the world, migrants in South Africa have to deal with the environmental challenges of the host country including unemployment, difficult access to social service and xenophobia (Barbera and Ochse, 2009). Refugee families across the world and in South Africa encounter barriers to housing, employment, acquiring documentation and language challenges when raising a family in a new context. Access to accommodation is a primary need for refugee families, yet challenges of accessing it exist among refugees around the globe as well as in South Africa. A stable source of income is also important for refugee families to survive. Yet, refugee parents are more likely to be either unemployed or to engage in informal businesses. Lack of proper documentation and language barriers are also among the key challenges for refugee parents and relate to other challenges. The following chapter discusses the theoretical framework of the study. It explains the

causes of these challenges and coping strategies of refugee struggles in the host country. These theories also help to understand the research problem.

## 3.0. CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### 3.1. Introduction

This chapter explains the conceptual research terms and two relevant theories on examining the challenges of refugee families. The purpose of this study is to examine the challenges of raising children, as refugee parents in South Africa. The acculturation theory is important to this study. It demonstrates the cultural changes that happen when people migrate to another context. The cultural changes will have an impact on a refugee's environmental challenges. As a result of cultural changes, migrants are more likely to meet economic, social and cultural challenges in the destination country. The theory categorizes the immigrant's cross-cultural experiences into four types: assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization. Hence, migrants will experience different extents of socio-economic challenges based on acculturation types. The acculturation theory is predominantly applied in the migration context and it allows the researchers to identify the causes of a refugee's challenges (Kieu, 2016). The second theory – social capital – is fundamental to this study. It analyzes the strategic ways to cope with certain existing challenges through social networking. Social capital is a versatile theory that has been used in many contexts. It is not only a theory that has been created for the migration context, but it is also a sociological tool that analyzes different aspects of life.

### 3.2. Theoretical framework

#### 3.2.1. Acculturation theory

Acculturation theory, developed by John Berry in 1980, explains migrants' tensions between maintaining original cultural practices and integrating the values and practices of the wider host country (Marlowe et al., 2014). Rothe et al. (2010: 681) refer to acculturation as, "the process that occurs when groups of individuals of different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, which changes the original culture patterns of either or both groups." Cultural changes happen as a result of migration, therefore, the notion of acculturation illustrates how a migrant who has grown up in one culture and adopted another new culture manages to accommodate to the new culture. Migrating to a new environment has always posed economic and social challenges for migrants, especially families and children.

According to Rothe et al. (2010), as a result of globalization (socio-cultural integration) and other possible factors, a large migration stream has emanated from mainly poor countries to developed countries. Migrants face complex problems such as racial discrimination, xenophobia and so forth. Migrants, especially parents, undergo varying degrees of acculturation stress, which leads to alterations in the person's mental health status. These alterations may improve or worsen depending on the person's adaptation level to the host country (Rothe et al., 2010).

### 3.2.1.1. Types of acculturation theory

Four types of acculturation happen to the individuals who have developed in one cultural context and attempt to re-establish their lives in another new context (Berry, 1997). Berry identified four acculturation categories. The first form is integration. It explores the integration of two cultures. The migrants continue to practice their identity cultures and at the same time seek to practice the daily interactions and values of the host country (Kungaba, 2017). Integration is closely related to biculturalism. According to Rothe et al. (2010), biculturalism is when the immigrant retains the cultural values, practices, and identifications of the heritage culture and at the same time values and integrates the new culture of the host country.

The second type is assimilation, which occurs when individuals completely leave practicing their origin culture and maintain the dominant culture that they live in, to easily participate in daily interactions of the host country without feeling inferior (Kungaba, 2017).

The third type is separation or rejection. This occurs when migrants avoid the cultural interaction of the host country and rather continue to practice their origin culture (Kungaba, 2017).

The final form of acculturation is marginalization. This is the opposite form of integration. Marginalization occurs when individuals reject practicing both their cultural identity and the large social network of the host country (Kungaba, 2017). However, Rothe et al. (2010) recognize the assimilation of one group into the other as 'acceptance', the merging of the two cultures as 'adoption' and the avoidance of other cultures as 'reaction'. Nevertheless, the migrant's experience will be the outcome of one of those four acculturation stages. Berry (1997) further proposed that immigrants might live with cultural, economic and social challenges depending on how they choose to navigate their way through the four stages of acculturation.

**Table 3. 1. Berry's model of acculturation**

| | | Maintenance of "Home" Cultural Identity | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | High | Low |
| "Host" Cultural Adaptation | Positive | Integration | Assimilation |
| | Negative | Separation | Marginalization |

Source: Adapted from Kiylioglu and Wimmer (2004:12)

The above table portrays the four categories of acculturation theory. The upper horizontal part of the table measures the individual's maintenance of home cultural identity (high or low). The upper vertical part measures the individual's level of host cultural practice (positive or negative). For example, when individuals highly maintain their cultural identity and at the same time have a positive cultural adaptation of the host country, such individuals fall under the integration acculturation category. Low maintenance of cultural practice of origin country and positive cultural adaptation of the host country is attributed as assimilation. High maintenance of home cultural practice and negative cultural adaptation of the host country is recognized as separation. Eventually, marginalization is the lowest category of acculturation theory, when individuals have very low maintenance of home cultural identity and negative cultural adaptation of the host country.

*3.2.1.2. Acculturation on family level*

In 1990, Alejandro Portes and his collaborators developed an empirically tested approach of segmented assimilation acculturation, which explains the interplay of factors between the children of immigrants and their parents (Marlowe et al., 2014). The approach summarizes the relations among immigrant children, their parents and the wider ethnic community on three types of acculturation: consonant, dissonant and selective acculturation. Consonant acculturation happens when both immigrant parents and their children adopt the host culture and gradually abandon their home cultural identity. Researchers refer to this as upward socio-economic mobility. Dissonant

acculturation refers to when immigrant children adopt the host culture faster than their parents do. This has been referred to as downward mobility because the parental support for the young people is absent. Lastly, selective acculturation is when immigrant children and parents gradually adopt the cultural identity of the host country while remaining embedded in the ethnic community. This type has little or no intergenerational conflict and preservation of parental authority (Waters et al., 2010).

Therefore, immigrant families must understand the importance of renegotiating new family roles in the new context and at the same time maintaining the important aspects of their culture (Marlowe et al., 2014). "A particular person's experience of integrating into a country means unification of one's cultural background, ethnic identity, education and other forms of history in a new context that may have new social constructions on parenting, gender roles, work, community and many other practices" (Marlowe et al., 2014: 61).

Negotiating new roles among immigrant families is important because each family member might have a different experience in the host environment, which might have a significant impact on the family system. Naturally, children achieve linguistic acculturation and adapt to the new cultural context more rapidly than their parents adapt, as dissonant acculturation explains. Therefore, the acculturation gap impacts the family system and creates conflicts between the first and second generations (Marlowe et al., 2014).

### 3.2.1.3. Application of the theory

Several studies have applied acculturation theory to their investigation of refugee parenting challenges. For instance, the study by Ho (2013), examining the parenting challenges for Chinese immigrants, revealed that refugee parents always maintain their origin culture, practice, beliefs, and attitudes while the children from the immigrant families are quickly able to adopt the cultural practices of the host country. Therefore, the parents' lack of integration into the new culture is likely to increase their environmental challenges. Rothe et al. (2010) also agreed that young immigrant adolescents have fewer developmental challenges than parents do because they reorganized themselves within the culture, language and environment of the host country. A similar study by Liu et al. (2009) considers that the language barrier is a factor that hinders migrants' integration with the society in the United States and that poor language skills are

disempowering for the immigrant parents. Migrants who are more proficient in speaking English are more likely to avoid many challenges and feelings of depression (Liu et al, 2009).

Kieu (2016) conducted a study on refugee families functioning in the resettlement context using acculturation theory. He argues that acculturation is a major source of change for refugee families, as it involves the shift in values, beliefs, identity, and behaviors. The immigrant children and refugee parents have different rates of acculturation and children tend to acculturate more rapidly than parents do. This becomes an acculturation gap. The findings of the study revealed that a lack of social support and financial stress on parents come from acculturation challenges. During interviews in the study, parents also described their tensions related to being part of two different cultures, which creates challenges and internal struggles in society.

However, acculturation theory has been used mainly in sociology, economics, political science and mental health science. In addressing mental health, the acculturation gap between household members creates conflicts among the family members, which leads to poor mental health outcomes for the members, particularly adolescents (Rothe et al., 2010). Immigrant parents and children have a divergent understanding of culture, values and languages. According to Rothe et al. (2010: 693), "it is important to keep in mind that the children of today's immigrants are a generation oriented not to their parents' pasts, but their own futures."

Additionally, other studies stressed that the pressure exerted by migrant parents on their children can lead adolescents to commit suicide. For instance, Durvasula and Sue (1996) examined the pressure from Asian American parents that increased suicide deaths among both male and female Asian American adolescents at 14.1% and 12.7% respectively. These statistics have become the two highest suicide rates compared to the other racial groups in the United States.

As discussed above, the concept of acculturation involves immigrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, those who live in an environment and society other than where they were born (Rothe et al., 2010). The purpose of this study is to examine the challenges of raising children as a refugee parent in South Africa, considering Somali refugee parents in Cape Town as a case study. However, the acculturation theory relates to this study because, in the context of migration, acculturation explains how and where the challenges arise from by analyzing the four types of acculturation. The study assumes that the Somali parents who fall under the South African

immigrant category have environmental or cultural challenges when they are raising a family. The results of the study reveal how the four acculturation phases are experienced by the Somali parents to enable dealing with the cultural, social and environmental challenges and which form of acculturation impacts their children in their attempts to adopt the new environment. Nevertheless, the complexity of living amongst different cultures results in unprecedented challenges for refugees. Most acculturation literature is focused on negative outcomes but this theory also considers whether migrants arrive in rural or urban contexts, how migrants' skills are valued in the host country and the economic characteristics of migrants (Rothe et al., 2010).

A few arguments have challenged the acculturation theory. Critics suggest that the use of the term acculturation itself is not a genuine word for its concept, rather the word enculturation would be more appropriate (Abi-Hanna, 2014). Other critiques suggest that the use of the terms in acculturation types such as integration, adaptation and assimilation create great confusion and are not clearly defined. Such critiques claim that there is not much difference between these terms and the acculturation term itself (Abi-Hanna, 2014). Moreover, Berry's explanation of acculturation, does not consider the impact of specific socio-cultural constraints such as power, race and religion on the immigrants' acculturation process. It rather explained undefined broader conditions of social exclusion and segregation by the host country (Abi-Hanna, 2014).

Nevertheless, acculturation theory acknowledges only the barriers of the dominant culture that immigrants experience. It does not further provide the possible strategies to avoid or deal with those challenges (Abi-Hanna, 2014). Therefore, using the above critiques, another theory is important to adopt for this study. Thus, social capital theory is significant to this study to fill the gaps of acculturation theory.

### 3.2.2 Social capital theory

Social capital describes the social networks and relations among certain groups of people. It is a social resource. Social capital is a theory which was introduced by Bourdieu in 1985. Other authors like Putnam and Coleman further developed this theory. According to Bourdieu (1985), social capital is the collective social resources such as institutionalized relationships and durable networks that the society possesses to maintain its recognition. Additionally, according to Putnam (1993), social capital has three essential features namely, norms, trust and reciprocity that facilitate

coordinated actions to build a society. The networks, relationships and trust that exist among members in society assist to overcome certain challenges through using the existing networks. Portes (1998) notes that unity and the positive values of society bring about power and influence. The social network has important characteristics including information flow, cooperation, trust, and reciprocity. Therefore, social capital is based on a sense of belonging to a group.

Social capital has been categorized into three significant types: bonding, bridging and linking (Putnam, 1993; Szreter and Woolcock, 2004). Bonding and bridging are horizontal forms of social capital while linking is a vertical form of social capital. The bonding network of social capital refers to people linked closely by locality, ethnic group, social class or religious affiliation (Marlowe et al., 2014). The bonding networks exist among people who have a close relationship and are already familiar with each other (Silva et al., 2005). Examples of bonding include the immediate family, neighbors or close friends. This form of social capital is referred to as strong and supportive community relations. However, members of the refugee background often use the resource of bonding capital to get emotional and physical social support from the community with whom they share a common ethnic identity (Marlowe et al., 2014).

Bridging social capital, which is also a horizontal form of social capital, refers to the connection and relations between people who are not known to one another (Silva et al., 2005). The example of bridging might be workmates, classmates or any individuals who are outside of one's own community. Bridging social capital is considered as 'weak ties' because different people interact and access the resources and opportunities of networking (Marlowe et al., 2014). The opportunities of bridging social capital for refugee-background communities in the host country can be limited by linguistic constraints and other external factors such as discrimination (Marlowe et al., 2014). The difference between bonding and bridging is the level of trust. In bonding, trust already exists among the close relations while trust generates in bridging networks only after establishing the network and building strong ties between individuals (Cleaver, 2005).

Linking is a vertical form of social capital. It defines the building of synergies between community and government structures, private institutions and local organizations to contribute positive developmental outcomes (Portes, 1998). This form of social capital links the poor and vulnerable groups to the people who influence the government's decision-making to promote their interests

(Cleaver, 2005). Similarly, Marlowe et al. (2014) describe linking as the relation that a community has to the authorities and organizations. For example, poor and vulnerable people contact the political authorities to promote livelihood strategies for marginalized people or to enhance their socio-economic opportunities (Thieme, 2006). However, the connection of refugee communities to the political and economic institutions in the host country might provide social support for refugee members (Marlowe et al., 2014). Thus, social capital and its three types of resources are very constructive for refugees to get full support and integration. The refugees' integration has a direct impact on the environmental and socio-economic experiences. Social capital resources also help individuals living with acculturation experiences (Marlowe et al., 2014).

Social capital theory can be usefully applied to this study to understand the available networks among refugee communities in the host country that support the refugees' struggle. Social capital provides a kind of 'credit-worthiness' (Thieme, 2006). However, the benefit of social capital is that refugees, particularly Somali refugees in South Africa, depend on their close interactions with friends from the same ethnic group. They receive sources of information about employment, access to accommodation, healthcare and other social services. Ngwenya (2017) previously investigated the role of social capital in shaping the Somali refugees' entrepreneurship in Johannesburg. He highlights that bonding social capital speeds up Somali entrepreneurship activities.

However, previous studies have applied both acculturation and social capital in investigating refugee challenges. Marlowe et al. (2014) applied both theories to address New Zealand refugees' experiences. Refugees' challenges like housing, education, health and well-being relate to the possibilities of a wider acculturation gap in the host community. Social capital theory becomes a significant theory, that families and communities use to help and support each other, share information and feel a sense of belonging to a group. Studies use social capital as a strategy to overcome certain environmental risks and challenges.

Joyce and Liamputtong (2017) recently conducted a study on young refugees' experiences in Australia using both acculturation and social capital theories. The study highlighted that, young refugees experience unique acculturation stress such as lack of employment opportunities, language problems and difficulties in accessing social services. The study argues that these challenges impacted on the young refugees' integration into the host society. Therefore, social

networks and supports from family, friends and the refugee ethnic community were important to cope with these challenges and enhance their well-being.

### 3.3. Key concepts and terminology

A conceptual framework is important for capturing the central concepts of the research. It is used to make conceptual distinctions. Thus, defining the basic terms and terminologies of this research is necessary for this study. It presents the core research terms such as migration, refugee, family and so forth.

Migration refers to the process of people voluntarily leaving their homelands for economic reasons, or involuntarily leaving as a result of civil wars or persecutions (WEF, 2017). Migrants are defined as people who cross international borders in order to overcome life obstacles experienced in their country of origin (Deen, 2018; McAuliffe and Ruhs, 2018). These people are called international migrants.

A refugee is a displaced person escaping life-threatening conditions in his or her home country, having crossed international borders to overcome persecution. The life-threatening conditions include civil wars, racial conflict, religious persecution and political instability (Dinbabo, Belebema and Mensah, 2017; Dinbabo and Carciotto, 2015; Dinbabo and Nyasulu, 2015).

Another refugee definition implies that the individual's fear of persecution for any of the relevant reasons such as race, religion, nationality, particular social grouping and political opinion, is fully recognized as a refugee by the country he or she is displaced to (Fitzpatrick, 1996). Refugees and asylum-seekers are recognized differently.

The UNHCR (2005) refers to an asylum-seeker as an individual who falls under the refugee category but has not yet been evaluated or the country they applied for refugee status to has not taken a decision. Most of the refugees were initially asylum-seekers, but not all asylum-seekers will eventually be recognized as refugees. Additionally, international migrants can be undocumented. Undocumented immigrants, also called illegal immigrants, are the migrants living in the destination country but who do not have any valid immigration documents (Pine and Drachman, 2005).

On the other hand, the comprehension of a family is different from context to context. According to the Census Bureau (2019), a family comprises of a householder and one or more other people who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption who reside together in the same household. The unrelated sub-families are excluded from the definition of family for the purpose of this research. Households and families are not necessarily similar because a household consists of all people who occupy a housing unit whether they are related or unrelated to the household head (Census Bureau, 2019). In Africa, the definition of family is perceived differently. A family does not only contain a mother, father, and their children but might also include aunts, uncles, and grandparents (Therborn, 2006). Although, in many parts of Africa the definition of family is drifting from the extended family to a small or nuclear family, the large family size is still recognized as one family across most of Africa.

Raising children (or child rearing) is the process of promoting a child's physical, intellectual, emotional and social development from infanthood to adulthood (Brooks, 2012). The tasks of child rearing are usually performed by the biological parents of the child or sometimes by older people of the family such as grandparents, uncles, aunts or older siblings.

### 3.4. Conclusion

Culture is an important aspect of life. However, as a result of migration, refugees experience cultural changes. Acculturation theory explains how the immigrants handle the two cultures of the origin country and destination country and how this will accommodate to the refugees' experience. Whether the environmental experience of the host country is positive or negative, it will be the result of one of the four types of acculturation: integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization. Additionally, it is evident that refugee parents and children have different experiences in the host environment because the immigrant children (the second generation) adopt the host culture faster than their parents do, while parents are generally challenged by linguistic constraints. Thus, this creates an acculturation gap at a family level and results in high inter-generational conflict. Therefore, the parents' lack of integration into the new culture is likely to increase their environmental challenges when they are raising children. However, acculturation theory has certain limitations; it only focuses on the refugees' challenges as a result of cultural changes and does not provide any strategy to cope with these issues. Therefore, social capital

theory was important to adopt in this study. The strong community networks in social capital theory will support migrants' emotional and physical needs, and also enhance their well-being and growth. The following chapter presents the research design and methodology that the study used for data collection and analysis.

# 4.0. CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

## 4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the research design and methodology used by the study. It details the research instruments and techniques used for the data collection, the sampling size and criteria applied to select the study population. The justification behind the sampling techniques and the methods of data analysis is further explored in this chapter. The ethical considerations conclude the chapter.

## 4.2. Research design

Research design is the methodological plan and structure that guides the research process. The purpose and nature of the research topic require a specific type of research design. Research design has been referred to as, "the plans and procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation" (Creswell and Creswell, 2017: 22). The research design allows the researcher to follow certain principles and procedures to reach a conclusion that can be added to the existing literature. However, this research topic requires insights from both positivist and interpretivist paradigms.

The positivist paradigm is a philosophy which relies more on quantitative research methodology, typically studying phenomena through systematic evidence and measurement (Pham, 2018). It illustrates and examines the relationship between an independent variable and one or more dependent variables (Pham, 2018). The interpretivist paradigm seeks a deeper understanding of phenomena, their complexity and unique context (Creswell, 2007). Working within this paradigm requires an in-depth understanding of human dynamics and focuses on the experiences of subjects within the context where they live. However, the interpretivist paradigm approves a relativist ontology, which states that a single phenomenon may have multiple interpretations and cannot be determined by measurement (Pham, 2018). This paradigm relies more on qualitative research methodology.

## 4.3. Research methodology

Research methodology is a science of studying how research is to be carried out to solve a social problem (Rajasekar et al, 2006; Dinbabo, 2011). It is a method used to gather information in order

to answer research questions. In research, there are generally two common methodological classifications, namely, quantitative and qualitative research methods. The quantitative research method is described as being realist because it determines objectively the meaning of people's lives under the real-world conditions by following certain processes and procedures of data collection and analysis (Yin, 2011). The quantitative research method tests hypotheses and theories to predict an outcome.

The qualitative research method does not involve any statistical procedure. The qualitative research narrates people's lives, living experiences, feelings, emotions, human functioning, behaviors, and interactions (Rahman, 2017). Furthermore, "qualitative research is interested in analyzing subjective meaning or the social production of issues, events, or practices by collecting non-standardized data and analyzing texts and images rather than numbers and statistics" (Flick, 2014: 542). The qualitative method tests multiple social realities and interprets social experiences.

For the purpose of this study a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative, called triangulation, was followed which gives both breadth and in-depth information. According to Malina et al. (2011), mixed-method is the process of combining several research methods into one study. In this study, the combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods was used to examine the demographic information as well as the socio-economic status of refugee parents through the quantitative method. In-depth research interviews were conducted as a qualitative method about the challenges that are experienced by the migrants and their strategies. Nevertheless, the motive for this method is to balance the strengths and weaknesses of each method. The figure below summarizes each method's strengths and weaknesses.

**Figure 4. 1. Strengths and weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative research methods**



**Strengths**
- Provides greater details.
- Raises more issues through open-ended surveys.
- Analyzes deeply human behaviors, values, beliefs and assumptions.

Qualitative Method

**Weaknesses**
- Highly subjective, no objectivity
- Researchers must have experience in the field.
- Qualitative data is also difficult to assess and present.
- Collecting data is time-consuming.

**Strengths**
- Reliable and quickly analyzed.
- Done within short time frame.
- Exposes numerical data using statistics.

Quantitative Method

**Weaknesses**
- No record of human perception and beliefs.
- Resource restriction for large-scale research.
- No in-depth explanation of the problem.

Source: Adapted from Choy, 2014: 101

The above figure highlights the numerous strengths and weaknesses of each method. For example, in the quantitative method, huge data sets can be gathered within a short period, they can be easily analyzed and they provide numerical statistics illustrations that allow the researcher to interpret the data easily. Regarding the weaknesses, the quantitative method does not involve any record of human perceptions, beliefs and experience as well as no in-depth explanation of the problem. The figure also shows the strengths and weaknesses of the qualitative research method, which provides detailed information about the research problem and it analyzes human behaviors, experiences and perceptions in great depth. Weaknesses of the qualitative method include that collecting data is time-consuming, the collected data is also difficult to assess and present and the findings cannot be generalized. The qualitative method is also highly subjective (Choy, 2014).

### *4.3.1. Quantitative research methodology*

A quantitative research approach is seen as being scientific in nature. It is an approach that emphasizes numbers and figures in the data collection and analysis to explain a particular phenomenon (Dinbabo, 2011; Daniel, 2016). According to Watson (2015), a quantitative approach is used to test for confirmation or disconfirmation of a theory or hypothesis. The primary objective of the quantitative research approach is to determine cause-effect, the relation and correlation between those variables classified as dependent and independent variables, and to describe demographic and socio-economic variables (Daniel, 2016). The sample of the quantitative research approach is randomly selected to generalize the findings. The quantitative research approach was useful in the assessment of demographic and socio-economic data on Somali refugee families in Cape Town. However, it also overlooked the experiences of refugee parents and the extent of their cultural integration. Although the quantitative method was highly significant to generalize the findings of the study, it is criticized for providing a lack of in-depth information about the problem (Choy, 2014). Therefore, this study needed to conduct in-depth interviews, using the qualitative research method.

### *4.3.2. Qualitative research methodology*

Qualitative research is an approach that studies human problems and behavior from different social perspectives. It is a systematic and subjective approach that discovers the complexity of the situation by explaining daily life experiences and human behavior from different perspectives, in great detail (Khan, 2014). The qualitative research method uses soft data such as interviews to produce rich and meaningful data in the analysis (Goldkuhl, 2019). Qualitative researchers perceive the social world as being dynamic and not static (Daniel, 2016). In the qualitative method, a wide range of data collection techniques such as in-depth interviews, observations, field notes and documents are used to explain the social phenomenon and draw a conclusion. Using these qualitative techniques gives the researcher an inclusive picture of social realities. The primary objective of the qualitative method is to give the study in-depth information about the field of study. However, the information gathered through the qualitative research method cannot be applied in a wider population because the findings are not tested to see whether they are significant or not (Atieno, 2009).

In this study, the qualitative approach was beneficial in examining the challenges of refugee parenting in Cape Town, the causes and strategies of those challenges, and their views on improving the lives of refugee families. The qualitative research method was a good method to understand why parenting challenges exist among refugees and how to cope with those challenges, but the findings of this method are limited to the particular group of people being studied; they cannot be generalized (Daniel, 2016). Therefore, to mobilize the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research methods, the mixed-method approach was adopted.

### 4.3.3 Mixed research methodology

Historically, quantitative and qualitative research methods have been applied separately in investigating research evidence but more recently, the practice of the mixed-method approach has become increasingly popular (Heyvaert et al., 2011). Usually, the mixed-method approach is used when the research questions need to obtain both breadth and in-depth information. The mixed methodology involves data collected quantitatively and qualitatively; these are two methods that are combined into one study (Malina et al., 2011). Similarly, Heyvaert et al. (2011) suggest that in a mixed-method approach, the researcher combines different techniques such as interviews, observations, documents and questionnaires into a single study.

For the purpose of this study, the motivation for adopting the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was to provide a better understanding of the research problem and compensate for the weaknesses of each method. Therefore, this method statistically described the variables of the demographic, socio-economic and overview of challenges of refugee parents. It also conducted in-depth discussions about the sources and strategies of the refugee parenting challenges. Using a mixed-method approach was beneficial because the data was comprehensive, it increased generalization of the results and provided a stronger conclusion to the study. However, this method has its own shortcomings. It is a time-consuming and expensive approach that can delay the work of the research. To compensate for these limitations, primary and secondary data was applied in this research. The secondary data helped to improve the understanding of the problem while primary data was collected for specific and additional information that enhanced the existing literature. The following section outlines the different techniques used in the study.

**4.4. Methods of data collection**

*4.4.1 Sampling techniques*

Sampling is a research technique that refers to a selected group of individuals from a larger population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole population (Dinbabo, 2011; Suri, 2011). In other words, sampling is the procedure of selecting the study's observation (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). Quantitative sampling is usually selected based on two main sampling types, namely, probability and non-probability sampling.

Probability sampling refers to when each sample of the population has an equal probability or chance of being chosen (Showkat and Parveen, 2017). This sampling technique involves random selection and the selected sample is a representative of the population. On the non-probability sampling method, the small sample size is selected and it relies on the researcher's subjective judgment rather than randomization. The researchers have to choose the study's participants based on their own judgment that is relevant to the research study (Showkat and Parveen, 2017). This technique is less expensive and less complicated. For the qualitative research, the researcher purposively selects the study participants based on their characteristics relevant to the research study. The qualitative method relies on purposeful sampling (Showkat and Parveen, 2017).

This study used non-probability sampling for both quantitative and qualitative methods. A purposive sampling type was deemed to be the most useful technique in a study of this nature. Purposive sampling is considered as the most effective technique when participants are selected according to the needs of the study (Tongco, 2007). For instance, the researcher of this study first asked potential participants whether they were raising children in Cape Town or not. If the response from the potential participant was positive, that participant had a higher chance of participating in the study. This was purposive sampling. The researcher selected a sample of 62 people based on their knowledge and experience of the study area. There were 50 self-administered questionnaires and 12 semi-structured questionnaires. The participants of the 12 semi-structured questionnaires were divided into two focus groups, one group for refugee mothers and the other for refugee fathers to understand the different points of view of the fathers and the mothers. The participants of the focus group discussions were drawn from the initial respondents of the quantitative research method as shown below.

**Figure 4. 2. Research participants**
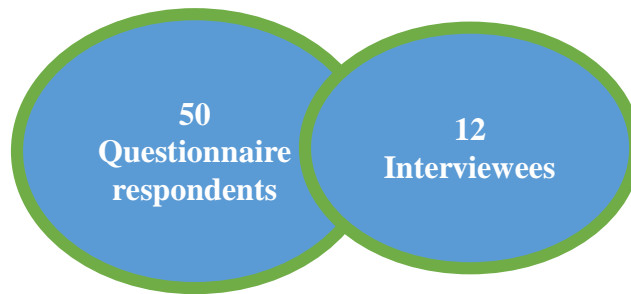


Source: Author's compilation, 2020

### 4.4.2. Structured questionnaires

A questionnaire is a survey research technique that involves collecting data. A questionnaire has been defined as, "a script which encloses questions and substance meant to generate suitable information for analysis" (Babbie and Mouton, 2001: 238). Administrating 50 questionnaires helped the researcher to capture the demographic and socio-economic status of the Somali refugee families in Cape Town. Closed-ended questionnaires were used to be easily processed. The survey participants were provided with a copy of the questionnaire and the questions were administrated in English. The researcher also provided interpretation into the main Somali language since the target respondents were not comfortable with English. Eventually, through using the statistical software packages, the correlation between data variables was easily determined in the analysis.

### 4.4.3. Focus group discussion

According to Wagner et al. (2012), in-depth interviews and observations are the commonly used techniques to collect qualitative data. However, to build a deeper understanding of the challenges of refugee parents, in-depth interviews through focus group discussions were conducted. A series of open-ended questions were formulated by the researcher to capture the information needed to understand the research problem. A total of 12 interviewees were divided into two groups of 6 participants. The Somali language was used during the discussions and all the interviewees approved the request of being recorded. The researcher later listened to and translated the interviews into English during the transcription of data stage. The focus group discussions focused on the viewpoints, feelings, and experiences of the Somali refugee parents in Cape Town.

**4.5. Data analysis**

After the completion of the data collection, the questionnaires and interviews were prepared for data analysis. The data analysis in mixed methodology involves analyzing both the quantitative and qualitative data within the same study (Onwuegbuzie and Combs, 2011). The mixed-method data analysis gives an opportunity of presenting quantitative results as well as ensures the participants' viewpoints and experiences are reflected in the findings of the study. The study used mixed-method data analysis to overcome the weaknesses of both methods and to gain a deeper understanding of the research problem. In this study, quantitative and qualitative data was integrated under themes; the qualitative result was a complement of the quantitative results.

*4.5.1. Quantitative data analysis*

The questionnaires from the quantitative data were presented numerically in an Excel spreadsheet and imported to Stata14 software for analysis. The Stata14 version was used to analyze the collected data from the questionnaires. Stata is a statistical software package that helps the researcher to describe, analyze and summarize the captured data set. In the beginning, the researcher double-checked the Excel data from the questionnaires to avoid errors. Moreover, in the Stata14 software, every variable in the data set was described using descriptive statistics. The tab command was frequently used to identify the frequencies and percentages of the variables and to present the data as tables in the analysis chapter. The cross-tabulation and 'sum' commands were seldom used to see the correlation between certain variables or the average of the variables. Through this, the researcher was able to present complete data of socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the Somali refugee families in Cape Town.

*4.5.2. Qualitative data analysis*

For the qualitative data, the researcher listened to the recorded interviews and transcribed them in English. The researcher printed the transcribed interviews and identified thematic sub-sections using coding frequency. The researcher re-read the transcribed data and organized it into themes. For example, the frequency of 'house' was identified and put under the housing theme. The researcher subsequently carefully created an umbrella theme that represented the combination of

all themes. Finally, under the analysis and findings section, the researcher linked the themes to the existing literature.

Theme 1: Demographic information of the Somali refugee families.

Theme 2: Socio-economic status of the Somali refugee families.

Theme 3: Challenges experienced by Somali refugee parents in Cape Town.

Theme 4: Strategies to improve refugees' experienced challenges.

## 4.6. Ethical considerations

According to Hennink et al. (2011), the researcher should follow three core principles for ethical research. Firstly, respect of participants is required as a core priority over the interest of the research. The researcher has to minimize any potential risks to the participants. Lastly the researcher upheld justice ensuring the research procedure was administrated fairly and in a well-considered manner. The researcher affirms that this research upholds the above-mentioned ethics. Moreover, this research was approved by the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape.

Throughout the research work, the researcher distributed information and consent forms and also respected the confidentiality of the participants, including their names. The researcher ensured that the captured data was used solely for the purpose of the academic research. Furthermore, the researcher recorded the interviews based on the respondents' consent and the participants were informed that their participation in this study was completely voluntary and that they could withdraw their participation at any time and that this would not have any consequences. The recorded data was kept in a safe and confidential place. The participants' identities were also protected by keeping their names anonymous.

## 4.7. Conclusion

This research design and methodology chapter discussed the procedures and methods of data collection and analysis. The chapter explained the different research designs and methodologies. It further discussed the methods adopted by this research, how data was collected and the logical reasons behind choosing data collection techniques. It further identified the sample of the population and the criteria of sampling. Finally, the chapter presented the data analysis procedures

and the ethical considerations of the study. The following chapter concentrates on the presentation of empirical data by following the structure of the research objectives.

**5.0. CHAPTER FIVE: DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS**

### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the empirical data collected from the Somali refugee parents in Cape Town. By answering the research questions, the chapter covers the interpretation, analysis and findings of the study. It first demonstrates the demographic and socio-economic information of Somali refugee families in Cape Town such as gender, age, marital status, legal status, household size, educational and employment status. It then presents the challenges experienced by the Somali refugee parents in Cape Town by linking to the existing literature. Additionally, the structure of the chapter follows the design of the research objectives. The first section applies descriptive and inferential statistics to assess demographic and socio-economic status. The second part illustrates the challenges experienced by the refugee parents, the extent of their cultural integration and the strategies to improve their lives. The last part summarizes the key findings of the research and concludes the chapter.

### 5.2. Demographic profile

A total of 62 respondents participated in this study with 50 of the respondents having completed structured closed-ended questionnaires and 12 interviewees having joined open-ended focus group discussions. The fundamental features such as gender, age, marital status, legal status, the motivation for migration, the duration of stay, as well as the household size are presented in the demographic information section using tables and graphs.

#### 5.2.1. Gender distribution

Table 5.1 presents the age distribution of the study sample in frequency and percentile. The majority of the respondents were female migrants (62%) and the remainder (38%) were male migrants. However, Peberdy et al. (2004) stressed that people often assume men are the predominant migrants but women are increasingly migrants in their own right, as well as being the partners of migrants. The imbalance of the gender breakdown in this study was not a surprise as a similar mixed-method study revealed similar results (Kieu, 2016). It cannot be argued that Somali female migrants in South Africa are the predominant migrants compared to their male

counterparts. Rather, the results of the study show that the respondents who participated in this study were predominantly female.

**Table 5. 1. Frequency of gender distribution**

| Gender | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------|-----------|------------|
| Female | 31 | 62.00 |
| Male | 19 | 38.00 |
| **Total** | 50 | 100.00 |

Source: Author's compilation based on field research, 2020

### 5.2.2. Age distribution

Table 5.2 breaks down the sample population of the Somali refugee parents by age. It shows that the highest number of the study's respondents (70%) were between the ages of 26 to 35, followed by 20% who were between the ages of 36 to 45, whereas 8% of the respondents were between the ages of 18 to 25 and only 2% were above 46. In other words, the majority of the study participants were a prime working age population (between 20 to 45 years). The prime working age population was the highest number of international migrants; 234 million were recorded globally as migrants of the prime working age population out of 258 million of international migrants in 2018 (ILO, 2017).

**Table 5. 2. Frequency of age distribution**

| Age of parent | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------|-----------|------------|
| 18-25 | 4 | 8.00 |
| 26-35 | 35 | 70.00 |
| 36-45 | 10 | 20.00 |
| 46-55 | 1 | 2.00 |
| 56-65 | 0 | 0.00 |
| 66 and above | 0 | 0.00 |
| **Total** | 50 | 100.00 |

Source: Author's compilation based on field research, 2020

### 5.2.3. Marital status

Marital status is the social attachment and civil state of each individual in relation to the marriage laws or customs of the country (Goldman and Weinstein, 1995). In this study, the highest proportion of the respondents (90%) were married and raising families in Cape Town, the remaining 10% were divorced. Although other statuses such as 'widowed' and 'separated' have been added to the options of the questionnaire, none of the respondents were identified under these categories. This means that the majority of Somali refugee parents were married and lived with their spouses. This percentage was not surprising since the study was purposively selecting a sample of refugee parents who were raising children in Cape Town. It is worth mentioning that it is uncommon to see 'single or never married' who are raising children in the Somali community, unlike other communities where this might be more common.

### 5.2.4. Legal status of refugee parents

To examine the experiences of Somali refugee parents in Cape Town, it is essential to identify the legal status of refugee parents. Documentation is a basic right for refugees to legally live in South Africa and engage in businesses (Ibrahim, 2016). Also, without having proper documents, migrants cannot enjoy full access to public and social services (Peberdy et al. 2004). Thus, the figure below summarizes that the majority of the respondents in this study (62%) were refugee status holders, followed by 22% asylum-seeker permit holders. The smallest percentage, 4%, is attributed to those who had citizenship and the other 4% were granted permanent residence. Moreover, 8% of the study's participants indicated themselves as undocumented.

**Figure 5. 1. Legal status of refugee parents**



**Legal Status**
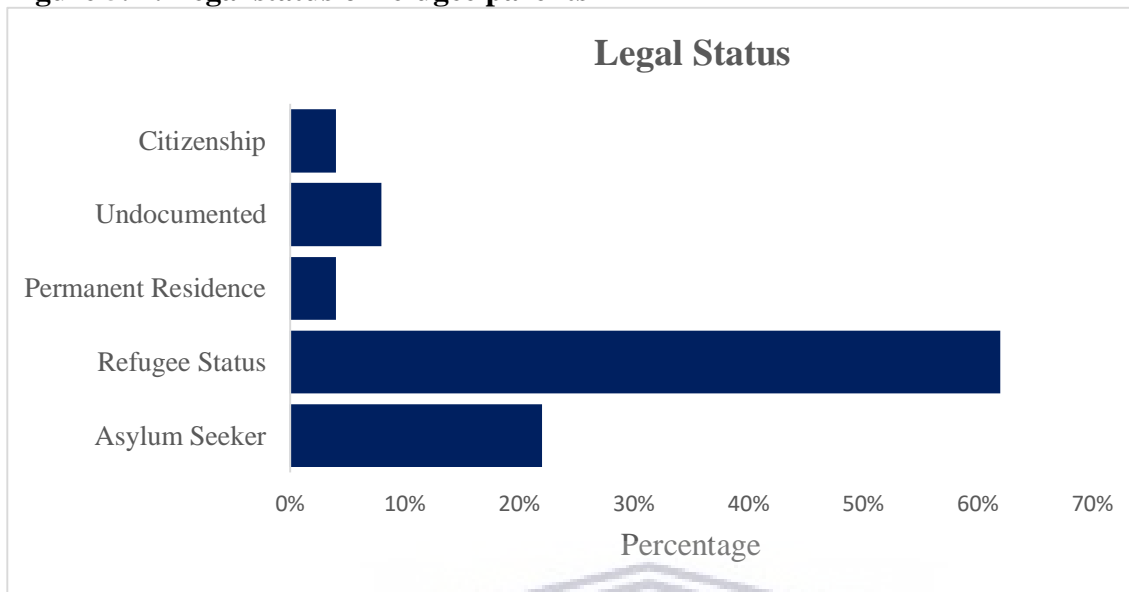
Source: Author's compilation based on field research, 2020

### 5.2.5. *Duration of stay in South Africa*

To comprehend the level of migrants' adaptation to the host environment, the survey included the duration of stay in South Africa as one of its central demographic variables. The analysis found that the majority of the refugee parents (42%) stayed in South Africa between 6 to 10 years followed by 22% who stayed between 11 to 15 years. The same percentage (22%) also stayed for 1 to 5 years. The smallest percentage (6%) stayed in South Africa for less than 1 year. According to Kieu (2016), the longer the refugee parents lived in the host country, the more they tended to adapt to the environment, the culture, and were able to improve their linguistic competency.

**Figure 5. 2. The duration of stay**



**Duration of stay in SA**
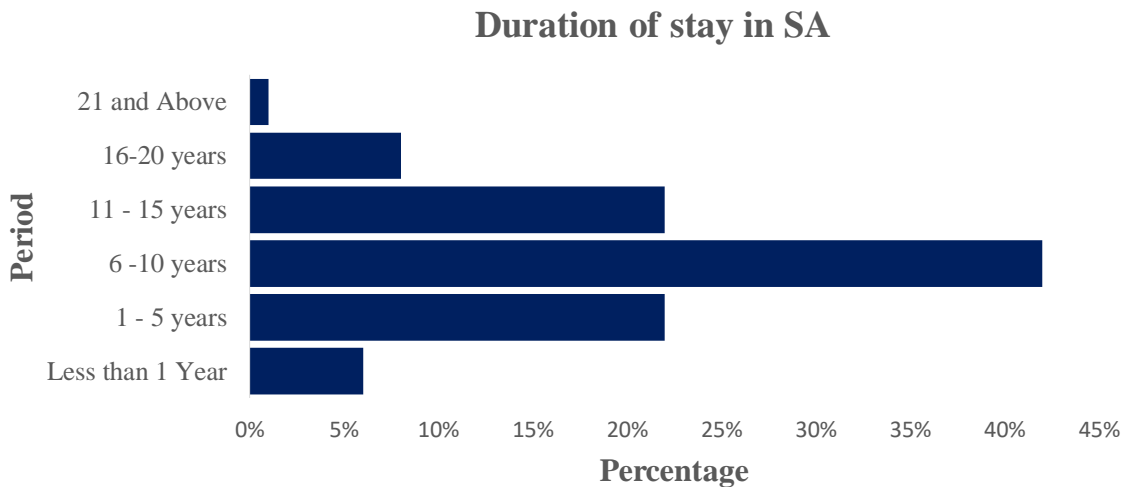
Source: Author's compilation based on field research, 2020

### 5.2.6. The motivation for migration

Globally, migration is motivated by economic and non-economic factors such as the desire to reunite with family, receive better education or social conflicts in the origin country. This study surveyed different approaches motivated by Somali immigrants to move to South Africa. The table below shows the frequency and percentage of the motivations of family, economy, education and safety. The data reveals that the majority (92%) moved to South Africa for security and safety reasons, seeking a peaceful place to live, followed by 4% for education and another 4% for a family reunion.

Furthermore, safety and security were the most recorded motivations for migration during the interviews. A Somali refugee father stated, "I left my country because of security challenges. My home country had social conflicts for a long time, and I believe there is not much security change up until today" (Interviewee 7, March 2020).

However, as the majority of the study's respondents revealed, Somalia experienced political unrest and environmental disasters since 1991. As a result, millions of Somalis were displaced and migrated all over the world (Fellin, 2013). According to Sadouni (2019), South Africa is a place of settlement to hundreds of thousands of Somalis who were forcibly displaced from their home country due to the civil war, conflicts and humanitarian crises. On the other hand, a few

interviewed mothers identified their motivation for migration as a family reunion, to partner with their husbands. A mother commented on her motivation for coming to South Africa, "I have been living in Cape Town since 2014, it is almost 15 years and I came to the reunion with my husband like the majority of us and I am raising three kids here" (Interviewee 2, March 2020).

A study on entrepreneurship among Somali migrants in South Africa investigated by Ibrahim (2016) revealed that the majority of the study's participants came to South Africa for economic opportunities. However, the research data of this study indicates to the contrary, finding that safety and security were the main driving forces behind Somali immigrants' decisions to move to South Africa. After their arrivals, they opened start-up businesses for a living and most importantly, for survival.

**Table 5. 3. Motivation for migration**

| Motivation for migration | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Family and friends | 2 | 4.00 |
| Education | 2 | 4.00 |
| Economic | 0 | 0.00 |
| Security and safety | 46 | 92.00 |
| **Total** | 50 | 100.00 |

Source: Author's compilation based on field research, 2020

### 5.2.7. Number of refugee children

The number of children who are being raised by the refugee parents determines the size of the family. However, the highest number of Somali refugee parents in the study (46%) are raising 2 to 3 children, the next 40% are raising 1 child. This is followed by 10% who are raising 4 to 5 children while the remaining 2% are raising 6 children and above. Table 5.4 summarizes the frequencies and percentages of the number of children in the refugee sample families.

**Table 5. 4. Number of refugee children**

| Children | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | 20 | 40.00 |
| 2-3 | 23 | 46.00 |
| 4-5 | 5 | 10.00 |
| 6 and above | 2 | 4.00 |
| **Total** | 50 | 100.00 |

Source: Author's compilation based on field research, 2020

### 5.2.8. Age of children

The figure below presents the variation of children's ages, ranging between 0 to 21 years. The majority of the surveyed refugee parents (48%) had children between the ages of 1 to 4 years old. The second category (38%) had children between the ages of 5 to 10 years old while 22% of the Somali refugee parents had children below the age of 1 year old. This is followed by 18% who had children between the ages of 10 to 15 years old. The least percentage (6%) had children between the ages of 16 to 20 while only 2% of the surveyed parents raised children above 21 years of age.

**Figure 5. 3. Ages of children**
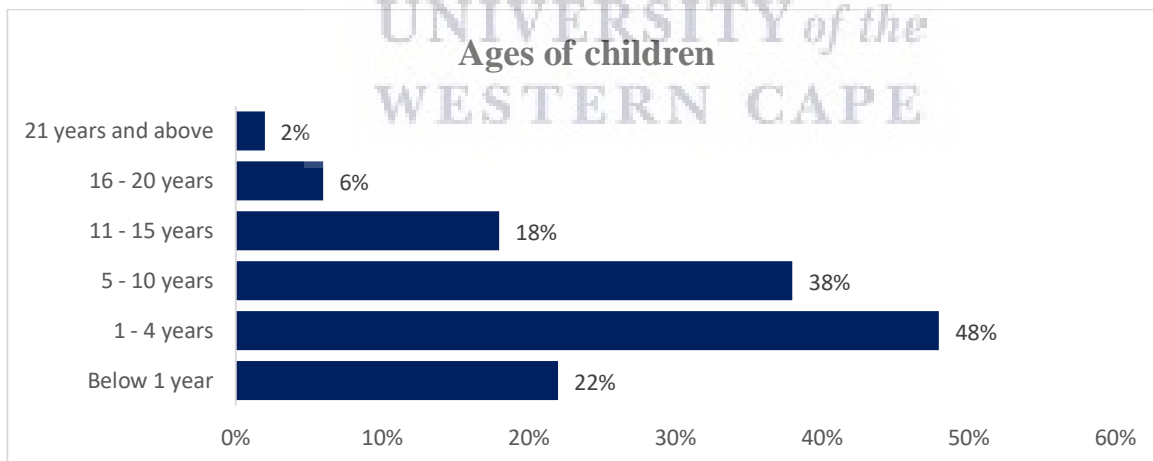


Source: Author's compilation based on field research, 2020

### 5.2.9. *Place of birth*

Of the 50 surveyed refugee parents, 42 of their children (84%) were born in South Africa. The other 8% were born outside South Africa and another 8% were mixed (some born in South Africa and others born outside South Africa). According to Kieu (2016), if the refugee children were born in the host country or had lived there for a longer period of time, they tended to drift away from their native language, receive more education and narrowed the acculturation gap and linguistic differences. However, evaluating refugee children's environmental adaptation was important to the study by screening their place of birth and the duration of living in South Africa.

**Figure 5. 4. Place of birth**



Source: Author's compilation based on field research, 2020

### 5.2.10. *Document status of children*

In order to evaluate whether children receive appropriate care in South Africa regardless of their parent's migration or legal status, a child's documentation was significant to this study. The highest number of refugee parents (62%) revealed that their children had a birth certificate, which allowed the child to get free healthcare, freedom to travel across the country, and to use for school enrolment. The second-highest number of refugee children (24%) were undocumented. Unfortunately, these children either migrated with their parents who were still undocumented or one of the parents, especially the mother, was undocumented by the time she delivered the baby. Furthermore, 6% of the children had refugee status and the rest (8%) had 'other', such as

permanent residence. Although the study included a citizenship option, none of the parents indicated their children as citizenship holders.

One of the interviewed mothers explained why children do not have citizenship:

> Getting citizenship for the children needs a long process. First, the parents must get standard committee (section 27) which is granting permanent residence. Then after several years, parents can apply for citizenship. The children must also go through the same process with their parents. But there is good news that recently came out from the government saying that all children born in South Africa regardless of their parent's statuses must be granted citizenship automatically, no need to depend on the parents anymore but only when they reach at the age of 18 years old (Interviewee 2, March 2020).

Previously, children born and registered in South Africa to non-South African parents were denied the right to apply for citizenship. However, the Citizenship Amendment Act came into force in January 2013, providing the right to apply for citizenship by naturalization for children born to non-South African parents, including refugees. However, the Act is due to be implemented in 2020 (Venter, 2020).

**Table 5. 5. Document status of children**

| Child's type of documentation | Frequency | Percentage |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Birth certificate | 31 | 62.00 |
| Undocumented | 12 | 24.00 |
| Citizenship | 0 | 0.00 |
| Asylum seeker | 0 | 0.00 |
| Refugee status | 3 | 6.00 |
| Other | 4 | 8.00 |
| **Total** | 50 | 100.00 |

Source: Author's compilation based on field research, 2020

## 5.2.11. Household size

As discussed in the conceptual framework, this study considers households as those comprising of the members who are directly related to the household head, either by marriage or biologically and who live together in the same house. However, the data on household size indicated that 45% of the respondents have 3 to 4 family members, followed by 28% who have 5 to 6 members. Furthermore, 24% have 1 to 2 members, which could be either parents or a single parent with their child. Lastly, only 7% have 7 or more members. Additionally, the study ran mean/average statistics and found 2.1 as the average household size of the surveyed Somali refugee families. Nationally, the average household size in South Africa is 3.3, according to StatsSA (2018).

**Figure 5. 5. Household size**
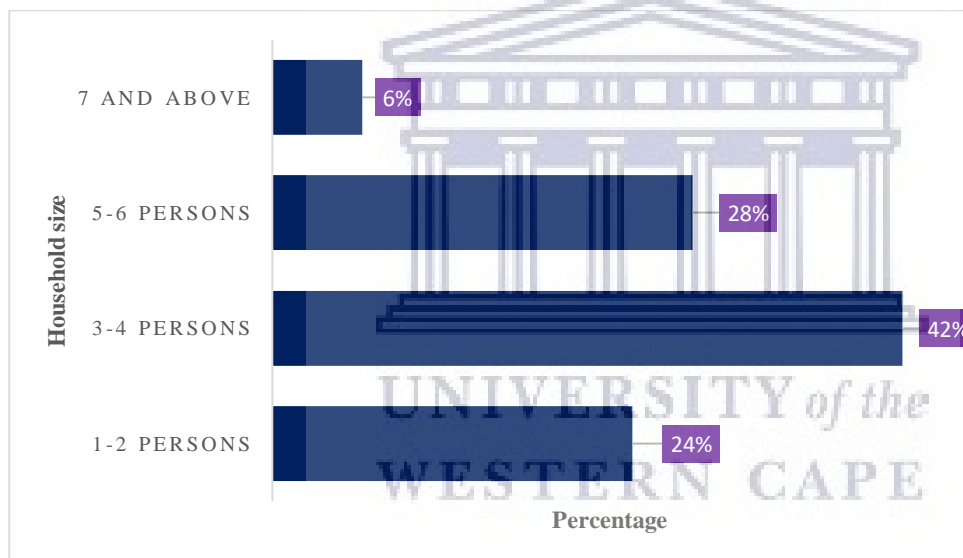


Source: Author's compilation based on field research, 2020

### 5.3. Socio-economic status of refugee parents

According to Thomas (2004), theoretically, measures of household wealth can be reflected by income, consumption or expenditure information on the household. The socio-economic status reveals the education and qualification level of Somali refugee parents in Cape Town as well as their ability to speak English or other local languages. Furthermore, the socio-economic status emphasizes the employment status and income levels of refugee parents.

### 5.3.1. Education and qualification levels

Educational levels are a holistic approach designed to support an individual's early cognitive, physical, social, language and emotional development through institutionalized settings (Spring, 2000). The educational level of refugee parents affects the different levels of effective parenting as well as their ability to enter the labor market, which also affects household income. This study revealed that 44% of Somali refugee parents had no formal educational background. In other words, they never attended formal schools but instead, they received Koranic and other basic studies before their migration. The second category of the study (20%) completed primary school, followed by 18% who completed their secondary education. Only 10% acquired a college or university degree.

The study observed the qualification levels of these refugee parents. The study found that 60% of them had no qualification at all, 28% obtained a secondary certificate or equivalent while only 8% received a university degree. Significantly, this research has shown that Somali refugees in Cape Town have slightly lower educational achievements. A similar study to this investigated the integration outcomes of refugees in the United States and highlighted that more than 40% of Somali refugees residing in the United States had not achieved a high school education. The lack of educational attainment of refugees is considered as an integration challenge (Capps et al., 2015).

This research observed that the interviewed males had a higher educational level than the interviewed females. Findings showed that 2 out of the 6 interviewed mothers had completed high school or university degrees while 4 out of the 6 fathers had obtained either secondary or university qualifications. This led the study to analyze the differences in educational levels by gender using descriptive statistics. As a result, the figure below illustrates that 61.29% of female achieved no formal education compared to their male counterparts (15.79%). Also, 16.13% of females received primary education while 26.32% of males received the same education level; 6.45% of females obtained a university degree compared to 15.79% of males who obtained the same qualification level.

Overall, this shows relatively high differences in educational levels achieved by refugee fathers and mothers. The higher the education levels, the lower the percentage of females with formal education, and the higher the percentage of males with formal education. Somali refugee women

in this study have lower levels of educational achievements than Somali refugee men. Nonetheless, education is a necessary tool and when parents do not have an adequate educational background, they are more likely to experience environmental, linguistic and integration challenges in the host country.

**Table 5. 6. Educational status by gender**

| Educational background by gender | Female | Male | Total % |
|---|---|---|---|
| No formal education | 61.29% | 15.79% | 44.00% |
| Primary education | 16.13% | 26.32% | 20.00% |
| Secondary education | 12.90% | 26.32% | 18.00% |
| College education | 3.23% | 15.79% | 8.00% |
| University degree | 6.45% | 15.79% | 10.00% |
| Total | 100.00% | 100.00% | 100.00% |

Source: Author's compilation based on field research, 2020

### 5.3.2. Language skills

Globally, most immigrants have limited language skills which can be a barrier to migrants' integration (Capps et al., 2015). Language skills are very important for refugees living in South Africa. This study investigated the level of language skills of Somali refugee parents in Cape Town. However, the study indicates that 72% of Somali refugee parents in Cape Town can speak both Somali and English, 24% speak only the Somali language while the rest (4%) can speak Somali and one of the other local languages (Afrikaans, Xhosa, etc.). The study further tested the level of competence in speaking other languages (English, Afrikaans, Xhosa etc.) in the Somali community. It indicated that 56% are good at one of those languages, 34% are poor at speaking other languages while 10% are very good at speaking English or one of local languages.

**Table 5. 7. Language skills**

| Language skills | Frequency | Percentage | Competence | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Somali only | 12 | 24.00 | Poor | 17 | 34.00 |
| Somali and English | 36 | 72.00 | Good | 28 | 56.00 |
| Somali and other local languages (e.g. Afrikaans, Xhosa) | 2 | 4.00 | Very Good | 5 | 10.00 |
| **Total** | 50 | 100.00 | **Total** | 50 | 100.00 |

Source: Author's compilation based on field research, 2020

### 5.3.3. Employment status and household income levels

The relationship between workers, employers, and business clients is referred to as employment. Standard employment is based on permanent paid work with a supportive working environment and non-standard work involves working in temporary and self-employment arrangements (Lowe and Schellenberg, 2001). Employment is a key source for the household's income. In this study, of the 50 questionnaires, 54% of the respondents were employed and 46% were unemployed. The majority of the 46% were women, who specified their reasons for unemployment as being housewives who were raising children. Only a few of them were searching for work. Although South Africa's unemployment rate rose to 29% in the last quarter of 2019, the unemployment rate among Somali refugee parents in Cape Town is low. Generally, most of the Somali migrants in South Africa are engaged in informal businesses. In Cape Town, the town of Bellville is the main center for Somali businesses; the dominant business type are the 'spaza' shops, which are small retail outlets that sell the basic life necessities.

The study breaks down employment by gender and it reveals that 74.19% of the female participants were not working, and only 25.81% of refugee mothers were working. On the contrary, all the male participants in this study were working (100%) as the table below shows.

**Table 5. 8. Employment status by gender**

| Are you employed | Gender | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Female | Male | |
| No | 74.19 | 0.00 | 46.00 |
| Yes | 25.81 | 100.00 | 54.00 |
| Total | 100.00 | 100.00 | 100.00 |

Source: Author's compilation based on field research, 2020

Furthermore, it is worth pointing out that 35% of the study's female participants were not looking for work because of their preoccupation with raising children. Participants were asked if they were involved in formal or informal businesses. A total of 24% engaged in formal businesses such as business and financial services, owners of registered businesses, and engagement in community and social services, while 30% engaged in informal businesses such as spaza shops and informal food services (like restaurants). Additionally, when analyzing the income levels of refugee parents, the study found that 48% earned between R1000-R5000 monthly, while 38% earned income between R5000-R10000 monthly. The smallest percentage earned either above R10000, or less than R1000. The study sought to determine if the household's income was viewed as sufficient income among refugee parents. Interestingly, the data showed a 50/50 balance. One of the interviewed parents discussed the burden of their household's insufficient income:

> I cannot say our income is sufficient because everything is expensive in Cape Town – houses, food and school fees. I pay R2040 for school fees only excluding transportation, books and uniforms each month. I also pay R1350 every month for Koranic studies separately. So, our income can just cover our basic needs, we cannot buy extra things for our home (Interviewee 2, March 2020).

## 5.4. Challenges experienced by Somali refugee parents in Cape Town

### 5.4.1. Housing

Housing is generally acknowledged as a basic need for all human beings (Peberdy and Majodina, 2000). It is an important physical shelter. In South Africa, the constitution protects basic human

rights, including housing. The Bill of Rights states that, "Everyone has the right to have access to adequate housing" (RSA, 1996, 12 cited in Peberdy and Majodina, 2000). Despite these protections, housing in South African cities like Johannesburg and Cape Town is scarce and costly (Peberdy and Majodina, 2000). Immigrants in South African cities encounter severe housing challenges. The housing challenges impact on immigrants' health and livelihood options. This study found that Somali refugee parents struggle to find accommodation; they encounter significant difficulties in accessing it.

Several factors limit the access to accommodation in Cape Town, such as unaffordable rental costs, lack of required documentation, the language barrier, housing rules and regulations, and discrimination by landlords. The figure below shows the percentages for each of these factors. About two-thirds of the study's respondents (66%) defined unaffordable rental costs as the main factor affecting access to housing in Cape Town. Almost a similar percentage (62%) referred to the lack of the right documents as a barrier to housing access, while 54% identified discrimination by landlords as a factor of housing challenges. The remaining percentage mentioned other factors such as the language barrier, and strict housing conditions.

**Figure 5. 6. Challenges of housing**
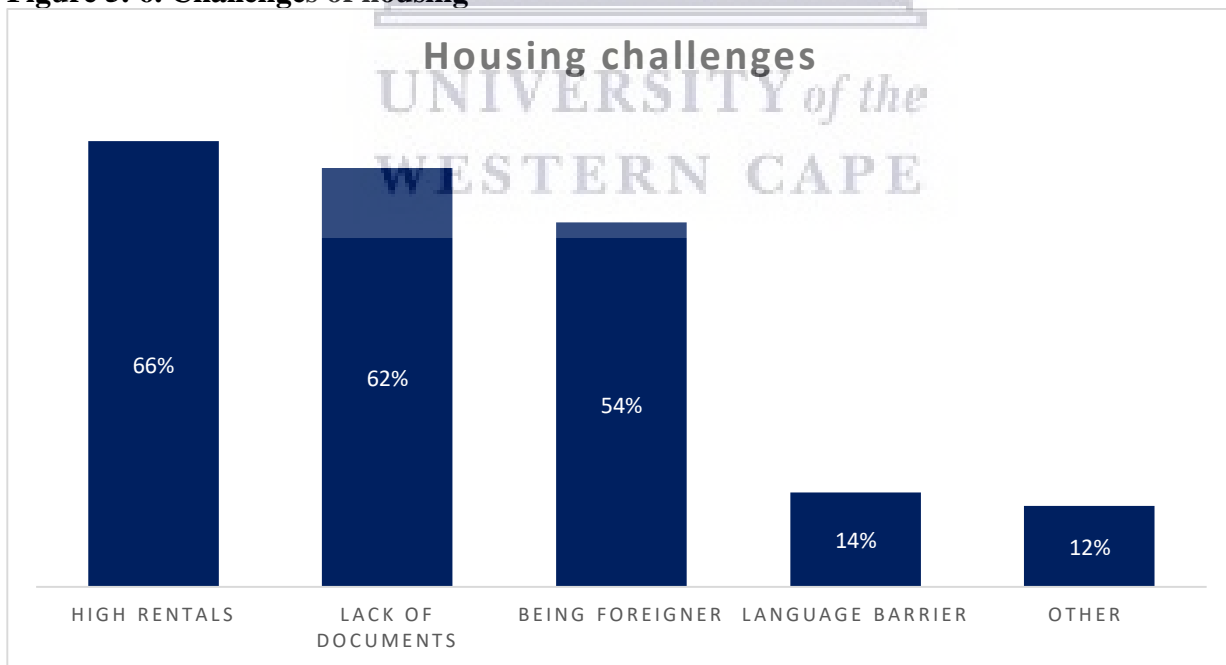


Source: Author's compilation based on field research, 2020

*5.4.1.1. Unaffordable rental costs*

The interviewed parents further discussed the factors limiting access to housing. Similar to the quantitative data, Somali refugee parents referred to expensive rental costs as one of the main challenges to accessing housing. One of the interviewed mothers explained her experiences in searching for suitable accommodation in Cape Town:

> The biggest challenge I face in Cape Town as a Somali refugee parent is difficulty to find a house and expensive rent if you get one. When I came here 1.5 years ago, I had been looking for a house for about one year. I have been staying with friends, then when I got it, it is very expensive and low quality which I am not satisfied with (Interviewee 3, March 2020).

Another interviewed mother described getting poor quality service in the houses (e.g. water and electricity), if the parents cannot afford to rent higher priced-houses:

> For us, we do have a house but the challenge we face as a family is the lack of enough water. We do not have enough water for about one year now. The water comes at 4am and goes off after 20 minutes. When we try to find other houses – first finding a proper house for our family is not easy and second, it is very expensive which we could not afford (Interviewee 4, March 2020).

The ability to pay the rent of standard accommodation links to the employment status and income levels. As indicated above, the income levels of Somali refugees in Cape Town are low and they engage in their own businesses, as they have limited opportunities in South Africa's formal markets. Additionally, Greenburg and Polzer (2008) note that the majority of migrants in South Africa search for inner-city accommodation which is more likely to have higher rentals than the townships. Migrants access the inner-city houses through family, friends and other informal social networks rather than through private rental markets.

*5.4.1.2. Lack of required documents*

The second category of the study respondents (62%) viewed the lack of required documents as another major challenge for housing access. They complained that they were denied the houses that they had been looking for because of not having the required documents. A father explained:

> The housing challenges for refugee parents are many; the biggest challenge is finding a safe house to rent for your family. But you are more likely not to get the house you have been looking for because your legal documents do not allow you to get it. You might be

undocumented or have an asylum-seeker or refugee status but most landlords do not want all these kinds of legal statuses (Interviewee 8, March 2020).

### 5.4.1.3. Discrimination by landlords

One of the main challenges regarding housing, is discrimination by the landlords. According to the quantitative data, more than 54% of the refugee respondents complained about their difficulties to access a house because of being a foreigner. Refugee parents felt that many housing applications were declined just because they were not citizens. This refugee father talked about his experience:

> Our housing issues include when you find an available house and you call the owner, immediately he learns that you are Somali refugee. He says he cannot give you the house and when you ask why, he brings different excuses, like Somalis always arrive at their homes late at night and go to work early morning so they do not have the intention to make their houses clean and neat all the time (Interviewee 10, March 2020).

### 5.4.1.4. Others

As the above figure shows, 12% of the study's respondents chose the 'other' category, specifying landlords not wanting many children on their premises, as well as strict housing conditions. The interviewed refugee parents raised these issues in the focus group discussions. A mother complained that having several children was a challenge: "Finding a house is difficult; plus, landlords ask you if you have children, and when they find out that you have more than 2 kids, they reject your application" (Interviewee 4, March 2020).

Another mother commented on the lack of complying with the rental rules and regulations as a challenge for their housing access:

> The houses are difficult to find. And when you find one, the landlords give you a lot of conditions which you cannot comply with. For instance, the rental rate increases every year; if you break something in the house you will pay for it; your family cannot make any noise during this and that time, and many others. So, even if you obey the rules, some of the landlords still behave strangely and rudely. They are fault-finders which makes you feel like you are a foreigner and this country is his (Interviewee 2, March 2020).

On the other hand, it was agreed among refugee parents that the limited spaces in Cape Town houses restrict the practicing of some of the traditional cultures, such as having guests. It also dictated household size, acting like birth control. This father lamented these issues:
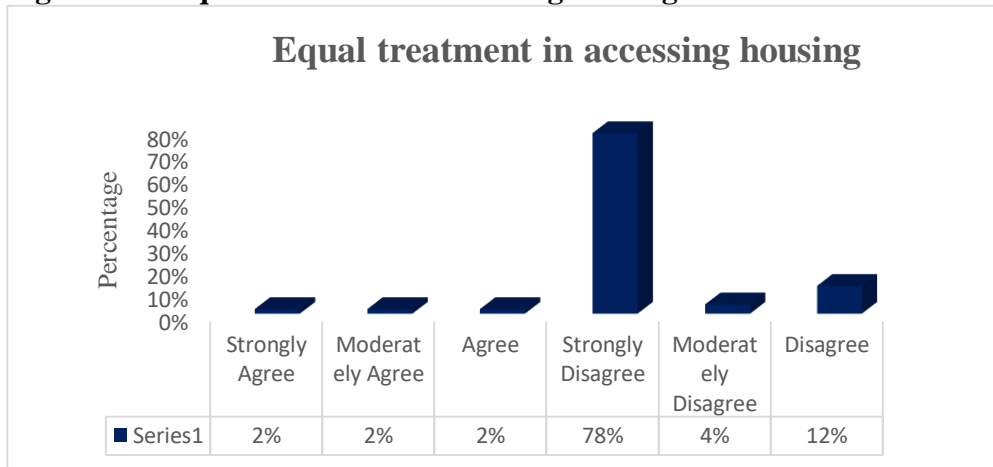
> I want to add something to the housing issues. Back home, we used to have guests all the time and this was part of our beautiful culture. The challenge here is, the house we rented is very small and only a few people can stay in it. And when someone visits you and wants to spend the night with you, you do not have an extra place to sleep. Even if you try to arrange a small place for the visitors, you're afraid that the owner of the house may see you and evict you from the house, therefore, this is indeed a big challenge for us (Interviewee 8, March 2020).

The father added:

> It is also a good point to mention that Somalis have a high fertility rate generally. Just imagine, a father who wants to have 9 kids and he rented a flat with two bedrooms and paying R8000 excluding electricity and water. Normally, the flat owners allow only 4 people including parents and children, no extra persons. The small houses in Cape Town brought tremendous challenges to Somali parents especially when the number of children is increasing. The parents must look for a proper house that they are not likely to find in South Africa or they may not afford to pay the rent. Therefore, this challenge forced a lot of parents to send their children back home or reduce the fertility rate which they may not be satisfied with (Interviewee 8, March 2020).

The study also sought the refugee parents' views on being treated as citizens, or not, when seeking suitable housing. They were asked if, in their view, the refugee families were treated the same as South Africans when renting a house. According to the survey, 78% of the refugees strongly disagreed and argued that citizens are treated better than the refugees. Another 12% also disagreed and only 6% of the respondents were positive in their responses.

**Figure 5. 7. Equal treatment in accessing housing**



**Equal treatment in accessing housing**

| | Strongly Agree | Moderately Agree | Agree | Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ■ Series1 | 2% | 2% | 2% | 78% | 4% | 12% |

Source: Author's compilation based on field research, 2020

### 5.4.2. Financial difficulties

Employment provides a means of livelihood to the refugees to support their families. As discussed above, the descriptive statistics found that 54% of Somali refugee parents were employed, mainly in their own businesses, spaza shops or community services. The remaining 46% were unemployed; the vast majority of those unemployed were women who were not looking for work because they were occupied with raising children. However, this data shows that unemployment is not a factor among Somali refugee parents but income difficulties are of concern.

### 5.4.2.1. Sending family members back home

Refugee parents identified financial difficulties as being among the challenges of raising children in Cape Town. Because of the low-income levels, and high rental costs, electricity, water and living expenses, some parents could not carry the burden of raising a family in South Africa. They therefore decided to send their children back to Somalia. Two fathers in the focus group discussions explained factors forcing them to send their family members back to Somalia after raising them in Cape Town for many years. A father said:

> The standard of living in South Africa is very high. A refugee person like me who is self-employed and does not have other skills cannot afford to pay all the living expenses for a family. The houses are expensive, the electricity and water are prepaid and expensive too. And I was raising my family in the inner-city which is more expensive than the township

areas. Due to these financial challenges, I sent my family back home (Interviewee 8, March 2020).

Another father added:

> I also sent my family for the same challenges. You know, you experience so many challenges in Cape Town including looking for a safe house, paying all the bills and education. So, by the end of the month you realize that everything you earned is being used up here, nothing else you can save or help with your parents back home. So, I thought, if I send my wife and children, they will use the monthly remittance I send together with my parents (Interviewee 10, March 2020).

Besides the financial difficulties, refugee parents complained about the unsafety in their workplaces such as crime, robbery and shootings. Overall, South Africa's crime rate is high across the country; interviewees discussed their experiences. A father explained, "I work in my tuck shop, I am also a deliverer for a Noodles company. During my work, I experience several challenges such as robbing and shooting. But I try to manage these difficulties as much as I can" (Interviewee 12, March 2020).

Refugee parents also added that working in the cities and township locations is not similar in terms of safety. Townships are higher risk areas than the inner-city, according to a father, who said:

> There are several challenges in the workplace. When you are working in the inner-cities you might not experience many difficulties but when you are working in the townships you experience things like looting, robbing, being injured or murdered. I have been working in the townships for many years and I still have shops there; working there is really a high risk (Interviewee 10, March 2020).

### 5.4.3. Getting the right documents

Refugee parents viewed getting legal documents in South Africa as one of the biggest challenges. Respondents of the study were asked about the factors that limit documentation access. The vast majority (64%) highlighted corruption in the process of applying for refugee documents and the lack of assistance at the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) as the major challenges. Others indicated the language barrier or the expensive transportation costs hindering them from getting the right documents from the DHA. A similar study addresses the challenges faced by refugees in the application for refugee documents. Zhou (2018) notes that the asylum-seeking procedures are

not always fair, and the long queues in the process of application open up room for corruption. In the process of extending papers, refugees find it difficult because the presence of long queues results in not being assisted on time.

**Figure 5. 8. Challenges of documentation**



Source: Author's compilation based on field research, 2020

The study reveals that refugee mothers experience more challenges in terms of documentation than fathers do. The majority of the interviewed refugee mothers were either undocumented or had asylum-seeker documentation while 1 out of the 6 mothers had been granted refugee status. Compared to interviewed fathers, all of them had been granted refugee status permits except one who was granted permanent residence status. Refugee mothers were struggling to obtain formal refugee status while most fathers complained of not getting permanent residence and arguing that they were qualified and they had lived in South Africa for a very long time. One father explained:

> I have been living in Cape Town for about 15 years now. When I came I got a refugee status permit but 6 years ago I applied to the standard committee (section 27) which is granting permanent residence but I never got feedback and I do not know the reason (Interviewee 7, March 2020).

Other refugee parents, especially mothers, related their difficulties experienced with getting the temporary permits for their first time. One mother recalled:

For me, I have a one-month asylum-seeker permit that Home Affairs renews for me every month. I had even been struggling to get this one-month permit. I went to Pretoria several times to get it. After a long struggle, I got it and they renewed it for me here in Cape Town every month (Interviewee 1, March 2020).

The same mother declared that renewing the documents was one of the biggest challenges she experienced as a refugee mother:

My biggest challenge is the lack of having the right documents. I have only a one-month asylum seeker permit, every month I have to go to Home Affairs at 4 in the early morning, which is not easy to go outside as a woman at such a time. Besides that, I have to join a long queue and you will be only assisted at 1 or 2 o'clock midday. I always leave my small kids behind and I do not even stay close to the Home Affairs (Interviewee 1, March 2020).

It is evident that, among the Somali refugee parents in Cape Town, documentation is one of the main challenges faced by the parents, restricting the rental of safe houses and closing off many opportunities in the country.

### 5.4.4. Access to public services

The Somali refugee parents who participated in this study, generally acknowledged a more positive experience in accessing public services such as healthcare and education centers, as well as the South African Police Services (SAPS) and the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA). As the figure below indicates, 64% of respondents answered 'no challenges' while 36% responded 'yes' to experiencing challenges.

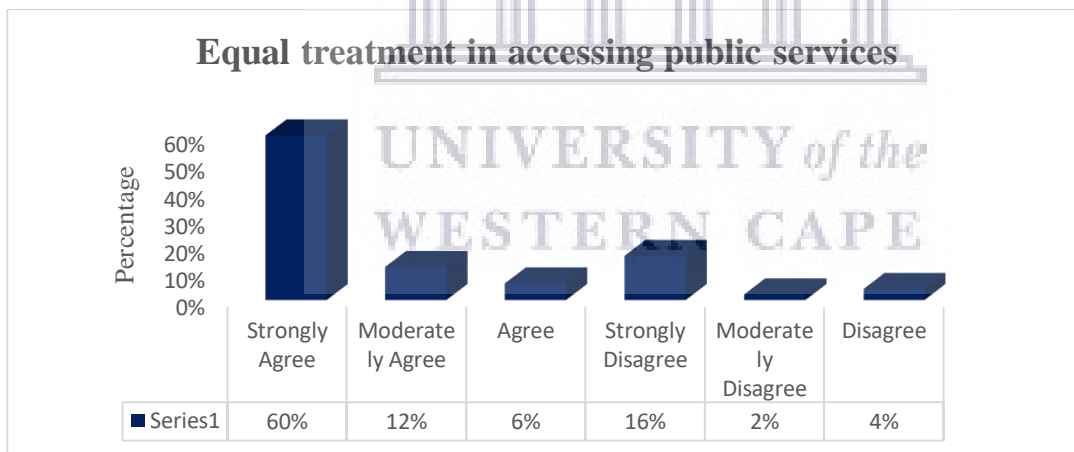**Figure 5. 9. Challenges related to accessing public services**
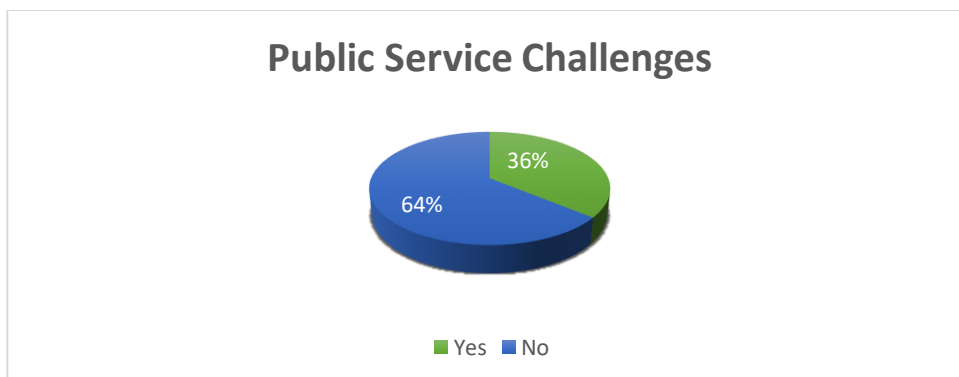


Source: Author's compilation based on field research, 2020

Respondents were further asked about their experiences of social services such as banks. They stated that banks do not open a bank account for refugees who are undocumented or who have an asylum-seeker permit. But some of the respondents argued that some banks accepted the asylum permit to open a bank account under strict conditions, such as bringing a guarantor to sign for the person and every time the temporary paper expires, the person has to bring the renewed paper back, together with the guarantor to sign it again. The findings of a similar study by Barbera and Ochse (2009) confirm the refugees' struggles to open a bank account in South Africa. This study found that some banks provide banking services only to the people with permanent residence documentation and to South African citizens, and that refugees and asylum-seekers are not allowed to open bank accounts without the signature of a guarantor.

Furthermore, respondents were asked their views about receiving equal treatment when accessing public services. The figure below shows that unlike the unequal treatment pertaining to housing, the majority of participants (60%) strongly agreed that public service providers treat them the same as citizens in South Africa.

**Figure 5. 10. Equal treatment in accessing public services**



| | Strongly Agree | Moderately Agree | Agree | Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ■ Series1 | 60% | 12% | 6% | 16% | 2% | 4% |

Source: Author's compilation based on field research, 2020

### 5.4.5. Parental involvement in education

#### 5.4.5.1. School applications

The interviewees described their experiences in applying to schools for their children. Parents' lack of information, illiteracy and low computer skills made school applications difficult among the Somali refugee parents in this study. One mother explained:

> For me, I do not have many challenges about my children's schooling because I can speak English very well and I know when school applications are opened and closed. But, I have seen many parents who are struggling with school applications. Most Somali parents have no information about the application periods, they start the application process very late and they end up being rejected [their applications]. The school applications of this country are open only between February until March each year. If the parent did not apply during these months, there will be no school for their children for the next year; the children will just be staying at home (Interviewee 2, March 2020).

The same mother, who also works for a Somali non-profit organization called the Somali Association of South Africa (SASA), added:

> I work with the SASA organization and we help a lot of people from the Somali community. The challenge I usually see is that parents have no information about school applications; they do not follow the media. Plus, the school applications must be done online but Somali parents have no computer skills which gives them a hard time. So, we help them to do their applications online (Interviewee 2, March 2020).

#### 5.4.5.2. Homework and school meetings

Because of the low educational levels and language skills among Somali refugee parents, helping children with their homework is a challenge. According to one parent,

> We meet a lot of challenges in education. Like, most of the Somali parents in Cape Town have a low schooling background and poor language skills. We cannot help our children to do their homework. Even some of us who went to schools cannot help children with their homework because the education systems of our country and this country are totally different. Plus, our children cannot speak Afrikaans, and we as parents also cannot speak Afrikaans. So, it is easy for the child to fail that subject (Interviewee 2, March 2020).

A father commented on the attendance of school meetings among Somali parents:

> I would say, Somali parents have great challenges in school involvement. Somali parents do not attend school meetings. It is either that they do not have time to attend the school

meetings or even if they try to attend they do not understand completely what the school teachers are talking about. And this point returns to the parent's low educational background and language skills (Interviewee 7, March 2020).

### 5.4.6. Language barrier

The language barrier is another challenge experienced by refugee parents. It is associated with a host of other challenges discussed above, such as housing, documentation, lower-income, access to health services, and parental involvement in education. The lack of English language proficiency is at the core of most refugee parents' struggles in Cape Town. A total of 14% of respondents identified the language barrier as their most difficult challenge in accessing housing. Also, 16% of the study respondents included the language barrier in getting the right documents from the Department of Home Affairs. This interviewed mother recounted her experience:

> I have an asylum-seeker permit which expires every six months. I have been living in South Africa for 9 years. During the 9 years I am here, the Department of Home Affairs was renewing this six-month paper. At the first time, when I was getting this paper, DHA called me for an interview. I could not understand or speak any word of English. I went for the interview, knowing nothing. Then DHA rejected my application and gave me [leave to] appeal. I tried to contact lawyers but my language is very poor and no one helped me since then (Interviewee 4, March 2020).

On the access of public service, the study indicates that 34% of the participants responded that they had challenges, which were elaborated on in the interviews. One of the interviewed mothers described her experiences in the healthcare centers and mentioned that language was the greatest challenge. As noted by Barbera and Ochse (2009) earlier, the challenges of parenting concerning healthcare services include the language barrier. Some refugee parents cannot explain the disease symptoms or previous diagnoses. One mother said:

> I do have challenges in healthcare centers because I do not know how to speak English or any other local language. Sometimes I go with a sick child to the clinics or hospitals and I do not know how to explain the situation. When you do not know the language, the nurses give you less attention and send you home without being assisted well (Interviewee 4, March 2020).

For some parents, even accessing public transportation is difficult because of their language barrier. A mother recognized this challenge: "I also have difficulties in accessing public

transportation because I do not know English. I do not even know how to say, 'I want to get off at place X'. So, I am very afraid to use public transportation, I am afraid to get lost" (Interviewee 5, March 2020).

As discussed in parental involvement in education, most parents indicated that because of their language limitations, they found it difficult to apply to schools for their children, attend school parent meetings and help their children with the homework. A mother commented: "Because of not knowing English, I cannot also help my kids with their homework" (Interviewee 4, March 2020).

Furthermore, parents indicated their language barrier was also a limitation in their community integration. They all agreed that they seldom interacted with local people because of language limitations. They confessed that if they knew any of the languages of this country, it would not be a challenge to integrate with the local people by having conversations with them.

### 5.4.7. Parenting in a new environment

#### 5.4.7.1. Fear of losing religious values

Bowie et al. (2017) note the challenges experienced by the Somali refugee parents in the United States of America. The Somali refugee parents in the USA considered it dangerous to let their children go outside where neighbors were strangers. They had a fear of changing their children's religious and cultural values. In this study, Somali parents also indicated a fear of losing the religious values for their children as a major challenge of parenting in a new environment. A mother confirmed this concern:

> As a refugee parent, the new environment is very challenging because the people we live with and we have different religions and cultures. We are very afraid to let the children outside alone; we try to keep them home as much as we can after they come from school. We only allow them outside with the parent's accompaniment. We are too afraid for our children to take other religions and cultures. We want to keep our children with the Islamic religion. Also, the safety and security in this country are not good, therefore, allowing kids to be outside is not recommended at all (Interviewee 2, March 2020).

A father added:

As we all know, in Somalia, our environment was the main part of effective child-raising. All people were speaking one language, the environment was supportive because we had the same culture, faith and religion. But in this country, the values of this environment and ours are different. So, parents are afraid of the change of religious values for their children (Interviewee 9, March 2020).

### 5.4.7.2. *Change of parenting roles*

The changing of parenting roles has become one of the great challenges that most of the Somali refugee parents face in South Africa. Disparities between parenting practices in Somalia and South Africa in terms of gender roles have been noted in the interviews. Fathers emphasized that, in South Africa, being the breadwinner only is not enough to raise a family. One participant observed:

It is a fact that most of us feel the changing parenting role. In Somalia, the primary responsibility of the father is only to earn the family's income, but here, taking this role only is not enough. You are needed to take part in raising the children, picking them up from the school and taking them out and letting them play outside on the weekends under your watch. Therefore, both parents have to look after the children equally (Interviewee 7, March 2020).

The reason this role has changed is because of the absenteeism of certain family members. Back in their home countries, grandparents and aunts help the family to raise children and the children do not have strong needs for their fathers. Therefore, the fathers are responsible for the family's income while looking after the children is a collective responsibility of the extended family. According to a respondent:

In Somalia, the primary responsibility of looking after the children is the mother's, usually. Fathers are busy with outside work. Fathers are not needed in the house that much, especially looking after the children because mothers have many supporters like grandmothers, aunts, and so on (Interviewee 8, March 2020).

Deng and Marlowe (2013) explored refugee resettlement and parenting in a new culture. Their study observes that the absence of refugees' extended family members became a particular challenge to the refugee families in New Zealand. Parents were the only caregivers for their children in New Zealand but in Sudan, relatives used to provide support to these families.

In this study, a father acknowledged the new parenting roles that Somalis adopted when they came to South Africa. He believed that parenting has changed for the better:

> I believe parenting has changed for a better way. We came to a country where people need to follow rules and regulations. Children in this country have the best care from their parents. Giving them your time, it is something that you cannot avoid. In Somalia, children were not given enough care or attention to what they need. But when we came here we adopted better parenting ways and children here has become very humble and good listeners because of the good parenting that they receive (Interviewee 10, March 2020).

Similarly, Deng and Marlowe (2013) note that while some of the refugees might see the change of parenting roles as a challenge, coming to a new country has brought them closer to their children. Another study by Marlowe (2012) indicates that some interviewed refugees in that study acknowledged the change of gender roles in the family by taking equal responsibilities for raising children, by taking turns to spend time with the children in a more disciplined way.

### 5.5. Strategies to cope with the experienced challenges

#### 5.5.1. Community networks

Social networks are determined by the resources that are available to the individuals within a shared ethnic identity group and they are strengthened by the physical and social interactions (Gastrow and Amit, 2013). The Somali communities in South Africa have a sense of togetherness which facilitates cooperation and reciprocity among them (Gastrow and Amit, 2013). In this study, among Somalis refugee parents, a strong community network is an essential strategy to overcome the experienced challenges. A father elaborated:

> We solve our parenting challenges by using community support. For instance, when we are looking for a safe house, we ask one of the community members with a South African ID to apply for us. Through this strategy, some of us overcome the challenges of housing (Interviewee 7, March 2020).

### 5.5.2. Support from Somali refugee institutions

The Somali Association of South Africa (SASA) is a Somali non-profit organization that supports the Somali community in different ways. Gastrow and Amit (2013) note that SASA is a Somali community-based organization operating in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth, advocating for and supporting Somali refugees. An interviewed mother outlined what they do:

> The Somali Association of South Africa supports the Somali refugees in Cape Town. It has English and computer learning programs in the office of SASA. Many Somali people go and learn something there. There are also after-school programs. The organization also sends some of its staff with the people who need interpreters at clinics, hospitals and police stations. The SASA organization provides a lot of support to the refugee communities (Interviewee 2, March 2020).

### 5.5.3. Integration

According to Brown (2015), xenophobia and crime in South Africa is a serious obstacle to integration. The language barrier is also a complex matter among Somali refugees in South Africa. However, some respondents in the study who have linguistic skills indicated that integration is their powerful strategy to cope with their environmental challenges. One mother said:

> I deal with most of my challenges through community integration. Since I am living in this country, I try to interact with the citizens and speak their language. I also try to become a close friend of them in order to understand each other very well. I believe all people are not bad. Good people always try to help you regardless of who you are and where you came from (Interviewee 2, March 2020).

### 5.6. Conclusion

In summary, refugee parents admitted that the new environment presented challenges to their parenting practices. Housing, documentation, income difficulties, the language barrier, parental involvement in education and a change of parenting roles were the main challenges experienced by the Somali parents living in Cape Town. This chapter presented and analyzed the empirical data that was collected by following the structure of the research objectives. The chapter also revealed the statistical data of the study by using figures and tables. It further used quoted statements by linking the findings with the existing literature. The following chapter summarizes the findings, suggests recommendations and concludes the thesis.

## 6.0. CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

### 6.1. Introduction

This study explored the challenges of raising a family as a refugee parent in South Africa, using a case study of Somali refugees in Cape Town. This chapter summarizes the findings of the study that reflect the research objectives of the study. It also provides recommendations and concludes the paper.

### 6.2. Summary of findings

#### 6.2.1 Challenges experienced by the Somali refugee parents in Cape Town

As presented in the above chapter, refugee parents discussed the severe challenges of housing in Cape Town, which impacts their lives in many ways. They asserted that certain factors limited their access to housing, such as unaffordable rental costs, lack of required documentation, housing conditions, the language barrier and discrimination by landlords. The study found that 66% of the sample experienced excessive rental costs, followed by 62% who struggled to obtain the documentation required for home rental applications. Furthermore, 54% felt discrimination against by landlords, thus limiting their access to safe housing. Additionally, some participants discussed other issues such as the language barrier, strict housing conditions, and unsuitable sizes of the houses for their household needs. The reasons for Cape Town's rental costs, as pointed out by Greenburg and Polzer (2008) are that accommodation in Cape Town is managed by private rental markets, and the majority of migrants in South Africa search for houses only in the inner-city rather than in townships because of safety matters.

Financial difficulties were also discussed as one of the main challenges among the Somali refugee parents in Cape Town. The study found that 54% of the refugee parents were employed in either spaza shops or their own businesses. It also found that many refugee women were unemployed and they were not looking for work, as they were raising children and did not want to leave their children behind. However, refugee parents discussed the insufficiency of their income, as 50% of the study respondents indicated that their income was not sufficient and therefore, that forced many

parents to send their children back to Somalia. They could not raise a family in Cape Town due to the high cost of living.

Applying for and renewing refugee documents was also one of the big challenges faced by Somali refugee parents in Cape Town. A total of 64% of the sample population highlighted that there was corruption in the process of applying for refugee papers, which made the process of obtaining permits unfair. There were also long queues and a lack of adequate assistance at the Department of Home Affairs, which made renewing the papers difficult. Studies by Ibrahim (2016) and Zhou (2018) confirm that the prevalence of long queues and the lack of assistance at the DHA as open up space for corruption. This results in the refugees in South Africa being unable to renew their papers on time, leaving them vulnerable to being arrested by the South African police. Additionally, refugee mothers in this study discussed their struggles in applying for and renewing refugee temporary documents in South Africa.

Notwithstanding the challenges of housing, income and documents, refugee parents acknowledged the role of public services such as clinics, hospitals, schools, social grants and police stations. The study found that 64% of the refugee parents had no challenges with accessing public services, while 36% responded that they had problems, mainly due to the language barrier. Ibrahim (2016) similarly noted that the refugees' experiences in public services such as education and health were positive among Somali refugees in South Africa. Moreover, the study asked its respondents about their view of the equal treatment with regard to accessing public services. Almost 80% of the Somali parents responded that they were being treated the same as citizens in the clinics, hospitals and education centers.

The Somali refugee parents in the study identified negative experiences in the involvement in their children's education. The interviewees cited their challenges in applying to schools for children as well as helping children with their homework. It is evident that these challenges are related to the parents' own levels of education, computer literacy as well as the language barrier. In general, the study found that the educational levels of the adult Somali refugees in Cape Town are low, with 60% of the sample population having no formal qualifications. Furthermore, the language barrier was an ongoing challenge among refugee parents, as it is associated with a host of other challenges such as housing, documentation, lower-income, access to health services, parental involvement in

education, and the limited integration into the host community. Several research studies confirm that the language barrier is a global challenge among refugees worldwide (see Turney and Kao, 2009; Barbera and Ochse, 2009; Tadesse, 2014).

The change of parenting roles and the fear of losing the religious values for refugee children were revealed in this study as paramount among the environmental challenges faced by the Somali refugee parents in Cape Town. A similar challenge was experienced by Somali refugee parents in the United States of America. Bowie et al. (2017) found that Somali refugee parents in the USA considered it dangerous to allow their children to play outside without parental supervision. Somali parents feared losing their children's religious and cultural values.

### 6.2.2. Strategies to cope with the experienced challenges

Somali refugees rely heavily on their strong community networks as the main strategy to cope with the challenges discussed above. A community network is an essential strategy for overcoming the experienced challenges by the refugee parents, with mutual support for each other and sharing crucial information. The study found that 92% of the respondents were dependent on their diaspora community. Additionally, several participants also cited integration into the host community as an important strategy to cope with the encountered challenges.

### 6.3. Recommendations

During the interviews, the participants raised some pressing issues that need to be addressed. This study suggests that the efficient implementation of government policies regarding refugee documentation would improve refugee families' lives in South Africa. Documentation is a basic right under the constitution of South Africa, yet there are huge restrictions on issuing appropriate permits for refugees and lengthy time delays in documentation transitions. Therefore, without having proper documentation, refugee parents find it difficult to access almost every service in South Africa. The South African government recently announced the implementation of 'citizenship by naturalization' for all children born in South Africa, regardless of their parentage. This study welcomes this announcement, as refugee children will be guaranteed their own rights, unlike previously, when children born to an undocumented parent, were denied a birth certificate

in South Africa. Furthermore, housing is a precondition of full rights, therefore, refugee housing needs to be integrated into South Africa's housing policy.

Migrants came to South Africa and resided in the cities without receiving orientation from the South African government or refugee institutions. This resulted in the migrants being uninformed residents and not knowing anything about the country's laws, policies and ways of integration. The study recommends that the government and refugee institutions provide support programs such as orientation for the newcomers as well as workshops and seminars for the migrants who already reside in the country. This makes cultural integration easier and it also informs migrants about the country's systems and policies as well as their rights and the rights of the people they live with. Most importantly, it will bring about social inclusion.

Lastly, human rights institutions and refugee institutions should implement parenting education programs, including the development of language skills. This will improve parents' awareness and educational levels, which will reduce difficulties in every aspect of their lives. If the parents are educated and have no language barriers, they will depend on themselves rather than on interpreters in clinics and hospitals.

### 6.4. Conclusion

This study foregrounded the greatest challenges experienced by refugee parents in Cape Town, South Africa. The study focused on the experiences of a selected group of Somali refugees in Cape Town. A total of 62 people participated in the study through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The study obtained in-depth information pertaining to the research problem. The findings of the study are relevant to the study's chosen theories and objectives. It illuminated the strategies to cope with these challenges – community networks and integration – which relate to the study's theoretical framework. Moreover, the researcher put forward some policy recommendations and suggested community interventions for refugee families.

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