COLLECTIVE ACTION AMONG FEMALE STREET TRADERS: A CASE STUDY OF A STREET TRADER ORGANISATION IN THE CITY OF CAPE TOWN CBD

By

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ABSTRACT

Street trading is a highly contested activity in South Africa because of the different interests held by the government, other stakeholders and street traders. The contradictory nature of the relationship between government and street traders has led to exclusionary policies and practices put in place by the government to regulate street trading. These exclusionary practices have negative effects on the livelihoods of street traders. Female traders are more vulnerable and at greater risk than their male counterparts. Organised labour movements have largely focused on formal sector workers, leaving the rights of informal workers largely unregulated. In recent years there has been an emergence of informal sector organisations seeking to protect the interests of street traders and influence informal trading policy. Although seldom researched, a number of informal sector organisations have emerged in South African cities. This study explores how female street traders on the Grand Parade in the Cape Town Central Business District organise and use collective action to overcome the various ways in which they are marginalised. The study used semi-structured interviews and key informant interviews to collect data. The focus was on determining the challenges faced by street traders, how they organise to overcome these challenges and the impact that the organisations have on street-trading activities. The study found that female traders faced several physical, infrastructural, economic and regulatory challenges to trading in common with their male counterparts and a few gender-specific challenges. Grand Parade United Traders Association, the trader organisation they belonged to, had a working relationship with the City of Cape Town and, while constrained by lack of resources, was not only able to represent trader's interests but had a strong presence of women in its leadership and membership. Despite this, it was not able to improve the gender-specific problems that female traders experienced nor address the infrastructural flaws to trading on the Grand Parade. To the limited extent that women used the GPUTA to highlight their specific issues, the study found that they were able to improve their collective capabilities.

Keywords: Street trading, street trader organisations, collective action, organising, female street traders, collective capabilities, City of Cape Town, Grand Parade

DECLARATION

I declare that 'Collective Action among Female Street Traders: A Case Study of a Street Trader Organisation in the City of Cape Town CBD' is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references and that this work has not been submitted before for any other degree at any other institution.

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Signed: 

Date: 24/02/2022

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CALS	Centre for Applied Legal Studies
CBD	Central Business District
CCID	Central City Improvement District
CoCT	City of Cape Town
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
DSBD	Department of Small Business Development
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
DTIC	Department of Trade, Industry and Competition
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHA	Gauteng Hawkers Association
GPUTA	Grand Parade United Traders Association
ICLS	International Conference of Labour Statisticians
IEMS	Informal Economy Monitoring Study
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ITMB	Informal Traders Management Board
LMD	Labour Market Dynamics
NDP	National Development Plan
NIBDS	National Informal Business Development Strategy
NIBUS	National Informal Business Upliftment Strategy
NPC	National Planning Commission
QLFS	Quarterly Labour Force Survey
SERI	Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa
SEWA	Self-Employed Women's Association
SEWU	Self-Employed Women's Union
SMME	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises
VAT	Value-Added Tax
VOC	Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie/ United East India Company
WCG	Western Cape Government
WIEGO	Women in Informal Employment: Globalising and Organising

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Street trading represents a large and growing part of the informal global economy. While there are no overall estimates on the number of street traders in the world, consensus among scholars, governments and international organisations suggests that the sector is growing (Brown & Mackie, 2018). Street traders offer the general public easy access to a wide range of goods and services at affordable prices. For a large number of people, street vending is an important source of income and at times the only way to make a living. Street vending not only creates employment for those who participate directly in it, but provides income for storage owners, porters, security guards and generates revenue for local governments through the collection of fees, fines and taxes (Roever, 2014). Despite their significant contribution, traders face a number of challenges, including poor working environments, low or fluctuating incomes and lack of legal and social protection.

A large number of street traders across the globe work in unprotected or inadequately protected jobs. This is partly because, like other informal occupations, street traders have not been recognised as workers eligible to be covered and protected by labour standards or suitable for organising and collective bargaining (Bonner & Spooner, 2011). In addition, informal sector activities have not been viewed as legitimate ways of making a living, resulting in the lack of supportive policies from policy makers and governments and stigmatisation by the general public (Chen, Bonner & Carré, 2015). Street traders across the globe are increasingly organising and forming unions, associations or cooperatives to overcome structural challenges, increase their collective voice, access and influence power relations and represent their needs at urban levels of management (Brown, Lyons & Dankoco, 2010).

According to Chen, Bonner & Carré, (2015) the best way for informal workers, especially women, to overcome the systematic and structural challenges they face is to organise collectively to be seen and heard by decision-makers who have the power to affect their lives and livelihoods. Collective action allows informal workers to articulate their interests, raise grievances and claim their rights. It creates opportunities to engage, negotiate, defy or build allies with other actors (Pieterse, 2008). Collective organising among informal workers is most prominent in the global South. The Women in Informal Employment: Globalising and Organising (WIEGO) network remains the only network with a database of informal worker organisations, with 805 organisations

registered on their database (Chen, Bonner & Carré 2015). According to the database, Africa, Asia and Latin America have the most organisations registered, at 240 to 250 each. In terms of economic activities at least 266 street vendor organisations are registered, most notably in Africa; 173 domestic worker organisations, concentrated in Asia; 133 waste picker organisations, most notably in Latin America; and 121 home-based worker organisations, notably in Asia (Chen, Bonner & Carré 2015).

Globalisation and the implementation of neo-liberal policies have had profound impacts on African cities. Free trade and opening borders have led to increased competition and resulted in job losses in the formal sector. The response in many countries in Africa has been an increase in self-employment, particularly in urban centres (Lindell, 2010). Globalisation and neoliberalism have also led to a movement towards creating world-class cities by beautifying and maintaining clean inner cities for international investors. along with gentrification and in-migration of the wealthy, this movement has resulted in increased repression and decreased tolerance of the informal sector, particularly street trading (Çelik, 2011). The increased informalisation of livelihoods in African cities prompted the emergence of organisations focused on representing the interests of informal workers. The objective of these organisations was to ensure that informal economic activities are considered and included in urban planning (Lindell, 2010). According to Motala (2002), the establishment of informal worker organisations can lead to positive economic and social change, including institutional reforms.

Street trading has been and remains a highly contested economic activity in South Africa. In the colonial and apartheid eras, street trading was characterised by repressive policies that sought to eliminate informal trading from city centres. For instance, authorities in major city centres attempted to control trading by limiting the number of trading licences issued (Rogerson & Hart, 1989). The mid-1980s saw a more relaxed approach to street trading and the introduction of the Businesses Act, Act 71 of 1991, removed many barriers associated with informal sector activities. Skinner (2008b) notes that the relaxation of control laws in the 1990s led to a dramatic increase in trading. In response to the expanding informal sector, the South African government created policies that were meant to regulate rather than restrict street trading. Since the dawn of democracy, the informal sector has been recognised as vital to the national economic growth required for job creation and poverty reduction (Skinner, 2008b). National data on street trading is scarce and

sample sizes for national surveys do not paint a clear picture of the contribution of the informal sector to the South African economy (Horn, 2011). However, drawing on national databases, a 2010 study (Davies & Thurow, 2010) stated that the informal economy contributed 7.1 percent of GDP and 22.3 percent of total employment. Street trading made up 41.5 percent of the informal sector, thus contributing to job creation and economic growth (Davies & Thurow, 2010).

In recognising the important role of street trading in the economic and social lives of people living in poverty local governments in South African cities have attempted to balance regulation with promotion. For example, while the City of Cape Town (hereafter 'CoCT' or 'City') government acknowledges the importance of street trading and the constraints they face, it maintains that the number and location of traders need to be controlled to maintain civic order. Therefore, the City makes use of a permit system and organises street traders into demarcated markets to promote trader livelihoods while allowing the City to regulate public space use (Goutali et al., 2014). Some have argued that the permit system can constrain opportunities to earn income as it limits who can trade, where they can trade and what they can trade (Goutali et al., 2014). Others have argued that the current permit system mirrors the restrictive nature of apartheid policies (Tissington, 2009).

According to Steck et al. (2013), little has been done to support street traders. Actions taken can be broadly defined as efforts at formalisation, such as restricting trading to certain areas and paying for licences or permits (Steck et al., 2013). According to Skinner (2000), the municipal by-laws we have today were adapted from the Businesses Act, Act 71 of 1991, which sought to promote street trading. However, these by-laws contain clauses that associate trading with uncleanliness and obstruction. The use of such language reinforces negative attitudes towards street trading. Informal sector policies in South Africa have been described as exclusionary (Roever & Skinner, 2016). In a study conducted in the city of Johannesburg, traders revealed that exclusion from policy-making processes, harassment by police, lack of infrastructure, unjust by-laws, limited access to health amenities and security were among the many ways in which they were excluded (Tissington, 2009). Exclusionary policies are periodically enforced through practices such as forced evictions, relocations and harassment. The South African government has devised policies and bylaws that are meant to regulate street trading but often create compliance difficulties for street traders (Matjomane, 2013). For example, in Cape Town, street traders are not allowed to sell

fruit at traffic intersections, the very spots where traders can make the most money. This results in street traders breaking the law or clashing with law enforcement (Tissington, 2009).

In the face of economic deprivation, little legal and social protection and lack of access to amenities, South African street traders formed organisations to leverage their collective strength. In South Africa, trader organisations mostly focus on lobbying, advocacy and financial services (Skinner, 2008b). These organisations may also help with creating economic opportunities and improving the livelihoods of street traders (Roever, 2014). Street trader organisations have been most prominent in the major South African cities. They have been used as mechanisms for inclusion in government, have contributed to the reduction of crime and created opportunities for trading (Skinner, 2000). These trader organisations continue to represent, lobby and advocate for the rights of traders. The relationship between street trader organisations and local authorities has been described as fluctuating and sometimes antagonistic, with traders resisting what they perceive to be restrictive policies and practices (Bénit-Gbaffou, 2018). Tensions arise because of the different interests held by government and street traders, formal businesses and the general public. These interests can be contradictory: some view street trading as a legitimate way to make a living in tough economic times while others see trading as having negative implications for good city management (Bromley, 2000).

According to Motala (2002), gender and race are key determinants in the patterns of participation in street trading in South Africa. Survivalist forms of street trading are dominated by African women. Female street traders receive relatively lower earnings from their trading, are more vulnerable to crime and violence than their male counterparts (Carré, Horn & Bonner, 2018) and more likely to be harassed by law enforcement (Matjomane, 2013). Studies from India, the Philippines, Peru and South Africa suggest that collective action among female street traders leads to better representation, improved working conditions and more innovative policies (Roever & Skinner, 2016). Brown et al. (2010) further suggest that trader organisations can play a key role in advocating for and increasing the voice and influence of female street traders in urban governance.

1.2 Problem statement

Street trading plays an essential part in the economy and provides opportunities for many South Africans to earn a living, especially women, who remain at the lower end of the economic spectrum. Women dominate the urban informal economy. This has been attributed to a legacy of

social and cultural norms and practices. Their concentration in low-income and low-skilled forms of trading weakens their bargaining power and ability to organise and act collectively (Motala, 2002).

Trading acts as a safety net for those who cannot access formal job opportunities, credit, infrastructure and skills to start formal businesses. Yet, while some view street trading as contributing to employment creation and poverty alleviation, others see it as a public nuisance or obstruction and associated with criminal activity. The state vacillates between these viewpoints, simultaneously recognising the positive contribution made by street trading and making some effort to promote the sector while viewing unrestricted street trading as incongruent with a vision of modernity and efficiency. Local governments in South African cities have attempted to balance regulation with control and this has led to restrictive and exclusionary policies and practices that limit rather than promote street trading and the voice of traders. Poor integration into urban planning, restrictive policies and practices often lead to traders facing challenges such as a lack of infrastructure and security and poor working environments.

The South African constitution gives every worker freedom of association, the right to organise, the right to participate in governance and the right to trade unions however these rights are not fully extended to street traders (Motala, 2008). Trade unions focus on representing the rights of workers in the formal sector. Informal workers are unrepresented or underrepresented by trade unions, necessitating a focused approach to challenges encountered by street traders. Street traders may form collectives and organisations to overcome their shared challenges and advocate for and safeguard their interests. While numerically dominant, the voices of women street traders remain largely unheard. There is little literature on collective action among street traders in South Africa and only a limited number of studies have brought out the gender dimension in informal collective action.

1.3 Research question

As it is important to understand how street traders use collective action to overcome challenges, influence power relations and represent their needs to local government, and as the body of knowledge regarding the role of women traders is limited, this study aims to answer the following research question:

- How do female street traders in the Cape Town Central Business District use collective action to overcome shared challenges and represent their needs to local government?

1.4 Objectives

The following research objectives were identified:

- Explore the shared challenges experienced by female street traders in the Cape Town CBD.
- Investigate how female street traders organise to respond to collective challenges and represent their needs.
- Investigate the barriers to organising that exist among female street traders in the Cape Town CBD.
- Investigate whether and in what ways collective action among female street traders benefits the vulnerable group.

1.5 Relevance of the study

Labour unions have largely focused on organising and representing formal sector workers. Street traders are seen as unsuitable for organising and collective bargaining. Where street traders are included in participatory and consultative processes, the degree of participation is uneven, their bargaining power minimal and their representivity contested (Horber, 2018). As a result, informal sector workers have remained largely unprotected and marginalised. The policies and by-laws developed and enforced by local governments to regulate street trading are not always responsive to what is happening on the ground and tend to be repressive towards street trading activities (Matjomane, 2013). Policies and regulatory practices restrict rather than promote the creation of livelihoods for the growing number of unemployed people. Women in informal work are further marginalised through exclusion from decision-making and policy bodies, despite their vulnerability to discrimination, physical harassment and hazardous working environments (Ahn, 2007). Their participation in unions is relatively low and at times marginal, owing to social, cultural and religious impediments. According to Motala (2008), women need to engage in collective action to influence decision-making bodies that are responsible for the gender-blind policies that marginalise women in the informal economy.

While there have been studies conducted on the relationship between street traders, city authorities and government and the exclusionary practices and policies used in South Africa to regulate street

trading, little is known about street traders, particularly women, organising and using collective action as a response to the various forms of marginalisation that they experience. This study examines how organising contributes to reducing the challenges or vulnerabilities of street traders through enhancing their access to resources, institutions and facilities. The study particularly focuses on how female street traders organise to address gender-specific needs and enhance women's voice in policy circles and local government. The importance of this cannot be overstated. According to Motala, "The ability of street traders, especially women, to exercise their freedom by joining or establishing organisations without intimidation is crucial for their empowerment, increasing their collective voice and bargaining power and shaping institutions, policies and regulatory practices" (2002: ix). Illuminating how female street traders use their freedom to form and join collectives to overcome challenges and participate in relevant decision-making processes will aid in formulating better and more responsive policies and innovative ways to support collective initiatives in the informal sector.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Chapter Two begins by discussing key terms and concepts used throughout the study, as reflected in the literature. The chapter then presents the conceptual framework that underpins this study.

2.1 Operational definitions and key concepts

2.1.1 Collective action

Collective action can be described as voluntary action taken by a group to achieve common goals or interests that cannot be attained individually or are more difficult to attain (Marshall & Scott, 1998). Collective action refers both to the process by which voluntary institutions are constructed and maintained and to the groups that decide to form these institutions and act together (Pandolfelli, Meinzen-Dick & Dohrn, 2007). Collective action can take up various forms, from voluntary self-help groups to grassroots associations or formal organisations that aim to advocate for change at a national or global level (Pandolfelli et al., 2007).

2.1.2 Informal sector

Scholars from different disciplines have offered competing definitions for the hotly debated term 'informal sector'. There is no consensus on how to define the informal sector and the activities that occur within it (Henley, Arabsheibani & Carneiro, 2006). In an attempt to identify a globally accepted definition, an international standard for defining the informal sector was decided at the 1993 International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS). The informal sector had been defined in terms of the characteristics of enterprises (production units) in which activities take place rather than the characteristics of the people who participate in those activities (Hussmanns, 2004). According to Tissington (2009), the increase in informalisation, the casualisation of formal work and the blurred boundaries between the formal and informal sector led to a shift in thinking about the way the informal sector had been defined. At the International Labour Conference of 2002, there was a call to move towards a definition that focused on the characteristics of the worker rather than the enterprise (Tissington, 2009).

A further refinement of the definition was proposed at the 2003 ICLS, which defined the informal economy as all economic activities by workers that are in law or practice not covered or not properly covered by formal arrangements (ILO, 2002). The conference recognised that informal

activities either operate outside the formal reach of the law or, when they do operate within the reach of the law, the law is not enforced or discourages compliance with informal activities because they are viewed as burdensome or inappropriate (ILO, 2002).

Until 2007, Statistics South Africa used the narrow, enterprise-based definition to define the informal sector. According to this definition, the informal sector was defined as "those businesses that are not registered in any way. They are generally small and are seldom run from business premises. Instead, they are run from homes, street pavements or other informal arrangements" (Statistics South Africa, 2007: xxiv). According to Heintz and Posel (2008), the enterprise-based approach bases the definition of formality on the registration status of the enterprise. Moreover, to distinguish between formal and informal employment, labour force surveys directly ask respondents whether their employment is formal or informal (Essop & Yu, 2008). Heintz and Posel (2008) suggest that respondents base their answers on their perception of whether their employment is formal or informal. Similarly, Yu (2012) argues that responses to this question might not give reliable estimates. Therefore, other indicators have to be used to formulate a more precise definition.

Heintz and Posel (2008) proposed a definition of informal employment based on the definition approved at the 17th ILO conference in 2003. According to this definition, informal employment includes employment in informal enterprises and employment in informal jobs. Self-employment is formal if those who are self-employed work in registered enterprises. Wage employment is considered to be formal if workers have an employment contract and paid leave and contribute to the pension fund (Heintz & Posel, 2008). The authors assert that the proposed definition allows for a distinction between formal and informal work based on the characteristics of the employment relationship and not based on occupation, the site of employment or the industry (Heintz & Posel, 2008). For example, under this definition, domestic workers are formal if they have an employment contract, paid leave and contribute to a pension (Heintz & Posel, 2008). This study has followed the definition of informal work of Heintz and Posel (2008), as described above.

2.1.3 Street trading

Street trading involves the selling of goods and services in a variety of public spaces, such as pavements, traffic intersections, outside malls, alleyways, parking areas or other public spaces (Tissington, 2009). Street traders will place themselves strategically in spaces where they can be

seen by pedestrians or motorists (Mitullah, 2003). Goods sold include clothing, food, household items, cosmetics, flowers and herbs. Services provided include repairs, personal care (salons and barber shops) or phone services (Tissington, 2009). Street traders may display their products in fixed or semi-fixed stalls. Some are mobile and can be seen walking around to attract attention or locate customers (Roever, 2014).

According to Sassen, Galvaan & Duncan (2018), many people undertake street trading, as with most work in the informal sector, as a necessity to secure a livelihood. Similarly, Tissington (2009) suggests that street vending is an alternative livelihood strategy for many who cannot access formal employment, skills and credit to start formal businesses. Other reasons include low entry barriers for those who cannot access formal jobs and flexible working environments for those who have domestic or care responsibilities (Fleetwood, 2009).

2.1.4 Street trader organisations

Carré et al., (2018) suggest that street traders form organisations to respond to their challenges and overcome their economic circumstances. Street trader organisations can be found in many cities around the world, organising in different ways and for a variety of reasons (WIEGO, 2014). Some traders organise according to the spaces in which they trade such as the same street, block or market or according to the products they sell (WIEGO, 2014). Some organisations play dual roles. Internally, they may assist their members to secure trading spaces, access credit or upgrade their skills and, externally, they may act as mediators between authorities and vendors (WIEGO, 2014). Lund (1998) further suggests that informal organisations are created to establish and defend legal rights, represent members, influence policy, build leadership through the empowerment of members, and provide and secure access to services.

2.2 Conceptual framework

2.2.1 The capability approach

The roots of the capability approach can be traced back to Aristotle, Marx and classical political economy. However, economist Amartya Sens' Capability Approach developed as an alternative to the way traditional economics conceptualised poverty, human development and inequality (Clark, 2005). Sen was critical of traditional welfare economics, which typically measures well-being in terms of personal utility (happiness, desire fulfilment, pleasures), opulence (real income, real wealth, commodity bundles), or the possession of primary goods (Nussbaum, Sen & Sen,

1993). Sen (1997) argued that the expansion of goods and services and economic growth were essential for human development. However, these are not end goals in themselves but rather means to an end. His capability approach is a framework used for evaluating and assessing individual well-being, social arrangements, policy design, proposals and social change (Robeyns, 2005). Sen argued that policy evaluations and assessments should focus on what people are able to do and be, the quality of their lives and removing obstacles to attaining the kind of life they have reason to value (Robeyns, 2005).

According to Sen (1990), capabilities can be described as the freedoms, opportunities and valuable options that people have to achieve a given functioning. That is, the freedoms and opportunities that people have to be who they want to be, do what they want to do and lead the kind of life that they want to lead (Robeyns, 2005). Sen suggested that in judging one's quality of life, one should consider one's ability to achieve valuable functionings (Sen, 1999).

Sen (2005) described the distinctions between functionings and freedom as follows. Functionings are described as what people do or are able to do with the commodities or characteristics that they possess or control. Thus, functionings are the achievements of a person (Sen, 2005). Sen referred to these functionings as beings and doings. They include being healthy, being literate or being educated (Sen, 1993). In this regard, "development can be conceptualised as people's effective opportunities to undertake the actions and activities that they want to engage in, and be whom they want to be" (Robeyns, 2005: 95).

Sen suggested that freedoms have both intrinsic and instrumental value (Alkire, 2005). He identified five categories of instrumental freedoms that contribute towards the expansion of human capabilities: economic facilities, political freedoms, social opportunities, transparency guarantees and protective security (Sen, 1999). Economic facilities refer to the opportunities that people enjoy to use economic resources and entitlements to consume, exchange or produce (Alkire, 2005). Political freedoms include democracy, freedom to scrutinise or criticise authorities, freedom of the press and multi-party elections (Alkire, 2005). Social opportunities refer to the choices made by society with regard to education, healthcare and other essential opportunities that influence people's substantive freedoms (Khosla, 2002). Transparency guarantees concern the need for trust and openness when engaging with others or the freedom to deal with other people under guarantees

of openness and trust (Alkire, 2005). Protective security refers to the freedom to access social protection for vulnerable populations to prevent them from deprivation (Khosla, 2002).

2.2.2 The Capability Approach and collective action

The standard version of Amartya Sen's capability approach has focused on analysing well-being from the perspective of an individual, while the collective aspect has not received much attention (Stewart, 2005). According to Evans (2002), as individuals, we rarely achieve the freedom to do the things and live the life that we have reason to value. He further suggests that those who enjoy a full range of capabilities may not recognise the value of collective action. For those who do not enjoy this privilege, attaining development as freedom requires collective action (Evans, 2002). Stewart (2005) suggests that although it is possible for poor people to escape poverty through individual efforts, they have limited access to assets and power, making their efforts largely insignificant. The lack of access to power and assets impels people living in poverty to create self-help projects or groups to overcome their challenges collectively (Ibrahim, 2006). Groups that are formed among economically disadvantaged people enable them to expand their economic, political and social capabilities and use them more effectively (Stewart, 2005). Economically, disadvantaged groups and communities are able to initiate and take advantage of new opportunities and collectively invest in their human, financial and social capital. Politically, disadvantaged groups promote participation and local governance while also promoting the relationship between the state and the society. Socially, disadvantaged groups can help overcome the problems of collective action, enhance the bargaining power of the group and foster social capital (Ibrahim, 2006).

The expansion of *freedom* and exercising *agency* is at the core of the capability approach. Both concepts are considered relevant for understanding and analysing the collective action of street traders through the capability approach and hence both are explored in this study in relation to street trader organisations.

2.2.2.1 Freedom

Sen refers to development as the process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy (Sen, 1999). Evans (2002) suggests that opportunities for collective action are of instrumental value in terms of securing the freedoms identified by Sen. According to Sen (1999), five categories of instrumental freedoms contribute towards the expansion of human capabilities. These are political

freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees and protective security.

Street trader organisations allow the traders the political freedom to voice their needs and grievances to local levels of management and governance (Brown et al., 2010). Collectives such as trader organisations can create an enabling and supportive environment where poor people can express their needs and opinions (Leßmann & Roche, 2013). According to Pandolfelli et al. (2017), women who have similar goals improve their ability to make their voices heard in participatory projects by collectively organising. Collectives thus enhance political freedom which is an essential part of collective agency. Collective agency, in turn, enhances women's individual and collective capabilities.

Self-help groups are economic facilities that help poor people generate income, such as increasing their access to credit, and may also increase their social opportunities (Ibrahim, 2006). Poor people do not have access to economic resources or have limited opportunities to access them. However, through collective action, they may be able to gain better access to economic resources (Stewart, 2005). For example, informal credit and savings groups increase access to finance for poor people who are excluded from formal financial institutions and encourage control over income through savings (Stewart, 2005). Collectives thus enhance opportunities for individuals to utilise economic resources for production, consumption or exchange (Alkire, 2005).

Transparency guarantees play a significant role in self-help groups because they are mostly built on norms of trust and reciprocity (Ibrahim, 2006). Transparency guarantees mean people have the freedom to interact with one another under guarantees of lucidity and transparency (Alkire, 2005). Depending on their strength, collectives such as street trader organisations challenge the powers of local governments by holding them accountable and advocating for transparency in processes regarding informal trading (Horn, 2014).

Lastly, through collective initiatives such as self-help groups, members can increase their protective security by assisting each other, especially in times of crisis (Ibrahim, 2006). Groups provide a safety net for underprivileged poeople in times of crisis to prevent them from falling into poverty. This can be done by offering social protection (Ejiogu, 2015). Street traders lack formal social protection and collectives such as trader organisations can provide informal social protection to their members.

2.2.2.2 Agency

The second concept of the capability approach that is linked to collective action is agency. According to Ibrahim (2006), contrary to the stereotype, poor people are not passive individuals waiting for assistance. Rather, they are active agents who take action to cope with and eventually overcome poverty. Agency recognises that individuals have values and goals that go beyond their personal well-being, such as opposing injustice and oppression (Clark, 2005). However, "In contrast to individual agency where a person pursues 'individually' his/her perception of the good, through acts of collective agency the individual can pursue this perception of the good collectively by joining or participating in a group with similar goals" (Ibrahim, 2006: 405). Freedom and agency are closely connected because wider freedoms allow individuals to act upon and achieve what they value and exercising agency results in the further widening of freedoms (Ibrahim, 2006). Thus, under the capability approach, agency is considered to be freedom of choice and the ability of agents to use that freedom of choice to achieve their valued functionings (Davis, 2015). Undertaking collective action to expand capabilities constitutes collective agency (Evans, 2002). Rauschmayer et al. (2018) argue that collective action needs and creates collective agency, which may change the capability set and thus achieve the functionings of participants and non-participants of that action.

2.2.3 Collective capabilities

Peter Evans, in his paper 'Collective Capabilities, Culture and Amartya Sen's Development as Freedom' (2002), argued that our individual capabilities and values are dependent on collective capabilities. Evans (2002) suggests that these collectives are not just the means to pursue and achieve the goals we value but are also arenas for constructing these goals. However collective capabilities are not just a sum of individual capabilities. Rather, they should be seen as new capabilities that an individual would not have been able to achieve without joining a collective (Ibrahim, 2006). These capabilities result from the exercise of collective agency and the benefits accrue to both the individual and the collective (Ibrahim, 2006). Evans (2002) points out that collectives have intrinsic and instrumental value for human capabilities. Evans (2002) further suggests that the act of choosing to be part of a collective and the contribution of that collective to the life of communities may be intrinsically valuable. Collective capabilities are instrumentally valuable for disadvantaged groups to enhance their bargaining power, promote resource sharing and encourage participation in local decision-making (Thorp, Stewart & Heyer, 2005).

Sen's capability approach acknowledges the important role played by social structures only as far as they influence individual freedom and well-being. Ibrahim (2013) notes that social structures are not only instrumentally valuable for promoting (or constraining) human freedoms and agency but are intrinsically valuable. Capabilities can also alter pre-existing social structures, making them more conducive for individual and communal well-being (Ibrahim, 2006). In addition, people act collectively to defend their rights, alter unequal power relations, challenge norms and existing inequalities (Cleaver, 2007). It is important to note that individual and collective capabilities are not independent of each other but they have a mutually reinforcing relationship. Individual capabilities are not only built from personal choices and capacities but also through the interaction of the individual with social structures (Smith & Seward, 2009).

The concept of collective capabilities has been critiqued by Sen and others. Sen (2002) acknowledges that individuals cannot think, act or make choices without the influence of the society around them. However, he rejects the concept of collective capabilities, choosing to label the capabilities that result from social interaction as 'socially dependent individual capabilities' (Sen, 2002). In later publications, Sen suggests that individuals belong to different groups and some of these groups may repress rather than promote human freedoms. Sen mainly accounts for the instrumental role of collectives and social structures (Sen, 2009). Alkire (2008) rejects the concept as it seems to assume that every member of the group who enjoyed collectively generated capabilities valued them. She argues that claiming that a group or structure provided collective capabilities may overlook the potential dis-benefits of group affiliation (Alkire, 2008). The main arguments against the concept are that collective capabilities may overlook the potential negative effects of group affiliation, limitations of group affiliation among poor people and the exclusionary nature of some collectives (Ibrahim, 2013). Ibrahim (2013), however, suggests that the limitations of group affiliation and the exclusionary practices of some groups should not undermine the potential role that collectives can play in enhancing capabilities.

Ibrahim (2013) acknowledges that not all collective capabilities are 'good' nor are they equally beneficial for every member of the collective. However, they are not harmful. She further suggests that there are conditions that need to be fulfilled to ensure that collective capabilities are beneficial for both the collective and the individual. "Collective capabilities need to be agent-oriented, free, voluntary and empowering in nature and need to generate benefits accruing to the individual and

the collectivity at large; in addition to affecting the individual's perceptions of his/herself and his/her sense of responsibility towards others" (Ibrahim, 2013: 7). Despite limitations, capability analysis should account for the constitutive and instrumental role that groups can play in fostering the ability of the individual to achieve the life he or she values (Ibrahim, 2013).

2.2.4 Collective capabilities and street trader organisations

Informal worker organisations are an example of how individuals can choose to come together and act collectively to access economic and social opportunities, overcome structural disadvantages and increase their representative voice (Carré et al., 2018). Organisations of informal workers such as street traders engage in collective action of different forms such as bargaining, negotiating and advocacy, mutual aid and self-help groups (Carré et al., 2018). Evans (2002) argues that collectives such as women's groups, political parties, unions and village councils are fundamental to people's capability to choose the lives they value. According to Ibrahim (2006), collective agency is critical to poor people being able to influence the social structures around them and collective action is an important pressure tool that can be used to influence policy and political changes. Brown and Mackie (2018) argue similarly that collectives in democratic systems have more of a voice than individuals; hence, collective action is considered the most useful way to create political leverage. According to Motala (2002), the ability of informal workers to exercise their freedom and join collectives without fear or intimidation is imperative for changing or shaping institutional environments and regulatory frameworks. Street traders are at times faced with challenges in their working environment that not only affect their livelihood but their well-being. Traders sometimes mobilise in pursuit of worker interests and rights. Gender plays a key role in patterns of participation in street trading, with the survivalist segment of street trading dominated by women, which further increases their vulnerability. The sense of agency gained by women through their involvement in collectives goes beyond the individual. It is transferred to their work environment, transforming laws and regulations in their work environment and thus improving their economic status (Duguid & Weber, 2019). Women informal workers who collectivise have the potential to inform policies, transform working practices and tackle social, cultural and religious norms that hinder women's empowerment (Duguid & Weber, 2019). Street trader organisations may be understood as institutions through which street traders can expand their capabilities and, by doing so, improve their well-being This study argues that, through their involvement in street trader organisations, female street traders use collective action as a tool or platform through which they

can exercise their agency to overcome the challenges that stem from their social, cultural and political environments. Through exercising their collective agency, women gain new individual and collective capabilities.

2.2.5 Collective capabilities: A framework for analysing street trader organisations

Since individual street traders do not usually have the power to influence policy, one of the functions of street trader organisations is to influence policy through coordinated collective action (Motala, 2002). The collective action that street trader organisations engage in to enhance their well-being represents collective agency. Collective agency may result in the expansion of collective capabilities which can be translated into collective functionings that can enhance individual and communal well-being. This process may be influenced by external factors owing to the social, political and economic environment (Ibrahim, 2006). A conceptual framework proposed by Ibrahim (2006) in her work focusing on how economically disadvantaged people can act together to expand and exercise their collective capabilities through self-help groups has been reproduced below for this study:

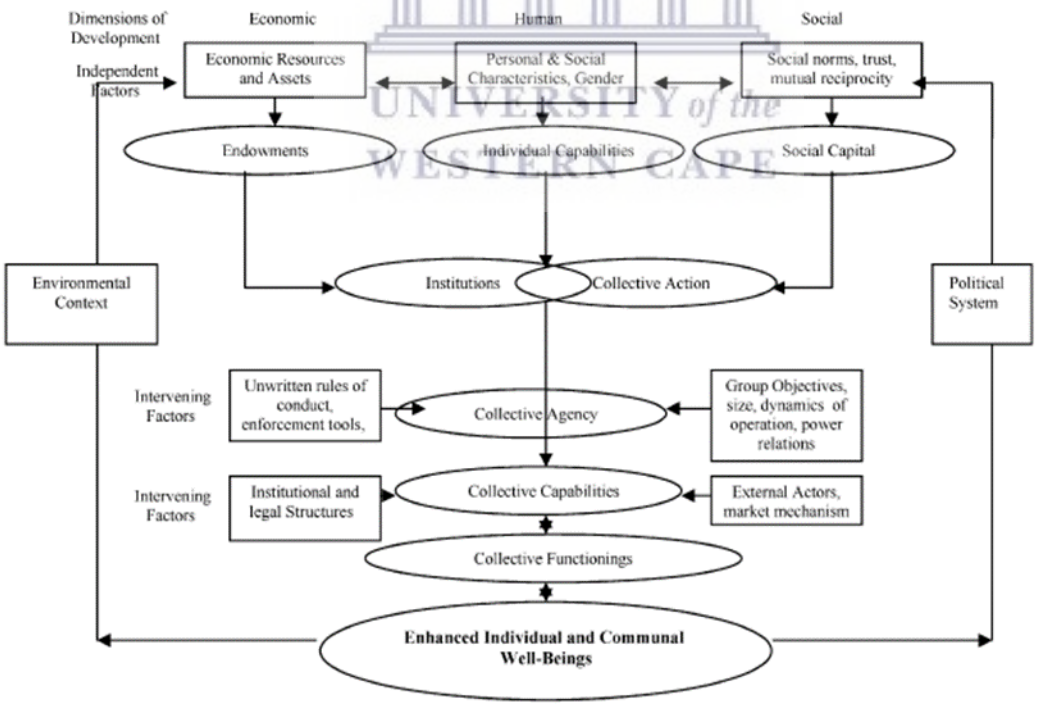

Figure 1: Analytical framework for collective capabilities

Source: Ibrahim, 2006: 410.

The framework accounts for economic, human and social factors that affect the process of capability expansion (Ibrahim, 2006). In this framework, the process of capability expansion is based on three pillars: endowments and assets of poor people, their individual capabilities and social capital. Endowments consist of various assets that the poor use during the self-help process. Individual capabilities represent the various individual functionings that poor people use to achieve the lives they choose to value. To achieve collective capabilities, the poor draw upon the third pillar, which is their rich social capital (Ibrahim, 2006). Using these three pillars, poor people can enhance their individual and collective well-being through collective action. This needs to be supported by formal and informal institutions (Ibrahim, 2006). Among the intervening factors that affect the relationship between capability expansion, collective action and institutions are the objectives and size of the group, existing power dynamics within the group, unwritten rules of conduct and enforcement tools (Ibrahim, 2006).

According to Ibrahim (2006), if collective action proves to be effective (i.e. traders are able to organise effectively) and existing institutions support the process of capability expansion, members of the street trader group would undertake an act of collective agency through which they would gain new collective capabilities as a result of participation in the collective. Depending on the roles played by external actors (market dynamics, structural, political, environmental constraints), the new collective capabilities are converted into collective functionings, realised as a result of collective action (Ibrahim, 2006). Collective functionings would not only improve individual and collective well-being but ultimately lead to the accumulation of new assets/ endowments, enhanced individual capabilities and nurturing social capital, thereby creating a virtuous cycle of a sustainable and effective process of collective capability building in poor communities (Ibrahim, 2006).

In this study, freedoms, or rather the lack thereof, are represented by vulnerabilities that street traders are exposed to in their work. Street traders, particularly women, often lack the voice and power to challenge powerful opposition. The activities that street traders engage in within their organisations to enhance their well-being represent agency. Enhanced individual or collective capabilities and achieved functionings may represent the benefits gained by street traders through collective action.

2.2.6 Conclusion

People's ability to access state and market institutions is greatly influenced by the capabilities they have as a result of their initial asset endowment: people with significant endowments are better able to access these institutions and thus influence patterns of access (Bebbington, 1999). Organisations initiate collective action at the local level to mediate between individuals at the micro level and structures and processes at the macro level (Kerstetter, Green & Phillips, 2014). Effective collective action goes hand in hand with institutions that are supportive of capability expansion (Ibrahim, 2006). If such conditions exist, poor people can exercise their collective agency and gain collective capabilities. This chapter has presented collective capabilities as a suitable framework to analyse street trader organisations, in particular how collective action can be used by female street traders to gain new collective capabilities and ultimately improve their well-being and overcome challenges.

CHAPTER THREE: EMPIRICAL REVIEW

The following chapter is a review of the empirical literature on the subject of this study. A brief review of studies and perceptions of street trading is followed by profiles of women in street trading. The chapter then introduces Street trader organisations, both globally and in South Africa, are introduced, followed by a discussion of the particular constraints experienced by female street traders. Finally, the chapter presents the barriers to organising that hinder women from participating in collectives.

3.1 Introduction

Despite the world's many advances in modern retailing, millions of people still make their living through the informal economy (Skinner, 2008a). In the global South, the informal sector is a primary source of employment for the economically disadvantaged (Carré et al., 2018). This is particularly the case in African countries where it is estimated that 85.8 percent of employment is found in the informal sector (ILO, 2019). Furthermore, the informal sector contributes approximately 60 percent to economies in Sub-Saharan Africa (Nkrumah-Abebrese & Schachtebeck, 2017). The informal sector is made up of diverse activities such as waste picking, domestic work and street trading (Carré et al., 2018). Street trading follows home-based work as the second-largest informal activity in Africa (Skinner, 2008a).

3.2 Street trading studies and differing perspectives

Street trading has been at the centre of many conflicts and its value has been debated in many contexts. Arguments for street trading point to the undeniable socio-economic contributions of street trading while arguments against concern the negative effects it can have on urban management and aesthetics (Racaud, Kago & Owuor, 2018). It is necessary to explore all sides of the debate to gain a clear understanding of the merits of street trading. Bromley (2000) discusses 11 arguments that are frequently used to justify or oppose the proliferation of street trading. Among others, Bromley (2000) suggests that street traders are an essential part of the economy and their daily transactions contribute to the overall level of economic activity and the provision of goods and services. Indeed, in a study conducted by Roever and Skinner (2016) across ten different cities in India, it was found that street traders add to the convenience and comfort of the general public by making goods and services easily accessible and at lower prices. Many traders sell items that

may not be available or easily accessible in off-street markets or formal shops. This creates new demand and may cater to seasonal demand (Bromley, 2000) Street trading has been widely acknowledged in the literature for its great contribution to employment at national and global levels. A study exploring street trading in South Africa found that approximately two million people were involved in street trading in 2014, highlighting its important contribution to people's livelihoods and the economy (Nkrumah-Abebrese & Schachtebeck, 2017). Bromley (2000) further argues that eliminating street trading would decrease competition, economic activity and the range of livelihood strategies available to citizens.

Through providing more employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, street trading generates income for traders and their dependants who may otherwise be destitute and possibly resort to crime (Bromley, 2000). In a study profiling informal traders in four South African cities, it was found that 78 percent of respondents from all cities depended on the income generated from trading to support themselves and their dependants (Horn, 2011). Street trading provides economic opportunities for entrepreneurs who cannot afford to pay rent for fixed or formal locations (Bromley, 2000). The economic opportunities that street trading provides can also act as a safety net for poor people that might be cheaper than setting up a welfare system (Bromley, 2000). Conventional wisdom suggests that street traders do not pay or avoid paying taxes, levies and fees. However, research has shown that traders commonly pay licensing fees and taxes that contribute to government revenue (Bromley, 2000). Roever (2014) found that approximately two-thirds of the street vendors (743) sampled paid for licences and permits to access public space and many paid value-added tax when purchasing stock although they could not recover it by claiming the refund as they weren't VAT-registered.

Without necessarily denying the contribution of street traders, those who argue against street traders highlight their proliferation in urban areas and call for more regulation of informal trading activities (Bromley, 2000). Street traders are normally concentrated in a few city areas with high pedestrian and vehicle traffic because demand is higher in these areas. Most traders are aware of this and gravitate towards these areas. The increased congestion can cause traffic accidents, increased pollution, impeding the movement of emergency vehicles and increased crime (Bromley, 2000). Similarly, Street traders have been viewed as public nuisances, obstructing vehicle and pedestrian traffic, contributing to crime and portraying the opposite image of the modern city

(Tissington, 2009). Arguments against street trading suggest that street trading contributes to the underground economy through undocumented cash transactions and bribes to municipal officials (Bromley, 2000). Big businesses, formal elites and residents who associate street trading with crime and grime may accept street trading in principle but reject it as undesirable in their neighbourhoods (Bromley, 2000). Many holding this view argue that traders should be moved to peripheral locations away from their neighbourhoods and businesses.

In an attempt to regulate street trading, some cities have zero-tolerance approaches to street traders that encourage aggressive or violent policing, harassment from officials, restrictive policies and exclusion from social and political environments (Roever & Skinner, 2016). Governments receive conflicting pressures from local elites, media and street trading organisations regarding the regulation of street trading. There is widespread consensus that governments need to regulate street trading, but no consensus on how this should be done (Bromley, 2000). Many cities adopt restrictive policies and practices that inhibit rather than promote street trading (Brown & Mackie, 2018). Most governments have attempted combinations of regulation and promotion, with mixed results (Bromley, 2000). One approach has been to move street traders to off-street locations or private markets, which can result in traders losing their customers and struggling to make ends meet in the new location. The city of Johannesburg's approach to street trading management has been to move street traders to designated informal markets to solve their street trading management crisis (Bénit-Gbaffou, 2018). This approach has been highly contested and is considered inefficient (Bénit-Gbaffou, 2018). In an earlier study on street trading in the inner city of Johannesburg, it was found that relocating street traders to trading markets led to immense hardship for street traders (Tissington, 2009).

3.3 Women in street trading

Many street traders face hardships and increased vulnerability caused by inefficient street trading management, among other reasons. Studies suggest that women have faced particularly harsh and, at times, unique challenges that make them vulnerable. The dominant presence of women in informal work has been widely recorded in the literature. According to estimates from the ILO, the share of women involved in non-agricultural informal employment ranges from 27.5 percent in Europe and Central Asia to 82.8 percent in Sub-Saharan Africa (ILO, 2017). In contrast, these percentages for men are 32.1 percent and 71.6 percent respectively (ILO, 2017). Coles, Macdonald

and Delaney (2018) suggest that women do not only dominate the informal sector but are highly concentrated in economically vulnerable and insecure forms of employment. Women are more likely to find themselves in economically vulnerable employment with their earnings significantly lower than their male counterparts (Carré et al., 2018). Men are more likely to be employers running their own enterprises while women are concentrated in more precarious forms of employment such as waste picking and street trading (Sansiya, 2013). Sassen, et al., (2018) assert that women participate in survivalist forms of street trading, such as selling fruits and vegetables, sweets and chips, which generate little income.

The ILO (2017) suggests that, despite global progress made in advancing gender equality in the labour market, gender imbalances persist across countries. The ILO notes that gender differences in the labour market at the country level vary depending on how different societies perceive and ascribe gender roles to men and women (ILO, 2017). Conservative gender norms result in unequal economic opportunities for women and men. For instance, in traditionally patriarchal societies, women and girls encounter many obstacles that may inhibit their access to economic opportunities and the labour market, such as low access to education, resources, technology and information (Willemse, 2011).

Street trading in South Africa is dominated by women, particularly black women, who are mostly driven into the informal sector by unemployment (Sassen et al., 2018). According to the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) in the second quarter of 2018, 47.6 percent of women, compared to 30.6 percent of men, were involved in informal trading (Statistics South Africa, 2018). Rogan and Alfers (2019) note a steady decline in the share of women's total non-agricultural informal employment after 2008. This decline has resulted in the share of informal sector employment in women's total non-agricultural employment decreasing from 18.5 percent in 2008 to about 15 percent at the end of 2014, compared to an increase from 17.5% in 2008 to 18 percent at the end of 2014 for male non-agricultural employment (Rogan & Alfers, 2019). Estimates from the QLFS in the first quarter of 2019 suggest that informal employment accounts for 30 percent of total employment for both men and women (Rogan & Alfers, 2019). Despite the numbers showing equal representation of women and men in the informal sector, women risk additional disadvantages such as a greater risk of poverty and lower earnings (Rogan & Alfers, 2019).

South African literature has identified two phenomena relating to gender inequalities in the labour market, namely, feminisation of the labour force and feminisation of poverty (Rogan & Alfers, 2019). In the early years of post-apartheid South Africa, the increase of females in the labour market coincided with the increase in female unemployment and the concentration of women in informal and low-return work (Casale & Posel, 2002). The majority of women, particularly those from female-headed households, continue to pursue low-return economic activities, further increasing gender-based poverty (Chirau, 2012). Chirau (2012) suggests a visible link between gender, working in the informal sector and poverty. This link has been traced in the literature relating to the feminisation of poverty (Casale & Posel, 2002). Studies suggest that, relative to men, women have a higher risk of living in poverty resulting from having little access to healthcare, food and education (Bhatt, 2002). The feminisation of poverty is associated with an increase in the proportion of female-headed households and the increase of female participation in low-return, urban, informal sector activities (Posel & Rogan, 2009).

Using national household data collected between 1997 and 2006, Rogan (2012) investigated the characteristics and poverty status of female-headed households. Female-headed households were found to be more vulnerable to poverty because the households were larger, had higher dependency rates, fewer working-age adults and female heads had lower earnings compared to their male counterparts (Rogan, 2012). The study further suggests that social grants assisted to keep women above the poverty line. However, where women relied on their earnings alone, gender pay gaps would be wider (Rogan, 2012).

Rogan and Alfers (2019) cite low levels of education, technical skills and human capital, unemployment, unequal domestic responsibilities and high dependency rates as some of the factors that drive women into the informal sector. Low levels of education and skills among South Africa's working-age population is one of the enduring marks left by apartheid (Gamieldien & Van Niekerk, 2017). During apartheid, women were left mired in rural areas with little or no access to education and employment while rural men were allowed to migrate to urban areas in search of employment (Padayachie, 2015). Due partly to this legacy of apartheid women, and particularly black women, are less likely to be employed in the formal sector and more likely to have lower levels of education and skills (Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2004). Women with low levels of education are further marginalised in the informal sector by taking up low-income occupations (Sassen et al.,

2018). Suda (2002) suggests that a lack of education undermines the ability of many women to participate on an equal basis with men in the informal sector.

Education is also a key determinant of the differences in earnings between men and women (Casale, 2004). Using data from South African household and labour force participation surveys between 1995 and 2001, Casale (2004) found that returns are significantly lower for women when compared to men, at every level of education. In addition, African women earned lower returns to their education than equally educated white women (Casale, 2004). Two decades later, the position of women in the labour market has not shown much improvement. Using data from the Labour Market Dynamics series (LMD), Rogan & Alfers (2019) analysed earnings from different types of informal employment. The data showed that among own-account workers (waste pickers, market traders, street traders), women earned approximately 71 percent of men's hourly earnings, R28 compared to R39, respectively (Rogan & Alfers, 2019).

The organising environment in South Africa highlights women's perceived positions in society and the labour market (Lund, Nicholson & Skinner, 2000). Women play a token role in organisations, have less of a voice and low representation in leadership positions (Motala, 2002). Motala (2008) cites a 2001 case study that profiled three informal organisations in Durban, wherein women were found to have strength in numbers but their voices were heard less than men. Despite making up the majority, female traders hardly spoke in meetings and gatherings and when they did speak it was mostly to support a statement made by a male trader (Motala, 2008). Members, mostly men, in one of the organisations, were reluctant to promote gender equity. Furthermore, men in focus group discussions described the focus on women as discriminatory (Motala, 2002). This suggests that the old forms of male dominance remain within the organising environment, placing women in vulnerable positions in organisations (Lund et al., 2000).

3.4 Constraints encountered by street traders

The insecure and unstable environments that street traders work under and the exclusionary practices and policies used by the government have negative impacts on the livelihoods of traders (Roever & Skinner, 2016). According to Carré et al. (2018), informal workers have raised many issues in their work, including economic deprivation, difficult relationships with contractors and authorities, lack of social protection, harassment, lack of recognition as workers, limited access to basic amenities, denial of access to health and safety equipment, and physical danger. The next

section discusses some of the constraints and struggles experienced by street traders in their occupations as revealed in the literature.

3.4.1 Political constraints

Among the most cited challenges faced by street traders in their uncertain working environment are the risks of evictions and relocations (Roever & Skinner, 2016). Evictions, relocations and harassment by officials are often strategies used by the government to regulate street trading (Roever & Skinner, 2016). One of the largest and possibly most violent eviction campaigns of the past decades in Africa was Operation Murambatsvina in Zimbabwe in 2005 (Skinner, 2008a). With the purported aim of slum clearance, thousands of traders were arrested. Some had their goods confiscated and their trading sites were destroyed, along with large tracts of surrounding informal housing. It is estimated that about 75 000 street vendors in Harare alone could not work from May 2005 (Skinner, 2008a). Roever and Skinner (2016) suggest that governments often have exclusionary practices, laws and policies when it comes to street trading. In extreme cases, street vendors are forcibly, sometimes violently, removed from public spaces. In less severe cases, they are relocated to marginal spaces and endure further harassment by state officials and authorities (Roever & Skinner, 2016). Women street traders tend to sell less lucrative and perishable goods and trade in smaller, insecure and illegal spaces, where they are easy targets for eviction (Njaya & Murangwa, 2016). The Informal Economy Monitoring Study (IEMS) found that women are more likely to suffer permanent loss or erosion of assets when their goods are confiscated by law enforcement, leading to relatively greater financial losses, particularly for traders selling less lucrative goods (Moser, 2016). The IEMS study also confirmed that women were far more likely than men to sell perishable goods such as fruit and vegetables (Moser, 2016). Both men and women informal workers suffer from harassment and violence in the workplace. However, unequal power relations and status in society and the workplace make women more vulnerable (Roever, 2016). The WIEGO (2018) found that women traders are more vulnerable to harassment in the workplace by actors such as property owners, the general public and the state.

Trading licences can cause tension between street traders and local governments (Skinner, 2008a). In most cities, local governments issue trading licences designating where street traders have the right to operate in public spaces (Tissington, 2009). The critical issue is how many licences are issued compared to the actual number of street traders in a particular area (Skinner, 2008a). In

general, authorities tend to issue fewer licences than there are people wanting to trade. A study conducted by Mitullah (2003) in Kenya found that, whereas there were more than 100 000 street traders, city officials had issued fewer than 10 000 licences to street traders at the time of the study. Mitullah (2003) states that city officials were often reluctant to allocate trading sites, especially in the CBD, because they largely viewed street vending as a temporary informal activity. As a result, most street vendors operated illegally at unauthorised trading sites, which occasionally led to violent confrontations between street traders and authorities (Mitullah, 2003). A related issue is the cost of trading licences and the processes followed to acquire them (Masonganye, 2010). In a study conducted in the city of Tshwane, street traders complained that the application process for a licence was lengthy and costly, making it difficult for them to trade (Masonganye, 2010). The study alleged that when traders were caught without licences by city officials, they experienced harassment from the metro police (Masonganye, 2010). Horber (2018) notes that limiting trading licences through costs and lengthy processes is ineffective as traders will then operate illegally and risk harassment and confiscation of goods.

3.4.2 Physical constraints

Street vendors are confronted with unique risks and challenges in their work. Traders in many cities operate in uncertain work environments (Sassen et al., 2018). Traders work in open spaces, some without shelter and storage facilities (Mitullah, 2003). A study on street trading in Cape Town revealed that demand for storage facilities was much higher than the supply in the city and at times led to traders being exploited by storage facility owners (Van Heerden, 2011). Owners of storage facilities could cripple the ability of street traders to expand their businesses by increasing storage prices at will (Van Heerden, 2011).

Street traders were concerned by a lack of infrastructure (Nkrumah-Abebrese & Schachtebeck, 2017). Street traders need shelter from the elements, storage and access to ablution facilities (Skinner, 2008a). A 2014 WIEGO study compared the various conditions of street traders in Durban, Accra, Lima, Nakuru and Ahmedabad. The study revealed that a fixed trading space is a shared priority among traders (Roever, 2014). A fixed space is economically significant for traders because returning customers are an important and large part of their clientele and bring in consistent revenue (Roever, 2014). Water, sanitation and waste removal were also identified in focus groups as important infrastructure for traders and their customers (Roever, 2014). Street

traders often have limited access to sufficient water and toilets to run their business effectively (Sassen et al., 2018). Basic infrastructure such as water and toilets keeps street markets cleaner and creates a more dignified and hygienic environment for traders to operate (Roever, 2014).

According to Nkrumah-Abebrese and Schachtebeck (2017), the rapid increase of street traders in major cities makes it difficult for municipalities to continue to provide basic infrastructure and trading spaces for traders. The authors suggest that this failure by the city is a consequence of not including street trading in urban planning (Nkrumah-Abebrese & Schachtebeck, 2017). Female traders report that poor urban infrastructure worsens their insecurity (WIEGO, 2018). For example, unsafe toilet facilities, lack of adequate lighting and unsafe working environments contribute to gender-based violence, particularly when traders work at night or in the early hours of the morning (WIEGO, 2018). The violence experienced by women in urban areas can be exacerbated by a lack of safe infrastructure and inadequate services (Taylor, 2011). Mohun et al. (2016) argue that well-designed public spaces and investments in water and sanitation can potentially reduce the risk of violence against women and promote women's mobility and economic opportunities.

3.4.3 Economic constraints

Street traders in some cities have permits or pay daily levies/ taxes for their use of public space; these are imposed by cities to regulate street trading (Roever, 2014). For example, in an attempt to regulate street trading the city of Johannesburg requires traders to obtain a permit to trade legally (Tissington, 2009). The permit practices and their associated fees, taxes, and levies impact significantly on the earning potential of street traders and are often disproportional to what traders earn (Tissington, 2009). Borrowing from formal financial institutions to finance these costs or cover their losses would require individuals to have collateral. Street traders lacking collateral are effectively excluded them from accessing formal banking institutions (Willemse, 2011). Traders turn to informal moneylenders as their only source of financial assistance (Mkhize, Dube & Skinner, 2013). Women are considered high-risk in this regard as they have fewer assets that can be considered collateral. The low levels of education and literacy among women in the informal economy mean that they have even less access to finance compared to their male counterparts (Njenga & Ng'ambi, 2017). The requirements for credit from financial institutions are often cumbersome, require some level of financial literacy and can exclude women even when they have the necessary collateral (Njenga & Ng'ambi, 2017). The terms offered by informal moneylenders

can be unfavourable for traders (Roever, 2014). These moneylenders often charge very high interest rates that are effectively debt traps, further undermining traders' ability to save or turn a profit (Roever, 2014). Njenga and Ng'ambi (2017) claim that women are more likely to borrow from friends, relatives, informal microfinance associations and moneylenders.

The study conducted by Roever (2014) identified macroeconomic pressures such as rising prices of inputs and sluggish demand as constraints on traders. The combination of increased supply prices and decreased demand limits the amount of working capital available to traders, which limits the amount of stock they can purchase and increases the need to borrow from informal moneylenders (Roever, 2014). In an informal economy monitoring study conducted in Durban, 54 percent of respondents indicated that the demand for their products had decreased in the preceding year while 63 percent indicated that supply prices had increased in the same period (Mkhize et al., 2013). These results suggest that street traders experienced a decrease in demand and an increase in supply prices (Mkhize et al., 2013). Most traders are unable to increase prices because of intense competition in the sector for their customers and expectations from their customers to negotiate lower prices (Roever, 2014).

Competition is a major challenge for street traders that results from a proliferation of street traders in one location selling the same goods and services (Tissington, 2009). In addition to increased competition from other traders, there is competition from supermarket chains and malls (Roever, 2014). The higher the competition, the more challenging the growth path for enterprises, especially those at the bottom of the earnings distribution (Roever, 2014). Women in the informal economy face multiple forms of competition from formal businesses and their male counterparts, who often have bigger businesses (Njenga & Ng'ambi, 2017) Competition among local and foreign street traders is fierce in South Africa, with some organisations formed specifically to counteract the competition from foreign traders (Lund & Skinner, 1999). Lindell (2010) has noted the worrying manifestation of increased xenophobia accompanying an increase in competition.

3.4.4 Social constraints

Street traders are socially excluded through discrimination, criminalisation of their work and mistreatment by law officials (Sassen et al., 2018). Street trading and the individuals who participate in it are commonly perceived as a public nuisance, an obstruction to pedestrians and traffic, associated with crime and grime and a threat to emerging world-class cities (Tissington,

2009). This negative perception is often held by stakeholders who are considered by the city as key to city regeneration or are overtly included in city policies (Tissington, 2009). These negative perceptions can lead to exclusionary policies and practices, including harassment, relocations and evictions (Roever & Skinner, 2016). Comparing IEMS data collected in five cities examining the impact of these exclusionary practices on the day-to-day lives of traders, the paper suggests that the biggest impact was on the productivity of traders (Roever, 2014). For example, female traders in Ahmedabad complained about abuse from local authorities suggesting that police confiscate their goods or, as a way of exercising their power, allow thugs to harass them (Roever, 2014). Roever and Skinner (2016) suggest that the exclusion of street traders is facilitated by governments. In all five cities examined in the IEMS study, by-laws limit the activities of street traders and the power to impose sanctions is conferred on local authorities (Roever, 2014). Street traders are excluded from decision-making processes that affect their trade, such as spatial planning, policy revisions and city regeneration projects (Kroll et al., 2021). Women are further excluded from these processes as they rarely have a voice within trader organisations or participate in negotiations with the government. This reflects societies where women are seen as subordinates and, following their low status in society, this results in under-representation in policy spaces (Njenga & Ng'ambi, 2017).

Street traders from foreign countries experience social marginalisation in the form of xenophobia (Sassen et al., 2018). Xenophobic attacks on foreign-owned businesses may have an economic dimension because their businesses are specifically targeted for looting and robbery (Mothibi, Roelofse & Tshivhase, 2015). A study conducted for the Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CALS) explored the lived experiences and socio-economic circumstances of street traders in the inner city of Johannesburg. Among the findings was the issue of tension between South African and foreign traders (Tissington, 2009). South African traders were under the impression that foreign traders were taking their customers and limited trading space, leading to tension and violence (Tissington, 2009). Mothibi et al. (2015) suggest that there may also be a gender dimension to xenophobic violence where foreign business owners are targeted for sexual and gender-based violence. Migrant women are more likely to work in less regulated or less visible occupations such as domestic work, hairdressing and informal trading. Eligibility for work permits in South Africa requires proof of employment and, since most women worked in the informal sector, they are consequently excluded (Mbiyozo, 2018). Female migrants are at a heightened risk of experiencing

sexual violence, forced labour, exploitation and abuse in various forms (Mothibi, 2015). Mbiyozo (2018) argues that female migrants in South Africa face triple discrimination through xenophobia, racism and misogyny, increasing their vulnerability.

Crime has been cited in several studies as one of the major risks faced by street traders (Lund & Skinner 1999). One such study was carried out in Durban in 1997. The study revealed that theft and violent crime were among the biggest concerns of street traders in the area, and particularly affected women and their trade (Lund & Skinner, 1999). More recently, 63 percent of respondents who were part of the IEMS study in Durban indicated that theft was a serious problem, alleging that thieves stole their stock or robbed their persons directly (Mkhize et al., 2013). Instead of protecting traders, the police accepted bribes from thieves and drug dealers to release them (Mkhize et al., 2013).

Street traders face a myriad of constraints that in one way or another limit their ability to effectively pursue their livelihood. The constraints mentioned above are not independent of each other but instead reinforce each other. For instance, social exclusion and negative perceptions of street traders may be reflected in policy. The challenges experienced by street traders thus form a web of constraints that limit productivity and ultimately the ability of traders to pursue their livelihood.

3.5 Responses to constraints

Street traders face a number of problems while pursuing their livelihood, with some of their challenges experienced on an individual level and others experienced as a collective. In this study, collective challenges are considered as challenges collectively experienced by traders related to workplace (e.g. harassment) and regulatory issues (e.g. licensing) imposed by the city/ policymakers. Individual challenges are experiences that are not shared and can be overcome through individual coping mechanisms. Responses to such challenges can vary from individual responses to collective responses. In a study conducted in Ghana, it was found that, regardless of the challenges that street traders faced collectively, their responses were mostly at the individual level. This was especially the case for female traders (Anyidoho, 2013). For example, traders took out individual loans when in financial need or found alternative trading spaces when evicted (Anyidoho, 2013). Similarly, Lalthapersad-Pillay (2004) found that street trading in Johannesburg was an individualistic activity among female street vendors. However, Roever (2014) notes that

although individual coping mechanisms are the most common way of overcoming challenges, collective action plays a more significant role in responses to regulatory challenges.

This section of the study explores collective responses used by street traders to deal with collective challenges. Street traders are increasingly using collective action to overcome their challenges, participate in decision making and make their voices heard (Yasmeen, 2003). A 2003 study conducted in India on the innovative organising strategies of street vendors found that street traders used their collective voices to overcome challenges such as lack of access to secure and affordable trading spaces, lack of social protection and lack of access to financing (Yasmeen, 2003). A study conducted by Bhowmik (2007) found that street traders were organised into unions to overcome the problems of evictions and confiscation of goods. These street traders were localised bodies who represented the needs and interests of street traders in negotiations with local authorities and affiliating themselves with political bodies to advance the interests of street vendors (Bhowmik, 2007).

A study conducted in 10 cities around the world found that organisations were instrumental in addressing issues related to infrastructure and crime (Roever, 2014). One of the organisations in Durban advocated for street lights to be installed in crime hotspots and another formed a valuable relationship with the police to overcome crime (Roever, 2014). A study conducted by Motala (2008) investigated three case studies of informal trader organisations; their strengths, weaknesses and effectiveness in representing street traders. In the case of the Gauteng Hawkers Association (GHA), it was reported that it was securing additional trading spaces for its members and negotiating with Shoprite/Checkers to have their traders erect and operate trading kiosks in front of the supermarkets (Motala, 2008).

The challenges that street traders face while pursuing their livelihoods are diverse and intersecting. While they may respond to some issues as individuals, collective action plays an important role in overcoming collective issues. Street traders undertake collective action to overcome certain challenges, participate in decision making and gain a more respectable position in society and the economy (Motala, 2008).

3.6 Street traders organising in the informal sector

It is widely acknowledged that informal sector workers could benefit from participating in collective organisations (Hendriks, 2017). Informal workers, especially women, need to organise to overcome structural disadvantages, gain power through solidarity and participate in decision-making processes (Chen, Bonner & Carré, 2015). According to Carré et al. (2018), workers in the informal economy face unique challenges. Many of these challenges stem from the institutional treatment of informal workers such as exclusion from representation in law, social protection and labour standards. On the other hand, some of these challenges relate to the type of work, the position of the workers in social and economic hierarchies, and gender (Carré et al., 2018). For a long time, the general perception among government and economic institutions was that informal workers have limited agency (Akorsu & Odoi, 2017), especially given that, globally, labour force movements have focused on organising workers in the formal economy (Goldman & Creation, 2003).

Trade unions are well-known, established workers' organisations that exist to protect the rights of workers against the actions and interests of their employers (Hendriks, 2017). Trade unions usually organise in the formal sector where workers are easily identifiable and can be classified based on their positions. Such workers enjoy social security such as legal protection and pensions (Hendriks, 2017). They have a measure of contractual protection and guaranteed income at regular intervals and can usually be found in concentrations at physical locations that are easily accessed, such as factories, towns and cities. All these factors, along with laws that protect their right to organise, make formal workers suitable for organising into trade unions and harnessing their collective bargaining power. Informal workers are not as easily organised as formal workers because they are not easily identifiable and cannot be classified based on position (Hendriks, 2017). Where informal workers are concentrated in numbers they may have multiple occupations, making it difficult to organise according to occupations or along lines of similar interests (i.e. they lack common cause). Those in a similar occupation are sometimes geographically scattered or isolated (Carré et al., 2018). Policy makers and trade unions commonly do not see informal workers as workers at all but rather as entrepreneurs or business owners (Chen, 2013). Trade unions thus find it difficult to organise informal workers, opening the door for informal workers to organise themselves (Hendriks, 2017).

3.7 Street trader organisations in South Africa

Street trading has become a major source of livelihood for approximately two million people in South Africa (Horn, 2014). However, the informal economy in South Africa is important, making up 34 percent of the workforce or about five million workers (ILO, 2018b: 30). Despite being relatively small, the sector continues to grow as the formal sector fails to provide sufficient work opportunities (Nkrumah-Abebrese & Schachtebeck, 2017). Collectives have more voice and political leverage in democracies than individuals (Hendriks, 2017). Various organisations were formed in South Africa to present a strengthened and cohesive front in the face of new informal trading by-laws, harassment by police and linear market distribution channels (Tissington, 2009). Evidence of street trader organisations is scant as only a few studies have been conducted in this area (Skinner, 2008a). Existing evidence suggests that organisation densities are low among street traders (Skinner, 2008a). Similarly, Roever (2014) suggests that street traders are large in number, however, organisations are usually small and less visible. Two surveys on street traders in South Africa found that only 15 percent of the street traders in Johannesburg were part of an organisation while in Durban the figure was 12 percent for men and 16 percent for women (Lund, 1998). Despite low densities, street trader organisations still play a vital role in representing and advocating for street traders (Hendriks, 2017).

The Informal Traders Management Board (ITMB) represents street traders in the Durban (eThekwini) metropolitan area. The ITMB was established in 1995 at a gathering of smaller organisations that recognised that street traders needed one voice (Motala, 2002). The main objective of the organisation was to create a unified voice among traders to engage local government to respond to challenges experienced by street traders and improve their working conditions (Motala, 2008). The ITMB also aims to educate street traders about their rights and to develop skills and empowerment programmes that will assist members to grow their businesses (Mkhize et al., 2013) As of 2010, the organisation had approximately 2 000 members, 70 percent of whom were said to be women (Mkhize et al., 2013).

A South African study conducted for the ILO explored the strengths, weaknesses and bargaining power of three well-established street trader organisations, one of them being the ITMB (Motala, 2002). The ITMB experienced challenges that undermined their capability to serve their members and the organisation was not found to be representative of women's needs (Motala, 2008). The

ITMB cited the lack of infrastructure as one of their key challenges, For instance, the ITMB did not have offices and their meetings were held in hired municipal halls and from their trading spaces (Mkhize et al., 2013). Additionally, lack of resources, lack of technical abilities and conflicts of interest were found within the ITMB (Motala, 2002). Despite challenges, the ITMB was effective in negotiations and representing its members. The ITMB was found to effectively represent street traders in a street trader forum initiated by the local government. The ITMB successfully negotiated more trading spaces, increased access to storage facilities and issues of traders' safety and security (Motala, 2008). The Self-Employed Women's Union (SEWU) was an organisation that exclusively represented women and that sought to empower female traders and create a supportive network for them (Motala, 2008). The organisation made great strides in terms of supporting female traders, including providing skills programmes for traders, contributing to policy formulation and creating spaces for participation in international networks (Motala, 2008). Although it styled itself as a trade union for women informal traders, SEWU could not register as a trade union with the Department of Labour because its members were not in formal employment. It is no longer active due to a lack of funding.

3.8 Barriers to organising

The South African informal sector faces a number of barriers to organising among street traders similar to other countries. In South Africa, these barriers include the precariousness of street trader activities, capabilities and skills, limited financial resources and time as to organising (Tissington, 2009). Lund and Skinner (1999) also point out that informal workers are not homogeneous within a group; there are gender, class, racial and cultural divisions. Similarly, the women street traders in this study are also not a unified group, but have different interests, causing some to compete while others cooperate (Lund & Skinner, 1999).

3.8.1 Economic barriers

Motala (2008) suggests that street traders, especially women with families, are reluctant to dedicate time to participate in organisations because of the uncertain returns. Time has an economic value in street trading. In a study conducted in Johannesburg and Durban, street traders revealed that time spent on organisational activities could mean a potential loss of income (Lund & Skinner, 1999). In the same study, leaders complained that traders only came to meetings when there were urgent matters and did not attend for housekeeping matters that are essential to building the

organisation (Lund & Skinner, 1999). Time is one of the most primary barriers to organising and maintaining an informal traders' organisation (Lund et al., 2000), especially for women. Women have to divide their time between domestic and labour market responsibilities, which means they do not have enough time to dedicate to organisational matters (Lund et al., 2000). Female traders tend to bring their children to work when they cannot afford childcare facilities and thus are unable to balance trading and taking care of children with attending to organisational matters (Lund et al., 2000). The still-existing spatial division of apartheid has left many traders living far from city centres (Turok, 2012). Transport costs add an extra financial burden to survivalist street traders (Lund & Skinner, 1999). Along with this, the precarious incomes of street traders make it difficult to organise and sustain organisations (Lund & Skinner, 1999).

3.8.2 Previous experience with organising bodies and corrupt practices

According to Tissington (2009), there is often a lack of trust between street traders and leadership due to past disappointments. Lund and Skinner (1999) report a common experience among traders of fraudulent 'fly-by-night' organisers who make promises under false pretences and do not deliver. Organisers suggest this is a major obstacle in recruiting street traders who have become suspicious of joining organisations (Lund & Skinner, 1999). In a study examining the organisational strategies of four organisations in South Africa, interviewed members suggested that there were a number of corrupt activities within their organisations (Motala, 2002). For example, a member of the ITMB, one of the organisations under study, allegedly obtained premises from the council to use as storage facilities but instead operated his own business from the storage facility (Motala, 2002). These corrupt practices make traders wary of affiliating themselves with organisations (Lund & Skinner, 1999). The result of this is that street trading becomes an individualistic activity that is not conducive to strong, sustainable organisations (Tissington, 2009).

3.8.3 Lack of knowledge of the existence of organisations

Existing research suggests that many traders do not belong to any informal organisation (Skinner, 2008a). In a study conducted by the CALS in 2007, it was discovered that most traders were not affiliated with any organisation because they had never heard of any street trader organisation (Tissington, 2009). The study further notes that those who were aware of these organisations or were members were often male street traders who had been trading for longer (Tissington, 2009).

3.8.4 Lack of resources

Organisations must be able to recruit new members to sustain themselves and grow while serving the needs of existing members (Lund et al., 2000). For this to happen, organisations need to hire full-time organisers who would be responsible for the efficient completion of these tasks (Lund & Skinner, 1999). The money brought in through membership fees is may not be enough to pay full-time organisers, especially in those organisations that serve poor traders (Lund & Skinner, 1999). Organisations also find it difficult to pay staff salaries, meeting expenses and fees for adequate meeting spaces (Bonner & Spooner, 2011). Funders of non-governmental organisations are less willing to fund organisations that are not moving towards financial independence, presenting a challenge for organisations working with economically disadvantaged people (Lund et al., 2000).

3.8.5 Cultural barriers

South Africa is a country known for its cultural diversity. Many of these cultures are still strongly patriarchal, where masculinity is associated with dominance and femininity with being subordinate to males (Sathiparsad, Taylor & Dlamini, 2008). Lund and Skinner (1999) suggest the plea to respect culture is used by both men and women to keep men in dominant positions within organisations. This leads to an environment where women's gender-specific needs are not adequately met and their issues are not adequately dealt with (Lund & Skinner, 1999).

3.8.6 Internal divisions

In the South African context, tensions between foreign and local traders have been known to result in violent clashes (Goldman & Creation, 2003). In a study investigating how the interests of women were promoted in informal trader organisations, it was found that divisions between foreign and South African street traders were centred on economic issues (Lund & Skinner, 1999). Many South African traders felt threatened by competition from foreign traders, suggesting that foreign traders traded better than them (Lund & Skinner, 1999). Xenophobia is rife among street traders because of the shortage of legal trading spaces, and higher education levels and business skills among foreign traders (Bénit-Gbaffou, 2018). These tensions result in a lack of representation of foreign street traders in the organisations (Tissington, 2009). Female migrants seem to face greater levels of discrimination and may be further marginalised and lack representation as foreign nationals who are also females (Mbiyozo, 2018). Since street traders regularly negotiate or engage with local government, this presents a further challenge for

foreigners as they are not part of a constituency that is represented in government (Goldman & Creation, 2003).

Class and racial divisions result in organisations representing the needs of one group over another (Lund & Skinner, 1999). Lund and Skinner (1999) found that, although there were females in leadership positions in Cape Town, they tended to support the interests and needs of 'better off' coloured traders rather than traders of other races. Street trader organisations represent heterogeneous groups with different interests, who are often divided by their differences in race, class, gender and nationality (Motala, 2002). Divisions and hierarchies in the informal economy are shaped by differences in interests among members, gender, race, ethnicity and resources constraints (Lindell, 2010). The potential of informal organisations to defend collective economic interests is undermined by internal divisions, poverty and vulnerability to elite capture (Lindell, 2010). As a result, street trader organisations are too marginalised, divided and disempowered to be able to withstand police harassment or challenge restrictive by-laws (Tissington, 2009).

3.9 Organising female street vendors: An empirical case

The Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) is one of the most documented informal sector associations studied in India and the world. SEWA is a national union of women working in the informal economy, established in 1972 (ILO, 2018a). It operates in 14 states of India and has approximately 1,5 million women members working in the informal economy in various occupations (ILO, 2018a). SEWA does not only function as a union but comprises several membership-based organisations, including cooperatives (Sankrit, 2015). SEWA struggles and advocates for worker's rights while the cooperatives and other collective organisations advance economic opportunities and development for its members (Sankrit, 2015). SEWA defends the rights of its members against poor working conditions, lack of social protection and low wages (ILO, 2018a).

SEWA identifies several barriers or constraints to organising street vendors in India, namely, illiteracy, poverty, cultural barriers, family/community pressures, discrimination, violence and abuse from higher authorities and castes (Sankrit, 2015). There are more street vendors in India than there are organisations with the capacity to serve them (Sankrit, 2015). The lack of organisations is partially ascribed to traders being dispersed and scattered, heterogeneity of traders and the lack of time to participate in organising activities (Sankrit, 2015).

Despite these challenges, SEWA has enjoyed many successes over the years. As a response to the harassment and abuse of female vendors by male vendors and the police, SEWA established the first market for female traders called Mahila Bazaar in Delhi (SEWA, 2012). This required four years of negotiations with municipal authorities, the police and the traffic department to obtain all the necessary permissions and documentation to establish the market (SEWA, 2012). More than 200 female traders from different areas in Delhi now trade in the bazaar with dignity and without harassment. SEWA continued to improve the market and provide water and gender-sensitive toilet facilities for women (SEWA, 2012). The bazaar is a rare example of a successful attempt at collectively mobilising, advocating and negotiating improvements for female traders despite the organising difficulties experienced.

3.10 Conclusion

Street traders have long been considered by governments and other actors to have no or limited agency and have been regarded as a type of worker that could not be organised. However, street traders have demonstrated their agency through collective organisations. These organisations have assisted traders to overcome or cope with some of the challenges they faced and increased their bargaining power, voice and political leverage. Women dominate street trading in terms of numbers, particularly survivalist street trading. as workers placed in a more vulnerable position, participation in trader organisations has the potential to empower women and contribute to their increased well-being in the workplace. Women face several barriers that can hinder their full participation in trader organisations. The literature shows that, by responding to the gender-specific needs of women, supportive organisations create a better working environment that allows women to exercise their agency and improve their well-being.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT

4.1 Introduction

Urban informality has been conceptualised as a sign of backwardness and underdevelopment. This conceptualisation was, in most cases, based on experiences in the global North (Bénit-Gbaffou, 2018). Street trading policies in African cities have emulated the colonial policy framework that was designed to control and regulate the growth of indigenous businesses (Mitullah, 2003). These outdated and restrictive policies make street trading illegal, associating it with dirt, obstruction and a public nuisance (Mitullah, 2003). The dominant repressive approach to street trading adopted in African countries clashed with national agendas that have embraced street trading as an important feature of African cities (Bénit-Gbaffou, 2018).

In apartheid South Africa, street trading was similarly characterised by repressive policy measures that often led to violent evictions of black street traders in urban centres (Rogerson, 2016a). According to Maylam (1995), the laws governing trading in South Africa were derived from the colonial era when urban spaces were controlled by white people. Rate-paying property owners elected municipal councils and, since few blacks owned property, municipalities largely represented the interests of white property owners. The municipality controlled trading, whether by shops or street trading, through the issuing of a limited number of trading licences (Matjomane, 2013). Before apartheid, a limited number of Indian and coloured traders managed to obtain licences in Natal and the Cape, but the Transvaal and Orange Free State placed severe restrictions on even the entry of itinerant Indian traders into those provinces. Under apartheid laws, African street vendors were not allowed to trade in white urban areas unless they were employed by white persons or white businesses (Skinner, 2008b). In the 1980s, traders were prevented from erecting fixed stands by laws that required them to move their goods at least 25 metres every 15 minutes (Skinner, 2008b). Other laws prohibited trading in areas that were mostly occupied by whites (Matjomane, 2013). With few exceptions, national and local government policies led to the total or partial inclusion of street traders in urban areas (Skinner, 2008b). In 1991, the country moved towards an attitude of deregulation by introducing the Businesses Act, Act 71 of 1991 (Tissington, 2009). This Act not only deregulated street trading but also recognised it as an important contributor to the economy and individual incomes (Tissington, 2009). The dawn of democracy

saw a more tolerant policy environment towards street trading in major South African cities such as Cape Town (Rogerson, 2000).

This historical background of street trading policy in South Africa is a useful departure point for analysing the policies currently in place in South African cities. The following sections explore policies influencing street trading at the national, provincial and local levels.

4.2 Policy environment at the national level

South Africa adopted a more liberal approach to street trading in the mid-1990s, following the passing of the Businesses Act of 1991 (Skinner, 2008b). The Act restricted local authorities from creating and implementing policies that would prohibit street trading. As a result, there was a sharp increase in the number of street traders across South African cities (Skinner, 2000). In the years following the democratic transition, the role of small businesses in creating employment and economically empowering the black majority received much attention (Skinner, 2000). The 1995 White Paper on the National Strategy for the Development and Promotion of Small Business committed to creating an enabling environment for small businesses, including survivalist activities (RSA, 1995). The White Paper specified support strategies for other non-survivalist small businesses, placing this responsibility on local governments (Skinner, 2000).

The Businesses Act was amended in 1993 to give greater autonomy to municipalities to formulate by-laws regarding street trading in their cities (Skinner, 2008b). This amendment implied that municipalities could now decide what trading was permitted, including declaring some areas as trade-free zones (Skinner, 2000). The amended Act gave municipalities the power to confiscate goods and fine street traders who were perceived as illegal (Matjomane, 2013). Matjomane (2013) argues that allowing local government to declare some areas as no-trading zones was a continuation of the colonial and apartheid laws. The White Paper indicates the importance of providing support networks for traders in the informal economy to create a conducive environment for their economic success (Van Heerden, 2011). The National Small Business Amendment Act, Act 26 of 2003, emphasises the role of the Minister of Finance in creating an environment that would be conducive for the economic success of small businesses (RSA, 2003). The amended Act states that the minister should assemble an advisory body to represent the interests of small business owners (RSA, 2003).

By 2012, the informal sector was receiving increased attention from the national government in a series of fresh initiatives aimed at stimulating the economy and addressing the need for policies specific to the informal sector (Rogerson, 2016b). The initiatives by the government have been described as simultaneously representing neglect, support and suppression (Skinner, 2018). The National Development Plan (NDP) predicts that 11 million jobs will be created by 2030 and anticipates that 1,2 million to 2,1 million jobs will come from the informal sector (NPC, 2012). According to Skinner (2018), the NDP does not explicitly mention strategies for the informal sector, how existing informal sector workers will be supported or how barriers of entry will be dealt with to help generate new jobs. The plans and proposals in the NDP are based on the formal sector small, medium and micro enterprises (Fourie, 2018).

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)[1] established a new Informal Business and Chamber Support directorate in 2012, which was seen as DTI recognition of the role of the sector in job creation (Rogerson, 2016b). The directorate established a reference group that was to focus on establishing a National Informal Business Development Strategy (NIBDS) aimed at guiding government intervention in the sector (Rogerson, 2016b). The DTI staff, together with local government, formal and informal sector businesses, reported back to the reference group and DTI launched the National Informal Business Upliftment Strategy (NIBUS) in 2014 (Skinner, 2018). Also in 2014, the Department of Small Business Development (DSBD) was launched. It would take over as the lead department implementing the NIBUS.

Another division of the DTI was simultaneously preparing legislation to replace the National Small Business Amendment Act of 1993. The draft Business Licensing Bill was released in March 2013 (DTI, 2013). The draft bill requires all businesses, no matter how small, to be licensed. Foreign businesses could be granted licences if the applicants had a business permit or refugee permit (DTI, 2013) According to Crush, Skinner and Stulgaitis (2017), permits were to be applied for in their home countries and only granted if applicants could demonstrate that they had R2,5 million to invest in South Africa. The Bill proposed that much more power be given to inspectors and licensing authorities than had been granted by the 1993 Act, no limits were to be set on fines and those who contravened the Act would face a sentence of up to 10 years (Skinner, 2018). The Bill was widely criticised, with some organisations alleging that the proposed measures were punitive

[1] In June 2019, this department was renamed the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC).

and would result in the criminalisation of the informal sector (Skinner, 2018). Criminalisation of informal sector activities has led to some municipal regulations that give power to authorities but render informal workers powerless (Sassen et al., 2018). The Bill has also been criticised for being anti-foreign. Skinner (2018) suggests the xenophobic sentiments in the bill highlight the need for greater research on the contribution made by foreign nationals to the informal economy.

The launch of the NIBUS was a turning point for informal sector policy, as the national policy initiative was the first initiative with a specific focus on the informal economy (Skinner, 2018). The document acknowledges that the government overlooked the informal sector in the past. It envisions a policy and regulatory environment that supports and promotes the development of informal businesses (DTI, 2014). The strategy is based on the idea of a development continuum where informal businesses would graduate from being survivalist to joining the mainstream (DTI, 2014). Formalisation seems to be a strategic objective, although the terms 'upliftment', 'transitioning' or 'graduation process' are preferred in the document to describe a process of progression where informal businesses will eventually become formal SMMEs and benefit from government programmes (Skinner, 2018).

The NIBUS requires informal business owners to comply with some form of registration or licensing to qualify for government support (Skinner, 2018). Government support could include access to suitable trading stalls in good locations, access to financial services such as business finance or insurance, access to water and electricity, government subsidies, skills development initiatives and assistance with formal supply chains (Fourie, 2018). Fourie (2018) suggests that while formalisation could be fruitful, formalisation should not be a policy objective but a means to aid the pursuit of better livelihoods. Formalisation must also not be used as a way of controlling or regulating but for supporting informal workers (Fourie, 2018). Forced formalisation with unsuitable by-laws and regulations would be detrimental for many informal workers (Skinner, 2018). South African policies tend to focus on formalising informal businesses and this may be linked to the sector still being viewed as a problem that should be brought under control by being formalised (Fourie, 2018).

The COVID-19 global pandemic has had a devastating impact on the South African informal economy. The government had to change and improve the regulatory environment to respond to the crisis. Hard lockdown regulations implemented by the government meant that street traders

had to stop operating and lose all income (Wegerif, 2020). After civil society organisations pushed for the government to allow traders, particularly food vendors, to operate again the national government responded by amending regulations in April 2020 (Wegerif, 2020). The amendments allow informal fruit and vegetable traders to operate with written permission from their respective municipalities (Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, 2020). The DSBD issued a directive that all informal traders had to obtain a permit as per the provisions of the Businesses Act of 1991 (Rogan & Skinner, 2020). According to Wegerif (2020), Some food vendors were able to get permits and start operating, some traders were refused permits and there were reports of traders who were arrested and harassed by law enforcement despite having permits (Wegerif, 2020). In addition, some municipalities did not have existing permit systems and struggled to devise them in the middle of a pandemic. As the lockdown went to lower levels, regulations were eased and informal traders were allowed to operate under strict conditions and with written permission from municipalities.

The DSBD launched a number of initiatives to support SMMEs, including spaza shops. However, informal workers have not benefited equally. Despite the acknowledgement that the sector has been negatively impacted by the pandemic, relief measures have reached a small number of predominantly male recipients (Rogan & Skinner, 2020). The national disaster regulations were imposed without proper consultation with municipalities and other stakeholders, leading to confusion and heavy-handed enforcement (Kroll et al., 2021).

4.3 Policy environment at the provincial level: Western Cape

The Western Cape Government (WCG) requires all businesses to register with their local municipalities and acquire business licences, including those businesses that need to comply with health and safety regulations (WCG, 2019). This complies with the Businesses Act of 1991. The provincial government does not engage directly with informal sector business owners as informal trading is controlled and managed by municipalities (WCG, 2019).

4.4 Policy environment at the local level: City of Cape Town

Informal sector activities play a significant role in Cape Town's economic life. Although precise data is scarce one estimate suggests that the informal sector contributes 18–20 percent to the city's GDP (Oldfield, 2014). Informal trading in Cape Town is visible in many areas in and around the

city. Most prominent in the inner city are street markets offering goods and services to tourists and locals (Rogerson, 2018). The Businesses Act is the overarching national legislation and gives local authorities the power to formulate their own by-laws. This has led to South African cities adopting different approaches to street trading (Skinner, 2008b). In 2003, the CoCT acknowledged and embraced street trading by introducing the Informal Trading Policy and Management Framework (Bamu & Theron, 2012). The document consists of plans that the City had for informal trading and proposes what is conceptualised as a developmental approach to the regulation of informal trading (Bamu & Theron, 2012). The policy document provides more details regarding the management of street trading and emphasises a developmental and facilitative approach, a move away from the restrictive approach of the past (CoCT, 2003).

Regarding regulation and management, the policy discusses the different roles and responsibilities of different departments at the management, operational and support sector level (CoCT, 2003). The policy is clear on trading zones: trading is permitted within the CBD or tertiary economic centres, pedestrian malls, designated trading areas and appropriate markets. This placement is said to provide traders with more trading opportunities to facilitate growth and diversity (CoCT, 2003). The rules and criteria regarding the allocation of trading bays are clear. In line with the Businesses Act of 1991, trading bays are allocated to bona fide traders, excluding those who operate in brick & mortar premises (CoCT, 2003). Preference is given to unemployed, previously disadvantaged individuals and those who operate for four days per week rather than casual traders (CoCT, 2003).

In compliance with the 2003 policy document, the City introduced a by-law on street trading in 2009, which came into effect in 2010. The new by-law is similar to its predecessor regarding trading zones, hygiene, waste removal and certain offences (Bamu & Theron, 2012). The by-law introduces new provisions such as special events, the freedom to trade, public, adoption of trading plans and participation before a trading plan is adopted (Bamu & Theron, 2012). In terms of the freedom to engage in informal trading, the by-law states that "Informal trading is permitted in any area within the jurisdiction of the City, subject to any trading plans adopted by the City, the provisions of this by-law and any other applicable law" (CoCT, 2009: 5). The City should adopt trading plans, particularly with regard to significant overlaps between the formal and informal sectors. The City is obliged to consult with all affected parties, including formal and informal actors before adopting a trading plan (CoCT, 2009).

According to Bamu and Theron (2012), the 2009/2010 by-law is an improvement over its predecessor because it allows for appeals against decisions made regarding by-laws. Therefore, theoretically, it gives a voice to informal traders and protects their interests. Indeed, the by-law states that "A person whose rights are affected by a decision taken by the City in terms of this by-law under a duty or power which has been delegated or sub-delegated, may appeal against that decision in terms of section 62 of the Systems Act" (CoCT, 2009: 13). The by-law also states that the City may prohibit informal trading to host a special event, notwithstanding the terms of a trading plan adopted in that trading area (CoCT, 2009).

In 2013, the city introduced an Informal Trading Policy to repeal the Informal Trading Policy and Management Framework of 2009. The amended policy emphasises that the CoCT takes a developmental approach to informal trading (CoCT, 2013). As part of its development approach, the City aims to assist the informal sector to prosper by focusing on planning and development, policy issues and institutional arrangements (CoCT, 2013). In terms of planning and development, the document acknowledges the role of the informal economy in stimulating employment and economic growth. It states that development interventions should be specific to the sector and individual traders to maximise profit and growth. The document further states that the City will provide the appropriate level of infrastructure and this shall be accompanied by a maintenance plan (CoCT, 2013). The document states that regulations will be adopted to promote the sector and the adoption of such regulations will be agreed upon in engagement forums (CoCT, 2013). Regarding institutional arrangements, the by-law suggests that a multi-stakeholder forum be initiated by the City to identify problems and solutions and set the direction for the development of informal trading. In addition, engagement forums will relay information to the sector through representative organisations (CoCT, 2013). The section further states that "Support to and assistance with the establishment of trader associations as well as other stakeholder bodies shall be offered. These organisations will represent their constituents at the engagement forums" (CoCT, 2013: 11).

The informal sector in Cape Town is regulated by the Informal Trading Policy of 2013. However, there have been calls to amend informal trading by-laws, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Kroll et al. (2021) suggest that by-laws and policies should be reviewed to create a more supportive environment for informal traders.

Municipalities had to come up with interventions to support the local economy and improve the regulatory environment in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (Hlati & Maziwisa, 2020). Like other metros, the CoCT fast-tracked and decentralised the procurement of trading licences to allow the sector to continue operating. State officials and researchers came together to interpret and oppose the lockdown regulations imposed by the government (Kroll et al., 2021). A notable intervention by the CoCT was the facilitation of an SMME COVID-19 Safety Toolkit to assist businesses to take the necessary precautions to operate safely (Hlati & Maziwisa, 2020). The toolkit included three litres of sanitiser, masks, a winter cap, social distancing mats and information on how to safely operate during COVID-19 (CoCT, 2020).

4.5 Conclusion

The approach to street trading in South Africa has evolved from control and restriction to acknowledgement and acceptance. The CoCT has demonstrated a commitment through its policies to the development of street trading. The policy approach of the CoCT to street trading has been internationally commended (Van Heerden, 2011). While in most countries the approach is still one of control and restriction, South African cities like Cape Town have embraced street trading and sought to facilitate the sector's growth and development (Van Heerden, 2011).

CHAPTER FIVE: METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research process in detail, beginning with an explanation of the study design, followed by the chosen research method and the justification for the use of this method. The chapter also discusses the sampling technique and sample size, the data collection methods and instruments used in the data collection process as well as the data analysis process and the ethical considerations that guided the study and the researcher.

5.2 Study design

A research design refers to a logical plan of how the researcher intends to collect and analyse data to answer the research questions (Ragin & Amoroso, 2011). Study designs vary but are dependent on the research problem or question and the evidence required to adequately answer the research question (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). According to Miller and Salkind (2002), various components influence the construction of the research design, including methods of data collection, access to organisations or respondents, type of data, number of cases and source of data (Miller & Salkind, 2002). The researcher adopted a qualitative research design. Qualitative research asserts that human behaviour is subjectively meaningful for the people who engage in it. Thus, the goal of the qualitative researcher is to study human behaviour from the perspective of the insider (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Qualitative research was found to be suitable for this study because it allowed the researcher to have a detailed encounter with the object of the study (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

This study sought to explore the collective constraints encountered by female street traders and how collective action is used to overcome these constraints. The qualitative approach allowed the researcher to study the experiences, behaviours and attitudes of female street traders in their natural setting. Participants were required to respond to questions by providing detailed accounts of their own experiences. The researcher aimed to capture these interpretations to better understand their behaviour, decisions and actions as individuals and within their organisations (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). This approach enabled the researcher to explore in-depth and understand the experiences of participants to provide a thick description of these experiences.

5.3 Research method: Case study

The study aimed to present a "detailed and intensive analysis of a single case" (Bryman, 2012: 66). The case study research method allows the researcher to closely examine a single case in a specific setting (Bryman, 2012). In most cases, this method involves the selection of a small number of participants as study subjects, in a small geographical area. A case study method intensely analyses the persons, decisions, events, projects, institutions and other systems that are studied holistically using one or more methods (Thomas, 2017). A case study method was seen as appropriate for the current study, which investigated not only individuals and institutions but the greater system they find themselves in, including the policies and by-laws that govern them. This study is based on a single case of female street traders who are members of a street trader organisation in the Cape Town CBD – the Grand Parade United Traders Association (hereafter 'GPUTA').

5.4 Study area

The Grand Parade, colloquially known as 'the Parade', is a large public space located in central Cape Town between the Cape Town City Hall and central library to the south, the Castle of Good Hope to the east, and the Golden Acre shopping centre and main Cape Town bus terminus to the north. The Grand Parade is bounded by Darling, Castle and Lower Plein Streets (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Case study boundary of the Grand Parade, Cape Town

Source: Author, adapted from Google Maps.

Soon after the Dutch trading company, the VOC (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, or the United East India Company in English) arrived at the Cape in 1652, it began to build a fort where the Grand Parade is located today, to secure the site against its European rivals. After the decision was taken to build a more secure castle to guard the harbour, the fort was abandoned and the garrison gradually moved to the castle site to the north. The fort site was then used as a parade ground for soldiers (Abrahams, 1996). In the almost four centuries since, the parade grounds now named 'Grand Parade' were used as a public square for civic functions, bi-weekly market stalls, a popular meeting place for all classes, and political rallies throughout the 20th century, including the mass rally addressed by former president Nelson Mandela in 1992 after his release from prison (Abrahams, 1996).

In the present day, most of the space is used as a parking lot, the biggest in the city. On Saturdays and Wednesdays, a large part of the Grand Parade is transformed into a market, which retreats to a much smaller peripheral space occupied by small-scale traders on the other days (Thompson, 2017). The CoCT manages the space by leasing out various spaces to six different trader organisations (Thompson, 2017). The small-scale female traders and their organisation were the focus of this study.

5.5 Data collection instruments

Qualitative research makes use of flexible and explorative data collection methods to allow the researcher to change data as the study progresses to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomena under study (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005). Interviews are usually one-on-one discussions between an interviewer and an interviewee to collect data on specific topics (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). The qualitative instruments of interviews and fieldwork observation were used in the data collection process. Using semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to probe and delve deeper into the topic to gain a deeper understanding of the answers provided (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). As a result, the reporting and analysis of data reflect the views and experiences the participants shared. The interview method also allows the researcher to probe further to clarify vague responses or enable participants to elaborate on incomplete answers (Welman et al., 2005). Through semi-structured interviews, the participants may share interesting ideas and themes that were not part of the interview schedule (Bryman, 2012). Non-participant observation involves the researcher acting as an outside observer without becoming involved in the activities taking place (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The researcher observed the participants carrying out day-to-day activities in the places where they work. Participants were then invited to share their insights about social relations and how they interact with their physical, social and cultural environments (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

5.6 Sampling procedure

Sampling is the process of selecting participants to be part of a study from the defined study population (Flick, 2007). Based on the research questions, the relevant population for this study was female street traders of all races, nationalities, age groups who are members of a trader organisation in the Grand parade. Snowball sampling was used to select the study sample. Snowball sampling involves the researcher initially approaching a few members of the relevant target population. These individuals then act as informants and refer the researcher to other members of the same population for inclusion in the sample (Welman et al., 2005). Each located subject identifies another subject until the process is complete (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The leader of the GPUTA was approached for an interview and asked to refer the researcher to other members of the organisation. The researcher was then introduced to another member of the

executive who identified other members of the study population. Each identified subject was asked to suggest other relevant traders. In total, eight interviewees were identified in this way.

5.7 Data collection

Primary data is original data collected by the researcher, using first-hand sources (e.g. interviews) for his or her study (Welman et al., 2005). Primary data enables the researcher to collect data that is specific to their study. The questions asked by the researcher are tailored to elicit relevant information for the study (Miller & Salkind, 2002).

Primary data was collected for this study in eight interviews conducted with female street traders in September and December of 2019. These included one key informant interview with the leader of the GPUTA and one executive member, who were also street traders at the Grand Parade. Whenever possible, interviews should be conducted in the native language of the participants to create a conducive environment of expression and to accurately capture, beliefs, views, opinions and attitudes expressed by participants (Drew, 2014). Participants were encouraged to express themselves in a language they were comfortable in and elected to be interviewed in English and/ or isiXhosa. The researcher conducted fieldwork observations during the interview sessions and outside of the interview sessions.

5.8 Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis can be defined as "the classification and interpretation of linguistic or visual material to make statements about implicit and explicit dimensions and structures of meaning-making in the material and what is represented in it" (Flick, 2013: 5) Thematic analysis is one of the most common approaches to analyse qualitative data. Thematic analysis refers to the process of extracting key themes from collected data (Bryman, 2012). Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest a six-phase method for thematic data analysis. As this method was used in the study, the phases are summarised below.

Phase One involves the researcher familiarising themselves with the data by re-reading text data (i.e. transcripts) and listening to audio data. Data should be actively, analytically and critically read while searching for emergent themes and meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Data familiarisation in this study was accomplished, firstly, through the interview process and secondly, through listening to the audio data while transcribing and taking notes.

Phase Two involves generating new codes. Codes identify and provide potentially relevant and interesting labels for the raw data or notes collected during fieldwork (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Codes can either be derived from the data (inductive) or derived from the literature of theory (deductive). While the former arises from collected data the latter is usually based on pre-set coding schemes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Codes in this study were developed from a pre-set coding scheme based on specific research questions that the researcher sought to answer.

Phase Three is the process of generating and constructing themes by combining and categorising codes into particular themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this study, some themes were identified and constructed based on patterned responses or the prevalence of responses and others because of their significant relation to the research question.

Phase Four involves reviewing developing themes in relation to the coded data and the entire data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This step requires the researcher to check themes to see if they work in relation to the data. If not, the researcher may need to discard some codes and combine, separate or refine some themes. This step is done until a coherent and distinctive set of themes emerges (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To complete this phase in the study, the developed themes were checked against the coded extracts and the entire dataset to determine whether they were relevant to the research subject.

In Phase Five, the researcher must assign names and definitions to themes and clearly state what makes each theme unique. Each theme must have a clear purpose, focus and scope and build and develop on the previous theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). When combined, themes must provide a coherent story about the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this study, themes were identified and grouped according to the research questions. The themes were named in relation to the research questions to create a coherent story that met the research objectives.

Phase Six comprises writing a report to provide a convincing, coherent, clear, yet complex story based on the data. Themes should be presented in a logical, meaningful manner in the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

5.9 Ethical considerations

Ethical behaviour is important in the research process. Certain ethical standards must be upheld by the researcher when working with human subjects. Informed consent, privacy, anonymity and

confidentiality were taken into consideration in this study. Because participants must be given as much information as possible about the study to make an informed decision about whether to participate, consent forms explaining the nature, purpose and significance of the research were issued to prospective participants. Consent forms were read out and explained to participants to ensure full understanding. Participants were also informed that participation in the study was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the interview at any point. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity and the following measures were explained.

- Information disclosed by participants during the interview process would not be shared with unauthorised persons.
- All interview transcripts, audio recordings and field notes were safely held and could only be accessed by the researcher.
- All participants were given pseudonyms to protect their identity and ensure anonymity.
- Pseudonyms, numbers and letters were used to identify transcripts to avoid linking participants' identities with their responses.

Permission and ethical consent to conduct this study were granted by the University of the Western Cape's Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences.

5.10 Limitations of the study

As the study was conducted with one organisation in the Cape Town CBD, the findings cannot easily be generalised to all trader organisations in the Cape Town CBD or traders in other areas. A major limitation in the study was that interviews had to be conducted in the traders' stalls during trading hours due to their lack of free time, which was disruptive to participants. Another major limitation was the refusal of some traders to participate in the study because they considered the interviews to be disruptive. Although it was beneficial that access to traders in the organisation was gained through the leader of the organisation, this also presented a possible limitation as traders feared that their livelihoods would be at risk if the information they shared reached the leader, the organisation or the City. Although precautionary measures were always taken in the field, the researcher became a victim of theft during the interview process and interviews had to be stopped due to safety concerns.

CHAPTER SIX: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses the research findings collected during the research process. The findings are presented and structured according to the research objectives. After presenting the shared challenges experienced by female street traders in the Cape Town CBD, the chapter presents a brief profile of the GPUTA and discusses the findings on the role of organisational membership in mitigating and overcoming shared challenges and findings on the barriers to organising that were revealed in the study. A summary of the findings concludes the chapter.

6.2 Research findings

As mentioned in Chapter One, this study aimed to explore how female street traders in the Cape Town CBD organise and use collective action to overcome the various ways in which they are marginalised. The study set out to answer the following research question:

- How do female street traders in the Cape Town CBD use collective action to overcome shared challenges and represent their needs in local government?

The study also addressed the following research objectives:

- Explore the shared challenges experienced by female street traders in the Cape Town CBD.
- Investigate how female street traders organise to respond to collective challenges and represent their needs.
- Investigate the barriers to organising that exist among female street traders in the Cape Town CBD.
- Investigate whether and in what ways collective action among female street traders benefits the vulnerable group.

6.3 Shared challenges among female street traders in the Cape Town CBD

Street trading is an important source of employment for many South Africans, including the women who are the main focus of this study. However, street trading is not without its challenges. This section explores challenges experienced by female street traders in the Cape Town CBD.

6.3.1 Lack of infrastructure

Lack of adequate and supportive infrastructure emerged as a major challenge for women trading at the Grand Parade. Storage facilities, shelter and functioning toilets were among the main infrastructural deficits cited by traders. The City does not provide storage facilities for traders to store their stock at the end of the business day, which compels traders to store their goods in privately rented spaces. Most storage spaces are far from the Grand Parade and heavy stock and components of trading stalls have to be pushed in trolleys by hired operators known as trolley pushers, through traffic and across at least two streets to and from storage spaces. Most of the women are not physically able to move the goods themselves, and trolley pushers are hired to do the job at a cost of between R40 to R60 per day. According to the traders, the cost of renting a storage space is between R500 to R750 per month. These costs are a large part of the operating overheads of the traders who consider them onerous. One interviewee highlighted the financial and physical challenges associated with accessing storage:

> It's extremely challenging to operate the way that we do in particular if you look at the *gogo* across the road here, she is also in her 60s already and she comes, she takes public transport every day and to come and set up her trade here she has this wire storage box, she packs everything in there, then she has to get some youngsters to push it to a storage area. The City doesn't supply us with storage which is one major challenge which we do need in the area where we operate. So traders have to pay storage, they have to pay for the boys that push the box in and out and it's across the traffic roads. Hey, it's quite far where they store, there in that area across Buitenkant street at the back […] and she's got to pay the guys every day in and out, she's got to pay her transport as well. So if you should ask her how much she goes home with [laughs] it's really nothing. (Interview 1)

The traders stressed that the daily and monthly costs of rented spaces and trolley pushers took away a large portion of their revenue, resulting in low incomes. Further probing revealed that theft of goods stored in private facilities occurred, causing further financial loss. Furthermore, agreements with storage providers and trolley pushers were informal and they could be held accountable for the theft of stock. Even if they could afford it, because they traded from informal spaces, there is no possibility of insuring the stock against theft, damage or loss.

The Grand Parade is an open space with no protection from the weather. Traders do not have access to the few permanent fixed stalls provided by the City. Most traders use a standard steel frame with no cover to display their goods. Some traders use plastic sheeting and other materials

to protect themselves and their stock from the heat, rain and wind. Other traders use boxes, steel trolleys and plastic bins big enough to display their goods on the ground. These displays are set up in the morning and packed away to be transported to rented storage facilities at the end of the business day. The traders reported two specific consequences of exposure to the elements.

Firstly, cold weather and rain, especially in winter, contributed to health problems such as colds and flu. Being exposed results in sickness, reduced productivity and loss of income. For most participants, street trading is their only source of livelihood and they are forced to work even when they are sick. As one trader stated:

> It's really difficult, my sister, especially when it's winter. As you can see we don't have shelter so we get sick a lot, we contract flu, some of us have had TB and it is difficult to work when you are sick. But we have to persevere, what else can we do? I really don't know what else to say about it, we just have to endure. (Interview 6)

Secondly, bad weather conditions like rain or excessively hot weather often caused stock damage, especially for traders who had no form of protective coverage. Because bad weather significantly deteriorated the condition of goods traders chose not to display items that were prone to damage. Since customers would not see these products, the potential for sales was reduced. The inability to display goods in inclement weather thus hindered the ability of traders to earn a living:

> Some things can't be in contact with water because they get damaged so we don't display such things at all when it rains and we end up losing money. (Interview 6)

In addition to shelter and storage challenges, participants said that they did not have access to running water and functioning toilets. The Grand Parade has public toilets located near the food kiosks that are within walking distance and accessible to traders. However, during the initial stages of the interview process in September 2019, the traders reported that the toilets had been out of order for 4–6 months and closed for repairs. When the researcher returned in December 2019, the traders reported that the public toilets had reopened in October 2019 but had to be closed again for repairs a few weeks later. Traders were then forced to abandon their stalls to use the toilet facility at the nearby mall for which they had to pay a fee. One trader explained how the lack of toilet facilities affected her as follows:

> They were trying to come and repair it but then it breaks next day, or same day it breaks, but now they started this new thing now I don't know why, they are very dirty, but toilets?! We don't have

> them; they must repair it fast yeah because I am a diabetic patient, I need to use it every two or three hours. Later I have to hold it you see? And another thing, the toilet downstairs – so many steps down. I must go there for free or I must pay here all the time, when I make R20 some days I will cut R2 and pay for the toilet. (Interview 5)

Paying for access to toilets was a high additional expense for traders, especially those who sold smaller items such as jewellery and cosmetics. Some traders tried to reduce costs by avoiding using restrooms as much as they could. Walking to and from the toilets at the mall meant leaving the market stall unattended for a long time, risking a loss of income either through theft or customers buying from rival stalls after finding one unattended.

The lack of toilet facilities was a health risk for traders and even for their customers and the general public, who were all relying on the public facility. According to the traders, the City had provided mobile toilets for a short period in September 2019. However, these mobile toilets were not cleaned regularly, adding to a dirty and unhygienic environment that could potentially harm the health of those in the market and affect customers' willingness to visit the market. One trader with a young child had this to say:

> There was here that mobile one but it was horrible, it was smelling here. It was terrible and I had never also took my child there because I don't trust taking a child to a toilet like that I can't even flush [inaudible] but okay, I never took my child there. (Interview 3)

The need for functioning, clean toilets and other amenities to ensure the health and earning ability of traders has drawn comment in the literature. Access to basic infrastructure is important for the health, well-being and productivity of street traders (Mkhize et al., 2013). Shelter is an important physical asset that urban dwellers use for productive and income-generating purposes (Farrington, Ramasut & Walker, 2002). Access to public infrastructure is important as that creates an enabling environment and supports trader livelihoods (Farrington et al., 2002). The study found that access to physical infrastructure is important for the day-to-day functioning of street trader enterprises. Vendors were effectively denied access to this asset through restrictive planning regulations that did not acknowledge the importance of street trading to the urban economy. As a result of this, traders' productivity was disrupted. According to the Informal Trading Policy of the CoCT, "flexible and the appropriate level of infrastructure shall be provided" (CoCT, 2013: 10). In addition, the policy states that the type of infrastructure required by each trading area should be identified and the delivery of such infrastructure shall be followed by a maintenance plan. As

evidenced by the interviews, supportive physical infrastructure as per CoCT policy in the Grand Parade is lacking and maintenance is not prioritised.

6.3.2 No security of tenure

According to the research findings, traders do not have tenure over their trading stalls. Participants confirmed that they had little or no say with regard to location, relocation and eviction. The Grand Parade is often used to host events such as concerts, festivals and races. According to the traders, the City requires them to clear the space to make way for event preparation a few days before major events. The traders feel that they operate in an insecure environment because they are moved with little or no notification. The City does not provide an alternative location for traders to run their businesses during these events which can last up to a week. This has a negative effect on the livelihoods of traders as they cannot trade or earn any income until the event ends. As one trader expressed:

> They do not consider our needs. If they decide that we are not going to trade today then we don't trade, if they decide that we should not trade tomorrow then we won't trade, they don't give us a seven-day notice anymore, if they wake up today and decide to remove us they just remove us […] sometimes this happens at the end of the month when we have to pay school fees or rent and we stock up a lot towards the end of the month because people get paid at the end of the month. As traders, we know that month-end is payday for most people so we must have stock that will last from maybe let's say the 27th to the 2nd but now we're scared to stock up a lot because what if they remove us? Then we are stuck with a lot of stock. (Interview 2)

Tenure insecurity was a common challenge among all participants, who all said it hindered business growth as they could not plan ahead well. The loss of income during interrupted trade was felt by the traders long after major events ended especially near month-end. After month-end, the market experiences a decline in customers and traders cannot make back the lost income. This affects traders' ability to re-invest in their business and feed their families.

The organisations at the Grand Parade have had leases that are renewed on a month-to-month basis since the late 1990s. The month-to-month lease does not give trader associations a sense of security as they and the traders cannot make plans to refurbish the market, negotiate long-term storage spaces or form meaningful partnerships with sponsors and formal businesses. One trader said:

> We formed a limited company of these 100 shareholders each one paid R500 for the company, we had a lease agreement, we rented space, traders pay and they are also shareholders and the profits

> ploughed back into business. So each one's R500 ended to be R60 000 today. If we had the correct mentorship in that which we are now currently getting from professionals from the corporate sector[…]we would have been very far as a business entity of informal traders but we didn't have the skill. I just had that vision of forming this entity, we did it, we did grow but by 2010 our lease was taken away because it was oh "they're redeveloping the city and the station". (Interview 1)

The trader reflects on partnerships lost with the corporate sector as a result of their tenure insecurity. In 2010, many traders were removed from various areas in the city in preparation for the 2010 FIFA World Cup. In this period, the organisation lost lucrative partnerships that would have assisted traders and made a positive contribution to the informal economy at large.

As evidenced by the literature, urban space is a critical physical livelihood asset for informal traders as their livelihood activities rely on access to these spaces (Brown et al., 2010). Location and the nature of tenure are two defining features of space as a physical asset for the livelihoods of traders (Mensah, 2006). Sethuraman (1997) suggests that the income of traders heavily depends on their location in the city. Setšabi (2006) stresses that for a particular location to be regarded as suitable for traders, it must have some degree of security of tenure (Setšabi, 2006). Furthermore, when faced with the threat of eviction, traders rarely invest in productive assets (Mensah, 2006). In most cities, street traders face the threat of eviction because they do not have permits or because cities use laws and regulations that traders cannot comply with as a means to evict them (Mensah, 2006). Traders at the Grand Parade are legally permitted to trade in the area through permits. By refusing to conclude lease agreements with traders the CoCT retains the power to remove traders at will.

6.3.3 Exclusion from decision making

The findings indicate that traders are often excluded from decision-making processes that affect their livelihood. According to the interviewees, decisions such as removal before an event or refurbishment of the market are often taken without consulting the traders and their representatives. As mentioned, neither the traders nor their associations have the power to prevent removals or evictions. In some cases, traders suggested that they were not involved in plans to repair the public toilets that were out of order, and they were given little or no notice. When asked about their participation in decision making, one trader expressed how their involvement in decision making had changed over time:

> When I got here things were not as they are right now, in the early 2000s the City would notify us in time before they would hold an event here, they would give us enough time to trade before the event or they would find us alternative locations to trade and they would show us the alternative location and we would assess whether this location would be ideal for trading. If the location was ideal for us we would take it, if not then we would tell them that we are not satisfied. But after 2010 things changed, now when they have events they don't involve us. (Interview 2)

In most cases, trader associations seem to be excluded from planning processes that include the temporary removal of traders. Although executive members admit that the City acknowledges their existence and has included them in certain planning and decision-making processes, some forms of exclusion persist. The engagement principles contained in the CoCT's Informal Trading Policy state that the city will communicate widely and accessibly in different forms to reach all relevant stakeholders. In addition, all relevant stakeholders should be included in the appropriate forums at appropriate levels (CoCT, 2013). As evidenced by the interviews, in practice, traders and their representatives are not always engaged by the City on issues impacting their livelihood. This finding resonates with the findings in a study conducted by Jiyane (2017), focusing on participation and policy formulation in the informal economy in Durban. Jiyane found that traders were not always included in decision-making processes despite Durban's informal trading policy allowing for inclusive and participatory planning processes. The study described an instance where traders were not consulted on changes made to spatial plans in the construction of the Warwick shopping mall. The final plans affected income-earning opportunities for traders at the site (Jiyane, 2017). This approach contradicted the inclusive planning processes contained in the city of Durban's policy.

6.3.4 Crime, safety and security

The research found that crime was a significant issue for all participants on the Grand Parade. Interviews revealed that crime in the area consists of pickpocketing, theft and drug dealing. The traders alleged that foreign nationals, particularly Tanzanians, were the main perpetrators of the crimes committed in the area. All participants agreed that crime harmed their trading operations, their earnings and reduced the number of customers that come to the market. One participant's view was typical of these feelings:

> There are these Tanzanian boys around here, a lot of them, they are the ones that steal from us a lot. Like for instance, if you put one of your bags down then ask the trader next to you to keep a look-

> out, you know people are also busy with their own things. Before you notice, your box is gone or they take whatever they take and run and it's really difficult to get your things back once they have taken them. Sometimes you find that by the time you get to them they have already sold your products. (Interview 6)

Traders often have to leave their stalls unattended to fetch more stock from storerooms in the morning or to find a bathroom in the mall. This makes them vulnerable to thieves in the area. Some traders suggest that their lack of shelter makes it easier for thieves to grab products on display and run. Crime does not only affect traders but customers and the general public as well. Traders suggest that customers do not feel safe enough to shop at the Grand Parade, which has a significant impact on sales and thus income. One trader said:

> Customers are too scared to come to the Grand Parade because they get mugged and their phones get stolen. The thieves here pretend like they are bumping into you but that's how they steal your things. Drugs are sold right in front of us… (Interview 2)

CoCT law enforcement and Central City Improvement District (CCID) officers are present at the Grand Parade throughout the day. These officers have been placed there by the City to provide visible policing and assist with deterring crime at the Grand Parade. The CCID also operates many closed-circuit cameras throughout the CBD. Despite their presence, the traders say that they have seen little improvement in combatting crime over the years. According to the traders, the officers were often not in sight when a crime was being committed:

> If I catch the person I have to beat the person, I have to yeah because there is CCID here but they don't do nothing. Sometimes when something happens, they will be so far away you won't even see them, you have to take the law into your hands, you have to fight the person that stole your things you understand? So you hit them so you can get your things. (Interview 4)

In addition to affecting their earnings, most traders felt unsafe in the market and particularly vulnerable because they are females. Their insecurity was exacerbated by their lack of trust in the law enforcement and security personnel (i.e. CCID) placed at the market. The findings of an IEMS study conducted in Durban were similar to this finding, as law enforcement officials were found to be unhelpful or unresponsive to reports of crime from traders (Mkhize et al., 2013). The literature (see Chapter Two) confirms that crime is a major risk for street traders and threatened their ability to trade. Lund and Skinner (1999) found that women are more vulnerable to crime than men and respond differently; unlike the above interviewee, women may retreat rather than

respond aggressively. In most cases, women are physically smaller than their attacker, most likely a male, and less likely to defend themselves (Møller, 2005). As males were not the focus of this study, such gender assumptions cannot be made. Although some women in the study chose to fight back, in one way or the other, most did not defend themselves. Some did not even report crimes because of their lack of trust in law enforcement and the CCID.

6.3.5 Financial constraints

A major challenge mentioned by all participants was the lack of financial resources to re-invest in or re-stock their businesses and sustain their families. The lack of financial capital was attributed to decreased customer flow, business-related expenses and decreased sales. Their lack of financial capital also threatened business growth. One participant captured the essence of what was shared by interviewees:

> There is no money here, sometimes you can't even buy stock. This is all I have right now. Sometimes they will come by and ask for prices but they never buy anything so we just sit here all day until we have to go home. (Interview 8)

Observations and interviews confirm that the location of the market ensures a large flow of pedestrian traffic. The market is conveniently located next to the bus terminus, Cape Town Station and the city centre. It has numerous shops and businesses on its periphery, and large attractions nearby such as the Golden Acre and Grand Central building malls. Despite this, traders complained that sales have decreased over the years due to decreased customer flow. According to traders, the constant evictions and removals by the City lead to customers opting to buy from the Station deck market above Cape Town Station which had fixed stalls and an adjacent taxi rank. According to the traders, the CoCT had attempted to move them further down the Grand Parade towards the parking lot where there were few passing pedestrians, resulting in a significant loss of customers. One participant said:

> They moved us there before but when people get off the busses, the flow is not going on that side. Customers always complained about going that side, customers said it was better for them to go to the street market on upper deck of the station which is much closer to the station. Then we lost customers because we were placed far from our customers but after some negotiation with the organisation they let us return here… (Interview 2)

As mentioned, urban space and location count as livelihood assets when traders can use them to their advantage to generate income and when they have some level of tenure security (Mensah,

2006). The traders experienced financial constraints for many reasons, most of which were linked to the infrastructural challenges and lack of tenure security. For instance, traders had to spend a good portion of their income on accessing toilets. A study on the links between water, sanitation, hygiene, productivity and well-being for traders in Nankuru and Durban found that traders spent 8–20 percent of their income on water and toilet access, cutting into their already limited funds (Kamau, Alfers & Sverdlik, 2019). Farrington et al. (2002) found that lack of access to one asset (i.e. infrastructure) can hinder one's ability to access other assets (e.g. financial assets). The financial challenges encountered by the women contributed to their lack of business growth, due to their inability to purchase productive assets (i.e. stock), and this created a cycle of income loss.

6.3.6 Double burden of work

Most of the street traders interviewed had children and were responsible for the care of their children and their households. This was true for both married and unmarried participants. Women who had younger children brought them to the market because they could not afford childcare facilities or they needed help at the market during weekends or on school holidays. One participant with a young child had this to say:

> I don't have a choice because I don't have money to pay for her crèche, crèche is very expensive so I don't have a choice to bring her, now I must just bring her every day. (Interview 3)

Bringing children to the market means that the women have to divide their time between taking care of their children and running their businesses. Participants stated that at times they could not pay attention to their business and children at the same time and thus lost income. As one participant said:

> They just take something off, okay that time it was my fault because that time I wasn't here. As you can see I've got a child on the market, she needs to go to the toilet or something so when I came back I saw that no, but there was something missing. So well it happens all over. (Interview 3)

Mothers further suggested that bringing young children to the market was unsafe because of the crime in the area. This resulted in mothers having to keep an eye on their children while running their businesses, which often took their attention away from the business. Similar findings were found by Chen et al. in their report on women, work and poverty (Chen et al., 2005). That study found that women had multiple duties such as childcare and cooking that hindered their ability to

trade. In addition to this, most women did not earn enough money to take their children to day-care facilities (Chen et al., 2005).

6.4 Membership in a trader organisation and mitigating shared challenges

6.4.1 Profile of GPUTA, a street trader organisation in the Cape Town CBD

6.4.1.1 Activities and operations of the GPUTA

The GPUTA was established in the 1990s as a local membership-based organisation. The organisation was created with the main aim of creating a united front to enable traders to speak with 'one voice'. The key foci of the GPUTA are assisting traders to obtain trading spaces, negotiating with local government on behalf of traders, representing and negotiating on traders' behalf with the private sector and creating an enabling operating environment for traders.

6.4.1.2 Organisational structure

The organisational structure comprises five individuals who are traders themselves and devote a certain amount of time to organisational activities. The committee is democratically elected by traders every two years at their annual general meeting. As of 2019, the executive was made up of four women, including the chairperson, and one man. The executive member interviewed indicated that she had been re-elected to the position by traders since the inception of the GPUTA. A female trader on the Grand Parade is employed by the organisation as a site manager to oversee the day-to-day operations. The site manager is also responsible for reviewing applications and allocating trading spaces to new traders. The executive committee meets once a month, while general meetings are held with traders when there is an urgent issue to decide.

6.4.1.3 Relationship with the CoCT governance structures

As noted in earlier chapters, cities often adopt restrictive approaches to street trading management. This has led to street trader politics being shaped by fluctuating but primarily antagonistic relationships with local government and resistance from traders and organisations who are opposed to this style of management (Bénit-Gbaffou, 2016). The study participants painted a similar picture of a strained but at times cooperative relationship with the CoCT. The constant threat of eviction, exclusion from decision making and restrictive decisions taken by the City on behalf of traders have left traders to conclude that local government has no regard for their livelihoods. This view was expressed by traders throughout the interviews. Speaking of the termination of their lease agreement, one trader said:

> …you see, to me, sometimes I feel the local authorities, the government does not like to see the strengths and the development of the informal economy. (Interview 1)

Organisation representatives do not feel they receive adequate support from local government on issues that affect their livelihoods on the Grand Parade:

> As traders we know our struggles, we experience them every day, so when we try as an organisation to fight the City of Cape Town on how we are being treated, they don't sympathise with us, or understand our struggles if they say we should sort ourselves we are forced to solve our own problems. (Interview 2)

6.4.2 General discussion of benefits

In comparison with other African regions, services and benefits provided by street trader organisations in South Africa are limited to reactive responses to problems as they arise (Motala, 2008). This is partly true for the GPUTA. The GPUTA has been active in negotiating space for traders in the market. The organisation actively represents traders in negotiations with the local government and continues to establish alliances with actors and institutions for the benefit of traders. Although the organisation has a clear long-term vision for traders at the Grand Parade, it is limited in its capacity to execute their goals. Challenges include financial instability, insecure tenure and a lack of cooperation between the organisations and the city.

6.4.3 Overcoming infrastructure challenges

Infrastructure was highlighted by all participants as one of the key issues that hinder their trading activities. The lack of supportive infrastructure created an insecure environment for traders to operate in. The organisation seemed to be limited in its capacity to overcome this challenge. Despite its active and continued engagement, lobbying and negotiation with the CoCT over the years, GPUTA has not achieved much improvement in this aspect. As expressed by one executive member:

> Well, the organisation aims to achieve an enabling environment for traders to work, to operate on, to ensure that they get the necessary services from the city like cleaning, running water, toilet facilities. We do not have everything as yet. As you can see, we set up our own structure, we don't have infrastructure that is developed by the city where they can just lock up and go. This is our ultimate wish but we are still engaging with the city. (Interview 1)

According to the leadership, although they continue to engage with local government around the challenging issue of infrastructure, "the pace of change is slow" (Interview 1). A challenge for the

organisation was effective engagement with the CoCT. The City has adopted a restrictive management approach that often hinders meaningful engagements that support the livelihoods of traders. This has resulted in the City taking decisions that prioritise construction and beautification projects rather than the livelihood of traders (such as the displacement of traders during the refurbishment of the Cape Town Station). As a result of this management style, the influence of organisations over local government practices regarding infrastructure is limited to small changes occurring over the years.

6.4.4 Overcoming tenure security challenges

The leadership identified security of tenure for trading spaces as a major challenge that hindered trading operations. The GPUTA has forged a wide range of alliances with different actors and institutions at the local and national levels for support and solidarity on issues affecting traders. Through these alliances, the organisation has been able to mobilise different forms of support and resources to assist it in engaging local government concerning tenure insecurity. A member of the executive explained:

> I think over the years, although we used to just get evicted without say it's better now because they know that we have people behind us. We have SERI behind us, Social Economic Rights Institute in Johannesburg, we would use them as legal advisors. We have the universities behind us, we have Caroline Skinner, we have PLAAS, we have Camila and them there, they know, the COSATU, the alliance with the unions, it's big. They know they can't mess with us the way they want to anymore. WECBOF: now we're becoming an associate member of the Western Cape Business Opportunities Forum […] we are forming an association with them, we're actually signing a document soon and we will get their support in all our challenges. Especially this lease, I've been telling WECBOF that this is a key issue, it's the lease and security of tenure… (Interview 1)

Despite continual engagement with the City, at the time of the interview, there had been no resolution regarding the eviction of traders during events. An issue that was being negotiated was the return to the Green Point market of the traders who had been evicted in 2010 and those who had been relocated to the Grand Parade. According to the GPUTA, the City was insisting on a permit system rather than having a long-term lease agreement as they did before the 2010 evictions. According to the organisation, the support received from various institutions and actors had put pressure on the City to respond to their complaints.

6.4.5 Overcoming exclusion challenges

Traders complained about their exclusion from decisions regarding their livelihoods. The GPUTA, as a single body, does not seem to have much influence over the exclusionary practices of local government towards street trading. The organisation does, however, use the influence it has to expose the restrictive and exclusionary policies and practices of local government through the media to put pressure on the City for more inclusion. Regarding exclusion from decision-making processes, one trader said:

> …they would lease our land to the formal world, like to the Drift City or to the Red Bull, that racing thing that was here, then also the cycling tours, the Pick n Pay cycling tour and we can't trade, we're just evicted. I've got these big big stories on that, I'm always in the papers or the news, […] the Atlantic Sun, I'm in there now on Thursday with regard to the return to Green Point. I'm giving my view there so yes, they do take decisions against us and I expose them. They're afraid to talk to me sometimes, they say 'Oh God please put it in writing because tomorrow we'll hear on the radio that we did this' and I say, 'That's right'! (Interview 2)

The media attention not only puts pressure on the City but attracts support from private and public actors.

6.4.6 Overcoming safety and security challenges

Crime is a key issue for traders and the greater public. The City has made law enforcement officials and the CCID officials available to assist with crime in the area. No evidence of efforts from the GPUTA to curb crime was found during the interview process. Traders view curbing crime as the responsibility of local government given that they are trading in a public space controlled by CoCT.

6.4.7 Overcoming financial challenges

The GPUTA recognises the daily financial constraints faced by traders. The research did not find any initiatives from the organisation to respond to the daily financial struggles of traders. However, the organisation had an informal savings plan for traders to offer some financial assistance. According to the leadership, membership fees are paid back to traders at the end of every year to assist them financially. One executive member said:

> Each one pays a certain fee and the profits that goes back to them every year, we would give them what we call a rebate, the excess money would go to every trader… (Interview 1)

In addition to this, the organisation was pursuing a bulk-buying initiative in partnership with the national government. Buying stock in bulk would allow traders to save more money.

6.4.8 Overcoming the double burden of work

Female traders at the Grand Parade have multiple roles and have to balance being mothers, homemakers and running their businesses. Some women have to balance being mothers and traders during business hours which can negatively affect trading. According to the leadership, the organisation recognises the specific needs of women regarding balancing their multiple roles. Although the challenge of balancing motherhood and business at the market was recognised there were no activities undertaken by the GPUTA to address this specific challenge. Despite this, the traders had created a sense of community where children were known and taken care of by other traders. One trader said:

> …every day she is here you can see, where is she now, there she is, she know everybody here and everybody know her since baby so she walk around everywhere [laughs]… (Interview 3)

Expecting mothers however were entitled to an informal form of tenure which was an initiative by the organisation to ensure that mothers who gave birth still had a space when they return. According to one executive member:

> If she goes on maternity where we know she's going to be away for six months we will know that this is her spot, we maintain it for her, we put casuals there, when we let the casuals trade we let them know that look this spot belongs to someone and she's going to be back in 6sixmonths and then we'll find another spot for you, so that is the power of having an organisation. (Interview 1)

There was no financial compensation for being absent as a result of childbirth, although this was part of the ultimate vision and plans were in place to offer services and benefits that would respond to the specific needs of mothers trading at the Grand Parade. However, the plan had not been executed owing to a lack of finances and support.

6.5 Barriers to organising among street traders

There were no barriers to finding and recruiting traders to be part of an organisation at the Grand Parade because one has to be part of the organisation before attaining a trading space. Therefore, any barriers or challenges to organising in GPUTA arose once traders were part of the organisation.

6.5.1 Division

One barrier identified by traders was the divisions within the organisation and divisions between organisations in the market. Within the organisation, traders often disagreed on issues tabled during meetings. Disagreements would arise from certain individuals trying to advance their interests instead of the interests of the groups. These disagreements led to discussions going on for weeks without a solution. One trader said:

> We always go back to the same issues because everyone wants to push their own agenda, they sometimes want to dwell on issues that do not benefit the collective, everyone wants their voice heard and everyone wants certain things to happen in their own way and we end up disagreeing. (Interview 2)

Group politics often mean that traders take longer to reach a resolution or do not reach a resolution at all and this hinders progress and unity. There are differing opinions and interests within the group, creating internal tensions that sometimes lead to divisions between members. There are significant divisions between organisations at the Grand Parade' This disunity makes it difficult to fight for traders' needs. Interviewees suggested that there were underlying tensions between organisations which made it difficult to form an effective umbrella body that would increase their power and influence. As one executive member said:

> There is lots of different organisations like Green Market Square but some organisations are not on board yet. They know about us, like they know we there but they don't like, they don't participate. It's difficult but we sort of send out the information, we keep them on a group platform, we pass through the information… (Interview 1)

Street trader organisations are prone to conflicts and divisions like any other formal organisation or union (Bénit-Gbaffou, 2016). In a study of street trader politics in the city of Johannesburg after Operation Clean Sweep, it was found that there are deep divisions and resentment between organisations. The existing divisions made it difficult for different organisations to unite in negotiations with local government (Bénit-Gbaffou, 2016). Although informal conversations between the researcher and the traders alluded to internal divisions within the GPUTA, and even conflict between members and the executive, they did not want to elaborate on the issue, on or off record.

6.5.2 Lack of female participation

Female traders who are members and not part of the executive were reluctant to raise their grievances or opinions in meetings, either because they were not confident enough to speak up or did not want to cause trouble. During interviews, it was noted that some female participants were reluctant to dwell on challenges experienced in the organisation or with the CoCT. Some participants claimed that they do not participate in meetings and simply accepted the final resolution regardless of their opinions. When asked about participation in meetings and influence on decision making, one participant said:

> Well, whatever is being done or what they say so I accept because I am not gonna say this or that or anything, I just accept anything. (Interview 3)

When asked about raising issues or grievance in gatherings, another participant said:

> …Hayi, you know [laughs] leave those things. I don't want to complain a lot because I am going to retire soon anyway. I don't really pay attention to those things anymore[…]other people have complaints. I don't do that I just sit there, I don't really say anything. (Interview 8)

The organisation prides itself on having an executive committee numerically dominated by females. Despite this, however, women members do not seem to speak up during meetings and do not express their grievances for fear of causing trouble or conflict. Although all the participants were aware that they could express their opinions, some felt that others could speak on their behalf. In a study exploring the organising capabilities of women, it was found that, in most cases, women are too shy to speak up, rather letting others speak for them or only speaking to support an opinion (Motala, 2008). Because they do not raise their opinions and struggles, there is a risk that the organisation may be unable to represent the women properly as their needs may not be voiced all the time.

6.5.3 Lack of resources

The organisation lacks financial resources to organise and fight against the treatment they receive from the City. In some instances, negotiations with the City lead to lengthy and costly legal battles. For a street trader organisation that is mostly financed through membership fees, legal battles can be too costly to engage in, making it difficult to advance their interests. One trader had this to say:

> It's not easy to win over the City of Cape Town because we also do not have money to get lawyers to represent the organisation in our fight against the City of Cape Town you see? Like this case that

> we have where the City wants to evict us, the traders who have kiosks had lawyers and they won their case. We don't have lawyers... (Interview 2)

The organisation mostly depends on contributions from street traders to finance operational costs. The money received is not enough to hire lawyers to represent them in court battles with the City. The lack of power and money means that the organisations may be unable to win court cases or even pursue winnable legal action against the City.

6.6 The role of collective action in reducing vulnerabilities and enhancing capabilities

As stated earlier, collectives that are formed among poor people enable them to expand their political, social and economic capabilities and to use them more effectively (Stewart, 2005). Reflecting on Sen's (1999) five instrumental freedoms that contribute to the expansion of human capabilities (see Chapter Three), the next section discusses freedoms that are realised by the female traders as a result of their involvement in the GPUTA.

6.6.1 Collective action and freedoms

This study found that the GPUTA contributes directly and indirectly to the expansion of three instrumental freedoms – political freedom, economic facilities and social opportunities.

6.6.1.1 Political freedoms

Political freedom is related to the freedom to scrutinise and criticise authorities, free press, democracy, freedom of expression and participation in political processes (Alkire, 2005). Ibrahim (2006) suggests that self-help groups allow or give poor people the platform to voice their needs and opinions, which is related to political freedom to a degree. The GPUTA creates a platform (not always used) for women to have a greater voice and opinion regarding their needs and their challenges while trading at the Grand Parade. This is evidenced by the dominance of women in the executive committee and the platform given to women to express their voice in meetings and gatherings. One trader explained the value of this as follows:

> I joined the organisation because I wanted to be to be heard, like if for instance, there is something I don't like or I don't like the way I am being treated, I can voice my grievances and opinions about that and suggest how I think things should be done from my side. And they take my opinions into consideration and they make those changes, so that's how the organisation helps me. (Interview 6)

The organisation provides a platform for traders to hold City officials accountable and to openly criticise their disregard for traders. Additionally, traders can express their needs and challenges within the organisation. Through the GPUTA, traders have the opportunity to oppose unfair evictions, tenure insecurity and unfair treatment by the City. Being part of an organisation that represents their needs enhances their ability to participate in decision-making processes. The GPUTA supports traders in developing their political capabilities which may allow them to renegotiate their terms of inclusion.

6.6.1.2 Economic facilities

Economic facilities refer to the opportunities that are enjoyed by individuals to use economic resources for production, consumption and exchange (Alkire, 2005). One of the main functions of the GPUTA is approving applications and allocating trading spaces to traders. Every trader who wants to trade on the Grand Parade must join one of the representative organisations as traders cannot apply directly to the City for trading spaces. Easy access to trading spaces was a benefit highlighted by all the traders and they described the application process to obtain a trading space as easy. A prospective trader writes a letter of application to the site manager, the application is reviewed by the executive and, if the trader meets the criteria, they are allocated a space in a matter of days. Traders suggested that this process was easier than it would be if they were directly applying to the City. As expressed by one trader:

> I asked the lady here if there is a place and she told me yes. I must just write a letter and to the committee and stuff like that and then I wrote and she gave me a place. (Interview 3)

The organisation provides easy access to trading spaces for traders to use for production and exchange. Access to trading space is an asset or resource that gives traders the freedom to pursue their livelihood, which they have reason to value. Traders use this trading space to run their businesses and earn an income, which enables other functions such as being healthy or being educated. By realising these functions, the women can reduce their vulnerabilities and improve their potential for business success. For example, investing in their health could increase their productivity, enabling them to earn more income. Although traders do not own the spaces they trade in, access is facilitated by the organisation.

6.6.1.3 Social opportunities

Social opportunities refer to people's ability to access health care, education, childcare and other essential facilities which influence people's ability to live better (Alkire, 2005). According to Ibrahim (2006), access to economic facilities creates opportunities to generate income which in turn widens their social opportunities. Earning an income through street trading enhances the ability of traders to invest in their children's education, their health and that of their families, i.e. to enhance their households' health and social capital and potential future outcomes. One trader expressed her appreciation of GPUTA as follows:

> There are a lot of positive contributions because this organisation makes a big difference in the lives of the traders and poor people, it opens doors for the poorest of the poor because people are able to make a living here because of this organisation. So they can at least put food on the table, pay school fees and rent. (Interview 6)

Being able to provide for the needs of the family may prevent families from falling into poverty and contribute to accumulating human capital to invest in health and education.

6.6.1.4 Protective security

Protective security is described as a kind of safety net or social protection that prevents economically disadvantaged people from being reduced to further poverty (Alkire, 2005). Ibrahim (2006) suggests that poor people can enhance protective security by assisting one another, especially in times of crisis. The female traders in the study were doing this, assisting each other through pooling money to pay for storage facilities and looking after each other's children in the market. According to the organisation, pregnant women can safely take off time to give birth and nurse their babies while knowing that their trading spaces would be kept for them. Although the GPUTA was unable to provide financial assistance, this can be seen as a form of protective security for pregnant women and new mothers.

6.6.2 Collective action and agency

Agency refers to a person's ability to pursue goals that are not their own (Sen, 1985). Collective action is thus an exercise of agency freedom because the poor undertake collective initiatives to pursue communal goals that are beyond their individual well-being (Ibrahim, 2006). Ibrahim (2006) further states that group formation or collective agency has the potential to enable and empower individual capabilities. Involvement in the GPUTA was found to enhance the ability of

traders to influence, participate and negotiate with local government. Each member in the group has an equal right to participate in the decision-making processes in the group. This can be seen as a crucial form of collective agency and empowerment for the female traders.

6.6.3 Collective action and capabilities

As noted in Chapter Two, capabilities can be described as the freedoms and opportunities that people have to be who they want to be, do what they want to do and lead the kind of life they want to lead (Robeyns, 2005). Capabilities are the freedoms and opportunities that people have to achieve valued functionings (Clark, 2005). As previously mentioned, female traders who belonged to the GPUTA expanded three of Sen's five instrumental freedoms through their involvement. The women gained a new range of choices through the group that not only benefitted individuals but assisted the group. For example, representing traders and fighting for their rights not only expands individual political freedom but the freedom of the organisation.

Group affiliation through GPUTA enabled the women to gain access to assets that they used to achieve valued functionings. Female traders gained access to social/political, physical, and political capital, three assets that may assist them in pursuing their livelihoods and enhancing their capabilities. Social capital was gained through group affiliation as evidenced by group members assisting each other during times of need. In addition to this, the trader organisation was affiliated with a number of individuals, universities and other institutions that supported their cause. They could draw support from these networks when needed. Political capital was evidenced in their freedom to make demands and hold the City accountable and, to some extent, influence decision making. Physical capital was evidenced by their access to trading space gained through the organisation. Access to physical capital enabled access to financial capital in the form of the income earned through trading, which opened up a range of other functionings, such as being able to re-invest in their business or feed their families.

6.7 Discussion of results

This study found that female street traders faced a number of issues that constrained them in the pursuit of their livelihood. The challenges they faced increased their vulnerability and disadvantaged them both individually and as a collective. Some of the challenges experienced by the women resulted from the relationship between traders and the City. The CoCT has restrictive policies that often led to the exclusion of street traders from the formulation of plans and processes

associated with the City's commitment to creating a world-class city, which was often at the expense of the traders when it impacted directly on the Grand Parade terrain. Exclusion means that the traders have a limited influence on their livelihoods. Most of the challenges found i.e lack of security of tenure, exclusion from decision-making, crime, safety and security, financial were not exclusive to females. Apart from the responsibility of childcare in the market which was found to be a challenge that affected women in particular, the challenges identified could affect male street traders as well although this cannot be fully determined by this study.

The study found that involvement in the organisation to some extent reduced vulnerabilities and contributed to the enhancement of individual and collective capabilities. The organisation was found to contribute to increased access to assets which in turn increased their instrumental freedoms and capabilities and to a degree enabled them to overcome their challenges. Social capital enabled traders to assist each other in times of need, such as taking care of children while their mothers were trading and thus able to earn an income, hence achieving their valued functioning while decreasing their vulnerabilities (i.e. financial constraints). Physical capital increased the capacity of traders to pursue their livelihood strategy from which they could earn an income (financial capital). Financial capital has the potential to assist traders to achieve their valued functionings. Political capital was associated with political freedom. The organisation empowered female traders to participate in political spaces, i.e. local government. This would not only create a sense of self-esteem within the group but could lead to being able to influence City by-laws or put pressure on the City to change rules and regulations that disadvantaged street traders.

6.7.1 Limitations of the organisation in enhancing capabilities

Being part of a collective may result in the expansion of collective capabilities. However, this process may be influenced by external factors in the social, political and economic environments (Ibrahim, 2006). In this study, the main external force that influenced the expansion of collective capabilities was the CoCT or local government. If external actors are supportive, collective action can be more conducive to the expansion of capabilities (Ibrahim, 2006). The City was not found to be entirely supportive of the expansion of capabilities among traders. Street traders are permitted to trade in the city and an Informal Trading Policy is in place to regulate informal trading. While this suggests that the City recognises the importance of informal trading and supports the efforts of traders, in practice the City's rules, regulations and by-laws often restrict traders from exercising

their agency or accessing assets to achieve their valued functionings. For instance, traders and their organisation were excluded from decision-making processes and this limited them from exercising their agency and their political freedom. In addition, traders had restricted access to trading spaces (physical assets) that are essential to income generation and capability expansion.

The influence of the GPUTA on local government decisions, processes and policies was found to be limited. The organisation seems to be largely reactive to particular challenges, and little evidence emerged of any significant policy changes brought about by the organisation. Changes that have occurred at the Grand Parade were described as slow-paced developments over a number of years. Most of the actions of street trader organisations in South Africa are limited to temporarily blocking municipalities from further restrictions (Bénit-Gbaffou, 2016). Organisations have little ability to influence policy or long-lasting changes to state practices towards the informal sector. This study confirmed that disunity and lack of resources were some of the barriers that constrained the efforts of the trader organisation, which nevertheless continued to lobby and negotiate with the government for the rights of traders. Where necessary the organisation has used the media to expose perceived unfair treatment by the City.

According to the executive committee, the GPUTA advocates for gender equality and female leadership, which is evidenced by the numerical dominance of women in the executive. Despite this, the organisation has not fully addressed issues that affected women such as childcare and maternity leave. While the organisation acknowledges the struggles of mothers in the organisation, there were no childcare facilities or any plans to provide access to childcare facilities. The traders used their social capital to ensure the care of their children at the market.

Overall, involvement in the organisation reduced vulnerabilities and enhanced collective capabilities to the limited extent that the organisation was capable of, given the constraints of a lack of resources or external actors. As a member-based organisation, the GPUTA is limited in its ability to influence the entire system, but was found to contribute to the expansion of individual and collective capabilities.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

This study explored collective action among female street traders in the Cape Town CBD who were all members of the GPUTA trader organisation. The study gathered and analysed primary data derived from interviews with eight female traders. The findings were presented in Chapter Six. This chapter concludes the study by summarising the study, how the main research question was addressed and the empirical findings according to the research objectives outlined in the first chapter. The chapter concludes by presenting the contributions of the study and recommendations for future research.

7.2 Summary

Street trading is a large and growing part of the South African economy, acting as an alternative livelihood strategy in the context of the prevailing high unemployment rates. Street trading is a highly contested informal activity in South African cities, including Cape Town, where the local government has attempted to balance regulation and promotion by supporting street trading as a response to poverty alleviation and regulating the sector to maintain order and protect its brand as a world-class city. This study acknowledges that the South African government has adopted more inclusive policy approaches compared to the colonial and apartheid eras and that the regulatory environment has moved towards the promotion of informal livelihoods. The past few decades have seen a more inclusive and developmental regulatory framework. Despite this, existing policies and practices are not favourable to the livelihoods of street traders and at times practices contradict policy. Restrictive street trading regulations and urban management strategies have been described as limiting rather than promoting livelihoods in the informal sector. Restrictive policies, exclusion from decision making and poor management practices have led to a number of challenges for street traders.

The experiences that female street traders reported in this study support the view that female traders are greatly affected by these constraints and that existing policies. The study found that the lack access to affordable child-care for female street traders was a major challenge that disproportionately affected female street traders and constrained their ability to make a living. However, the study did not find that the constraints identified disproportionately affected female

street traders. The study identified political constraints that include evictions, harassment and exclusion. Existing regulations and policies emphasise compliance with by-laws, licensing of traders and development plans that often hinder the conduct of street trading. Except to a limited degree through their organisations, the street traders are excluded from decision-making processes such as urban management strategies and policy development.

They experience physical constraints in the CBD such as lack of access to proper infrastructure that is supportive of their trade and expands livelihood opportunities. Where infrastructure exists, it is poorly located or designed and does not take into account the needs of street traders. One example is the lack of on-site storage for their goods which adds to the expense and risk of operating on the Grand Parade.

The traders experience economic constraints that exacerbate their already low income, including the cost of operating, rising competition and decreased demand. Since the informal sector is characterised by low earnings traders are known to cover shortfalls or raise cash to buy stock by borrowing from moneylenders who charge exorbitant interest rates. Traders at the Grand Parade tend to sell the same or similar goods and have the same customer base, leading to decreased demand and pressure on prices.

The site is also associated with social constraints, including discrimination and crime. Discrimination came in various forms and women were found to be more vulnerable than men in this regard. Crime was a serious impediment to income generation and general safety. While both women and men experience these challenges, the study concluded that women seem to be more vulnerable. They were more prone to disadvantage than their male counterparts due to their perceived social status, low literacy levels, low skills, gender discrimination and violence. The women were not, however, always passive victims and claimed to take action to protect their goods from criminals

Street trading has largely been perceived as an individualistic activity where traders who are in competition with each other use individual coping mechanisms to overcome challenges. Evidence suggests that street traders are capable of organising and are increasingly doing so. Rather than lacking the agency and solidarity required for successful collective action, street traders are increasingly organising to overcome their challenges, represent their needs in negotiations and bargaining with local government and other stakeholders. Collective action has the potential to

empower traders while improving their livelihood opportunities and contributing to their individual and collective capabilities. Female street traders in particular find themselves in vulnerable positions and as a response use their agency to organise into collectives to overcome these vulnerabilities. The study revealed that collective or cooperative agency was not only exercised in the formal trader organisations operating in the Cape Town CBD. The female traders also had a common purpose in gender-specific roles and cooperate with one another by minding traders' children or keeping an eye on the goods of a trader who left the site to use a toilet or fetch stock.

The study showed that the traders generally, and females in particular, face several barriers to organising in the informal sector. Economic barriers include the difficulty of traders to allocate time to organisational activities, since time has economic value and time away from trading translates to lost income. The literature also shows that females struggle more with time as it is split between trading, their domestic responsibilities and the activities of the organisation. In terms of cultural barriers, women operate in a patriarchal environment. The study shows that the female traders did not always feel empowered to voice their needs during meetings and discussions within the organisation. Internal race, class and gender divisions further undermine the ability of street traders to organise.

Despite these barriers, this study suggests that female street traders know they can increase their agency through their membership in a collective. Agency can be enhanced through collective action, actively raising their political voice, creating and widening their networks and sphere of influence and gaining recognition in public spaces of participation and negotiation. Looking through the lens of collective capabilities, this study suggests that street traders can gain collective agency through collective action to achieve their valued beings and doings. In other words, through collectively organising, female street traders can engage in actions that will affect their environment and possibly improve their circumstances.

7.3 Answering the main research question

The study asked the question: How do female street traders in the Cape Town CBD use collective action to overcome shared challenges and represent their needs in local government? According to the findings, it can be concluded that street traders organised by joining and actively participating in the trader organisation through which they could increase their individual and

collective capabilities and ultimately overcome their challenges. Collective action was a tool through which members could exercise their collective agency, although their capacity was limited at times.

Street traders experienced various economic, political and social challenges, in most cases related to how they interact with the city. The CoCT put in place an Informal Trading Policy, which purports to recognise the significant contribution of the informal trading sector to the local economy. In practice, the findings suggest that the traders' lack of inclusion in decision-making processes and urban plans may indicate that the City is not supportive of the livelihoods of street traders. Although the City policy includes participatory governance, traders are mostly excluded from decision-making processes. The City refuses to reinstate the old system of concluding leases with traders, preferring to deal with their representative organisations. This lack of tenure security affects the traders' daily trading and ultimately their present and future income. Despite the explicit commitments in its Informal Trading Policy to do so, the CoCT does not provide the traders with basic infrastructure such as appropriate shelter, storage facilities or water. Traders had access to public toilets on site but these were poorly maintained and often out of order, forcing traders to pay for access to off-site facilities. Balancing trading and childcare was a finding in this study that was not previously identified in the literature. Female traders who cannot afford or access child care are forced to take care of the children at the market while attempting to simultaneously trade.

The City manages the trader relationship by working through the existing trader organisations. Since the only way to gain access to a trading site in the Grand Parade was through membership of a trader organisation, all the female street traders who participated in the study had had to join already existing trader organisations at the Grand Parade, including the GPUTA. The organisation is responsible for allocating trading spaces to street traders which generates income and may ultimately assist in reducing their vulnerabilities. The GPUTA acts as a representative body for the traders and their interests in negotiations with the CoCT but was found to be reactive, generally responding as issues arose. An issue of interest to the researcher was the discovery, contrary to the literature, that the GPUTA executive consisted of females with one exception and thus was a leadership collection that was more sensitive to female challenges, having experienced the same challenges as their members. Furthermore, The GPUTA had an elected leadership and the general membership included men, showing that the women in the executive were held in high regard.

Women were free to speak during meetings and gatherings. However, as reported in the literature elsewhere, some female traders preferred not to speak but rather agree with or support statements made by other traders. The executive was committed to responding effectively to the challenges that were specific to female street traders but were limited in their capacity to act by the organisation's financial constraints. One benefit the organisation was able to provide was a form of security for women who could not trade because of advanced pregnancy. Their trading sites were reserved and used by casual traders until their return, thus providing an informal form of non-financial social protection. The organisation tried to make up for the lack of resources by networking with other organisations such as COSATU and SERI to obtain support to overcome some of the challenges encountered.

The organisation struggled to secure financial resources to achieve all it sought to do, including covering legal costs in court cases pursued against the City. Internal divisions were apparent within the organisation and with other organisations in the Grand Parade at the time of the study, hindering the organisation's position in negotiations with the City. Nevertheless, the GPUTA offers street traders a platform and opportunity to actively participate in decision-making with the CoCT and to exercise their agency and ultimately overcome their challenges. Platforms and spaces of engagement with the city were achieved through membership in an organisation. Through active participation, members had the opportunity to voice their needs and have them resolved. The literature suggests that collective action requires supportive institutions to be successful. The CoCT was found to be partially supportive through its acknowledgement of street trading as an important activity and the creation of an Informal Trading Policy. However, in practice, some of the regulations and practices of local government stifled collective efforts. The organisation sought support from other institutions such as universities and trade unions to support collective action with some success achieved.

The GPUTA continues to advocate for the rights of street traders and negotiate on their behalf despite lacking resources and support. As the study has outlined, there are boundaries and limitations to what street trader organisations can do to assist street traders in overcoming challenges. For instance, they cannot protect street traders against financial loss or provide an income during maternity leave. The study is therefore careful not to overestimate the potential of street trader organisations to protect female street traders against risks and vulnerabilities. With

supportive institutions, however, street trader organisations can make significant contributions to the livelihoods of street traders.

7.4 Policy recommendations

The study found that street trader organisations play an important role in promoting well-being among female street traders, by enhancing their individual and collective capabilities and thus improving their ability to overcome their challenges. Members demonstrated agency by coming together and presenting a united front to address issues in the face of powerful opposition. The role of street trader organisations is recognised by governments, scholars and civil society organisations. The government ought to build on the agency and freedoms generated through and promoted by street trader organisations.

This study recommends that the CoCT should put into practice what is stated in the Informal Trading Policy by opening platforms for participation where trader organisations are part of a consultative decision-making process. Traders and their representatives should be recognised and given the platform to participate in development and spatial planning and the management of trading, sanitation and water facilities. In addition, trader organisations should be involved in the revision of informal trading by-laws to create an environment that enhances capabilities and supports informal trading. This may allow the creation of policies that are less driven by compliance, and more flexible and tailored to street traders. The involvement of female traders could also facilitate the creation of policies and practices that are gender-specific.

The consultative process should be clearly outlined and followed before making decisions regarding street trading. The City can work with street traders to assist them to reduce vulnerabilities. Some street traders pay for trading spaces but are using some of the time during trading hours caring for their children. Together with trader organisations, the City could invest in childcare facilities for women to assist them to increase their earning potential. This would require sustained engagement between the city and trading organisations to build trust and better relationships.

Street trader organisations should be capacitated to enable female traders to discuss and negotiate their rights with the city. This can be done by creating spaces for gender-sensitive participatory planning.

7.5 Recommendations for future research

More research could be conducted on the potential of street trader organisations to enhance individual and collective capabilities. The study concluded that street trader organisations have an important role to play in improving the well-being of female street traders. However, more knowledge is required in this area to assist the government in understanding and creating a better working relationship with street traders. This knowledge may also result in policymakers developing more responsive policies. This study only included female traders in a specific market and thus could not establish the extent of female vulnerability, relative to men, in the wider informal sector. Thus, future research may be needed on other female trader populations. It may also be necessary to include the perspectives of communities including male traders as well as the experiences and perspectives of other trader and stakeholder organisations.

7.6 Conclusion

The study sought to explore how female street traders use collective action to overcome shared challenges and represent their interests. The study confirmed that, when faced with challenges, female street traders are not passive but rather use their agency to overcome their challenges. Trader organisations were found to play an important role in assisting street traders to overcome their challenges and represent their interests with local government. Organisations provide a platform for traders to exercise their agency and express their needs and interests and thereby enhance their individual and collective capabilities. This was found to be particularly important for female street traders who were often quiet during participatory processes. The organisation actively encouraged female participation through a female-dominated executive that was sensitive to female issues. As a result, female issues were prioritised and this increased the potential of the organisation to assist in overcoming these challenges. The GPUTA organisation experiences limitations that hinder it from offering the services required by members. These limitations mostly stem from the lack of capacity, financial resources and support from local government. The researcher was convinced that strengthening the capacity of street trader organisations to work with local government rather than be cast adversarially against it will benefit both the state and the organisation. In addition, ongoing, sincere consultation between street trader organisations and local governments will not only facilitate a better working environment for traders but contribute to the prosperity and development of the cities.

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