

**University of Zululand  
Faculty of Arts**

**Department of Anthropology and Development Studies.**

**Entrepreneurship and Identity among a group of Ghanaian women  
in Durban (South Africa)**

**BY  
Vivian Besem Ojong**

Thesis submitted for the fulfilment of the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy.

Promoter: Prof G.C.V. Buijs

2005

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this thesis to my mother, Arrey Lucy Nkongho, who is of blessed memory.

## **Verification**

I testify that this is my work and has not been submitted in any other institution for examination.

.....  
Signature/ date

## **Acknowledgement**

I wish to give sincere thanks to my project promoter Prof. G. C. V. Buijs, for her frequent availability through out my project. During the course of my studies, she was appointed as Assistant Vice Rector in Academic Affairs and I was worried that due to her busy schedule with the new role, she would be unable to give me adequate attention, but this wasn't the case. Her support and useful guidance is highly recognised.

I am deeply indebted to my husband, George Ojong for his support through out my project. The countless hours you spent listening to me especially during the conceptualisation phase of this project is highly appreciated.

Many thanks go to my three sons: Ebot-Monchey, Ashu-arrey and Nkogho-Manyo who spent weeks not having me at home and always wondering why I had so much work to do and was not able to come home. I missed them during this period and often wondered why I had to sacrifice not being there for my children and instead spending time on the project.

I would like to thank all my friends for their continual encouragement and support: Elizabeth Mpepo, Dr Pearl Sithole, Dr Eunice Evala, Margaret Okharedia, Janet Opoku. Their support in no small way contributed to the realisation of this project.

## **Abstract**

African migrant entrepreneurship is fast becoming an increasingly important part of discourses of African migration to South Africa. This field of study is new in South Africa, because African women's transnational activities have been neglected until now in studies on African entrepreneurship in South Africa. As Ghanaian women in South Africa through their entrepreneurial activities provided the background through which this researcher has initiated a discursive space, it has paved the way for Ghanaian transnational entrepreneurship to become an intellectual field. It is hoped that this study will become a starting point from which African women's cross-border engagements can be viewed.

Interrogating entrepreneurship through 'cultural lenses', this study reveals that the drive to succeed entrepreneurially and the spirit of entrepreneurship lie within certain groups of people, since they are embedded in peoples' culture. Thus Ghanaian women have a high propensity to be engaged in entrepreneurial activities, even when they are living and working in other countries. This study hopes to demonstrate that a shared culture facilitates entrepreneurial performance.

The thesis has explored how their identity as Ghanaians in South Africa promotes their ability to succeed. This is because in post-apartheid South Africa, being a Ghanaian woman is being interpreted by South African blacks as knowing how to dress hair professionally. The findings indicate that although being first generation migrants, these

women have developed hybrid and cosmopolitan identities in the manner in which they carry out their entrepreneurial activities. This has been facilitated by the researcher's attempt to locate the women's entrepreneurial activities within a historical context of identity formation and the contemporary melange of their identity in South Africa. The evidence suggests that there exists a symbiotic relationship between being a Ghanaian woman in South Africa and the tendency to succeed entrepreneurially, especially in the field of hair dressing. Their 'maniere de fait' allows them to be defined as a group of successful entrepreneurs. These women are also desperate to succeed because they are expected to send remittances home to their families and friends and also to participate in community projects in Ghana. Success is primarily judged by the assets they have acquired back in Ghana and their ability to bring family members to join them in the diaspora.

These Ghanaian women are succeeding in this sector because after the fall of apartheid, hair care has become a major indicator of modernity for black South African women. This entrepreneurial area that these women have gotten into is one that has considerable opportunities for growth because black women after apartheid are earning more money and they want to spend that money on their appearance. The best way to show that they are modern is by keeping up with the latest hairstyles.

This research has demonstrated that Ghanaian women's entrepreneurship is producing benefits for South Africa. Coming from a system of apartheid where black South African women were not given the opportunity of knowing how to dress hair in what seems like

western fashion, Ghanaian women have brought in these hairdressing skills and transmitted them to South Africans. These skills are being used by these South Africans as a source of both social development and economic empowerment. By providing employment to some South Africans (who before their encounter with Ghanaians were unemployed because of lack of skills), they are not only transmitting skills but providing for the daily needs of entire families. This sort of contribution by Ghanaians to the economy of South Africa is rewarding and represents a sufficient opportunity for recognition by the South African government.

The study also reveals that in transnationalism, gender becomes unimportant. While the opportunistic tendency of migrants is given 'the front seat', gender is given 'the back seat'. Through the need to migrate and the opportunistic tendency of migrants, hairdressing has produced a distinct social place in which Ghanaian men have hijacked a cultural space which had been a female domain as they have become hairdressers in South Africa as well as Ghanaian women.

This research has also shown that religion and entrepreneurship are 'bedfellows'. This is demonstrated by the fact that Ghanaian women believe that Christianity lies in the shadows of their business activities. Therefore, they see their businesses as a way of carrying out God's redemptive plan and as one of God's divine plans for them which gives significance to what they do. These values have been transmitted through different structures like schools and churches in Ghana and forms part of the socialisation process

for children. When people who come from Ghana grow up, it becomes difficult for them to distance themselves from these values.





# Table of Contents

<b>Dedication .....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Verification .....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Acknowledgement .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Table of Contents .....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>Chapter One .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction and Methodology .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.2 Motivation for the study .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1.3 Significance of the study .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1.4 Study questions.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1.5 Objectives of the study.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1.6 Methodology .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>1.6.1 Area of study .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>1.6.2 The study population .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>1.6.3 Sampling procedure.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>1.6.4 Method of data collection .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>1.6.5 Fieldwork challenges .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>1.6.6 Limitations of the study.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Chapter Two.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Literature Review .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>2.1 General concept of entrepreneurship.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>2.2 The effects of migrant businesses owned by women.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>2.3 Social networks and entrepreneurial success .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>2.4 Cultural factors and entrepreneurship .....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>2.5 Reasons why women start businesses.....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>2.6 Women and the work\home dilemma .....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>2.7 The South African Immigration Act and migrant behaviour. ....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>2.7.1 The bill on foreign business ownership.....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>2.7.2 Migrant malpractices.....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Chapter Three .....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>The role of religion in Ghanaian women’s entrepreneurial success .....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Chapter Four .....</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>Entrepreneurial opportunities for Ghanaian women.....</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>4.1 Structural opportunities for entrepreneurship .....</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>4.2 Cultural opportunities for entrepreneurship .....</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>Chapter Five .....</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>Reconstructing and negotiating Ghanaian identity in Durban .....</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>5.1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>5.2 Particularities of immigrant identity .....</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>5.2.1 Historical dimension of identity formation of Ghanaian women from a diasporic point of view.....</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>5.2.2 The contemporary mélange and the in-betweenness of Ghanaian women’s identity .....</b>	<b>120</b>

5.3 Case studies of the in-betweenness of identity and entrepreneurship .....	121
5.4 Solidarity and Entrepreneurship .....	127
4.5 Being Ghanaian and entrepreneurial opportunities in South Africa. ....	132
4.6 Case Study .....	136
Chapter Six .....	139
The economics of the entrepreneurial activities in Durban .....	139
6.1 Factors that led the women to emigrating from Ghana. ....	140
6.1.1 Situational/environmental factors .....	140
6.1.2 Effects of the structural adjustment Plan .....	144
6.1.3 Social influence .....	146
6.2 Power relations and the economics of the family .....	148
6.3 The acquisition and transmission of hairdressing skills.....	150
6.3.1 Skills transmission: the myth .....	155
6.4 Channels of entrepreneurial success .....	157
6.5 The effect of social networks on entrepreneurship .....	162
Chapter seven .....	168
The impact of Ghanaian entrepreneurial activities on both home and host countries .....	168
7.1 Impact on home country .....	169
7.2 The issue of return migration to Ghana .....	175
7.3 The impact on the host country of Ghanaian entrepreneurship .....	180
7.4 The gendered nature of hairdressing in South Africa .....	182
7.5 The embedded space of family life/business activity by gender .....	185
Chapter Eight .....	188
Conclusion .....	188
Appendix A .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
References .....	195
Appendix B .....	205
Photographs .....	205

# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction and Methodology**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Recent large scale African migration to South Africa dates back to about one hundred and fifty years when African men migrated from some Southern African countries to work in the South African mines. During this period however, the apartheid government restricted African entry to contract mine workers, who were men. In 1994, when the first democratic government took over, it became easier for people with specific skills from other African countries to migrate to South Africa, with no gender restriction. These developments in the past ten years after the Republic of South Africa had its first democratic election have rapidly increased the number of foreign African migrants who have come to South Africa.

Recent developments, including the gruesome phenomenon in several central and west African countries of the rise of well-organised large-scale killings and/or mutilations of people considered subversive, disposable or simply "in the way" by armed groups, especially in Sierra Leone, prompted South Africa to allow people from these troubled countries to come in as refugees. Another push factor behind these developments includes the direct destruction of lives of community members and sustainable political, economic and environmental conditions through armed violence. Civil wars also in Angola and Mozambique and the resurgence of conflict in Angola and the recent war in the Democratic Republic of Congo pushed the Republic of South Africa to start offering asylum status to foreign Africans from the rest of the African continent. However, this

refugee status has enabled these migrants to become involved in entrepreneurial activities and contribute to the economy of South Africa (especially in the informal sector). This increased presence of foreign Africans and their subsequent contribution to the economy has put the study of African migrant entrepreneurs in the spotlight. Numerous studies, (Dodson 1998, Muzvidziwa 2001, Vawda 1999, Reitzes Bam 1998), caught the researcher's interest. This research has shown how African immigrants exploit business niches and dominate certain sections of the informal sector in South Africa.

Much has been written about African men and their entrepreneurial activities in South Africa (Mattes et al 2000, Crush and McDonald 1999). A lot also has been written about women and cross-border trading (as cited above), but little research has been done on African women who settle in South Africa as entrepreneurs. I doubt whether the lack of literature on African women entrepreneurs is due to their lack of active participation in these activities. Ghanaian women, for instance, are active in the entrepreneurial activities in South Africa, as I will show. These women are motivated by the demand for their business activities and at the same time are willing to seize any business opportunity. For Ghanaian women in South Africa, getting involved in entrepreneurial activities is not a new experience.

Before migrating, most of these women whom I studied either ran a business or had been brought up in an entrepreneurial environment. While in South Africa, they found it worthwhile to start-up similar businesses and were prepared to expand beyond their previously known levels of capacity and skill. In South Africa, they have now been

exposed to new lifestyles. Their present ability to earn much money (compared to what they made back in Ghana), was the first step towards this change. This economic power and the new level of confidence they have gained have caused a recognizable difference in lifestyle. A difference which is visualised by, for instance the move from ownership of one hair salon to owning two or three. These women back in their home country could never have had the thought of having a bank account or buying a car or even building a house. Their present financial ability to purchase these assets for them represents a complete shift in lifestyle. Some of them indicated that having money in a bank, which belongs to them, is something new. Some even boast of the fact that they can at any time go to the bank and withdraw money without the consent of anyone and buy whatever they need.

Such changes not only affect their economic power but their decision-making authority at home with their husbands. The old stereotype is for Ghanaian men to provide for their families. Today, on the contrary, especially in the case of those women entrepreneurs who were already established as entrepreneurs in South Africa before marriage, the women are now providing for their families. As these women now own several salons and in most cases, encourage their husbands to run one of them, it could be said that 'the tide has turned'. As the family becomes rich in terms of their increase in assets (a house back in Ghana, a flat in South Africa), and the woman's financial contribution in the building or purchasing of these assets is acknowledged the women are no longer subordinate to their husbands in earning capacity.

In my study of African immigrants to Kwazulu-Natal (Ojong 2002), I became particularly interested in the fact that Ghanaians (especially women) have made the field of hairdressing their own after years of stay in South Africa. My curiosity led me to ask questions on why and how they succeed as immigrant entrepreneurs in the Durban city centre. Various theoretical frameworks in Europe, elaborated by leading researchers in the field of immigrant entrepreneurship (Light 1996, Aldrich and Waldinger 1990, Bonacich 1980, Rath and Kloosterman 2001), have been used to explain why immigrants are found in this business sector and why they succeed. These frameworks have placed emphasis on the following:

- A predisposing factor which suggests that particular immigrants do well because of a propensity towards business,
- Close kin and community ties (protected market)
- Opportunity structures.

As I probed further towards understanding whether or not there are paradigmatic problems with the above approaches, I realised that Ghanaian women's entrepreneurial success is not based on any single factor but an interaction between cultural, economic and social factors. Basically, their success could be either as a result of reactive or situational factors, or both.

Often it is said that immigrants turn to entrepreneurship because other opportunities for employment are not open to them (Aldrich and Waldinger 1990). I would rather say that Ghanaian women turn to entrepreneurship in South Africa not because other

opportunities for employment are not opened to them but because they, as women, are open to entrepreneurship. Back in Ghana, any girl child whose parents could not afford higher education or who dropped out of school because she fell pregnant was sent to vocational training schools where hairdressing, dress-making, catering, etc, were taught. Most of the women who have opened hair salons in South Africa are pulled into hairdressing by reactionary/situational factors. Among the twenty women in my study, only two had a high school qualification. One of them has a university degree.

The only type of employment opportunity most of these women have been exposed to is training for self-employment or in the circles of entrepreneurship. For most of them, hairdressing is their career and they are just doing what they know how to do best and do not want to try other fields. Most research on migrant entrepreneurship has emphasised the necessity of employment for migrants rather than opportunities for employment. This study has attempted to study entrepreneurship by focusing on Ghanaian women hairdressers in Durban. I discuss the dynamics of starting such a line of business in relation to the opportunity structures that are open to these women. I have looked at modes of hairdressing from Ghana and also how, through transnationalism, Ghanaian women have entered into a unique social space which has brought a hybrid nature to their hairdressing styles.

The sample for this study consists of an indepth study of a wide range of people; twenty Ghanaian women who own hair salons, ten Ghanaian men (who were interviewed towards the end of the study to enable me establish the reason why it was difficult to find



women hairdressers from Ghana. Male hairdressers however out-number the women, but since initially I had set out to focus this study on women, I had to use just ten of the men) who came to South Africa from Ghana since 1983. I also interviewed others including one dress maker, three women who sell hair products and Ghanaian traditional foodstuffs, three women who run restaurants, five Ghanaian, four Congolese, three Swazi, and seven South African women hairdressers who supply their skills in Ghanaian owned hair salons. Also, two Pentecostal pastors and two immigration officers were interviewed. A total of fifty-eight people were interviewed for this research.

The reason behind the inclusion of these other people whom I have enumerated above who do not form part of the key informants for the study is because of the embedded nature of Ghanaian entrepreneurship. In the Durban city centre, there are women whose entrepreneurial activities include the importing of products from Ghana and supplying them to all who own hair salons. A few women run restaurants, where only traditional Ghanaian dishes are prepared. These women sell food to Ghanaians who run businesses as well as some South Africans who work in Ghanaian-owned salons who have learnt to eat Ghanaian traditional dishes like fried rice, '*kenkey*' (maize flour soaked in water for some days, wrapped in banana leaves and simmered) fried fish, etc.

Among the women who own hair salons, some are pioneers (those who came during the apartheid era) and others came later on the basis of pre-existing social networks. The more recent Ghanaian migrant women have depended on a variety of factors such as opportunity structures, bounded solidarity (the unification of a group of people that

comes about due to the existence of a common experience) and enforceable trust (the existence of social obligations that provide group members with economic advantages and opportunities), for their business success. The pioneers consciously built and developed the business environment, which the post-apartheid immigrants are still exploiting for their personal gain.

This study focuses on how African migrant women from Ghana use entrepreneurship as a social process to achieve their own economic and social empowerment. These women have been able to generate their own consumer demand by introducing different hair styles and new hair products which previously did not exist in South Africa. This has been facilitated by the opportunities which are available for hairdressing after the fall of apartheid. They have also tried to remain as a group by associating with their fellow Ghanaians to promote common interests. By attending weddings of fellow Ghanaians and funerals, as well birthday parties, and by associating with other Ghanaians, they are able to know when one of them is visiting Ghana to either send remittances or requests for products from home. This association is seen as a crucial factor for their continual survival in entrepreneurship.

For Ghanaian immigrants as a whole, success abroad is measured in terms of the following: a house built in Ghana, the number of siblings one is able to bring to South Africa, how often one sends money to parents (if they are still alive) and one's standard of living in South Africa (whether or not one has a car, house etc). From the above, I conclude that most of these migrant women are succeeding. This is because, when

compared with the lives they led in Ghana, they are now able to have material assets which was an impossibility in Ghana.

## **1.2 Motivation for the study**

Until the early 1990s, African migration to South Africa had been a predominantly male legacy (Crush et al 1991, Mattes et al 2000, and McDonald 1999). Since the abolition of apartheid in South Africa, many researchers in the field of migration in South Africa have brought our attention to the growing number of African female migrant entrepreneurs.

This study extends research on African entrepreneurship in South Africa in three important ways. First, while research on African entrepreneurship is growing in South Africa, it tends to focus primarily on street vendors and hawkers (Peberdy and Rogerson 2001, Peberdy and Crush 1998, Rogerson 1997, and Skinner 1999). Secondly, recent research has focused on male entrepreneurs and where women seemed to be treated like one, they are referred to as “cross-borders”, moving to and fro to trade (Dodson 1998, Muzvidziwa 2001). Thirdly, in current research, the social and economic impact of African migrant women entrepreneurs on the local society has been covert (Reitzes 1998).

In contrast, this study will look at African women entrepreneurs from an indepth perspective, in which African women are seen and treated as international entrepreneurs (living and carrying out well established businesses in both South Africa and Ghana),

thus providing a more holistic and generalisable perspective on female African entrepreneurship in post-apartheid South Africa. The central argument that this researcher is bringing forward is that entrepreneurship is pivotal to the social and economic empowerment of migrant women and South Africans in general.

### **1.3 Significance of the study**

- This research is intended as a timely contribution to both theoretical and empirical perspectives on African migrant entrepreneurship and black women empowerment in South Africa.
- The study is meant to improve the general understanding of how small businesses operate and hopes to contribute to more effective strategies for the management of small businesses in South Africa.
- The exposure of the achievements and impact of the entrepreneurial activities of migrant women, it is hoped will motivate the South African government to rethink its policies on migrant entrepreneurs from Africa.
- This study is intended to clarify issues and controversies on migrant activities in South Africa.
- The study will assist the migrant entrepreneurs concerned and future migrants in their pursuit of business ventures in South Africa.

## **1.4 Study questions**

In view of the nature of the research, the following study questions were formulated.

1. Are migrant women entrepreneurs found in certain sectors of the KwaZulu-Natal economy and not others?
2. How does the identity of these women as migrant women from a specific African country affect their entrepreneurship and ability for success?
3. What relationship does the culture of an individual have with the desire to become an entrepreneur?
4. How powerful are the social and business networks of these women?
5. Do religious beliefs have any impact on the business performance of these women and if so, how?
6. What is the specificity of the entrepreneurial engagement of Ghanaian women?
7. What are the transnational connections of these women and what contributions to they make to their communities?

## **1.5 Objectives of the study**

- This study seeks to provide fresh insights into the entrepreneurial activities of some African migrant women.
- It explores the social, cultural and economic perspectives of some African women migrant entrepreneurs in the new South Africa.

- It seeks to establish identity as a cultural marker in African migrant women's entrepreneurial success.
- It also seeks to uncover the relationship between religious affiliation and entrepreneurial performance.
- It seeks to identify the achievements, challenges, and hindrances faced by a selected group of migrant women entrepreneurs in South Africa.

## **1.6 Methodology**

Methodology refers to the systematic ways of producing and analysing data so that theories can be tested, accepted or rejected. It is not just a haphazard way of acquiring knowledge. It is concerned with both the detailed research methods through which data are collected and more general philosophies upon which the collection and analysis of data are based (Haralambos and Holborn 1997). Methodology could also be likened to a particular procedure or a set of procedures that enable a systematic plan of enquiry. It is a way, a technique, or a process of doing something. In very simple terms, methodology may be nothing more than a detailed recipe for making something. The methodology embodies the area of study, research design, sampling and data collection techniques used. It was very important for this research to be qualitative because of the nature of the research problem. Researching issues like immigrant entrepreneurship brings the researcher to the point of uncovering the nature of people's lives and activities. This type of research which had to uncover the nature of people's experiences could not have been possible using primarily quantitative methods.

Qualitative research refers to any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification. It can give intricate details of phenomena that are difficult to convey with quantitative methods (Strauss and Corbin 1990). The simplest way to define qualitative research is to say that it is a type of research which involves interpreting non-numeric data.

The qualitative approach to data collection as opposed to measurement of people's views is focussed on the interpretation of meaning. Since my aim was to understand the meaning and symbolism of immigrant women's entrepreneurial actions, the qualitative approach is appropriate. This approach gave me as a researcher the unique opportunity of understanding the difference between idealism and realism, which very often are very different. It is important to understand that people's views as expressed on questionnaires are different from their beliefs and practices. What they say they do can be very different from what they actually do.

Hammersley (1990) argues that conceptualising the social world in terms of variables and the relationships among them abstracts away the character of social life and produces distorted, inconclusive, irrelevant, banal, or even plainly false results. He suggests that if we are to understand the social world, rather than aping the natural sciences, we must attune our methods of inquiry to its nature.

The qualitative mode of enquiry is important because it attempts to uncover social reality that would by no other means be possible. Human beings are not like animals or objects that could be controlled for observation. Once put under experimental conditions (for instance through questionnaires), they may tend to react in certain ways which may distort the whole purpose of the research and the desired results may become unattainable.

Such research is extensive and includes the personal involvement of the individual researcher. It is the sort of research that provides interpretation and meaning as opposed to measurement of people's lives. It allows the researcher to study what people actually do and what they say they do.

Although often regarded as an easy way of carrying out a study, Leedy (1993:140) remarks that qualitative research is not slovenly, undisciplined, soft research, but creative scholarship at its best. This is because dealing with ideas and concepts and converting these to verbal forms is quite exhausting and as intellectually demanding as any numerical computation. As a qualitative researcher, I do not ignore the quantitative methods, if the situation in which I am working requires the latter approach.

One reason why the qualitative approach to data collection is important is because it allows the researcher to conduct research in the natural settings of social actors. This allows the researcher to study their subjects in their natural settings without obstructing their actions and activities. Such research gives the researcher the opportunity to study events, happenings, actions, activities, etc as they occur. During my fieldwork, I happened to be



present at some of the church services in the Christian Redeemed Church in Durban (a church where my informants fellowship). As a participant observer, I was able to observe and take part in their activities without obstructing the service. This approach reveals the qualities of a group experience in a way that other forms of research cannot. Without this approach to data collection, it would have been impossible to capture the events which I have recorded elsewhere in the project.

Reporting the events from an insider perspective, the qualitative researcher finds him/herself in the place of capturing the process by which people interpret the world around them, without trying to explain their actions. The belief is that meaning is situated in a particular perspective or context, and since different people or groups have different perspectives and context, the qualitative researcher is left with the best option, 'qualitative research'. This form of research is very sensitive to social construction of meaning. By studying with the eye of the informant, the qualitative researcher produces findings which are relatively unbiased and truthful. This makes qualitative inquiry credible in generating new hypotheses and theories.

The qualitative method is often seen as richer, and more vital, as having greater depth and as more likely to present a true picture of a way of life of people's activities. However, one of the major drawbacks of this method is that such research uses a small sample, which makes it difficult to generalise its results.

### **1.6.1 Area of study**

This study was carried out in the KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa, specifically in the Durban city-centre. Durban is a vibrant cosmopolitan city. It is also known in the Zulu language as Thekwini. It has a population of four million people with diverse cultures including a large Indian community. ([www.nationmaster.com/encuclopedia/durban](http://www.nationmaster.com/encuclopedia/durban))

From indepth interviews I had with my informants (especially those who tried to open hair salons before the fall of apartheid), it became evident that the Durban city centre, where this research was conducted, was never established in the first place to cater for the needs of black people. It was a city that was meant to cater for the white settlers, in apartheid terms, while the blacks were confined to townships like Umlazi on the outskirts of Durban, and Indians were in other designated areas. The sort of shops that were in the city centre reflected the needs and demands of white people. Before 1990, there was not a single hair salon owned by a black person. All were exclusively white-owned. In 1990 when Nelson Mandela was released from prison, blacks started gaining access to the city centre. After the first democratic elections in 1994, the city centre entered a new phase. The formerly white-owned hair salons were closing down since white people no longer felt comfortable with the increased black presence in the city centre. These salons could no longer stay in business since their customers feared for their safety in town. The white-owned salons moved to the suburbs and blacks took control of the city centre.

This relocation was a gradual one as one business after another withdrew. The relocation affected not only hair salons but also other clothing stores and bookshops etc. The black African migrants from West Africa, specifically from Ghana who had been running hair salons in the places like Umlazi, Ulundi, and also Transkei took this opportunity and were amongst the first people to open hair salons after the whites moved away. The hair salons were bought from their formerly white owners and other shops were easily converted to hair salons. These Ghanaian women took advantage of the fact that they were blacks and were accepted in the city especially due to their professionalism in hair dressing.

### **1.6.2 The study population**

In order for me to understand the entrepreneurial activities of these women, I decided to focus my research on twenty women who own hair salons in Durban. Among these twenty ten became my key informants, who were those women from Ghana who had established hair salons before and immediately after the fall of apartheid. In most groups we anthropologists study, there is always someone within that group who can provide a unique perspective on the group as a whole. Such a person could either be an elder in an ethnic group or family member who can describe the history of the group or family. Such a person however is someone who hasn't been conducting research on this group. Such people who often have some close relationship with the group that allows them to provide a researcher with understanding are called 'key informants'. Pelto and Pelto (1978)

subsume that the key informant approach is based on obtaining information over time, from a community resident who is in a position to know the community well. Such persons have broad knowledge of the community. Bernard (1994:166) sees key informants as people who you as a researcher can talk to easily, who understand the information you need, and who are glad to give it to you or get it for you. Bernard also believes that when a researcher runs into a really great informant, there is no reason to hold back and that if a researcher lets him or herself become the student, such an informant will educate the researcher (1994:166).

Using key informants in research is an excellent way to recover information about past events or ways of life that are no longer observable (Pelto and Pelto 1978). Apart from these key informants, I interviewed five other Ghanaian women, four Congolese women, three women from Swaziland and seven South African women, all employed at Ghanaian owned salons. A further three women who run restaurants which serve Ghanaian dishes, three dress-makers and three women who sell hair products, as well as other food items, were interviewed.

These women migrant entrepreneurs were successfully established in the city centre at the time of the research. Also, among the Ghanaians who own hair salons, some are men but since the focus of this study was women, I interviewed ten men to find out why they have embarked on a line of activity which has been traditionally female. Amongst the twenty women interviewed, significant data was collected about how women from Ghana use entrepreneurship as a route to opportunity and success but only ten women were

selected to present the detail for the study. However, interviews were conducted informally with a range of other migrant entrepreneurs; those who imported hair products and African foods and women who run restaurants. Two pastors of a Ghanaian Pentecostal church and two officials from the immigration office were also interviewed. I decided to focus my attention on Ghanaian women who own hair salons at the Durban city centre, rather than all African migrant women entrepreneurs. I did have the opportunity to speak to some Nigerian women who own restaurants and fabric shops but they did not form part of my sample. From my earlier research, I developed a specific interest in Ghanaian women because I realized that they were highly entrepreneurial, a cultural trait which I was interested in investigating.

Having spoken to three women from Ghana whom I met during my previous research, they passed me on to others they knew. Naturally, due to the network principles, most of them ended-up coming from the same area of Ghana, Jesikan, from where the women who introduced them to me came. This explains why most of my informants come from Jesikan. This was not an accident, but happened because the snowball method introduced them to me.

Jesikan is located in the Volta region in Ghana, about 165 miles from Accra, the capital city of Ghana. It is a district centre whose capital is Hohoe. Jesikan is located about 19km from Hohoe. Jesikan is the next largest town after Hohoe (see map at the appendix). It is a predominantly farming society since it is located in the tropical rain forest areas far from the coastal areas. If one wants to understand what a typical rain forest looks like I

was told, go to Jesikan. There are beautiful thick forests with very tall trees and dark soil with very heavy rainfall. This makes the area very fertile and both food and cash crops such as cocoa, palm trees, plantains, cassava, cocoyam, yams, okra, beans, cashew, *egusi* (melon seeds), oranges, and mangoes are grown. People in Jesikan live in linear settlements and houses are built on either side of a road. This pattern is different from the housing pattern in KwaZulu-natal where the houses are scattered. On a closer look, the people on both sides of the road are related to each other. This is not surprising because pieces of land belong to families and each family member builds on that land. Each person builds where ever they want and it is therefore possible to find one person's sitting room facing another person's toilet, as there is little or no town planning. With this type of settlement pattern, most of the people from the same area who migrate turn to assist others to migrate and have a high tendency of being in contact with one another.

After gaining permission to speak to each of the women in my sample, I started by tracing their experiences and activities from when they first arrived in South Africa. I have followed up their activities for fourteen months, during which time some have gone back to Ghana, some have gone out of business and some are prospering these being the ones detailed in the study. Those whom I ended up with as my final sample have been very open to me and have shared their experiences, achievements and personal problems which gives this research its richness. They also hope that the information given to me will help in one way or another future entrepreneurs. Some of them spent time explaining to me the process of teaching South African women how to dress hair. Their intention is

that these findings will be an ‘eye-opener’ for the government of South Africa on the positive contribution of these women to the economy.

### **1.6.3 Sampling procedure**

Sampling is the act of drawing a sample from a population (Mason and Bramble 1989:115). Usually the sample is considerably smaller than the population, though in the case of a relatively small population, the sample may be nearly the same size. Sampling can be seen as the process of selecting a subset for observation from an entire population of interest so that characteristics from the subset can be used to draw conclusions or make inferences about the entire population of interest. I used the snowball method of sampling. Bernard (1994) noted that in snowball sampling, a researcher locates one or more key individuals and asks them to name others who would be likely candidates for the research. A snowball sample is a sample that is drawn up with an interviewer asking each person they interview who else they know who might be willing to be interviewed about a topic. This can be a very helpful way of gaining access to people who, without such a personal contact, might otherwise refuse to be interviewed (Seale 1998:139). It has, for example, proved useful in interviewing people involved in illegal drug use and prostitution, where the stigmatized nature of these activities means that potential interviewees are more likely to talk to someone who found them through a mutual contact (Seale 1998). I encountered a similar situation during my fieldwork for this project. One of my key informants, Anna, referred me to Cecilia Yebua, another Ghanaian immigrant entrepreneur. On arrival at Cecilia’s hair salon, she refused to be interviewed and instead

told me to write out the questions for her to answer at her house. She said that some researchers came earlier and pretended that they just wanted to know how the Ghanaians run their businesses in Durban. These researchers betrayed their trust by publishing that interview in news papers without telling the women beforehand what they intended to do with that information.

This special non-probability method is used when the desired sample characteristic is rare. For this project it was the only possible way of finding Ghanaian migrant women entrepreneurs. Also, due to the sensitivity of immigration-related issues in South Africa, this study was left with no other alternative. I used personal contacts to build my sample, since these women are from the same country and have the possibility of being in contact with one another. However, such a sample cannot be representative, since to have any chance of being included in this study in the first place one must be part of a personal contact.

#### **1.6.4 Method of data collection**

A combination of methods of data collection, including unstructured in-depth interviews and participant observation were used in this study. Unstructured in-depth interviews provide a framework for a subject to speak freely on his or her own terms about a set of concerns which the researcher brings to the interaction and whatever else the subject may introduce. Generally with in-depth interviewing, the researcher has an idea of what basic issues he or she wishes to cover in interviews. Although free narration by the subject is



encouraged, such narration must be guided if the interviews and the data that are collected are to contribute to the research objectives (Mouton and Marais 1993).

During this period of in-depth interviewing, I asked specific questions but was also sensitive to allow my informants, especially those who showed particular interest in the subject of discussion, to lead, while I probed when necessary. Because of the nature of my informants' activities, I was also careful not to ask too many questions at a time when they seemed very busy. This I believed would put them off my research. I didn't want a situation whereby they would feel reluctant to talk to me or, the worst scenario, refuse to see me. This approach proved very useful and during those periods when they were very busy, I stopped interviewing and instead helped them with whatever they wanted me to help with. I got involved in all the activities in the hair salons, except collecting money from the customers, which is reserved only for the owners or close kin. I had had some experience back in Cameroon where I grew up in hair dressing (not a professional experience because I learnt it through trial and error whereby I tried copying the styles made by professional hairdressers in Cameroon and tried them on my friends' hair).

During the period of data collection, I observed and participated in my informants' group activities like church meetings and weddings. I went to all the Ghanaian owned restaurants and the salons. As I was participating in these activities, I was observing as well. From time-to-time, I would step back and take a few notes of the day's observations, making sure that I left out nothing. Since my informants felt comfortable about me taking notes, this was relatively easy. This allowed me get a broad understanding of the Ghanaian experience in

South Africa. Observation of social behaviour allows one to have a better understanding than a mere survey.

Information for this research was collected between March 2003 and May 2004. I tried not to move from one salon to another, before completing my work at the first because I realized that most of them were at logger heads with each other either because of a boyfriend relationship or because of a conflict over customers. I avoided this because I had been warned by Amina, the woman who initially introduced me to these particular informants. Every possibility of information being withheld from me was avoided at all cost. At times I changed routes to informants' salons so that I shouldn't be seen by different informants.

I initially set aside one week for each informant, but I ended up returning when I needed more information on a subject. The salons were the venues where information was collected except for those of my informants whose homes I lived in and those who were so busy that I could only interview them on Sundays, when they were not at work. It was my intention to visit the homes of each of my informants, but because most of them had small living spaces that could only accommodate them and their families, I was left with no other choice but to interview them at their salons.

Various instruments were useful during the collection of data. A tape recorder was used which helped me collect the depth of information I have for this thesis. Although lengthy hours were spent transcribing the recorded data, it was worth the time spent. A tape recorder is a very important instrument when much data is needed. Most of the time, we

just chatted while the recorder was on. For some specific informants who never wanted me to record the interviews, I used my note books. Although note books were used every time, for all the periods that I was in the field, I realized that there was always much data on the recorder. All my observations and information which I collected from other people I interviewed who did not form part of my sample were written in the note books. The information in my notebooks I realised is dependable data and they did help my intuition. I also used a digital camera which helped me take photographs of important hairstyles, places and items such as specific hair combs, hair pins used in styling ‘banana hair style’ and hair products, which are not sold in South Africa but imported from Ghana .

### **1.6.5 Fieldwork challenges**

After finishing my master’s degree, I gained fresh confidence, and thought nothing could hold me back. I convinced myself that I had mastered the ‘rule of the game’ (fieldwork). During my period of stay in the field (from March 2003-May 2004), all the data I needed had been gathered but there was a major problem; that of disseminating my data. There were practical implications involved. I realized that it is important to protect the world of my informants, my world as a researcher and the world of future researchers. Research on migrants is intertwined with dilemmas. One of them is that people are at risk of repatriation. Another is that although the information collected is empirically important, it has to be disseminated in such a way that the three worlds I mentioned above will be protected.

Such an approach shed light on the possibilities of problems arising that would affect these worlds, should the researcher choose to be objective. Was this decision going to infringe on the epistemology of the research? How was I going to articulate the findings in a way that will not raise problems for the different worlds?

As I pondered over these dilemmas, I remembered what one of my informants (Cecilia) told me. *I know you are my sister but I cannot allow you to interview me because someone came here in 2000, pretending that he just wanted to know how we run our business and the next thing we heard was that he had put the interview in the newspaper with our full names. I was frustrated because I thought he was interested in our entrepreneurial style.*

One other challenge which I faced as a researcher was that as I became involved in the activities of my informants, they somehow misjudged or misinterpreted my role. During my period of fieldwork, I spent time helping to dress customers' hair, when my informants were very busy. These peak periods were usually from Thursdays to Saturdays, and throughout the whole of December and the early part of January. At times some of my informants became angry when I failed to turn up at the salon during the busy periods to help them. This happened because they considered me as one of their employees. I was often asked questions like 'where were you yesterday when we had too much work?' I was cross and felt like telling them that it was not my duty to work for them, but I knew that if I did so, it was going to hamper my research.

A third challenge was how to gain access to a very strategic informant, who till then, did not want to be part of the research. This particular informant always claimed to be very busy when ever I was in her salon, doing everything to avoid being asked any question. I went to her salon continuously for one week, sitting and observing and chatting with every one who came to her salon. On the eighth day, one of her employees started braiding her hair. This style was taking a long time to finish and there were many customers waiting in the queue for Angela to do their hair. Since I knew how to braid that particular hair style, I started braiding it for her so that her employee could attend to the other customers. The owner was excited that I could do it so well, better than the girl who had been braiding it for her. When I finished her hair, it was then that she asked me if I had finished with the interviews. She then asked me to come to her house on a Sunday so that I could have enough time to interview her.

The fourth and major challenge was my identity. My identity became important, as it determined whether or not I gained access to certain information. Was I going to be considered as an insider or an outsider? I realized that being either an insider or an outsider had its advantages and disadvantages. Before I continue I would like to explain how doing this research exposed the multiple identities which I possess which would not have meant anything prior to the research. I am a Cameroonian woman, living in South Africa. This alone qualified me as an immigrant thereby having a common identity with my informants. I am from West Africa, which ties me even closer to my informants because most West Africans speak a common language known as 'Pidgin English'. I am a woman, an African and a Christian like all of my informants. These facts all could

possibly make me seen as an insider researcher. On the other hand, the different facets of my identity clearly showed how much of an outsider I was. I am not a Ghanaian, not a professional hairdresser, and as a Christian, I realised that my church was different to the one most of my informants belonged to.

The above facts illustrated to me how relative the insider/outsider perspective is. I wondered why such terms should still find a prominent place in our methodology. This is because, during my period of fieldwork, I was in many instances an insider as much as I was an outsider. An example here is an experience I had on my first two visits to one of the churches attended by some of my informants. This church is called The Redemptive International Power Ministry in Albert Street in the Durban city centre. As a Christian, I felt that I was an insider but what happened towards the end of the service made me realize that I was an outsider.

Towards the end of my first visit to the church, I saw two Ghanaian women putting their fingers up and waving envelopes. The pastor immediately asked them to come forward. As they stepped forward, they were circled by other elders in the church and were prayed for, that God should bless their businesses, which is the source of the tithe. I was in the dark until I asked the informant I came with about this. She then explained to me that these two women had brought in their tithes and as a custom, they had to be prayed for because it was a special offering. I later found out that their names and amounts were clearly written on the envelopes. This was something new to me as I have been accustomed to giving tithes without anyone knowing, never thinking of writing names on

an envelope. It all pointed to being an outsider and I could not understand why it had to be done that way. However upon further inquiry from the pastor and other Christians, I was told that it was important so that the pastor could know when God is not blessing his Christians. Other Christians said that it was good because it encourages everyone to pay tithes, since it is done openly; it becomes easy for everyone to know who doesn't pay. Some said that it made it easy for the pastor to budget.

Being an outsider, some of my informants took my position as an opportunity to educate someone who was interested in their way of life. At some points, informants wanted to prove their superiority to me in terms of the knowledge which they possessed. This was a useful way of getting valuable information which may be difficult for an insider to access. I had a feeling that what they are engaged in is important and had to be known by other people. When I tried to inquire through some of my key informants whether such research would have been easier were it a Ghanaian carrying it out, this was the response I got; 'what if they used our secrets to prosper more than us? We would not have told them what we are telling you'. This makes me think that, being an insider and having access to more information than an outsider is a myth.

On the other hand, being an insider (immigrant as well), I was able to access certain information, especially related to my informants' immigration status and the process through which they came to South Africa. This, my informants vowed, they would never have told me, had I been South African.

After finishing my Master's thesis and going back to the field to do my PhD, I learnt that, each time one goes to the field, one's eyes see things which have never been seen before. Going to the field can be likened to 'looking at your image in the mirror'. Each day one does that, one sees one's self differently.

Going back to the field gives the researcher the unique opportunity of identifying recurring patterns of behavior as well as changes which informants may be unable to recognize. It is interesting to know why people keep on looking at themselves in the mirror. This helps us understand the element of change which is inherent in human existence.

### **1.6.6 Limitations of the study**

Immigration related issues are very sensitive and the researcher may realize at the end of the study that some information which could enrich the findings cannot be disseminated. This is because of the clandestine and intricate manner in which the whole business set-up is made. Being a foreign African immigrant woman, I had a unique opportunity to get information about the various modes of entry into South Africa. The Department of Home Affairs in South Africa can only issue work permits to foreigners who possess scarce skills. Hairdressing is not considered as one of the scarce skills, making it difficult for Ghanaian hairdressers to obtain work permits. As a means of living and working in South Africa therefore, they resort to other means such as entering into marriages of convenience. This information would have shed light on the weaknesses of the



immigration laws in South Africa and also demonstrate empirical evidence of the survival strategies used by African migrants in South Africa. Therefore, the richness of this thesis has necessarily been compromised for the safety and immigration concerns of my informants. Such information if released could possibly lead to many of the migrants being arrested and detained for crimes related to immigration.

My research has also dealt with issues of hair culture, which my some of my informants were unaware of. I had planned to go to Ghana, and probably interview some old women on the history of the hair culture in Ghana, and also check in museums on information on the socio-cultural history of Ghana before 1900. Lack of finance was also a major handicap. I intend to go there after my PhD for a post-doctoral fellowship.

Any immigrant population is a very mobile one and during the course of my study, some of my informants returned permanently to Ghana. Among these are those who did not achieve financial success in managing their hair salons and had to close down because they could not afford the rentals for their shops. Another group includes those who came to South Africa but failed to secure permanent residence permits to enable them to continue living in the country. Conflicts often arose between those who brought these women and the financial arrangements offered to them were often cited as a major reason why they had to return. Ghanaians have a practice of bringing fellow country men/women to work in their hair salons. Before they are brought in, both parties initially agree on how much money these men/women will earn while in South Africa. Very

often, when these fellow country men/women are in South Africa, they realize that they are making a fortune for their employers and turn against them. When such disagreements happen, since the employers are the ones who secured the permits for them, these people have no other alternatives but to return to Ghana. When this happens, one's informant is lost in the process.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

This study has reviewed an extensive literature relating to issues on African migrant entrepreneurship in South Africa and internationally. A key objective of the review was to develop an understanding of the dynamics under which such businesses are carried out, in relation to the opportunities available for such businesses. Therefore, much of the literature reviewed focuses on issues related to the act of business ownership. A review of the recently enacted Immigration Act has also enriched the project's understanding of African immigration to South Africa and African migrant entrepreneurial involvement in the South African economy.

Reviewing this literature has also helped to clarify the relevance of a comprehensive study of African migrant entrepreneurs in South Africa. The review process has revealed a limitation in much of the literature on migrant entrepreneurs in South Africa, as most of the research has either focussed on male entrepreneurs or cross-border female traders. Thus, the literature rarely has taken the diversity of migrant entrepreneurs into account. This project has attempted to address this limitation by focussing specifically upon female African migrant entrepreneurs.

The literature reviewed here, has been divided into the following:

- general concept of entrepreneurship,

- the effects of business ownership by women,
- Social networks and entrepreneurial success,
- reasons why women start businesses,
- women and the work/home dilemma,
- cultural factors and entrepreneurship,
- migration policy and migrant entrepreneurship,
- the impact of religious practices on female migrant entrepreneurs.

## **2.1 General concept of entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurship, the act of business ownership and business creation is a concept which has a long history in Africa, although previously often called market-trading. The word entrepreneur is derived from the French word *entreprendre* meaning “to undertake”. Bridge et al (1998:23) see an entrepreneur as some one with the foresight and confidence to operate in conditions when costs may be known but rewards are uncertain. This word has been used in a broader sense to mean any person who has the ability to search the environment to identify opportunities for improvement, to mobilise resources and implement action to maximise those opportunities (Cronje et al 1996). Entrepreneurs innovate and take risks. They employ people, provide services and through new combinations of materials, create new products for the markets. The key role the entrepreneur plays in economic development is the issue of job creation (Cronje et al

1996). The authors argue that the most important observation made in the search for a solution to the problem of shrinking job opportunities is that small and medium-sized enterprises create far more jobs than large enterprises.

A business does not come into being on its own. It originates from people who desire to be self-employed, who see a need for a service or product in a society, and utilize that opportunity. It is commonly recognized that an individual's motives for seeking self-employment are numerous and diverse (Tanton 1994). Appreciating Goffee and Scase's work (1985), Tanton (1994) noted that although men and women superficially share common areas of motivation for undertaking business ownership, women often wished specifically to escape the male domination of employers and husbands. Circumstances such as lack of opportunity for advancement or salaried employment tend to push individuals into entrepreneurship.

Regarding the important role of the entrepreneur, especially in the small and medium-sized enterprise, a brief overview of the SME sector in South Africa is necessary. In South Africa an SME is defined as a business with fewer than 200 employees; fewer than 50 is deemed to be small and between 50 and 200 medium-sized. In 1999 the Bureau of Market Research at the University of South Africa conducted an exhaustive investigation into the definition of a small business in South Africa. A business is defined as a small business if it meets at least one qualitative criterion and two quantitative criteria. The one qualitative criterion is that the business must be privately owned, managed and controlled

but may have more than one branch or unit. The two quantitative criteria may include any two of the following:

- Total annual turnover of less than two and a half million rands (1992 Figures);
- Total asset value of less than two million rands (property and buildings excluded);
- Fewer than 50 full-time employees (Cronje et al 1996:426).

The economic effect of female migrant entrepreneurship in South Africa is yet to be seen since there are no statistics so far on migrant female entrepreneurs. The process of setting up small businesses by migrant women has many phases. The steps taken by migrant women in South Africa may be small compared to migrant women in Europe and America but they are catching up with great rapidity. The motivations of African female entrepreneurs are increasingly becoming complex and heterogeneous. The characteristics of their lives and activities in Durban is a reflection of the above mentioned dynamics. The different strategies employed by these female entrepreneurs are important facets in determining how successful they are. Entrepreneurial success however depends on the type of business activity carried out by these women. It may be difficult to bring out the dynamics of this distinction because no one factor can completely account for entrepreneurial success.

Evidence from many countries suggests that entrepreneurship is important to economic development and that women have been pivotal in their trading activities. Harper (1987) has remarked that female-owned trading enterprises have a very long history in many

parts of the world, such as West Africa. Among Africans, a very large share of market trading, selling as well as buying is left entirely to women (Boserup 1970:87).

Literature on female African migrant entrepreneurs is scarce. Most research has been carried out without giving attention to gender concerns. This suggests that migrant entrepreneurs in South Africa have remained invisible. However, it does appear on the basis of observation, that migrant women entrepreneurs' strategies and motives, from the sorts of choices they make, to the relationships they establish, and the ends they achieve indicate that even in situations of invisibility, women are more successful than conventional theorists have assumed.

## **2.2 The effects of migrant businesses owned by women**

This section synthesizes a variety of perspectives based on the general literature about migrant female business owners. The reviewed literature touches upon the effects of migrant businesses on the local economy.

Migrant entrepreneurs are affecting development in cities in numerous and sometimes quite unexpected ways, for example by the introduction of new products and new marketing strategies (Rath and Kloosterman 1998). They introduce and provide goods and services that indigenous entrepreneurs are not likely to supply relating to foreign products as in the case of African fabrics and hair and skin products. In many cases this

hard-to-copy expertise is based on first-hand knowledge from back home or it has been generated through trans-national networks that bridge the country of origin and the sometimes extensive diaspora of a specific group of migrants. By introducing new products and new ways of marketing, these migrant female entrepreneurs can be innovators. An example is the introduction of a new hairstyle by Ghanaian hairdressers in Durban. South African hair dressers might lack the credibility for this kind of business because they need at least one Ghanaian hairdresser in the salon to prove that they can do such a hairstyle well.

In certain areas, because of their specific skills, knowledge or social capital, migrant business can be at a comparative advantage. The sewing and selling of African printed fabrics is a case in point. Migrant women entrepreneurs bring skills which South Africans do not have. In the cities of Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg and Durban, Ghanaians are reputable dress makers in the West African style.

Opportunities for business occur and migrant entrepreneurs seize them, since setting up one shop in this or that line of business has become more rewarding than any alternative use of their resources. Rath and Kloosterman (2001) emphasised that immigrant entrepreneurs are not just responding to static opportunity structures, but are able to change and mould them through innovative behaviour and thereby create opportunities that till then did not exist. A large majority of immigrant women, arguably, has to accept such existing structures at least at the beginning of their careers but may change in the long run.



Studies conducted by the Centre for Policy Studies in Johannesburg suggest that many immigrants and migrants are engaged in a range of economically productive activities, including the selling of artefacts, barber shops, running spaza shops, hairdressing salons, and working as technicians and artisans. In doing so, they sometimes create employment for others, to whom they impart certain skills (Reitzes 1997). The society's need for a product or service that the entrepreneur can offer is an important factor in determining the success of the business. The need is reflected in the present and potential market for the product or service. Reitzes (1997) suggests that South Africans should welcome immigrants as they provide initiative, skills and products, which are not previously available in South Africa.

Rogerson (1997) has come up with the following general conclusions about foreign migrant involvement in the South African SMME sector:

- The kinds of businesses established by immigrant entrepreneurs fall within a relatively narrow band of activities. For example, selling curios, retailing ethnic clothes and foods, motorcars/panel beating and hairdressing salons. Others include operation of restaurants, nightclubs, cafes, music shops, several import-export businesses and traditional healing.
- Many entrepreneurs are clustered in the clothing sector. Activities include making traditional African clothes, wedding dresses, and general tailoring. All of these are made possible by social networks.

## **2.3 Social networks and entrepreneurial success**

The network is the antidote of alienation. It generates enough power to remake society. It offers the individual emotional, intellectual, spiritual and economic support. It is the institution of our time, an open system, a dissipative structure.....poised for reordering, capable of endless transformation (Steel and Beck 1989:142)

It should not be overlooked that migration generally is a dynamic process usually taking place between countries with close historic, colonial, economic and cultural ties, which constitute migration systems. Contributing to this process are, inter alia, migrant social networks of family and friends which have been established over time and which link cities and labour markets in receiving countries (Cholewinski 1997). Ethnographers have traditionally defined human groups as disjointed collections of individuals who are linked to each other by regular interaction, shared perceptions, and affective ties. They are internally differentiated: some members occupy a central position in the group while others are on the periphery, and yet others are somewhere in between (1997).

For migrant entrepreneurs, social networks are crucial for establishing their businesses and providing accommodation, circulating goods and services, as well as psychological support and continuous social and economic information. Through networking individuals gain access to the information and contacts which can help enhance their ability to share ideas and to take necessary steps in adapting to their new milieu. Social networks often guide migrants into or through specific networks of interpersonal ties. In

my study, it was the social network of most of my informants that enabled them to either have a hair salon or a shop in a particular town.

Social ties in pre-migration networks are related to factors affecting which people migrate, the means of migration, the destination and future prospects for both physical and occupational mobility. The networks utilized by migrants vary depending on the history of migration and national conditions. Migrant entrepreneurs, for instance, rely mostly on networks of colleagues or kin-based networks. Some people have many direct contacts while others have few. A person in contact with thirty others of widely differing social background would have a wider range network than a person in contact with thirty people of the same general social background (Mitchell 1969). The links between an individual and the people with whom he interacts come into being for some purpose or because of some interest which either or both parties consciously recognise. The content of links in a person's network may consist of, among other possibilities, economic assistance, kinship obligation, religious cooperation or it may simply be friendship (Mitchell 1969).

A network exists in the recognition by people of sets of obligations and rights in respect of certain other identified people. At times these recognised relationships may be utilised for a purpose- to achieve some object, acquire or pass on information, to influence some other person in a desired direction. Although there is an inverse connection between social distances and frequency of contact between kin, geographical distances seem unimportant particularly because the provision of economic assistance depends more on

the social network than on the distance between homes. The network as a whole, therefore, provides a covert or informal structure composed of inter-personal links which spread out and ramify in all directions, criss-crossing not only the whole of the local community but knitting together people in different towns and countries.

Emigration is by no means a chaotic and disorganised process for these skilled, professional businesswomen who form part of my sample. From their home countries these migrants identify new markets. They plan their trips, bring their own money and are immediately collected by their relatives from the airports. Once in South Africa, a network will provide shelter, a couch in a house, food and a job in a field they have made their own through decades of practice, for example hairdressing. The word brethren (which means brothers and sisters) frequently used by immigrants may not necessarily mean people from one's family. This type of relationship is called "a fictive kin system". Defined by Ebaugh et al (2000) it is a family-type relationship, based not on blood or marriage but rather on religious rituals or close friendship ties. It constitutes a type of social capital that many immigrant groups bring with them and that facilitates their incorporation into the host society. A fictive kin system expands the network of individuals who provide social and economic capital for another and thereby constitutes a resource to immigrants as they confront problems of settlement and incorporation. Systems of fictive kin constitute an important part of the social networks that draw immigrants to a particular area and provide them with the material and social support that enables them to become incorporated into the new society. Migrant women offer each other help and services. New comers are taught how to use public transport and how to

use shops. The network created by earlier emigrants offers information on the better life in other countries and how to access it. Family (and to a somewhat lesser extent friends) are a major source of information for migrants. Social support networks of family and compatriots are frequently assumed to be fundamental to the newcomer's adaptation, easing their transition to a new way of life through an exchange of material, information and emotional resources. For women, networks can bring about a real change in their outlook by making them aware of their own responsibility for change, and a sense of power. One network helps in linking women to other networks for ideas and contacts in the areas into which they are considering a business move. Through examining the networks of my key informants, I was able to trace how they came to South Africa and how these networks help them in establishing their businesses in Durban from Transkei.

## **2.4 Cultural factors and entrepreneurship**

*Is there something within some migrants that makes them disposed to and prepared for entrepreneurship? Why are some migrants more enterprising than others?*

Personality theorists like Gibb (1987:6) consider that it is the personality of individuals that pushes them into entrepreneurship. If we accept that immigrant entrepreneurs require ideas, opportunities, skills and resources for them to succeed then the situations to which they were pre-exposed in their home countries will impact on the choice process. It should be noted that while personality theories tell us about the kind of people who

become entrepreneurs, they do not tell us much about the process by which cultural factors actually influence the decision to become an entrepreneur.

This section describes and analyses how embedded cultural values and beliefs impact on entrepreneurial success. While re-reading and thereby challenging some of the mainstream arguments underlying the conventional wisdom of entrepreneurship that lays emphasis on the psychological attributes of the entrepreneur, this section argues that the cultural milieu in which individuals were initially nurtured becomes crucial in explaining entrepreneurial success. Emphasis is laid on the enormous cultural variation in the way in which migrant entrepreneurship is symbolized and how this symbolism relates to culturally constructed notions of business. It becomes clear that in order to understand the way Ghanaian female entrepreneurial success is viewed, it is vitally important to understand the cultural matrix into which this form of business is incorporated. This is one which has often been neglected by researchers of migrant entrepreneurship in South Africa. As a result, Ghanaian hair dressers have commonly been regarded solely from economic perspectives.

It is only when we fully understand the cultural matrix in which these women operate that we can understand why they succeed in South Africa. An anthropological definition of culture is that it consists of the abstract values, beliefs, and perceptions of the world that lie behind people's behaviour and that are reflected by their behaviour (Haviland 1996).

The question is: *how does the culture of a people encourage, promote or discourage entrepreneurship? Are there certain cultural traits that enable certain societies and*

*peoples to be more entrepreneurial?* It should be emphasized that entrepreneurial behaviour cannot be determined by cultural factors alone, but culture plays a significant role. Aldrich et al (1990) argue that some migrants have a cultural “predisposition for business” or a mentality that favours commercial success. According to them, some migrants tend to work harder, save their money and dedicate their lives to their business. This explains why many immigrants go into business and why they are usually successful in their business undertaking. They also argue that some groups bring with them a trade culture that favours entrepreneurship.

The above argument suggests that the relationship of certain cultural factors to the initiation of entrepreneurship is significant. This may mean that many people from a certain society tend to exhibit collective similarities in their commercial activities. Douglas (1992:192) argues that ideas of esteemed behaviour are generated collectively. What an individual is going to want is not entirely his own idea, but consists largely of a set of desires that the social environment inspires in him/her.

## **2.5 Reasons why women start businesses**

Entrepreneurship offers tremendous opportunities for women across the world by opening doors to greater self-sufficiency, self-esteem, and growth not only for the women themselves but also for their families and their employees. Women are not unlike men in their entrepreneurial drive and their desire for economic independence and personal self-fulfillment that business ownership brings. Most women want to be their own boss. They see a need for a product and want to make money. As the numbers of women

entrepreneurs continue to grow and their businesses prosper, it will gradually change the way the world regards women in business.

Gundry (1997 ) emphasises that the increase in the number of female-owned businesses and their substantial contribution to economic growth in the last decade have led to a greater focus on the woman entrepreneur and the influences on the start-up and growth of female-headed businesses. Women choose entrepreneurship for a variety of reasons. Many desire greater independence and discretion in decision making than is present in their employment by someone else. Others seek increased flexibility and balance in their work lives, with control over how they work and on what they work. Some are frustrated by limited opportunities for advancement and recognition and are motivated by the opportunity to reap the rewards of their own performance. Women entrepreneurs start and grow businesses around a creative idea or in response to an opportunity they discern in the marketplace.

Generally, women become entrepreneurs due to various reasons. These reasons can broadly be classified into two: 'push' and 'pull' factors'. The pull factors imply the factors which encourage women to have an independent occupation. Under the influence of such factors the women entrepreneurs choose a profession as a challenge and an advantage with an urge to do something new. The push factors are those which compel women to take up entrepreneurship to get over mainly financial difficulties.



Curran and Blackburn (1991:117) have remarked that women migrants might be pushed or pulled towards self-employment by the profit it potentially offers; or pushed into it through a lack of alternative choice. They suggest that many women enter into self-employment because they have no alternative means of earning a living. According to this paradigm, women who cannot find employment elsewhere are forced into self-employment by economic necessity. Morokvasic (1988:95) describes the various successes achieved by migrant women across Europe who are independently employed. She points out that migrant women commonly have less choice available. This, she assumes, is because opportunities for formal employment are not open to women since they are migrants and have few skills. She remarks that entrepreneurship for this group of women hardly ever results from a real choice. However, it is always presented as something the women always wanted to do.

Why are women ready to set up their own business, to take the risks? Why would women risk everything? Is it because they want to be rich or because they want to render a service to other people? Most of the sociological literature, (Gartner and Gatewood 1995) explains the new phenomenon with reference to two areas: firstly, women's traditional role within the household that is they have a double burden on their shoulders, which has to be harmonised. The harmonisation is perhaps easier with flexible working time. Women often see their businesses as a continuous system of relations and not just an economic unit in a social world. Gartner and Gatewood (1995: 385) emphasise that women synthesise aspiring to balance their family life, with their business life and these are seen as important motives behind their decisions to start their own businesses. These

women entrepreneurs manage their time independently, to obtain a higher degree of flexibility for themselves and their families and to have freedom to decide their approach to work. Women go into entrepreneurship motivated by the prospect of more flexibility and balance between work and family and by the prospect of creating employment for others. The fact is that by starting their own businesses they acquire a higher position for themselves, since they are the owners (managers) of the businesses which gives them recognition. Women decide to become entrepreneurs for such personal reasons as fulfilment and as a way to actualize personal goals that focus on family (Gartner and Gatewood 1995)

The second area is women's disadvantaged labour market position, which forces women to get out from this situation. Women try to avoid the negative experiences, like downward mobility caused by childbirth, inflexible organisation, unequal career chances. Well-educated women want to avoid the so-called glass ceiling with the help of enterprise. As a result of these phenomena, founding a business can offer a real alternative for women to combine their abilities and possibilities (Goffee and Scase 1985)

Women start their businesses for a variety of reasons. Independence, flexibility, freedom from corporate limitations, and the freedom to take risks are usually major motivational factors for the woman who decides to start her own business. In addition, many women seek personal satisfaction, a certain balance, broader horizons, respect in the industry, the excitement of growth and the opportunity to learn new things. Women start their businesses to create a secure future and to have choices about their lifestyles. Many have

a community mission which they plan to support or fund. Many want to provide good jobs and a secure future for a dedicated staff. Finding a better way to deliver services or making a difference in the lives of many people is often at the top of the list.

The structure and resource argument has been used by Aldrich and Waldinger (1990) to explain immigrant entrepreneurial success. They use the structure side to refer to factors external to immigrants: the existence of a potential market, government policies, and high unemployment as some of the factors that push immigrants into self-employment. The resource side has been used to mean the factors that are internal to immigrants: The capacity to mobilize solidarity, The cultural predisposition for business, or a trade experience, are some of the factors that favour independent business activities. How successful immigrant entrepreneurs are is viewed as the product of a successful interaction between these two sets of paradigms.

## **2.6 Women and the work\home dilemma**

Women contribute to the process of business formation and growth in at least two major ways. First, married women often provide a variety of hidden and unpaid services to their husbands' businesses during the crucial start-up period. Without this largely unrecognised contribution many male-owned enterprises would not get off the ground.

This already shows the fact that when we are taking into account the experiences of female and male entrepreneurs, we usually do not evaluate them from the same point of view. Speaking about male earners, managers, or entrepreneurs we concentrate first of all on their economic results, success. The job or work is always in first place and determines men's general decisions. On the contrary for women the importance of family is always emphasised, and other social or economic activities are subordinated to their family life. Women almost always have to combine their family and work duties, otherwise they are not accepted as being successful as their male colleagues. The manner in which women become involved in entrepreneurship and run their businesses cannot be separated from their domestic life. The manner in which a woman abroad runs her business is very complex. O'Conner and Ruddle, (1988:24) remark that when a man sets up a business, priorities are clearly defined in terms of business and family, and business roles do not conflict with family roles as the wife takes responsibility for the organization and running of the home. Women entrepreneurs on the other hand, find themselves trying to balance the combined roles of organizer of the home and business person.

## **2.7 The South African Immigration Act and migrant behaviour.**

Creative policy thinking about immigration in South Africa has been hampered by the country's unsavoury immigration history. The central purpose of the immigration policy of South Africa is to determine which foreigners can become part of the community of the people of South Africa either on a temporary or on a permanent basis. In theory, the

migration policy could choose to shape the future composition of the South African population by giving preference to certain types of individuals who are deemed to be more desirable as members of their national community than others. The policy could choose to give preference to professionals or people with skills or higher education or, alternatively, could choose to prefer people from certain geographical areas.

Before 1994, the South African immigration policy was a naked instrument of racial domination. Until 1991, the official definition of an immigrant was that he or she had to be able to be assimilated into the white population. By definition, therefore, Africans were not considered immigrants. Black people from the rest of Africa were allowed legal entry to South Africa only under strictly controlled conditions, usually as migrant contract workers who were required to return home as soon as their employment ended. Immigration is therefore associated in many minds with South Africa's racist past and is seen as of little relevance to the new state (Crush 2000).

South African and multi-national employees seeking to introduce foreign skills on a temporary basis have also become increasingly frustrated and critical of the South African government. Immigration is not viewed as a public policy tool that could benefit South Africa. Rather, immigrants and migrants (even the most highly skilled) are more often stereotyped as a threat to the economic and social interests of South Africans (Crush 2000).

Since 1994, therefore, the South African government has struggled to formulate an appropriate policy that is responsive to the country's new role in a changing regional, continental and global migration regime. The focus of this country profile is on the ways in which the new government has responded to South Africa's changing role in the labour market, reconfiguring migration streams to the country from the region and further afield.

South Africa's transition to a new post-apartheid immigration policy has been slow and tortuous, and is currently characterized by deep uncertainty. Though less than a year old, the new legislation is already caught up in legal and constitutional challenges. This certainly suggests that the long struggle to shape a new South African immigration management regime will continue into the foreseeable future.

### **2.7.1 The bill on foreign business ownership**

Further to the above, the ANC government is making a concerted effort to attract foreign investors/entrepreneurs to the Republic, which action is fully supported and promoted by the Department of Home Affairs. Applicants who wish to enter into business or embark upon business ventures in the RSA are broadly categorised as follows:

- Aliens who wish only to invest in property or existing business concerns in the Republic either individually or as members of companies or close corporations by purchasing shares. These are purely financial or business transactions

through banking institutions with no involvement on the part of the Department of Home Affairs.

- Existing overseas concerns wishing to establish branches of their business in South Africa either on their own or in affiliation with South African entrepreneurs. If these companies do not second any of their existing personnel to take up employment in South Africa, the Department is not implicated. Should they, however, wish to transfer personnel to South Africa, the Department is not averse to granting temporary work permits to key personnel such as managing and financial directors or, if manufacturing processes are involved, in the production process or installation and maintenance of machinery. Each application will nevertheless be considered on merit depending on the conditions and circumstances which may be applicable at that point in time.
- Persons who wish to establish businesses of their own either individually or in partnership with other aliens or South African citizens or other permanent residents. Here again the applications may be divided into either new businesses or the acquisition of existing concerns. If the investor will not personally be involved in the running or operation of the business whilst residing in South Africa or remains outside South Africa, no involvement by the Department is necessary. If involved in the business whilst sojourning in the Republic, with or without remuneration, such persons must be in

possession of work permits issued by the Department prior to taking up employment in the business and prior to entering the RSA. In this regard it should be noted that visas and temporary work permits issued to aliens are subject to certain restrictions and conditions which may not be changed without approval beforehand by the Department. This in effect means that aliens who enter South Africa on visitor's or business permits to explore business prospects and who after establishing or entering into a business become engaged in the managing or running of the business without the Department's approval (work permit), are violating their permit conditions which constitutes an offence in terms of the Aliens Control Act, 1991 (Act 96 of 1991), as amended. Any person assisting such an alien to act in violation of the permit conditions is also committing an offence.

In general, applications by foreigners who wish to conduct their own business are considered mainly on grounds of foreign capital introduced or to be introduced into the RSA for investment, the feasibility/viability of the business and whether the investment will generate employment opportunities for South African citizens.

Any foreigner who wishes to undertake a new venture will have to satisfy the Department initially that an amount of money consistent with the type of business to be established is available in foreign capital for investment in the business as well as to meet daily running expenses in respect of the business and own subsistence. To this end certified copies of audited financial statements of personal assets and liabilities in respect



of the foreigner as well as that of any partners who may be involved in the venture must be submitted together with confirmation by banking institutions as to the amount in foreign capital available for transfer to the Republic for investment in the business. If the viability of the venture is not self-apparent, details regarding the business intended should be supplied in full. For example if import/export is intended, what commodities will be imported/exported, market surveys, expected income, number of people to be employed or any other relevant information deemed necessary by the Department. On approval of the application, a work permit valid for a provisional period of twelve [12] months will be issued to the applicant. Renewal of the permit will be subject to the submission of documentary proof of additional foreign capital invested as well as audited financial and bank statements in respect of the business, proof that South African citizens or permanent residents are being employed and that the business has been registered with the Receiver of Revenue.

The passing of the new Immigration Act, which replaces the notoriously defensive Aliens Control Act, should have been greeted with relief. Instead, the response among South Africans concerned with economic growth has been dismay and confusion.

Why is this? And how can the situation be rescued? South Africa has two closely linked shortages. One is a shortage of productive skills and practical competencies, and the other is a shortage of people who are employable, self-employable or readily trainable by employers in a modern, knowledge, technology and technique-based economy.

Unfortunately, and despite President Mbeki's commitment to review immigration laws to 'enable us to attract skills into our country', the new Immigration Act reflects considerable hesitancy and confusion in the ruling party about the importance of skilled immigration. The parliamentary process that produced the new Act also reflected deep contradictions among our lawmakers and key stakeholders around the legitimacy of business concerns and interests and about the principle of non-racism. The process also demonstrated some barely disguised xenophobia.

More specifically, the new Act imposes very onerous responsibilities on the Department of Home Affairs by requiring it to consult extensively with the Departments of Labour and Trade and Industry in the creation of an elaborate set of quota and skills certification requirements and then to enforce these complicated rules. These requirements are supposed to ensure that no South African will lose a job to a skilled immigrant. This is a wasteful task - employers will almost never prefer a skilled immigrant to an equivalent skilled South African since the total cost of employing the South African will invariably be lower. It is also an ill-advised task, given all the evidence that skilled immigrants create jobs for locals and help train locals. Slow and pointless bureaucratic procedures that have prevented foreigners from bringing their knowledge and energy to South Africa in the past will not be alleviated and in some respects are likely to be reinforced.

Ultimately, South Africa will need a bold new Immigration Act that really does create an open door for skilled people and entrepreneurs. In the short term, however, regulations to the current Act should go as far as they can to reflect the courage and leadership

necessary to go for growth and investment. The Act's reliance on a quota system will not make this easy, and the regulations must, of course, be compatible with the Act. Nevertheless, correctly framed regulations could go a long way to reduce the damage..

In the end, however, we will need new legislation to correct the more fundamental weaknesses of the current Act. South Africa is not short of job seekers but it is desperately short of skilled people and entrepreneurs. The immigration regulations - and ultimately our legislation – should reflect this reality.

Researchers estimate that every skilled professional directly or indirectly generates numerous unskilled jobs. Foreign entrepreneurs create new wealth and taxes. Each new skilled immigrant will create jobs for South Africans simply by going about their business, buying goods and services and paying tax (Hall 2003).

Another problem to be addressed is the requirement that immigrant business people must invest a minimum of R1.5 million (167,000 U.S. dollars) in South Africa to obtain a permanent residence permit. The labour unions are silent on this matter because their membership is not composed of entrepreneurs. However, the business community notes that the high investment requirement relegates small and medium entrepreneurs (SMMEs) to temporary residency permit status, impeding their success and contribution to the economy. A Southern African Migration Project report found that foreign-owned SMMEs create an average of 4.1 jobs each (Hall 2003).

Critics of the Act say that such restrictive laws may stifle the fragile economy by making it difficult for entrepreneurs to enter the country. Some argue that the door should be swung open to all foreigners who can bring their skills and new ideas to South Africa. Peberdy (2002) remarked that trade policies have paid little attention to the activities of small entrepreneurs. Activities by small entrepreneurs have been overshadowed by attempts to support the activities of big business and capital.

### **2.7.2 Migrant malpractices**

African immigrants who have decided to leave their countries either because of poverty or war/civil unrest may often use any possible route to come to South Africa, since it stands as the economic giant in the African continent. Under such circumstances, the receiving country may find it difficult to ascertain who a labor migrant and who is a refugee. This probably because the channels used by these people usually overlap. Minnaar and Hough (1996:10) note that it can be difficult to make a clear distinction between refugees and non-refugees. It has always been common for large-scale economic migrations to be accompanied by politically motivated exile or flight, and vice-versa. The level of economic discontent that gives rise to emigration also gives rise, in many cases, to protest or resistance against a system of government that perpetuates, tolerates or is powerless to correct conditions of deprivation.

Minnaar and Hough argue that the distinction between refugees and economic migrants is most difficult when people flee from countries where poverty is perpetuated by the

political system. In Vietnam, political repression was combined with economic stagnation in a pattern that sustained an outflow of boat people for fifteen years.

In the light of economic and political turmoil and sanctions facing most African countries, economic sanctions designed to underscore a government's lack of legitimacy may lead to political upheavals but in the mean time cause deterioration of living standards in an already devastated economy. Under such circumstances, for instance, refugees and some migrants may use or attempt to use the same avenues for entry into another country. Minnaar and Hough (1996) claim that if labor migration channels are open, refugees may opt to avoid the bureaucratic rigors and uncertainties of asylum procedures and simply enter as workers. Thus, the labor needs in an industrialized country have acted as an attraction for refugees as well migrants. When, on the other hand, migration channels narrow, some economic migrants attempt to avail themselves of the asylum channels.

In South Africa, because of the strict immigration law concerning the issuing of work permits, some African immigrant women who intend to be self-employed prefer to apply for asylum status, since it has become relatively easier to obtain such permits after 1994. This does not include immigrant women who accompanied their husbands, who in turn got formal employment and came in with work permits. In-depths interviews which I had with Ghanaian migrant women entrepreneurs in Durban confirmed that migrants would use any available channel to live legally in the country.

Marriages of convenience is one other channel used by these African migrant entrepreneurs to stay legally in South Africa. As soon as they arrive in South Africa, migrants apply for refugee status, or while they are in the process of seeking asylum, they enter into marriages of convenience with South African citizens. Minnaar and Hough (1996) stated that whilst in South Africa, illegals hasten to marry South African women and try to ensue that children are quickly born of such unions. This, Minaar and Hough believe, is a thinly disguised ploy on which to base a plea for non-removal (having dependants in South Africa) if they are apprehended by the authorities. Other migrants merely enter into liaisons with South Africans and try to bear children as soon as possible on the assumption that if they are caught they would have humanitarian reasons for leniency and be allowed to stay on the basis that they have to support a family. Some men even enter into traditional marriages and pay lobola (brideprice) for their South African wives.

In my study of African immigrant women entrepreneurs I found out that not only men, but women enter into such marriages of convenience, but in a different style. These women do not have children with their South African partners and do not have any sexual encounter. It is simply a financial arrangement. The women pay South African men and they sign a marriage certificate. From time to time, since the government of South Africa has started following-up these clandestine marriages, these women make sure that they are constantly in-touch with their supposed husbands. Of interest is the fact that most of these women were married before and some after such unions with South Africans. In terms of the immigration malpractices, it is indeed a complete mix-up. These women's

real husbands are married to South African women while they themselves are married to other South African men. Sometimes these women divorce the South African “husband” before marrying a Ghanaian man. By so doing, the woman and her husband can now live as permanent residents in South Africa.

This is the only possible way for them to live legally in South Africa because the Department of Home Affairs cannot issue work permits for migrants who intend to come in and open hair salons. It is however very easy for them to carry on with their activities once they have a permanent residence permit.

## **Chapter Three**

### **The role of religion in Ghanaian women's entrepreneurial success**

We know for certain that economic considerations touch our day-to-day life. Religious beliefs and practices also affect us but in a domain which is sacred, an arena of personal choices with private attitudes but with bearing on the hard realities of making a living (Salzmann 1978:319). Durkheim (in Seymour-Smith, 1986:243) viewed religion as a social creation which expresses and reinforces social solidarity, such that religious beliefs are in a sense metaphors for society itself and the sacred nature of social obligation and social cohesion.

Ember and Ember (1996:311) citing the work of Malinowski, noted that people in all societies are faced with anxiety and uncertainty. They may have skills and knowledge to take care of many of their needs, but knowledge is not sufficient to prevent illness, accident and natural disasters. They further remark that whether or not religious beliefs and practices can affect our success or reduce our risk, we may consider them useful or adaptive if they reduce our anxieties, and reducing anxiety might indirectly maximise our success. This could be particularly true with a salvation-religion like Christianity, with sections of their sacred book (Bible) which states thus “be anxious about nothing, but in everything with prayer and supplication, with thanks-giving in your heart, let your request be known unto God”. Looking at the circumstances under which people turn to the gods, Geertz in Ember and Ember (1996:316) emphasised that it is only when people



are faced with pain and unjustness of life that they explain events by the intervention of the gods.

Religion has long been identified as an important determinant of economic behaviour. Max Weber's "Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism" elaborated at some length on this relationship. He perceived Protestantism as providing a favourable climate for entrepreneurial activity. In a Weberian inspired way, people could be influenced by religion because of their mundane expectations rather than because they have any concern with great religious ideas. Weber pointed out that it is possible for people's ideas, particularly their religious ideas, to influence the course of history. The important fact about his Protestant ethics is its doctrine of salvation, which is attained by faith. It advocates forms of human behaviour that are pleasing to God and obligatory for everyone. Weber's Protestantism regards profit maximisation as the highest good. Revisiting the works of Weber, Bendix (1966:93) emphasised that men act in obedience to religious beliefs so that they may prosper and have a long life on earth. Hamilton (1995:97) on the other hand pointed out that religion is not, for the most part, a matter of individual choice but instilled into the members of the society and required of them.

Religious beliefs may shape immigrant entrepreneurial behaviour as well as performance. Weber claimed that the spirit of capitalism is not simply a way of making money, but a way of life that has ethics, duties and obligations. Barot (1999:9) in his study among Swaminarayan migrants in Britain noted that the Patels had close links with the Shree Akshar Purshoham Sanstha and their contributions to their Temple community have

remained a vital part of the prosperity of the entire transnational sectarian community. These people value enterprise and success. Making money and spending it for religious social organisation is regarded as a virtue. According to the Sikshapatri document which the founder of the sect compiled to regulate the conduct of his followers, each member of the sect should contribute either a tenth or a twentieth proportion of his or her income to the sect. The ability to contribute a large amount of cash is both meritorious and prestigious and offers a prospect of salvation of the highest kind. Barot explains that such examples and publicity given to individual entrepreneurs tend to create the image of Indians as well-to-do wealthy people.

From time to time, the British press has publicized stories of successful Indian business men. For instance, on 26<sup>th</sup> April 1987, The Sunday Times did a profile of Arunbahi Patel and his acquisition of 300 Finlay newsagents shops under the headline “Mr. Morning rises early to build a British empire”. The Sunday Times also published a list of the richest men and women in Britain that has names of South Asian men and women whose businesses were valued in billions and millions of pounds. In my study, one’s prosperity is often spoken of especially in public places (churches or religious gatherings) where the Pentecostal Christians give testimonies of God’s blessings. This is encouraged as it is seen as proof of one’s commitment in church. The Ghanaian women openly testify in church how they have been faithful paying their tithes and show how either their acquisition of a house or a car is proof of God’s blessing.

In the light of Ghanaian women's engagement in entrepreneurial activities, the following questions helped in clarifying how religious beliefs are intertwined with the day-to-day running of migrant women's businesses.

- Is there any specificity in their entrepreneurial style which demonstrates the embeddedness of religion and entrepreneurship and how do their beliefs affect the management of their businesses?
- Do personal values have a strong influence on business performance and management?
- What role do Pentecostal pastors play in the lives of the women in business?

Often it is difficult to articulate effectively what the connection is between religious beliefs and the manner in which a business is run. Inherent in each individual's 'modus operandi', are his or her beliefs and practices which have a strong bearing on how she/he makes a living on a day-to-day basis. This could however be a major determinant of their personal choices and secret attitudes which allows them to choose certain behavioral patterns over others.

Due to the Pentecostal influence they had in Ghana before migration, all my informants did claim that they are Christians. The term 'Pentecostal' actually defy easy definition and categorization. This is because there are all shades of Christian groupings, which may answer to it. In Ghana, all shades are lumped together and usually referred to as *Sunsum Nsore*, that is "Spiritual Churches" ([www.pctii.org/cyberj13/amanor.html](http://www.pctii.org/cyberj13/amanor.html))

In the earlier years in the usage of that word, it described anyone who believed in the possibility of the gifts of the Holy Spirit describes in the new testament as being available to believers today was considered a Pentecostal. Pentecostal were those who believed that the 'Bible pattern' of baptism in the Holy Spirit was an experience subsequent to salvation and evidenced by the ability to speak in tongues.

These women are unable to distance themselves from a religion they have been exposed to from childhood. For some of these women, beliefs and practices of their parents were the 'eye-openers' for their desire to look for alternative belief systems. As will be seen in the trends of beliefs as we move from an older generation to a younger generation, traditional African practices are losing grounds in the lives of Ghanaian people. The information provided by a few people in a small way, demonstrates a whole way of life of a group of people and the circumstances that surround their beliefs and practices. Some of the information below portrays the circumstances back in Ghana that led to women's inability to shed their religious beliefs. For some though, traditional beliefs still have a big role to play especially when it comes to succeeding entrepreneurially. For them, it is an opportunity to draw resources from both patterns: traditional and Christian religions.

### **Case One**

One of my key informants, Angelina Kobo, narrates how her religious background has made it difficult for her to belong to any religion other than Pentecostal Christianity and how her religion influences her day-to-day life.

I grew-up in an environment whereby if one sneezes in the morning, it would mean a bad omen. I remember that when I was a child, whenever I sneezed in the morning my father would be very worried thinking that something was wrong with me. My parents were very superstitious. Whenever I was bathing, and singing at the same time, I was warned never to repeat it again. I was told that it was only when a corpse was being washed that people sing. For someone who is still alive, bathing and singing was a bad omen. My parents used to go to church but from their practices, I was unable to differentiate as a young girl the difference between religious beliefs and superstition. They practiced both.

In our village in Jesikan, we grew up knowing that on Sundays we had to go to church. Why we went to church, I can't explain and we did not even understand. It was just one of our duties, like going to school. At times my father would go to church but as a rule, children were not allowed to stay at home on Sunday mornings. We were forced to go to church.

When we were still young, we all used to go to the Catholic Church, but I remember some where along the line my father stopped going. My parents married in the Catholic Church but when my father stopped attending, my mother went back to the Evangelical Church. This was the church she used to attend as a young girl and when she married, she had to move to her husband's church. We were told that if a woman married, she had to join her husband's church. Since my mother's father was an elder in the Evangelical Church, he asked her to come back to the Evangelical Church.

In Jesikan, I attended a Catholic primary school. As one of the school rules, we had to be present in church every Sunday. An attendance register was kept every Sunday in church. If one was marked absent on Sundays, they were punished on Mondays. Attendance registers were also sent to other churches for those children who did not attend the Catholic Church. Those who were marked absent would have to carry forty-four buckets of gravel to fill potholes on the soccer pitch. The gravel was not readily available. We had to dig the gravel from the hills and carry it in buckets on our heads. I will never forget how I got blisters on my hands and had severe pain on my neck just because I failed to attend church only once. So on that unfortunate occasion, I went through what others used to go through. Since it was a bit difficult to dig the gravel, we arranged amongst ourselves for boys to dig while the girls carried. I think it was a way of introducing us to God. Even though I have left that religion, I believe it was a good way to teach us children how to follow God.

When I went to secondary school, I continued attending the Catholic Church. Whilst I was there, I used to attend crusades organized by the Christian Union (CU). Whenever there were camps organized for youths or girls, I went to listen.

In the Catholic Church, I belonged to the Saint Anthony guild, which was for both boys and girls. We use to go for prayer meetings and pray with the rosary and the

way of the cross. We were told that Saint Anthony used to pray those prayers and was someone who lived his life for the service of God. So for us to follow his footpath, this guild was created so that people could exemplify Saint Anthony. During those years, we would wake up very early in the morning, sometimes at 2 am and go to church. I used to wake up and walk to church. Once the church bells rings, everyone who belonged to that guild would go to church. From about 2 am, we would pray till 5 am. It was a commitment. We prayed for the sick, destitute, needy, nations, etc. We used the simple prayer book. We were told that Saint Anthony used these prayers. During my days in the secondary school, Pentecostal Christians were many and it was becoming common. Even for us who used to pray a lot were told that we were not believers in Jesus. This, I couldn't understand until I started spending holidays with my elder sister, Hanna in Accra.

I started seeing the difference when my sister's husband, Jonathan became born-again. As a result of Jonathan becoming born-again, Hanna too joined. Each time I visited them during holidays, they would ask me to accompany them to church. They used to attend a Pentecostal church. From there, every day they would pray in the house in the morning and in the evening. I knew the kind of man my sister's husband was before he became born-again (he used to drink a lot of alcohol and have girlfriends) and I realized that something was different in him. I also wanted to experience it. I then bought myself a Bible. Till then, I had never used a bible. In the Catholic Church, we used the newsletter. After then, occasionally, I would read it and my sister encouraged me about following Jesus and the importance of being born-again.

I will never forget how village life in Ghana influenced my life. The way village life is in Ghana is such that every one has an opportunity to hear the gospel preached by the Pentecostal Christians. Whenever there was a crusade in the village, I don't know whether it was out of curiosity, most of the people, especially children came out for these crusades. It was an excellent opportunity for me to leave the house. I used to be excited to leave the house with a good excuse to meet with my friends on the pretext that I was going to attend a crusade. There were a couple of things that as a young girl I was interested in finding out about these Pentecostal practices. One of them was whether People fell on the floor or under the influence of the Holy Spirit as the preachers used to tell us. During the crusades, those who have been converted gave testimonies of how they were either thieves and they have changed or how they were sick and they were unable to be cured by the hospital and when they became born-again they were miraculously healed, etc. Some said that they were witches and have changed. These people all indicated that their presence at the crusade ground was a testimony of what happened in the lives.

These things did not mean much to me and at times I used to make fun of them and laugh. At other times, some of the songs that were sung at the crusade grounds, my friends and I would use the song and make jokes out of them. An

example was; ‘In my heart, in my heart, I want to see Jesus in my heart’. We sang it as ‘ in my cup, in my cup, I want to see beer in my cup’.

Despite all this childishness, when one of my mother’s sister’s daughters, Theresa, became born-again, I had more exposure of what it really meant to be born-again. She moved to Accra to live with my sister and each time I went to visit my sister, I would share a room with Theresa. On those occasions, every evening before we went to bed she would just tap me on my shoulder and say that it wasn’t sleep time yet, that we had to pray. At first I wasn’t worried because I thought that it was going to be for a few minutes. On the first evening, instead of my normal five or ten minutes’ prayers I used to pray alone, we prayed, standing on our feet for more than one hour. Sometimes I felt like not sharing a room with her because she would want us to pray and pray.

With this exposure, Christian values were deposited in me but the real turning point was when I got married. My mother-in-law always accused me of squandering her son’s money. During those early years in marriage, I used to have bad dreams and I was told by some of the people in our village that my mother-in-law was a witch. In my dreams I would see people threatening to kill me. This drew me closer to God in whom I could seek protection and the Pentecostal Church in which I knew how to secure my protection. I Joined the Christian Union and every Sunday evening, we would share the word of God and pray together. I would like to say that it is God who calls his own.

## **Case two**

Another key informant, Helen Efua, the owner of Grace hair salon in West Street and a member of the Durban Christian Centre, recounted her experiences as a child and how these drew her closer to Christianity.

When I was growing up as a child under my parents supervision, I had no choice no choice of what to believe in. I have cuts/marks on my body due to traditional immunisation. My parents and I used to attend the Evangelical Church in Jesikan, our village. I didn’t see how Christianity influenced their lives because as children, we were always taken to the fetish priests to protect us from different sets of things. They used to believe so much in what we call ‘country fashion (tradition). God loved me from the beginning when I was still under the control of my parents. I was stubborn to country fashion and each time I was taken to a fetish priest, I wasn’t happy. There were times when I was ill and my mother will go to the one of the fetish priest and bring medicine but I will refuse to drink

them. One thing that made me to know that there was a power that was greater and the devil is a liar is during my childhood experience.

At the age of 13, I went to live with one of my mother's sisters who was a fetish priest. She had a shrine which was in a house and a special room was built for it. It was built with mud and roofed with grass. But since the gods are becoming modern, it has been renovated and transformed into bricks. She put stones (big rocks) and white clay on top of the stones and every time I used to see her chew cola nut and spit it on the stones. Animals are slaughtered and their blood is poured on the stones as well as drinks, each time the gods are to be consulted.

When it was time for the 'new yam festival', the new yam is cooked by the fetish priests, my aunt being one of them, and given to the gods. The gods had to taste the new yam before people could eat them. The cooked yam is mashed with palm oil and others with boiled eggs and thrown in the shrines. Only the fetish priests could perform these rituals and they were greatly revered by all the people in the village before they became exposed to Pentecostal Christianity, which has made people believe that the activities of fetish priests are demonic and should not be used.

In Ghana, the fetish priests are revered because they are seen as people who have a god or spirit in them and are the mouthpiece of God. They are seen as the local representative of God and therefore act as intermediary between creator and creature (Williamson 1965: 102). Helen and the other informants told me that when they were young, their parents did not allow them to ask questions about the fetish priests and the activities surrounding the shrines. Fetish Priests were seen as people who could inflict illness and this made them greatly feared.

When Helen's aunt died, according to their culture, every one, especially family members expected someone to replace the priestess before her burial. At that point in time, Helen shared a bed with Rosaline (her dead aunt's daughter). Immediately after the death of Rosaline's mother (Rosaline was her first daughter), the spirit of fetishism possessed her. At night she started shaking and it continued for two nights. On the third



night, when the other fetish priests were playing the drums, she ran away from the house and joined them dancing (something she never did). This was immediately interpreted by the fetish priests to mean that God had chosen another local representative. She was taken and appropriate rituals were performed.

Helen narrated how her mother's sister used to treat people who suffered with mumps. She knew some herbs, which she used in treating the mumps. Early every morning people would come to her with a live chicken as payment for their treatment. She would show them samples of the herbs and ask them to go the bush to collect them. At times she went herself. She would then instruct the people not to talk to anyone on their way to her house after collecting the herbs. She would then grind the herbs and add lime juice to them. When handing the medication to them, she instructed them not to greet anyone on their way to their houses. This was in order to maintain the ability of the medication to be effective. These people usually licked the medication and within a few days were healed.

One day after I left my mother's sister's house and started living again with my parents, I was affected with mumps. Our house was not far away from my mother's sister's house but I reminded myself of the fact that I had been observing her and knew the herbs needed. I went to the bush without informing my parents and collected the herbs. Unlike my mother's sister, I didn't observe the rules of not talking to anyone on the way. I came home, ground the herbs and added lemon juice and licked it for two days and was healed. It was then that I told my mother that her sister was a fake fetish priest and that she was tricking people in order to eat their chickens. I told my mother how I was sick and how I used the same medication and became healed. My mother was furious especially because at that point, I was shouting at the top of my voice for everyone to hear and know that fetish priest were liars (remember that I told you that I was a stubborn girl).

The one thing that made me hate traditional African religion, is an incident that took place when I was living with my parents. This was the incident I could see as

‘the last nail put on a coffin’. It was one that made me to look for other alternatives to the religion practiced by my parents.

When I had my first menstrual periods, it was difficult to get sanitary pads since they were expensive. My mother told me to go to any tailor and collect pieces of cloth and pack them together, which I did. I used them and used to wash them every day and dry them outside for reuse. At the age of 15 when I started selling oranges after school, I had some money, which I used to buy pads. Unlike the pieces of cloth which when used I washed and reused, my new pads were used once and thrown away.

One day my mother asked me whether I had seen my menses the previous month and I said that I did. She said that I was telling a lie but she didn’t give me the opportunity to explain to her what had been happening. I think she panicked, thinking that I was pregnant. She went and told my father that the for the previous months I hadn’t had my menses.

At that age (15 years old) I had never had sex. My father called for me (he was a humble person even though he used to get angry) and asked whether I had my last menstrual period that month. I could sense that he was finding it difficult to even ask me about it. I explained to him that I wasn’t pregnant and asked him to take me to the mid-wife in the village to check whether I was pregnant. At that point I burst out crying. My father said that he believed me and that I should stop crying. This made my mother know that she made a big mistake and I lost all confidence in their fetish priest. I vowed that I was never going to be a recipient of their services.

A few months later I was very sick and my mother went and collected medicine from a fetish priest and gave it to me to drink. She tried to convince me that this was a very renowned man and he was going to cure me. When she realized that my situation was getting worse and every attempt to make me take the medication was failing, she called one of her brothers and my father’s brother. They hired a taxi and told me that they were taking me to the hospital. When I entered the taxi, I was first taken to the house of the fetish priest who lived on the way to the hospital. Immediately we got there, he diagnosed that the ancestors were angry and that they had to slaughter a goat if not, I was going to die. My parents hurriedly went and brought the goat and did everything as Papa Kodjo (the fetish priest) told them. My mother and I were left at his place for three days. On the fourth day, my situation became worse and I was rushed to the hospital.

My body temperature was very high and the doctor, after finding out that we were from a fetish priest was furious with my parents. My eyes were very red and the doctor said that I had a boil in my head and that it had ruptured, causing severe headache. I was diagnosed with malaria. Meanwhile, the fetish priest had incised my whole body and put the black powder in the name of healing me. I stayed in the hospital for one week and was discharged. This was the last time I remember

having anything to do with the fetish priest. It increased my disbelief for their gods because they had lied to me twice. While I was in the hospital, I was visited and prayed for by some Pentecostal Christians. I gave my life to Jesus Christ and since then, I have continued being a Pentecostal Christian.

The reason behind people leaving the traditional missionary churches Meyer writes about in Ghana, is because Pentecostals present themselves in sharp contrast to the mission churches. Missionary churches are criticized for failing to retain wealth and health and emphasise that those who believe in Jesus Christ would be rewarded when they die. On the other hand, the Pentecostal churches teach that the gospel brings both material and spiritual fulfillment in this present life (Gifford 1980: 32). Matshidze (2004) noted that Pentecostalism has become popular because it brings a lot of changes into peoples lives, especially in how they view the future. It transforms the way they feel about the present. It depicts God as a caring father who reaches his children through the power of the Holy Spirit and touches human hearts to restore hope amidst life's troubles. Most of the people who leave Pentecostal churches claim as Cox (1996) noted in his study in Kinshasha, to have left the traditional mission churches to go and look for salvation elsewhere, where their aspirations would be better addressed. As one of pastors I interviewed remarked, "fight fire with fire".

### **Case Three**

Agatha Abua, owner of African Specifics hair salon in Durban felt that the Pentecostal influence in Ghana made her and her Ghanaian counterparts 'feel natural Christians'. Her hair salon is in Albert Street while Susan's one is in Smith Street. They both live together in a flat in Russell Street although they own different hair salons. Through indepth

interviews with Agatha, I realized how easy it was for people to expose secret beliefs and practices of others and yet not their own. Before I explain how this happened, let us hear her account of the Pentecostal influence.

By the time I left Ghana, I wasn't a really Pentecostal Christian but because the charismatic movement had been introduced into the Catholic Church where I belonged, I had received Jesus Christ into my life. The charismatic movement had long been in existence in bigger towns like Accra and Kumasi, but in Jesikan, it was introduced only about fifteen years ago. I was a committed member of the movement. We prayed in tongues like the Pentecostal churches but it somehow brought division which I think is present till now. We were encouraged to read the Bible and find things out ourselves. I received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We prayed for sick people and they got healed but we were still restricted in many ways because we were under the control of the Catholic priest who was not baptized in the Holy Spirit. What I didn't like was the fact that we still had to pray using the rosary and holy water. However, the charismatic influence drew me closer to the Pentecostal Christians. There was a change in me because I started asking questions about things that I didn't understand about being a Pentecostal Christian.

After the 1990s one could comfortably state that Pentecostalism had become the main current in Ghanaian Christianity. This could possibly be seen so especially because of the institutionalisation of charismatic movements in the Catholic Church. Pentecostal values were introduced into the Catholic Church for fear of losing members.

Before we all left Ghana, we had heard the gospel of Jesus Christ although some chose not to believe it completely. My father once said that when he was growing up, there were few churches, but presently in Ghana, 'when you lift a banana leaf, you will be certain to find a Pentecostal church underneath'. In our village, Jesikan, there is no one who can claim that they haven't heard the gospel. One of the reasons why Ghanaians all claim that they are Christians is because back in the villages during Christmas, one cannot find a seat in church. The person coming to church may be 'as drunk as a fish' saying that it was the end of the year and I have come to thank my God who has helped me throughout the year. From the experience I have with my sister whom I live with, I understand that some people don't want to be told to abandon their traditional beliefs.

Back in Jesikan, we have Fetish Priests that people, especially when they are about to leave Ghana, go to look for good luck. Some people like myself have moved away from them while others like my sister have not. For this group of people, praying to an unseen God is not enough. The elders believe in it such that when some of us are about to leave Ghana to travel abroad, they will come and pray and commit you in the hands of the ancestors. I remember when I was about to travel to South Africa (I came before my sister, she followed a year after), my father said that even though we are Christians, before I travel we had to go to Papa Kodjo (a fetish priest) to pray on the altar and offer chicken and eggs so that it would be well with me in South Africa. By then I was 'a born-again so I refused and left. My sister, Susan, followed my parents' advice.

Susan is not a committed Christian. I always had to plead with her before she would go with me to the Durban Christian centre. She goes to church occasionally and she can even go to a Malam (a Moslem traditional healer) if she wants to achieve something. She left Ghana with ten Cedis (equivalent to R10) given to her by Papa Kodjo which she puts underneath her cloth box. This she says is to make her prosperous. She also has a cream which she uses every morning before she enters her shop, which was given to her by the same fetish priest.

When Agatha told me this, I went and tried to inquire from Susan whether she believes in traditional medicine, but she refused to tell me. She told me how dedicated she is as a Christian and explained that the only reason why she doesn't go to church every Sunday was because she had too much work. Agatha then, to prove that she was right, told me to hide by the side of Susan's salon, early the next morning, just before she opened the salon. I did that and I saw her approaching the salon. She looked around, took a container from her bag (as though she was smearing hand and face cream), rubbed her hands and face before opening the door. I allowed her to get in so that she wouldn't suspect that I saw her. When I got there, I could smell a foul smell which Susan said was because the salon was untidy ( I don't know whether I did the right thing but I had to capture the event, the important thing about being in the field). Agatha told me of her first attempt to confront her sister about her practices.

When I asked her to stop believing in things that could destroy her, I was surprised at her response. She told me that when I refused to go to Papa Kodjo, when I left, she, her father and mother went there on my behalf. They bought drinks and poured libation and informed our ancestors that I had left for South Africa and that they should look after me. They even promised the ancestors that if things went well with me they will slaughter a goat. When I heard this, I wrote a letter to my parents and warned them never to do that again because I don't believe in it. I also told them that I was not going to send them money to buy the goat. Thereafter, I prayed and brought some of my elders to help me pray and cancelled the effect of what happened at home. I have made a conscious decision that whatever gods my ancestors served, I will not be part of such ceremonies.

All my informants whether or not they do practice their traditional religion, say they are Christians (This is the impression a researcher gets when she/he interviews these women). It is very common to get this response; 'by the grace of God', each time one asks these women about their welfare and that of their businesses. This could however be seen as a result of the fact that Christians are seen as people who demonstrate good attitudes and are not prone to cheating or crime.

Several months of fieldwork and my active involvement in the lives of these women made me realize that, although they all say that they are Christians, it is the fear of uncertainties that makes them hide under their religion. They may have skills and knowledge to take care of their needs, but knowledge is not sufficient to prevent illness, accident, and natural disaster. Therefore religion is there to find comfort in unfortunate situations.

Most of these women believe that being abroad and running businesses which can crumble at any time (because thieves can break into their shops and steal everything and

that will be the end of their businesses) they have to maintain their relationship with God. Such a situation is very precarious and whether or not their religion accomplishes what they believe it does, as long as it is able to explain the inexplicable, they will continue to identify themselves as Christians.

Among these women there is a general consensus that religion indeed lies ‘in the shadows’ of their business lives. They believe (whether or not they practice it) that their belief in God is interrelated with their ability or inability to prosper in their business endeavor. Paullina Kesiwah, one of my informants, relates her belief in God.

I believe in God. If anyone does not believe in God, what does she/he believe in? At the end of each month I have to give something to God because I believe that he is the one who has blessed me. If he does not send customers to me, they will not come. My health is in his hands. Apart from this I also believe that if you don’t know how to do hair, talk nicely to customers and use good products for customers hair, God cannot make you to prosper. Although believing in God helps you to prosper, you must also know how to manage a business.

Some do not only see their businesses as a route to success but as a way of carrying out God’s creative and redemptive plan. With this group of women, viewing their businesses in the light of God’s divine plan for them gives them significance in what they do and how they do it. From empirical evidence, one can conclude that some of these women have mastered the relationship between their businesses and their religious beliefs by inculcating their economic success with their beliefs. This is illustrated below by what Mary says about her belief in God.

I am a Christian and did not come to this country to joke with my Christian life. I don't attend the church formed by the Ghanaian pastor any more. When it was founded in 2002, we all went there, trying to support what we called 'a local initiative'. What I saw made me decide to leave the church before I compromise my Christianity. Ghanaian men and women were using the church as a place where they could dress and show their riches. Above all, there were lots of gossips around. The pastor also was always traveling out of South Africa and most of us concluded that he was using our money to travel abroad while most of us could not afford that luxury.

Most of my Ghanaian colleagues use traditional medicines brought from Ghana to make them succeed in business. I believe in my God and to feel that my business is part of his plan to reach the lost with the gospel and to prosper me.

Mary's belief in the embeddedness of her religious practices and business endeavours is demonstrated in her every-day life. Her salons, she says, are her pulpit given to her by God. She believes that if she is unable to preach in church, she has countless opportunities to preach to people who come to her salon, as the opportunity arises. She said that God did not only provide her with a salon to dress women's hair but also to address women's spiritual needs. This public space is used as a meeting place for other believers who come from time to time for a word of prayer, especially in the early hours of the morning when there are no customers and specifically as a conversion ground. Being a Pentecostal believer myself, I was one of the participants during morning hours of prayer between 8am and 9am, during my fieldwork.

Women who came to dress their hair and spoke to Mary about their problems provided an excellent opportunity to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to them. She then introduced them to someone who was able to solve their life problems. When such women gave their lives to Jesus, she would then ask them to start attending any Pentecostal church of their choice, specifically those that are near where they live. Unlike other Pentecostal



Christians who insist that their new converts attend the same churches they attend, Mary is very dynamic and said her duty is to direct people to God and not to a church. Should they choose to attend the Christian Revival Church that she attends, she is pleased, but insists on not forcing people to attend it. In her salon, Radio 2000, a gospel radio station is the only radio station she tunes to. She believes that people who come in will have an opportunity of either listening to the gospel while they are dressing their hair or listening to gospel songs. This to her is an evangelical tool, as, after listening to a preacher, the message sometimes makes room for discussion, especially by those who do not believe in Jesus. She then uses this opportunity to tell them about Jesus in her own words and give them testimonies of what Jesus has done for her. Through her religious activities in the salon, many women have been added to the church.

From the interviews I conducted, I found out that Pentecostal pastors tend to play a more active role in the lives of the women in business. This is evident in their regular visits either to the residential or business premises of their church members. During their visits, pastors pray for their members and this encourages the women especially if these visits coincide with a period of family crisis or business crisis. In a more Weberian style, Protestantism is more favourable to entrepreneurial activities because of the kind of doctrine it stands for. Bonacich and Modell (1980) affirm that each religion stands for a system of social relations in which a peculiar economic shape develops. The crucial factor here is to explain religious affiliation as a result of the social relationships that churches develop. People are more likely to pursue a social relationship than a set of rules set by a church. The common belief among Pentecostal pastors now is ‘friendship before

function'. This would however mean that people who go to a church often stand a better chance of reinforcing their social ties expressed by religious affiliation.

Mary felt that for her business to be recognized by God and blessed by him, she had to do the following:

When I found the shop in West Street where I opened my salon, before I started receiving customers, I called my pastor who came with other elders in church to come and pray and bless my business. This has helped me a lot. In 2001, I was failing to pay my rentals as well as my employees. I didn't understand what was going on so I invited my homecell members. In our church, we are divided into different home cells which take place every Thursday at 6pm at the home of our home cell leader. I approached them and told them what was happening with my business and we decided to hold a meeting in my salon and pray for God's intervention.

A few days after we held this prayer session in the salon, one of my employees came and told me that she was going to tell me something and she pleaded with me not to tell anyone else that she is the one who told me. She said two of her colleagues (Mary's employees) had gone to a traditional healer and taken some medicines which they have been using to chase away my customers. They were planning to direct these customers to their residence that same week and quit their jobs to start their own hair salon at their residence. I couldn't believe how I left my country, came here and employed people who wanted to destroy my life. I called the two girls that same day and told them that they cannot succeed to destroy me because my God is the first and theirs is the last. When they heard this, they started crying and asked me to forgive them. One week later, they managed to call back some women they had chased away. Unfortunately, they became uncomfortable in the salon because they realized that I knew their secrets and finally left the salon. Thereafter, the business started running well and became profitable.

I know that I cannot joke with God, so I do whatever He asks me to do. I know I should pay 10% of my profit as tithe to God, but I am unable. Whatever I have, I give to the church. When I give, my business prospers. It is also another way to support the work of God and the church ministers who are there to pray and support us emotionally. It is my responsibility to take good care of the church ministers. To pay tithe is good. The money we pay as tithe is used in taking care of the church. It is also good for my spiritual wellbeing.

Cecilia Yebua also believes that she cannot run her business and succeed without allowing God to have the prime place.

I am dependent on God for everything that I do in life. Before opening this salon, I called my pastor and he came and prayed for the salon. I attend the Durban Christian Centre. I believe that God gave me this business as a means of using me for his glory. I am happy because our pastors are very involved in our lives to make sure that we are succeeding in our businesses. Every Tuesday at 9am, we have a meeting for business people, organized by our pastors. During these meetings, our businesses are prayed for and then we see success. I also believe that payment of tithes is very essential for the success of every Christian, not just for business people. I pay my tithes and I think it is one of the reasons why I am succeeding. With God, the rules are straight, 'give and it shall be given'. If you pay your tithes you will succeed in whatever you do, but if you do not pay, you will obviously fail.

Ada is one of the women who decided to stay fellowshipping at the church formed by the Ghanaian pastor. This church is called Redemptive International Power Ministry. This church is part of a transnational network from Ghana. Meyer and Geschiere (1999:160) have emphasized this new trend of internationalization in the way Pentecostal churches are named. Contemporary Pentecostal churches present themselves as representatives of global Christianity, with some having words like "world" or "international", or "global" in their name. I see this new trend as a means of facilitating the "planting", as the term is often used by Pentecostal pastors, of churches for the establishment of other branches in diaspora. This fluid nature of naming churches represents the unboundedness of such a form of religion, in terms of physical spaces. Declaring its international representativity, it should be accepted with less resistance in any country when it is established. The Redemptive International Power ministry was formed in 2001 by Pastor Andrew Andoh. This church is an affiliate of the Redemptive International Power Ministry in Kumasi,

Ghana. This church offers a social space whereby new Ghanaian immigrants can meet and create social relations and a means of accessing niche markets. New-comers often use this religious space also to learn how to renew their visas since most of them come in with a tourist visa. It has proven helpful and the easiest forum since fellow brothers and sisters in the Lord are expected to help each other. Although some of the Ghanaians use this church as a 'bridge' to establishing in South Africa, some were members of the 'mother church' back in Ghana. For this group, joining the 'sister church' in South Africa was a way of 'being at home away from home'. In Durban, it is currently located in Albert Street in a hall. It was formerly located at The Workshop shopping mall in the city centre in a cinema hall. When the numbers of members increased to forty, they moved to the present location. It is interesting to note how Pentecostal churches have migrated to South Africa with the attitude of using public spaces to hold their church meetings.

Meyer (1999) pinpoints how Pentecostalism has taken over hitherto secular realms in Ghana. Most state-owned as well as private cinemas have been converted to churches. Public spaces have been confiscated in two ways: firstly in terms of the buildings and secondly by sound space. Presently, the International Redemptive Power ministries have fifty members. Apart from the Sunday meeting, bible studies are held every Wednesday and revival meetings on Fridays. During each of these meetings, despite the small number present in each service, the pastor always uses microphones. The sound coming from the church can be heard as far as one kilometre away. Meyer (1999) explains how loudspeakers have become crucial mediators of the divine message, used not to simply reach the congregation inside, but above all to communicate one's presence to the world

outside. The apparent fact is that 'being heard' means 'being there'. This indicates how Pentecostalism is seeking not only to preach the gospel to those who willingly want to listen, but also to those who don't want to. This confiscation of public space is seen as a means of attracting people or as a means of making one's presence felt.

When I first went to this church, when Ada and I were about one kilometre away, I could hear the sound of the microphone. The impression I had before arriving at the church was that it was a big church because of the noise that emanated from there. I then asked Ada how big the church was and she said I should see the number myself, since we were almost there. When I got there, there were about twenty people who were praising God by singing and dancing, while the pastor praised using the microphone. After the service, I was introduced to the pastor and when we went to Ada's house, she told me how there used to be about one hundred and fifty members and how most of them had left the church because they complained that the pastor was using their money to travel to other countries in the name of preaching the gospel and how he was proud of the fact that he traveled a lot. She said that she prayed and asked God whether she should also leave but reckons that God asked her to stay. She is the one who first took me to this church during my period of fieldwork.

I did observe that at the end of each church session, the pastor would ask if there is any one with tithe money. The men/women who have their tithes with them would go to the front of the church and the pastors and elders would form a circle around them and pray for them, before collecting the money. This is done because the pastors preach that these

people will prosper if they bring their tithes. This prosperity gospel teaches that the more money one gives to the church, the money one gets. For this group of people, prosperity does not come as a surprise because they are taught how to pray and the various procedures to follow like bringing one tenth of their income to church in the form of tithes. The payment of tithes is a crucial issue in the Pentecostal churches as it depicts a person's level of growth spiritually. Faithful payment of tithes indicates that a person has established him or herself in a local church and is a matured Christian and vice versa. These pastors not only visit the women at their business sites, but also at their homes.

Apart from these services, weekly meetings have been organized as follows: on Fridays, deliverance/revival meetings are held and most often, on the said days, all-night prayers, coupled with fasting and prayers are held. Bible studies are held on Wednesdays. In any of these services, there is a particular pattern of events. They all begin with a few songs of praise and worship. After this, a few prayer points are announced by the person leading the service, usually the pastor, for instance, *'any power blocking my blessings, scatter, in Jesus name'*. Every one is expected to repeat this prayer point several times in a violent way so as to make the powers obey.

Revival meetings are seen as power encounter times. The power of God, confronting the powers of darkness (of the devil). The reason for organizing these revival meetings is to be filled with the Holy Spirit so that members will be empowered to cast out demons that tend to hinder the progress of the believers. Many people however are attracted to these meetings because they believe that through violent praying in tongues, they will be able

to “take back what the devil has stolen from them”. During these meetings, it is said that with violent praying, the devil has no choice but to surrender. The pastor often makes statements like: ‘power must change hands’. People come with the expectation that any evil force trying to hinder their success in business or life in general will be destroyed. Amongst the women involved in hairdressing, there are rumours that some of them are using ‘black magic’ (medicines from traditional healers) to succeed as well as hinder others from succeeding. During these revival meetings, people pray loudly to destroy the powers of such magic.

The common belief among this group of people is that ‘there are powers that block their progress in life’. It is also believed that such powers monitor their daily activities and would prevent them from looking for ways of terminating their activities in their lives. These assertions do not end only at the level of ideology. Practically, when they go to church, due to the belief that these powers have agents whom they have positioned as evil spies, they usually pray and blind those eyes monitoring their activities and trying to counteract their prayers. Prayers like ‘every evil eye monitoring me now be blinded by the blood of Jesus’ are said.

Also, among this group of Christians of African origin, there is the belief that the curse of poverty that has been operating in the lives of their ancestors has to be broken. If such powers are not broken, these businesswomen cannot prosper. The pastor once said that migration cannot separate people from their ancestors. These curses, he said have, demons that have been assigned to make sure that the curses are not broken. Often,

especially during revival meetings and night vigils, specific prayer points are addressed to break these ancestral curses. For example, 'every power pursuing me from my father's house die in the name of Jesus', and 'every power pursuing me from my mother's house die in the name of Jesus'. The believers are taught that these powers are stubborn and would not die if one prays quietly. These sets of prayers must be said loudly. Comaroff and Comaroff (1999) in their article on occult economics and the violence of abstraction have elaborated on how people are in constant pursuit of new magical means for otherwise unattainable ends. They see this sort of action as 'new magic for new situations'. For these Ghana women, the activities of their ancestors in their lives for evil intent are pressing practical problems which must be dealt with. This is because these women are so desperate to succeed in their entrepreneurial endeavour not only for themselves, but also for those family members who are left behind in their country of origin.

These sorts of prayers to break all evil ancestral links are said in a manner which I call 'the peak of spiritual warfare'. The scenario is one of fierce battle with spirits. Prayer points are announced by the pastor and said violently by members of the congregation, with the covering of eyes, shaking of heads, up-and-down movements of people, stamping of feet, kicking and punching of demons (unseen physically but believing that they exist). When one prayer point is announced, it would be repeatedly prayed in a violent manner until the pastor senses, through what I call 'his spiritual thermometer' that the powers have been adequately dealt with before they can move onto another prayer point. Whether these ancestral powers are real or imagined, these Pentecostal Christians



use violent praying rituals in the making of their present and future prosperity in entrepreneurship.

Most of the members of this church are businessmen/women from Ghana and a few South Africans. All these people are seeking to succeed in their business endeavours. Meyer and Geschiere (1999) have pointed out that all over the world the Pentecostals embrace a so-called prosperity gospel which teaches that God will bless true 'born again' Christians with prosperity. During the period of my fieldwork, men and women often went up to the pulpit during services and gave testimonies of how their faithfulness in paying tithes and giving generously to the church has helped and they have been blessed by a new salon, a house built in Ghana, or a car.

These women all believe that their beliefs lie in the shadow of their businesses. This is not surprising because of the strong Pentecostal influence they were exposed to before they left home. Most of them do not attend any church, but at the same time, profess to be Christians. It is worrying to hear everyone from Ghana purporting to be Christians even when some of them have never been to any church since they came to South Africa. It is difficult for the researcher to tell how sincere these women are because the way people express their beliefs is very personal.

During my fieldwork, I realised that the women never told me that they were using traditional medicines. They could easily point out others and not themselves. Their instincts may suggest that their belief plays a significant role in fostering their

entrepreneurial success. I would conclude here by saying that, there is no combination of beliefs that constitutes a key to entrepreneurial success. This explains the reason why some Ghanaian women in Durban are not that successful and still have to work for others, for their survival.

From in depth interviewing, I found out that the Christian religion in Ghana forms part of the socialization process. Christian doctrines are embedded in the rules and regulations of schools and form part of community life, especially in the villages. These values pass through different structures (schools and churches) and when people who come from these areas grow-up, it becomes difficult for them to distance themselves from the values (whether or not they practice it). It is not surprising therefore when one informant poses a question to a researcher like; 'if someone does not believe in God, what the person believes in?'

## **Chapter Four**

### **Entrepreneurial opportunities for Ghanaian women.**

#### **4.1 Structural opportunities for entrepreneurship**

Migrant women entrepreneurship does not necessarily begin with the introduction of a new product or service into the South African market. Writers on migrant entrepreneurship in South Africa have claimed that migrant entrepreneurs succeed because they introduce a wide procurement of goods and services which are not readily available in South Africa (Peberdy and Rogerson 2001, Dodson 1998, Rogerson 1997, and Skinner 1997). Many analysts note that a major reason immigrants become self-employed and seek out entrepreneurial niches is because they suffer economic disadvantages, either resource disadvantages or because they lack the requisite human capital (language, skills, and contacts) to compete for better employment, or have labor market disadvantages in the country of abode and therefore have little choice but to pursue self-employment (Spenser and Bean 1999). While such views do not deny the fact that migrant women involved in business actually generate economic gains for

themselves, the disadvantage perspective essentially sees migrant self-employment as deriving from economic deprivation. The rationale in this view leads to the expectation that immigrant women entrepreneurs are a disadvantaged group of entrepreneurs.

It does appear probable on the basis of observation that migrant women are “opportunists”. Their entrepreneurial activities start with an opportunity and these opportunities are readily available in the South African environment. It is true that for an individual to be able to see an opportunity and utilize it requires a set of skills. These women entrepreneurs are highly eclectic. They are experts in drawing upon connections and relationships, or build them if they don’t exist. This eclectic characteristic is a valuable weapon used to enhance their entrepreneurial success. They use both inter-cultural and inter-personal relationships to their advantage. They use both the concepts of “bounded solidarity” (the unification of a group of people that comes about due to the existence of a common experience) and “enforceable trust” (the existence of social obligations that provide group members with economic advantage and opportunities) to succeed entrepreneurially (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993). They are quick to use their connections and ties with countrymen/women or fellow immigrant entrepreneurs for assistance for niche markets and their inter-cultural skills to carry-out their businesses among the local South Africans.

Evidence which I collected for this study among Ghanaian entrepreneurs strengthens my argument that the opportunity structures in place are partly responsible for the entrepreneurial success of Ghanaian migrant women. It was found that the mindset of

many South Africans is partly responsible for migrant success. This cultivated mindset is a form of opportunity structure that Ghanaian women find when they enter South Africa which had been laid-down by the earlier immigrants who came during the apartheid era. This concept principally deals with the complex way in which Ghanaian women have gained entrance into the South African business sector as well as made certain fields their specialty over the years.

This concept of opportunity structure enables the entrepreneurs to survive in segments of the South African business sector where as a rule, local entrepreneurs battle or cannot succeed. Such opportunity structures occur and these immigrant entrepreneurs seize them. Kloosterman and Rath (2001) emphasized that immigrant entrepreneurs are not just responding to static opportunity structures but are able to change and mould them through innovative behavior and thereby create opportunities that till then did not exist. Immigrant entrepreneurship although becoming more and more diverse, is still strongly oriented toward specific segments of the opportunity structure (Rath and Kloosterman 2000). The emphasis here is subject to the fact that such opportunity structures are already in place, which immigrant women use and manipulate for social and economic gains. The emphasis is one which seems appropriate and crucial in explaining the entrepreneurial success of African women in general and Ghanaian entrepreneurs in particular.

One of the major reasons why Ghanaian women are succeeding in this entrepreneurial sector is because of the opportunities that are available for such businesses in post –

apartheid South Africa. Hair care has become a major indicator of modernity for black women. Marshall (1994: 7) associates modernity with the release of the individual from the bonds of tradition, with the progressive differentiation of society. The need for black women to differentiate themselves from those women who can not afford to dress and style their hair in particular ways demonstrates this new modernity. Black hair breaks easily because it has been stretched with relaxers and therefore needs specific products to maintain it in its current form. Women therefore, to keep up with this new modernity of relaxing and styling hair, have to visit a hair salon once every week or twice a month. Naidoo (1994) in an article in the Sunday Times high-lighted the fact that fresh wealth among women has spawned a new class at hair salons as clients now pay a fortune to be pampered and preened every week. Some women even visit every second day to ensure they are looking their best, paying up to R150 a time for attention.

This makes this entrepreneurial area that Ghanaian women have gone into a considerable area for growth. Many black women in post-apartheid South Africa work as salaried employees, and one of the ways they spend their money is by keeping up with the latest hairstyles, which indicate twenty-first century modernity. Having the latest hairstyle distinguishes the woman as stylish and fashionable, more than it will do for a white woman. Ghanaian women have used this entrepreneurial opportunity and made quite a lot of money in a short time which they use in building houses back home or sending remittances. As black educated women strive to distinguish themselves by strengthening and styling their hair, the demand for such businesses keeps growing and the Ghanaian presence is rapidly increasing and felt everywhere in South Africa.

Ghanaian women already have a reputation among black South Africans as the best hair dressers. This is because during the apartheid era black South African women were not allowed into the white hair salons and didn't have the opportunity of doing their hair in the Western fashion. So when the first Ghanaians who came to Southern Africa to teach in Lesotho and Swaziland brought their wives, these women had very long and healthy hair which was highly admired by black South African women. They wanted their hair to look like that of the Ghanaian migrant women. In South Africa this started in the Transkei because it was the first homeland to gain independence and Ghanaians moved to other cities with the end of apartheid when Transkei united with the Republic of South Africa. Ghanaian women started dressing black South African hair in their homes before opening salons. Since then, they have been able to keep this reputation as the best hairdressers. I believe that this notion of Ghanaians being the best hairdressers is deeply rooted in African history.

My informants referred to Ghana as a model African colony and the most advanced of all the British colonies in Africa. The British administration introduced a western form of education and dressing at an early stage. They introduced the Kingsway London stores immediately after the Second World War. Margaret Sappor, the current president of the Ghanaian Hairdressing Association was the first Ghanaian woman who went to London to the Maurice School of Hairdressing to learn how to do hair. She spent a couple of years in London and when she came back, she opened many hairdressing schools alongside the Kingsway stores. Learning how to do hair became easy for the average

Ghanaian woman. Upon completion of qualifications from these schools, they received certificates with reference to the Maurice School of Hairdressing in London. From then on, any girl whose parents could not afford high school education or university education went to the hairdressing schools. It was an excellent opportunity for girls who fell pregnant from school to have a qualification. Mindful of the fact that Ghanaians are not afraid to migrate because their culture encourages them to do so, as they migrate, they utilize these skills.

If you walk into any black hair salon in Durban, Ulundi, or Empangeni, whenever you find a large crowd queuing for service, the probability that the owner of the salon is a migrant woman from Ghana is high. The fact is that South Africans see these women as the best hair dressers, thus giving them the opportunity to make hair dressing their field.

Having had this unique opportunity, these migrant entrepreneurs bring fellow country women from Ghana, as well as employing those who are already in South Africa but unable to raise money to start their own businesses, and also South Africans. This, according to Amina (one of my informants), is a strategy which they use to work on the mindset of South Africans. She explained that with other migrants working in her salon, even when she is not available at her business site, the business still runs well. On the other hand, should she leave only South African hairdressers in her salon, most of her customers will go away. Customers always want their hair to be done by a foreigner, she said



## **4.2 Cultural opportunities for entrepreneurship**

History tells us that entrepreneurs are associated with values of innovation, achievement, personal gain and profit, hard work and success. These values could be seen as learned predispositions held by either individuals or a group of people. These values are complete embodiment of beliefs and practices. Hofstede (2001) maintains that beliefs and practices are broad tendencies to prefer certain states of affairs over others. Rokeach (1972) believes that to have a value is to maintain an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct, or end-state of existence is preferable to other alternatives. Since values are seen as preferred modes of conduct, different groups of people will therefore have different values.

These views however suggest that different groups of people with different patterns of beliefs and practices would, if put under the same circumstances, behave differently. Thus the learned predispositions held by different groups of people would either inhibit or promote their desires for entrepreneurship. If we agree that the a vital ingredient to initiating businesses across borders lies within certain groups of people, then it becomes apparent that certain groups carry within them some collective similarities, inherent in their beliefs and practices which is the drive to business ownership. There seems to exist a significant relationship between the act of business ownership and the beliefs and practices of a people.

This relationship becomes important in discussing entrepreneurship because it determines the attitudes of individuals towards starting and running businesses. Thus, it can be proposed that the culture of certain groups of people will certainly influence the degree to which businesses are initiated and the manner in which they are run.

Harper (1987) has remarked that female-owned trading enterprises have a long history in many parts of the world, such as West Africa. Among Africans, a very large share of market trading, selling as well as buying is left entirely to women (Boserup 1970:87). For Ghanaian women, like other African women, their activities have not been limited only to their national boundaries. The end of apartheid saw an increased number of Ghanaian women migrating to South Africa. With this trend of immigration, the question we need to ask is; which sector of the South African economy is easily accessible for these immigrant women? This question needs to be addressed especially because of the xenophobic attitudes towards immigrants from other African countries (many South Africans believe that immigrants are stealing their jobs).

The above mentioned xenophobic attitudes are focused on the civil service sector of the South African economy and are unjustified, especially because more and more Ghanaian women are setting up shops and boutiques. From in-depth interviews and informal contacts, it is evident that self-employment among Ghanaian migrant women is very prevalent. Their numbers are increasingly growing in the business sector in South Africa. As migrant entrepreneurship keeps growing in South Africa, Ghanaian hair dressers and fabric retailers are featuring prominently. Considering the history of market trading in

West Africa (Boserup 1970), these women have a special ability to perceive opportunities in South Africa, which South Africans do not see or do not care about. Basically, these women see a need and then bring together manpower, materials and capital required to meet that need.

More importantly, entrepreneurship for Ghanaian women in South Africa is being used to narrow the gap between the poor and the rich migrants. Entrepreneurship is indeed becoming an inevitable part of African migration to South Africa. Writers have claimed that hawking is typical of businesses that are run by African migrants (Rogerson 1997, Dodson 1998). Contrary to this view of hawking as a prevalent business, I have found that hawking among Ghanaian women is used as a stepping stone, during which money is saved for future investment in businesses. It should be emphasized here that hawking among these women is a form of “disguised” employment strategy used in the first few months or years of stay in South Africa, and not the ultimate form of employment. Most of these women entrepreneurs end up owning shops and boutiques where African fabrics are sold.

Small businesses in South Africa have reduced the probability of immigrants staying unemployed for longer periods and this sector is absorbing more and more women of African origin. Small businesses are simple to operate in South Africa. Although entry into this form of activity is relatively easy, trading licenses and shop rentals put “a strain on the pockets” of the migrant entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship is a unique activity since it allows operation at any level without fixing any limits for investments.

Despite the fact that migrant women use small businesses as a means of utilizing their skills, writers like Dasgupta (1992) have established that petty traders in the Third World are mainly poor and marginalized people who are trying to eke out a living with most of them trapped in this activity out of desperation to survive. But among Ghanaian migrant women in South Africa for instance, I found out that women venture into small businesses by their own choice (this decision is taken while they are still in their home countries) and also because of the opportunities available in South Africa for migrant small businesses and not because of lack of other employment opportunities. Exploiting the opportunities, obtaining higher incomes and gaining personal autonomy were some of the reasons given to me by women for going into entrepreneurship in South Africa.

It is the intention of this chapter to explore the driving forces behind Ghanaian women's entrepreneurial success. For this purpose, it is essential to examine variables that are related to the overall conceptual framework of their activity. Two important variables will be explored: the opportunity structures and cultural factors to aid our understanding of the entrepreneurial success of Ghanaian female migrants in South Africa.

It is normative that there exists no such thing as an outstanding factor determining migrant women's entrepreneurial success in Durban. Though there exist some collective similarities in African migrant women's entrepreneurial activity, the key to starting and running businesses in South Africa lies within the individual migrant woman, and the degree to which the spirit of business ownership can be stimulated within these women.

My curiosity lay in the reason why Ghanaian women chose to become entrepreneurs in South Africa, specifically in Durban. This section tends to focus towards an explanation of the relationship between the culture of a people and the desire to become an entrepreneur. It argues that there exists a significant relationship between culture and entrepreneurship. This has been made possible through in-depth study among Ghanaian migrant women entrepreneurs in Durban. The aim of this section is to highlight a shift in the normative thinking of entrepreneurship and portray a deeper understanding of the symbiotic relationship between the decision to become an entrepreneur and the culture of origin. It describes and analyses how societally embedded cultural values and beliefs impact on entrepreneurial success.

While reading and thereby challenging some of the mainstream arguments underlying the conventional wisdom of entrepreneurship that lay emphasis on the psychological attributes of the entrepreneur, I argue that the cultural milieu in which individuals are initially nurtured becomes crucial in explaining entrepreneurial success. It emphasizes the enormous cultural variations in the way in which migrant entrepreneurship is symbolized and in which this symbolism relates to culturally constructed notions of business. It becomes clear that in order to understand the way migrant female entrepreneurship is viewed, it is vitally important to understand the cultural matrix into which this form of business is incorporated.

It is only when we fully understand the cultural matrix in which they operate that we can understand why African migrant women entrepreneurs succeed differently in South Africa. Simply defined, culture consists of the abstract values, beliefs, and perceptions of the world that lie behind people's behavior and that are reflected by their behavior (Havilland 1996). Hofstede (1994) attributes culture to the environment in which a child grows up and states that these reinforce the dominant patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting in other spheres. He also sees culture as a collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group of people from another. In other words, he regards culture as a collective phenomenon that is shaped by individuals' social environment, not their genes. On his part, Hall (1959) provides a simple explanation of culture as the pattern of taken-for-granted assumptions about how a given set of people should think, act, and feel as they go about their daily affairs.

Personality theorists like Gibb (1987:6) consider that it is the personality of the individuals that pushes them into entrepreneurship. If we accept that immigrant entrepreneurs require skills, ideas, opportunities and resources for them to succeed then the situations to which they were pre-exposed to in their home countries will impact on the choice process. It should be noted that while personality theories tell us about the kind of people who become entrepreneurs, they do not tell us much about the process of which cultural factors actually influence the decision to become an entrepreneur.

The question is; *how does the culture of a people encourage, promote or discourage entrepreneurship?* It should be emphasized that entrepreneurial behavior cannot be

determined by cultural factors alone, but culture plays a significant role. Aldrich et al (1990) argue that some migrants have a cultural “predisposition for business” or a mentality that favors commercial success. According to them, some migrants tend to work harder, save their money and dedicate their lives to their business. This explains why many immigrants go into business and why they are usually successful in their business undertaking. They also argue that some groups bring with them a trade culture that favors entrepreneurship.

The above argument suggests that the relationship of certain cultural factors to the initiation of entrepreneurship is significant. This may mean that many people from a certain society tend to exhibit collective similarities in their commercial activities. Douglas (1992:192) argues that ideas of esteemed behavior are generated collectively. What an individual is going to want is not entirely his own idea, but consists largely of a set of desires that the social environment inspires in him/her.

It is important at this point to bring out the cultural premises behind the entrepreneurial success of Ghanaian women. According to the culture of the Akan people in Ghana, particularly the Ashanti area from whence my informants come, there is a long history of hair culture. According to their culture of hair, different hairstyles signify different statuses in the society. There were different hair dos to signify when a woman was married, single, menstrual and post-menstrual etc. For instance if hair was plaited in a particular style, it meant that a woman was married and an unmarried woman was not allowed to have that same hair style.

The Akan women were known for having healthy hair and even before the colonial masters colonized Ghana, sheabutter was produced traditionally. It was processed and used in making hair grow long and strong. Colonialism brought and added technology by putting different fragrances into the sheabutter.

Among the Ghanaians, a man is supposed to take care of his family, providing for all their needs. The culture also stipulates that a woman through specialization is to be engaged in profitable employment to take care of herself. It is inconceivable for a woman according to this culture to sit at home idling. That is why the informal sector in Ghana is so strong and dominated by women. Being a matrilineal society, the women have a great deal of freedom and are highly respected. It is common to find sisters pooling their resources together to start a business. For Ghanaian women, their pride is that they make a lot of money. The women who come from this area are highly entrepreneurial.

These women have as one of their roles that of intermediary in the distribution network and since the early twentieth century, they have been engaged in trade (Sudarkasa 1973). Their increased involvement in the distribution sector began with the commencement of the colonial era. The Akan women were, prior to the twentieth century expansion of the exchange economy, cultivators which greatly increased the number of positions available within the internal market (Sudarkasa 1973). The fact that trade by women has a long history amongst Akan women, coupled with the expansion of trade avenues, triggered the modern economy, and maybe accounted for the fact that all uneducated Akan women



and even many of those who are educated are traders. Trading skills are passed-on to the younger generation for continuity and as a means of survival.

In Jesikan, all food crops are harvested from the farms, some are sold while the remainder is eaten. They are put in trays and placed on the heads of children to sell in the village. There isn't any farm produce that cannot be sold. Even wild vegetables like mushrooms which are picked in the forest are sold. Everything is sold because it is the only way of earning cash income, selling. The interesting aspect about buying and selling in Jesikan is that although everyone has at least one 'farm', some may not have certain food crops on particular days or some may be sick and unable to go to the farms and therefore will have to buy what is lacking in the house. Also, because Jesikan is the District Centre in the Volta region, it is fast becoming a centre for trade for the surrounding towns and villages. It has a secondary school, police station, clinic with medical doctors, shops, teacher-training college, banks, and all these people buy whatever comes from the farms. Jesikan is in the centre in this region and all the roads connect to other neighbouring villages. One can find some shops in other villages but most of the big shops are found in Jesikan. Civil servants who work here go to their farms only on Saturdays and therefore are forced to buy from the farmers. In Jesikan, everything that is grown is sold to make profit. Children who come from this area learn how to make a profit from anything which they can eat.

When a girl child is growing up, she is taught certain trading skills to take care of herself. This prepares her for uncertainties in the future. "*Nsano dwuma*" (meaning learning to

use your fingers to make money) is the drive for women. They are encouraged to have *Nsano dwum*, which makes them unafraid to migrate. According to their culture, they are expected to seize any opportunity to make money and the culture supports it. One of the Akan proverbs is *anoma antua obuada*, meaning “a bird that stays in the nest stays hungry” or in other words “a bird that does not fly stays hungry”. This saying (Ga language) is a very popular contemporary saying among all Ghanaians. These women are expected to move out of their homes and look for opportunities to create wealth.

From an immigrant entrepreneurship point of view, it can be accepted that people coming from a particular country or area of origin may tend to exhibit some collective similarities in the sorts of businesses they initiate, and how such businesses are run. One may find among these women that there is a common practice of saving for future investment, while this may be contrary to their South African counterparts where their focus is on living and spending to enjoy the moment. This behavior has an implication for the amount of personal funds that may be available to start another business. Such savings are apparently used as a means of opening up new business ventures. Of interest is that among these more “entrepreneurial women”, there is a common practice of bringing fellow countrymen to work in their hair salons. According to my informants, this practice has been in place since the 1980s in South Africa.

Thus groups of people can be distinguished from each other by the differences in the shared meanings. From the above symbiosis, one can deduce that there is a relationship between culture and the act of business ownership. At a macro-level, it can be accepted

that people belonging to a certain country tend to exhibit collective cultural similarities; however, at a micro-level, an individual's cultural orientation may indicate differences. This difference is marked among the entrepreneurial Ghanaian women in Durban. While most of them own one business or another, there are those who feel that they are not capable of doing so. They have the skill (*sano-duma*) but are afraid to take the risk as expected by their culture and own their own businesses. These Ghanaian women although coming from a highly entrepreneurial group have chosen to negotiate a self identity and deviate from the act of business ownership. One way in which this has been made possible is by their decision to hire/sell their services to fellow Ghanaian women, who run businesses in Durban. The degree to which such women succeed in this deviation depends on their short and long-term goals; either immigrating to another country or staying permanently in South Africa.

The above finding shows the complex nature of the relationship between culture and entrepreneurship. Despite the above deviation of a few members from the same society, certainly, the cultural context in which persons are rooted and socially developed plays an influencing role in making entrepreneurs.

Ghanaian migrant women become entrepreneurs in South Africa for various reasons. Some of the reasons are lack of opportunities in their country of origin, difficult political or social conditions and the effects of the structural adjustment plan. These reasons can broadly be classified into two categories: "pull factors" and "push factors". The pull factors imply factors which encourage them to have an independent occupation. Curran

and Blackburn (1999: 117) noted that women migrants might be pushed or pulled into self-employment by the profit it potentially offers; or pulled into it through a lack of alternative choice. They suggest that many women enter into self-employment because they have no alternative means of earning a living. According to this paradigm, women who cannot find employment elsewhere are forced into self-employment by economic necessity. This to me seems to be a variant of the fact that Ghanaian women already have a reputation among South Africans as the best hairdressers. Thus, any migrant woman from Ghana can easily be pushed into self-employment based on this reputation.

Under the influence of these factors, the women migrant entrepreneurs choose hairdressing and fabric retailing as a challenge and an adventure with the urge to do something new. This was very evident with Amina, a hairdresser from Ghana, living in Durban and working at Umlazi, a large township outside Durban. When Amina decided to open a hair salon in KwaZulu-Natal, she went to Durban and rented a flat to live in. After realizing that there were too many hair salons in central Durban, (too many for a newcomer to make a profit) she went to Umlazi, and bought a shipping container for R25. 000 which is movable. She rented a piece of land for R250 per month where she placed the container. This is a busy spot known as “skebenga”, a Zulu word meaning a place where there are many thieves. This was a very challenging and risky venture, but her idea was to take her business close to her customers.

Amina migrated to South Africa in 1993. Before emigration from Ghana, she had studied as an apprentice in a hair salon for three years. After completing her course, she was unable to

raise enough capital to start her own business and as a result, her elder sister, Asa, who is a dress designer in the Eastern Cape, invited her to South Africa.

When Amina came to South Africa in 1993, Asa opened a hair salon for her, where she worked for four years. Asa was paying Amina R500 per month. The agreement was that Amina wasn't going to pay for rent, food, and the electricity bill, among others. She was supposed to save the money she received every month, which she did. Amina worked and lived there for four years and when she realised that she had saved enough money to open her own salon, she decided to leave East London and come to Durban. While in East London, apart from the R500 that she earned every month, she used to sell hair products from Ghana and other cosmetics. Whenever she knew of someone going to Ghana, she would send money with that person to buy the products, which she sold in the hair salon.

Before she came to Durban, Amina had a friend from Ghana called Margaret. Margaret first had a hair salon at Ulundi before moving to Durban to open a bigger hair salon. Margaret encouraged Amina to open a salon in Durban. She told her that she would make more money working in Durban. When Amina came to Durban however, she realised that the rents in the city were too expensive so she decided to buy a container as a base for her shop.

Her idea of buying a container came from the fact that in Ghana, a container can be used for doing many things different things such as selling food, or as a boutique. With this in mind, she didn't hesitate to buy one. When she went ahead and bought it, she had no idea where she was going to place the container. In Margaret's hair salon, there was a local woman

called Phumla who advised Amina to go to the townships to see if she could find a place to put her container. Since Amina was not familiar with the environment, and coupled with the fact that she could not speak Zulu, Phumla accompanied her to Umlazi.. At Umlazi, Amina decided to place her container at the afore-mentioned busy spot known as “*skebenga*”, meaning a place where there are many thieves. However, since opening her hair salon, she has never had any incident of theft even though it is in a high crime area.

When this salon was opened at Umlazi, it meant that Amina had to commute every day to work because the flat she rented was in Durban. Amina said that she has been running this hair salon for just four years and has accomplished a lot. From the money which has come from the hair salon, she has been able to pay the air ticket of another lady from Ghana (one of her friends), who is a professional in braiding and for her younger brother who is also a hairdresser. All of them live in town and pay R10 for transport every day to work. Amina has also been able to employ some Ghanaians who migrated to South Africa but were unable to raise capital to start their own businesses. She has also employed South African hairdressers but said that she pays the Ghanaian hairdressers working in her hair salon more than the South Africans. She explained that, with the other migrants in the salon, even when she is not there the salon still runs well. But if she leaves only the South African hairdressers, most of her customers go away. Customers always want their hair to be done by foreigners because they believe that foreigners know how to dress hair better than South African hairdressers. At the end of each month, Amina pays Ada (the lady she brought to work in her salon) R1000. She pays two other Ghanaians R1, 200 each, she pays her barber

R600 etc. At the end of each month, her own income after all the people have been paid is R7000 and from this amount, she saves R2000 every month.

The “push factors” are those which compel the Ghanaian women to take up entrepreneurship to get over financial difficulties. My other informant Ada, was pushed by financial constraints into owning her own business. She was brought from Ghana in 1997 by Margaret, a fellow migrant from Ghana to work in her hair salon. She worked there for two years and was paid R500 per month. She then realized that she was making a lot of money for Margaret yet earning little, and this was coupled with the high cost of living in South Africa. However, she managed to start her own business. She saved enough money and presently, she owns a hairdressing salon in Durban, with fifteen employees.

African migrant women have successfully established themselves as migrant entrepreneurs in South Africa and are succeeding in certain areas such as hairdressing where as a rule, local entrepreneurs battle or cannot succeed. The findings lend a strong illustrative support to the proposition that entrepreneurial success is an inter-play between economic and socio-cultural factors. The opportunity structures in South Africa and the Ghanaian culture are strong driving forces for Ghanaian women’s entrepreneurial success. These women entrepreneurs continue to be essential bridging stones for the introduction of new hairstyles and products, and are important as far as job creation is concerned. Their involvement in the SME sector in South Africa is far from being recognised and is still covert. Migrant hair dressers and fabric retailers need to enjoy

greater visibility to stimulate their entrepreneurial potential and the South African government needs to improve awareness of women's role in these fields.



## **Chapter Five**

### **Reconstructing and negotiating Ghanaian identity in Durban**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

In the new South Africa, whose borders have not only been opened to Africans from the Southern African countries, but to the rest of Africa, immigrant entrepreneurship and identity is becoming an increasingly important part of discussions on African immigration. Self-employment among Ghanaian women in Durban started to appear in the early 1990s, just before the end of apartheid. Although not much research has been done in the area of immigrant women entrepreneurship in South Africa, similar research has been carried out elsewhere, especially in Europe. Such research has paid attention to hybridity and cosmopolitanism, (Hannerz 1990, Hannerz 1996), which according to the author, are more suited to the study of second and third generation migrant identity. In the case of Ghanaian women entrepreneurs in Durban, such concepts are relevant as well, even though these are first generation migrants.

It is indeed at first sight quite puzzling to see that migrant women who are disadvantaged in various ways are over-represented among the self-employed business people in Durban. A majority of hair salons and related businesses are owned by these women.

It is probably true that the study of migrant entrepreneurship is an area which is better placed in the socio-economic spheres, but the implications of migrant economies in terms of identity have been unexplored. It is my intention therefore to try to explore the symbiosis between identity and migrant entrepreneurship in the case of Ghanaian women entrepreneurs in Durban.

## **5.2 Particularities of immigrant identity**

There are certain particular attributes that give Ghanaian women entrepreneurs in Durban their specific identity. However, one has to be conscious of the fact that these women have multiple identities. I will be looking at issues of cultural transformations and negotiations of social identity among Ghanaian women entrepreneurs in Durban. The main interest is in how they experience and express their sense of belonging in relation to their transnational activities. I will try to explore how Ghanaian women use their multiple identities when dealing with their entrepreneurial activities.

From a theoretical perspective on identity formation in relation to migration, it could be located on a continuum in terms of the emphasis that is placed on adaptation, on the one hand, and cultural continuity on the other. International migration is far from having just economic challenges and it is fast becoming a real challenge to the issue of identity. Immigrant entrepreneurs encounter these challenges on a daily basis because while abroad, they are not just trying to adjust to new ways of doing things but at the same time involved with reproducing the cultures of their home countries. This dichotomy does

exist and migrants are caught between 'country of abroad and country of origin'. Esman in Hutchinson and Smith (1996) emphasized that it is an illusion to think that diaspora quickly assimilate into the receiving society. Migrants do maintain their identity and solidarity over extended periods and maintain links with their country of origin. There is a continuous link between diaspora and homeland in the manner in which they carry out their entrepreneurial activities.

Leaving Ghana for South Africa puts Ghanaian migrant women at the point of articulating their identities. This is an inescapable action as they have to find a place of belonging. However we may choose to define social identities, I believe that it is a state of mind. Societies that people normally identify themselves with and that help them define themselves are always imagined. For migrants, they may choose to speak a particular language, wear particular attire, specialize in doing particular hairstyles, etc; these are all aspects of identity taking place within peoples minds. They could also organize quasi-cultural meetings, as repertoires of the cultural reproduction of their communities in their home countries. All these collective actions re-affirm a common identity.

Being a social construct, social identity forms part of a larger collective strategy that knits people together. In the field of international migration, it is becoming clear that migrant identities are always multiple. Migrants are like customers in a hair salon, trying on different hairstyles, and watching themselves change image in the mirror. There are many identities lurking inside migrants. One or another may be triggered depending on the

situation the migrants find themselves in. For instance, a Ghanaian woman entrepreneur may find herself affiliating only with members of her kin group in South Africa, rather than a wider Ghanaian community. At other times one may find such a woman associating with South Africans and speaking their languages.

It is Ghanaian women's ability to embrace and work through the many identities as constructed by themselves and others, rather than the pursuit of a single Ghanaian identity that is enabling these women to succeed in their businesses. These women use these multiple identities to solve their day-to-day encounters. They resort to interpersonal networking based on kin, friendship and cross-cultural ties. They are able to draw on their indigenous knowledge as well as cross-cultural knowledge depending on the circumstance. In Appadurai's sense, global relations and cultures are sustained and transformed by global networks of communication and information (1991).

The borderlines of such imagined identities, cross-cut in a variety of intricate ways. At one point Ghanaian migrant women in Durban would be ardently national, when they attend the weddings of fellow countrymen/women, cultural meetings, attend a church founded and run by a Ghanaian pastor, and other festivities. At other points, they may choose to emphasize their regional affiliation with other migrants from West Africa. Such identities are highly situational and triggered only in certain instances. This seems to be a spontaneous process in the lives of these migrant women. Hall (1998:222) does not

regard identity as an accomplished fact but as a production which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside representation. Such identities are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference. This would however suggest that identities are not static or predefined, but infinitely malleable (Woodward, 1997:313).

These women form identities that combine or balance various points of reference. They form part of a cultural context in which different values and identities are confronted and negotiated daily in their entrepreneurial activities. From empirical evidence which will be dealt with in detail below, one could say that the identities of Ghanaian women in Durban are negotiated within social worlds that span more than one space.

According to Appadurai (1991:191) increase in mobility has led to dispersed identities which are being reproduced. As migrants change geographical places, they enter a different social space in which new interpersonal ties are established, group membership is renegotiated. Thus, identity has to be reconstructed in a reflexive process as the migrant encounters the cultural norms and values of the host country and undergoes a shift in role expectations and status involved with being defined as the 'other'. On his part, Hall (1996) theorizing the transformations of the notion of identity in relation to migration, considers it as a process of perpetual change. He views this as a rise of a 'new modernity' that turns established notions of unambiguous, stable, and collective identities upside down.

The assumption that identities have a static territorial dimension does not allow us to understand these women's identity. The point of departure is the realization that classical theories of identity do not suffice to grasp people's identity in a highly mobile world. Faist (2000) believes that transnational activities create distinct social spaces that transcend geographically bound nations. He creates a typology of transnational social spaces based on the kind of social relation and types of activities in which migrants may be engaged, for instance transnational communities and entrepreneurial activities.

### **5.2.1 Historical dimension of identity formation of Ghanaian women from a diasporic point of view**

Through in-depth interviews and informal contacts I had during the period of this study, I have been able to trace how Ghanaian women gained entry to South Africa during the apartheid era and established themselves in hairdressing. Most of the Ghanaians who were the pioneers in South Africa have established in Cape Town and the Eastern Cape. Thanks to social networks which link people across space and time, I was able to meet with the first Ghanaian woman who introduced their style of hairdressing into South Africa. The information provided below despite being written in my words, was gotten through informal contacts with Ghanaians, both men and women who did not form part of my sample except for one woman who came through the Transkei (Cecilia) and another who came in 1985 but directly from Australia and who had no contact with those from Transkei. During the process of data collection, I realized that there was a missing

link which my informants could not provide. This missing link was the history of the Ghanaian presence in South Africa. This is because most of the women who form my sample came to South Africa just before or immediately after the fall of apartheid. Like I said, those who came around the early 1980s have remained in the Cape.

The first Ghanaians who came to South Africa were men who migrated by road through Uganda, Congo, Zimbabwe and finally were either working either in Lesotho or Swaziland. These men also came to Transkei which was the first homeland to gain independence under the Bantustan system and Ciskei the second homeland to gain independence. Upon attaining independence, the government of Transkei sent officials to Lesotho and Swaziland to recruit foreign skills, specifically in teaching in the secondary schools. In 1983, these Ghanaian men came to these areas and were asked to present their certificates which they did. The government officials sent them to the various Principals in the secondary schools and if the Principals wanted them, they had to report to the education officials who gave them contracts.

These Ghanaian men were not allowed to work anywhere else and their wives were not allowed to work under that system. At that time, hairdressing was an area which attention was not paid to, specifically because it threatened no one's interest. These women who were the spouses of the employed Ghanaian men, and could not get employment anywhere, started dressing black South African women's hair in their various homes.

Around 1983, there were no black hairdressers for women in South Africa. Following the apartheid system that was in place that prohibited black people from going to white areas, black women did not have access to hairdressing. They could not go to the white-owned salons. The whites on the other hand, did not have the technical know-how on black hair texture and type of chemicals that are needed for such hair. Most of the women who came from Ghana at that time were professional hairdressers and they brought with them their products from Ghana, which were used in dressing black hair. Their homes were the venues for hairdressing at this stage. When the business started booming and the Ghanaian women were becoming popular, their houses could no longer contain the large numbers that were queuing for their hair to be done. These women had to look for a means of opening a shop.

The first hair salon to be opened was in Bisho. This was facilitated by the fact that Magdalene, the wife of one of the teachers, who was also the first Ghanaian woman to be employed by the municipality, had a legal status, as a resident. She brought in her sister, Cecilia, one of my key informants to work in that salon. Magdalene now lives in King Williams Town and manages three hair salons across the Eastern Province. Newcomers from Ghana were easily attracted to hairdressing since it had become a major source of income and proved reliable. Some learned how to dress hair only when they arrived in South Africa and after a few months, they too started attracting many customers. For these women, hairdressing was not new and they could remember even as children, how they got exposed to it.



Cecilia Yebua (she is now 45 years old) recounts how as a child, she was exposed to hairdressing.

When I was ten years old, my mother's grandmother who was old at the time used to dress her hair. At times I heard her saying that she was going to get her hair done by my mother's sisters. They used an iron comb which was put in a coal stove for it to get hot. When it was hot, they applied shea butter on the hair and combed it out. This comb was called a stretching comb. The shea butter was used to prevent the hair from burning since the comb was very hot. Initially, after stretching the hair, they would plait the hair in a particular manner and the following day, it was combed out. When it was combed, it looked like the contemporary styles from the salons.

I remember also how my mother's mother and my mother used to use a soap in stretching their hair called Senior J. I also used it when I was a young girl. I was told that Senior J (a Ghanaian man) was the name of the man who introduced this soap. Immediately it was applied on the scalp, it had to be washed within five minutes else it would burn the scalp. This was the second method after the stretching comb before hair relaxers were introduced. Since Western education was introduced, women collected pens (old or used writing pens) and cut them into three pieces which they used in rolling the hair. At other times, they collected injection syringes from waste bins in the hospitals or through the mid-wives which were used in rolling hair with hair pins. When the hair was combed out, it looked like waves and it was from there that they learned how to style the finger waves which has made them popular. Before these women left home, they had the basic hairdressing skills which are stipulated by their culture and which form part of the identity of the Akan woman.

Anna Andoh (42years old) and Cecilia Yebua (45years old), two of my key informants and a cross-section of other migrants came to Durban to start their businesses in the early 1990s, just before the fall of apartheid. Just like any woman from Ghana, (especially among the Akan people from whom my informants come) it was imperative for them to have certain skills, especially in relation to feminine beauty. The identity of an Akan woman, especially in the pre-colonial era, was so special that one could look at her and be able to tell whether she was married, single etc. Among these people, there is a long history of hair culture. Different hairstyles signify different statuses in the society. If hair

was plaited in a particular style for a married woman, an unmarried woman was not allowed to have that same hair do. Thus, Akan women are known for having very healthy hair. Before Ghana was colonized, shea butter, which is used for hair growth and strengthening, was grown locally and processed traditionally. An Akan woman is expected by her peers to have neat hair and a neat outfit.

Having acquired such an entrepreneurial identity from childhood, Anna, Cecilia and a cross-section of other Ghanaian women in Durban were insinuated into a new social space in which the meanings that they attach to hair and their general outlook had to be revised, revisited and negotiated. This new social space which includes the black South Africa cultural context, is one in which ethnic identity, with special reference to a woman's hair was poised for interrogation. The nonexistence of a western mode of hairstyle among black South Africans, who are the target population for Ghanaian hairdressers, is related to apartheid policies. During the apartheid era, black South African women were not allowed into the white hair salons and didn't have the opportunity of doing their hair in the western fashion. So when the first Ghanaian men who came to teach in Lesotho and Swaziland brought their wives, these women had very long and healthy hair which was highly admired by black South African women (Ojong, 2003). Thus, Ghanaian women started dressing black South African women's hair. In the process and over the years, their hairstyles have undergone transformation.

### **5.2.2 The contemporary mélange and the in-betweenness of Ghanaian women's identity**

Ghanaian women entrepreneurs in Durban find themselves in new social spaces that are distinct from Ghana and South Africa. I believe that there is a 'mélange' or 'in-betweenness' of expression of identity of Ghana and the socio-cultural characteristics of South Africa. In their entrepreneurial activities, one can find evidence of the identity of both communities. Most of the women at some point tend to express some form of biculturalism, where they have internalized the multiple expressions of identity and demonstrate unique cultural practices of home and host country. For these migrant women, there is no clear-cut Ghanaian identity in the manner in which they carry out their entrepreneurial activities in South Africa. Ghanaian and South African identities have intersected. They have brought in their culture and invested in South Africa and have also learnt a South African culture.

Ghanaian hairdressers are originally good at braiding hair and styling with their fingers (finger waves, figure 1, p.205) while South African hairdressers are good at styling with the tongs. My informants have learnt also how to style with the tongs. Those who are not able to learn have hired South African skills. Often they mix the two modes in one hair do (figure 2, p.205 and figure 7, p.208). In the light of this, one could speak of a 'hybrid business', which refers to culture that is a product of two previously distinct cultures.

This allows us to understand that migrants form a new creolized form of identity. This is a combination of two distinct cultures. Appadurai (1991) on a more general note has emphasized the declining relevance of the borders between cultures.

### **5.3 Case studies of the in-betweenness of identity and entrepreneurship**

In 1992, Anna, one of my key informants, started her hair salon in Pine Street, Durban. She bought it from a white man who used to be the owner during the apartheid years. From 1990, after the release of Nelson Mandela from prison, black people who were formerly not allowed to own businesses in town, started businesses around the city centre. This recent development, however, made white hair salon businesses around the city centre less prosperous since white people felt uncomfortable coming to this area.

During the period 1990-1994, it was very difficult to open a hair salon for foreign Africans. The law stated that one could not open a hair salon close to another that was less than two kilometers apart down the road. Certain forms had to be filled at immigration posts with the potential entrepreneur's curriculum vitae which made it difficult for foreigners to own hair salons ( this is in accordance with the immigration law

on the issue of work permits). Most of the hair salons at that time were owned by white people. At that time also, there wasn't any opportunity for African migrants to have refugee status ( the refugee status allowed migrants to carry out any economic activity of their choice).

After 1994, it became relatively easier for any migrant to open a shop. This was facilitated by the new status a foreigner could get as 'refugee'. The outbreak of war in the Congo and Sierra Leone allowed the Republic of South Africa to open its doors to those who were fleeing war and conflict. Consequently, Africans from other countries arrived in South Africa under the umbrella of being refugees. When the refugee status was first initiated, it wasn't well defined and refugees were allowed to take up employment. This however has changed recently and refugees are given an initial one year work permit and with this, they are able to open hair salons. Anna was among the first women to secure such a permit.

Anna bought her business for R30, 000 and for the first six months, she was unable to make any profits from this business. Her business did not do well initially because this salon was owned by a white man and black people were not welcomed due to apartheid policies. When Anna bought the business, she changed the target population but black people were not aware of this change of ownership. So she changed the name of the salon and six months later, black people became aware of the change. She had to pay the rent which was R6,000 per month at that time, from her past savings. Her monthly rental

presently is R11,000 because each year her rentals increase by 12%. Her rental is expensive because of the location and the size of the shop.

When I asked her why she chose this location for her shop, she told me that since there was a demand for black hair dressing salons, she had to look for a way to supply it. In this wise, she had to locate her salon in a risk-free zone where her customers would feel safe at all times to come and have their hair done. Also, the shop had to be located where there would be a secure parking garage for her customers. This salon is located in Pine Street, where there a large parking called Nicol Square. She also took into consideration the fact women cannot just leave their houses or work places and go somewhere to do their hair. So, she located it around shopping complexes. Her idea was that after shopping, her customers would still come and do their hair even when they are tired. After all these considerations, she had to do what I call 'market segmentation'. This was important because in South Africa, we have whites, blacks, coloured and Indians. Her target population however is black and in this respect, she buys locally produced chemicals as well as importing some from Ghana, which are specifically suitable for black hair. Despite the fact that her business targets mainly black people, some white people come to have their hair done. However, these are mainly tourists who want a flavour of Africa and come in for braiding their hair.

Anna does both South African as well as other foreign African women's hair. Her relationship with her South African Zulu-speaking customers is important since over the years she has learnt to speak their language. With her relations with her fellow migrants,

especially Ghanaian women, there is some ambiguity, since some of them are her acquaintances and friends. There always seems to be some negotiations going on each time her friends or acquaintances come in for a hair do. She has to decide whether or not they should pay and at times it is up to these women to make a choice. Depending on how close she is to the friend/acquaintance (I have failed to determine how this is negotiated), at times she refuses the money offered. This happens often because Anna expects certain favours from her fellow migrants. Anna has to be careful how she deals with her South African customers when fellow Ghanaian women are present. She is careful not to allow them to feel uneasy or neglected. Should her South African customers feel neglected, they may never come back to her salon.

Even though Anna has the skills required to run her business, she cannot divide herself physically, especially because she now owns two hair salons. She has hired skilled Ghanaian men and women as well as South Africans to work in both salons. Over the years she has acquired some skills from South Africans which she combines with traditionally Ghanaian styles.

Immigrant entrepreneurship is not only about having a skill and running a business. Management and skill are entirely different things. Many Ghanaian women in Durban have hairdressing skills but because they lack managerial skill, they end up closing down the business and find themselves in debt. Some of them work for others because they lack the capital while some are not prepared to take the risk of starting a business.

Getting into the hair business, Anna knows she has to be creative because it is like fashion designing, where she has to innovate new hair styles if she wants to continue in the business. She goes through magazines, watches national and international television programmes, to look for different and new hairstyles. She tries these on her employees and takes photographs of them. When her customers admire the style, it now becomes a new fashion. In terms of protecting these new styles, she is very vulnerable. She says it is not possible to protect a new style from other stylists. Since there are many Ghanaian hairdressers in the city centre, one may walk in pretending to buy a product or paying a visit and copy the style. She isn't worried because even if they copy it, they are usually unable to do it the same way, or modify it. It is a competitive business and there is little she can do to protect a new hair style.

On the other side of the street are Cecilia's two hair salons, which quite close to each other. Cecilia opened one in 1994 just before the first democratic elections and the other in 2003. She, like Anna, bought the first salon from a white owner whose business was crumbling due to the fall of apartheid and the other from another fellow migrant entrepreneur who failed in managing it. She is a highly professional hair stylist who had obtained a diploma in hair dressing from the King Palace beauty salon in Ghana in 1980. She is among those who came through Transkei to KwaZulu-Natal. Before opening this hair salon in Durban, she had been running one at Umlazi (a township outside Durban) for five years. She said that she took a chance in 1994 to start this business because blacks had started moving to town. She needed about R35, 000 to start this salon, which



she had saved by dressing hair at her home and selling African printed fabrics and attire to black South Africans.

Cecilia is one of the most successful Ghanaian migrant entrepreneurs in Durban. She now owns two of the busiest hair salons in the city centre. She has had her ups and downs in business. She has gone through difficult times when she thought that she would have to close down the business. Presently she is confident that she has not come this far to turn back. She stresses that running a hair salon does require many skills and therefore it is not an activity anybody can do. She explains that one needs both practical and inter-cultural skills to succeed. She has employed many Ghanaian men and women working for her and a few South Africans. She explains that it is important to always have Ghanaians around since South Africans believe in their skillfulness. Such perception by black South Africans is based on the reputation Ghanaian women have made over the years as the best hairdressers. This allows her to be able to take time away especially when it comes to going back to Ghana to bring hair products. She believes there is more efficiency when there are many Ghanaians in the salon.

Cecilia travels to Ghana about three times each year. Going home is an opportunity for her to learn the latest hair styles in Ghana, which she brings to her salons. For her, this is a very important strategy for survival. Both salons have the same name but in the one, she has put her younger brother in charge. She however moves between the two salons and all her customers know that the two salons belong to her.

## 5.4 Solidarity and Entrepreneurship

No matter what the migrant entrepreneur may tell the researcher is the driving force behind her/his entrepreneurial activity, the main reason why people go into business is to make profits. It is important to bear in mind that emigration is usually an individual decision and not based on a group decision. So while abroad, migrants are there to make the best of their migration decision. For Ghanaian women entrepreneurs in Durban, competition is the norm, since they are in the fashion business. The more exceptional the woman entrepreneur is in the different hairstyles she can offer to her customers, the more profit she is bound to make. In their study, Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) established that immigrant entrepreneurs use both the concepts of ‘bounded solidarity’ (the unification of a group of people that comes about due to the existence of a common experience) and ‘enforceable trust’ (the existence of social obligations that provide group members with economic advantage and opportunities) to succeed entrepreneurially.

Without participant observation and indepth interviewing, one may think that these concepts are active among Ghanaian women entrepreneurs in Durban. Apart from the hair salons owned by South Africans, almost all the hair salons in the city centre are owned by Ghanaians. In the early 1990s, there were only two hair salons owned by Ghanaians. What has happened so that today they have ‘taken over’ the city centre?

Anna, one of my key informants had this to say;

“hair dressing is a good business. One can compare the presence of many Ghanaians in the hair business to the clothing business in South Africa. In the

early 1990s in South Africa after the fall of apartheid, there was only Woolworths, Edgars and Foschini (clothing shops). Presently there are many clothing shops. Once a business is flourishing, it attracts other potential entrepreneurs. Since most of the Ghanaian women who come to South Africa have the skill (even those who come without the skill try and acquire it here), once they see a gap, they get in and fill it immediately”.

Paullina Kesiwah, another key informant feels that there is no absolute solidarity amongst Ghanaians.

“We do not help each other. The only help I give is to pay my workers so that they can be able to take care of themselves”.

While Paullina’s feelings are shared by most of the women, the Ghanaian men who are involved in this activity feel differently. Since most of them come to South Africa as carpenters, electricians, or bricklayers, fellow Ghanaian men who are already established in hairdressing take these men who often find themselves on the streets selling sweets into their salons and teach them hairdressing, at no cost. When they have acquired the necessary skills, they will work in the respective salon until they have saved enough capital to open their own hair salons. Also, unlike women, the men often have discussions on business performance and during these informal meetings/discussions, different hairstyles and techniques as well as new available hair products in the market are discussed. By so doing, they are able to learn from each other. This explains the reason why when I posed similar questions about solidarity which I asked the women, I was told that there is solidarity.

There are two ways these women carry out their hair businesses. Some have the skill and start their businesses, while others don’t have the skill but have the capital so they start

the business and hire the skill. Once they have succeeded in starting one business, they want to get a greater share of the market. These leads them to having more than one hair salon, and to bringing in fellow Ghanaians to work for them. Hence the presence of many Ghanaians in the city centre.

Although most of the women feel that there is no solidarity amongst them, there are certain practices which I observed which could be seen as an aspect of solidarity. One of the first behaviours that I observed was the fact that once someone comes from Ghana with products be they hair products or food items like palm oil which is a well-treasured commodity, everyone is informed. Although, as I realised, kinship plays a key role as to who becomes aware of the availability of a product first. The general rule is that everyone is told and even Ghanaians who are not in Durban are also informed. When products arrive, the women make sure that they get enough for themselves and thereafter they go on to inform their relatives and then others can be told. They then agree on how much to sell the product for and by so-doing, they are able to protect their niche markets. At other times, some of them may not have money to buy such products but then it is common practice for others to lend them the money on the basis of no interest charged.

Does this mean that there is no solidarity among these women? This is highly debatable and brings me to the reason why I see it as 'fragmented solidarity'. To a certain extent, one could say that there exists some sort of solidarity amongst them. This is clearly revealed by the fact that certain products, for example shea butter, Alban hair food and Hair Grow (used in enhancing growth and hair strengthening) are found only in Ghanaian

hair salons. Those Ghanaians who import these products don't usually supply them to South Africans and even when they do, they supply it at far higher prices. This is because they are trying to have a protected market.

If we agree that there is absolute solidarity amongst them, how can they be a group without an association? When I did research in 2001, Ghanaian entrepreneurs had formed an association with social and economic obligations towards other Ghanaian migrants. This group of people finds it difficult to separate themselves from the forces of globalization and modernity which are breaking into every culture. When Ghanaians had their association which was an attempt to revitalize their cultural practices from their home country, the forces of modernity which come with capitalism and individualism set in. Since as I said earlier, the main reason why these people are here is to make profits, this association disintegrated. Some of the members did not want to 'support other peoples' projects' as they put it plainly. Unlike other areas in South Africa where Ghanaians have cultural meetings organized on a monthly basis, the ones in Durban have failed to maintain such a group.

However, when I went back in February 2005 as I was concluding my writing-up, I heard that one of my informants (Yaa) had died in a car accident. Although the Ghanaian association in Durban had collapsed, former members were still able to contribute R200 each her close friends contributed more, to assist in her funeral. Paulinna, a friend of Yaa, told me that she contributed R800 because she was a good friend to her and that she will miss her. The corpse was then transported to the Eastern Cape, where most of her family

members are, since it would have been too expensive to transport the corpse back to Ghana.

The issue of the protected market spoken of by Aldrich and Waldinger (1990) does not apply to these business women. This is because none of them actually can assist a fellow Ghanaian to start such a line of business except in situations where family members are involved. As one of their strategies for survival, the women introduce new hairstyles. In terms of protecting this new style, they are very vulnerable. It is not possible to protect a style from being copied. Since there are many hairdressers in the city centre, at times one may come in pretending to be a customer and copy the style. They are in a competitive market so there is little they can do to protect a new hairstyle.

The new identities based on kin, non-kin and cross-cultural connection enable these women to succeed entrepreneurially. It is important to emphasize that the construction of identity is a process which is specific to the way people struggle to express their experiences. Seeing themselves as successful entrepreneurs has given these women the economic independence they and every Ghanaian woman need in life. These women have made strategic decisions (moving from one cultural milieu to another) and deployed their identities in an advantageous manner.

These Ghanaian women are aware that they are relying on aspects of different cultural knowledge to succeed entrepreneurially. How they succeed in moving from one cultural

milieu to another depends on their drive to succeed. These attributes are exercised in their daily entrepreneurial activities. It could be seen as a strategy for survival in business. The growing importance of Ghanaian women's entrepreneurial activities in Durban and its consequences in terms of identity has to be interrogated further. In studying issues of identity among immigrant entrepreneurs, we have to be careful not to fall into the trap of using a bounded conception of identity. As has been shown earlier, cultural hybridity can be very helpful in understanding these women's identity in relation to their businesses.

It is important also not to neglect the fact these women are tactical in the different strategies they use in succeeding entrepreneurially. They are aware that they are dealing in a competitive market and have devised diverse strategies for survival. Their situation is complex and their ability to move from one cultural milieu to another is highly admired by their South African counterparts.

#### **4.5 Being Ghanaian and entrepreneurial opportunities in South Africa.**

The death of apartheid in 1994 in South Africa opened a new page in the history of African immigrant entrepreneurship. This era has made Ghanaian women place less value in their old proverb which goes that 'a bird in hand is worth ten in the bush'. This era saw an increasing presence of Ghanaian women leaving the certainty of the known in their home country to the uncertainty of the unknown. Why are these women prepared to

sacrifice all? Is it because a bird in hand is no longer worth what a bird was worth twenty years ago? Or is it because they believe that the fields of South Africa are still virgin for them to exploit?

Since culturally it is stipulated that they should be prepared to seize opportunities, the fall of apartheid and opportunity for hairdressing (an unexploited area or a virgin field), gave these women the opportunity of 'doing what they how to do best'. The word 'virgin field' as used in this section does not have a literal meaning or connotation. From an entrepreneurial perspective, it does reflect that such a line of business activity has been unexploited, uninfluenced by any other entrepreneur or group of entrepreneurs. This virgin field could as well represent an environment which the prospective entrepreneur has a 'free hand' to exploit. Ghanaian entrepreneurial activity in hairdressing in South Africa can be seen as a line of business activity that was discovered or introduced for the first time. That is the reason why I call it 'virgin fields'.

An average Ghanaian woman is taught from childhood to be able to perceive opportunities and seize them. Such was the case of the virgin field of hairdressing in South Africa just before and after the fall of apartheid. Before this period, hairdressing among black South African women was non-existent. Mary, like most of my informants narrates the hairdressing situation among black South Africans, when they just arrived.

In 1982 when my husband and I came to South Africa from Australia, black South African women were neither using hair relaxers nor hair extensions to dress their hair. They used to keep their hair short like men.



Many questions came to my mind as I ponder about what is essential and what is not about being Ghanaian (in relation to success in hairdressing) in post-apartheid South Africa.

- When does their Ghanaian identity super-impose itself over the African identity of these women?
- Under what set of circumstances do they purport to be African?
- Is their affiliation with the local population an ideocentric or a metaphoric one?

Several months of fieldwork brought me to an inter-face of un-packing the processes and circumstances of immigrant ethnic identification. My experience and interaction with Ghanaian women entrepreneurs in Durban has made me understand that the process of ethnic identification (especially across borders) is synthesized with a high level of sophistication. For many centuries, human beings have always had the tendency to identify with or be identified with an ethnic group. Those internal and external ascriptions are normally based on some observed physical attributes of individuals or a group of people. Dashefsky (1976:8) concur that group identification involves not only a recognition that because of one's ancestry one is a member of a racial group and a recognition that the majority group defines one as belonging to that group; it also involves a positive desire to identify oneself as a member of a group and a feeling of pleasure when one does so. Holzberg (1975:142) stresses that to the extent that individuals are conscious of their common identity, they share cognitive orientations as well. This is not to say that all members of an ethnic group share

uniformly isomorphic cognitive maps, but rather that their idea systems overlap. Thus, in certain instances, they share capacities for mutual prediction. The focus here is on how individuals manipulate their ethnic identity for the purposes of social interaction.

Since social identities are constructed in interaction, their meaning and existence are therefore constantly negotiated, revised and revitalized. For immigrant entrepreneurs, identification becomes essential especially with interaction with the target group for personal business gains. Hutchinson and Smith (1996) assume that claims to ethnic membership arise and change according to situational variable circumstances and interests. In different social time and space, immigrants have a variety of possibilities of identification that overlap. This would however mean that, depending on the economic or social aspects of interest to an immigrant, such claims becomes very crucial.

Based on the mindset of many black South Africans that Ghanaians are the best hairdressers (Ojong, 2002), many Ghanaian women, even those who never did professional hairdressing back in Ghana, are using their ethnic identity to enhance their entrepreneurial aspirations. Mary, like most of the women I interviewed, is an example of how people use ethnic identity to succeed entrepreneurially.

Below is an extract from an interview I had with Mary;

## 4.6 Case Study

Mary's husband was fortunate in winning a scholarship donated by the Australian government to Ghana. Mary at that time was working as a clerk but she has an entrepreneurial background since her mother used to bake bread and sell the loaves. In 1982, when Mary's husband had qualified with a doctoral degree in Australia, he got a job as a lecturer in South Africa at the, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. They moved from Australia and she remained a housewife till 1984 when she opened her first hair salon. Here is her account of her experience:

I didn't go to any school to learn how to dress hair. I just realized that, everywhere I went, black South African women were asking me to do their hair because they said they have heard that any one who comes from Ghana knows how to dress hair. I realized that it was an opportunity for me to be engaged in an activity that will bring income. I didn't know very much about hair dressing at that time, except putting relaxers on natural hair and combing it out. I just remembered that at home, you push yourself to do something which you have never done before. My instinct taught me what to do. While my husband was lecturing at the university, I opened my salon and employed one girl. At that time, there were only three black hair salons in Pietermaritzburg. The different hairstyles at that time were not as complicated as they are now. All I did was relax women's hair and set it for them. As time went on, the business grew and I employed one other girl, a South African who had learnt hairdressing, who could style hair using the tong. That was in 1998.

In 2000, we moved to Durban because my husband was given the position of Head of Department of Housing in the municipality. I sold that salon for R45.000 and was lucky to find a place in West street in Durban where I am till date. Over the years, I have learnt new skills and I am still learning. I have learnt to play with the mentality of some of my customers and I am able to stay in business. For most of my customers, once they see someone with very long and beautiful looking hair, they will immediately want to use the same products that the person uses not knowing that different hair textures require different products. I try to explain to them that the same product will not have the same effect on their hair. When they don't agree, I would pretend to use the product they requested and when their hair

looks beautiful, they always come back to me. Should I use the product they request and the hair come out ugly, they will say that I don't know how to dress hair and not blame it on the wrong hair relaxer they requested. This is a tactic my South African counterparts don't use. They use whichever product the customer requests and if the hair doesn't look beautiful, it is up to the customer. I have realised that what a customer needs is satisfaction and most of them come to the salon to dress their hair without even knowing the colour of the products.

Apart from the above, I have learnt to improvise some styles. When I see a new style, I don't copy it the same way, I style something around that style. This makes it look different. Most of the styles, I copy from Ghana apart from the catalogue. Each time I go home, having become a specialist, I just look at the styles and I immediately know what to do. In copying a style, I try to use other chemicals to make it look different. For instance, if styling gel was used in styling, I will use buffer shampoo to achieve the same goal. I always stock good products like Ladine and Excel products produced locally as well products from Ghana. Most of my customers think that Ghanaians are more professional in the way they do hair than their South African counterparts. Since they think we are, we try to prove it and that is why we succeed.

For these women to continue to prosper in the hairdressing business, they have to continue to remain Ghanaian. Their future in this sort of business depends on their ability to continue to define a common belonging. Some of the things that may help define them could be their food, language, dressing, hair products, etc, which are all cultural markers. These are some of the indicators that help others; especially their South African customers recognize them as Ghanaians. Their continuous identity is very useful also to those future entrepreneurs who may want to venture to South Africa. Remaining in the group also enables them to continue to know where and how to get their hair products, especially those imported from Ghana. This is achievable through networks of embedded relationships. This is one of the major strengths behind their entrepreneurial success. Being Ghanaian enables them easy access to imported products from Ghana which may not be accessible to outsiders and at cheaper prices than locals will have to pay.

The way these women imagine their capabilities in terms of what they have achieved can be traced to the different identities; Ghanaian, African, West African, Akan, etc. In the words of Appadurai (1996:52) more people all over the world are exposed to a wide range of possible lives than ever before. All these different possibilities have increased the chances of Ghanaian women succeeding entrepreneurially. In South Africa, they do have a plurality of socially constructed identifications to help them carry on in business. In this context where they have to liaise with other West Africans for certain services like products (hair products like virgin hair fertilizer, Jeba hair food, Agkani face cream, food items like *garri* (cassava which has been grated and fried), palm oil and other foodstuff) from Nigeria and at the same time maintain their African identity to be able have South African customers, this diversity of identity is a very useful instrument.

## **Chapter Six**

### **The economics of the entrepreneurial activities in Durban**

Entrepreneurship has always been used by immigrants as a channel of sustaining life abroad. Starting small businesses with the relatively small amount of capital needed at the start-up stage has been a means by which immigrants survive economic embarrassment, with the basics of food and shelter. Entrepreneurship for African immigrant women in South Africa has not only meant having food on the table and a shelter, but has given them economic independence and social recognition and respectability. This has insinuated a slight change of lifestyle and expectation specifically because back in their home countries, these women are often seen as failures. Back in Ghana, hair dressers are mostly those girls and women who drop out of school either because they fell pregnant or because their parents could not afford school fees.

As a rule, the vocational training schools which most of my informants attended and where they learned how to cook, sew and dress hair are not among the prestigious schools in Ghana. These schools are there to provide girls with the basic skills needed for survival, when life provides no suitable alternatives to them. Back in Ghana, a majority of hairdressers cannot accomplish as much as the ones in South Africa which is the reason why many of them are immigrating to South Africa.

These are the women who can afford to visit Ghana two or three times a year, something which comes as a luxury for those are employed in the civil service, who can go home once in two or three years. Ghanaian women entrepreneurs have used entrepreneurship to, as one of my informants said 'kick poverty out of their lives'. Immigrant entrepreneurship as I have observed, is not an impromptu action. It is a calculated, premeditated decision taken under the influence of many factors, most of which are not under the control of the immigrants concerned. Usually regarded as push and pull factors, my focus here is on how social/economic factors influence the choice decision of migration. The consequences of such decisions are not reflected in bounded spaces, but on trans-national borders

## **6.1 Factors that led the women to emigrating from Ghana.**

### **6.1.1 Situational/environmental factors**

Most of the women who were interviewed for this research came from the Akan cultural grouping, who are the leading cocoa producers in Ghana. A brief look at the history of their encounter with cocoa production explains to a large extent why these women and many other Ghanaian men could no longer afford to live in Ghana when cocoa which was the major source of income could no longer sustain them.

Before the introduction of cocoa among the Akans, the first and most important item of legitimate trade to emerge in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was palm oil, used for cooking and in the manufacture of detergents, and exported from Ghana (then Gold Coast) from 1820

(Briggs 1998: 31). This was necessity of a small scale trade harvested from wild palms, but plantains were slowly established also. By 1850, palm oil was the principal export and by the 1880s it accounted for almost 75% of export revenue (Briggs 1998: 31).

1879 marked a pivotal moment in economic development with the return of Tetteh Quarshie to Ghana from Fernando Po with a few cocoa seedlings which he planted in his garden in Mampong (Briggs 1998). Mampong is in the Akan Ashanti area of which Jesikan is part. This explains the reason why the Akans were the first group of people in Ghana to be exposed to cocoa production. The climate of this area and soil proved ideal for growing cocoa and it was exported from 1891. By 1935, Ghana was supplying half of the world's cocoa. The cocoa industry favoured the small scale farmer and it was estimated that in 1951, roughly 500,000 people were employed by the cocoa industry or earned their primary income from cocoa production (Briggs 1998).

All the women who form my sample grew up believing that cocoa was an indigenous crop since it was being handed down from one generation to another. This makes one think that indigenous plants or crops depends on people's memory. As long as people cannot recall where a particular plant came from, it becomes indigenous to them. In Jesikan, almost every family has cocoa farms since they are inherited. Most families have one or two farms and some even move out to other villages to buy land which they use in growing cocoa.



Men usually own the cocoa farms. Women do not own land or any property. A woman may be given some property like land to grow her crops but when she dies, the property does not pass down to her children. They will go back to her father's house. Women however grow cassava, cocoyam, plantains, maize, pepper, okra, groundnuts, *egusi* (melon seeds), and other vegetables. Money that comes from the production of cocoa comes once a year and women cannot depend on such an income which comes only towards the end of the year. They produce these crops mentioned above to take of their families and their personal needs. Cocoa is harvested only around October, November and December. However, December is the peak season for harvesting. When it is harvested, it is then sold to state agents after it has been dried and weighed.

In Jesikan, women wield some degree of power in the sense that they are able to keep the money gotten from the sale of crops which they produce. They are able to do this irrespective of the fact that their husbands render their services in women-owned farms. Cocoa, however, brings in more money and therefore, it only men who own it except in certain instances when a father's sister may own a cocoa farm. People in this area depended greatly on cocoa production until around the 1970s when the economic situation started worsening and the people started leaving for Nigeria which at the time was experiencing oil boom. Essential commodities like salt, evaporated milk and toothpaste came from Nigeria.

The women narrated that, as far back as in 1983, there was a severe drought that hit the entire country, the situation worsened and in Jesikan, cocoa farms dried up. There were

bushfires which destroyed a lot of cocoa and other cash products and life became unbearable for many people. This was as a result of the weather in 1983 with drought that cut cereal production from 518,000 tons in 1982 to only 450,000 at a time when an extra one million had to be fed after expulsion from Nigeria (website 3) This led to chronic food shortages which were aggravated by a massive influx of one million Ghanaian workers who were expelled from Nigeria (the famous ‘Ghana must go’).

The situation was bad because the cocoa which was produced at that time took about five years once it was planted to reach maturity. It is only recently that the hybrid form has been introduced which takes about two years to mature. After the drought, people re-planted cocoa and moved out of Jesikan until after five years before they could get any hope of getting some money from cocoa production. This made parents realise that the soil has failed them and the rains could no longer be trusted since they had become unreliable. The only other option was out-ward migration which was proving able to bring prosperity in just a few months or one year.

Also, with the increase in literacy, young men are moving away in search of white-collar jobs. Presently, when young men inherit cocoa farms who are educated, they are either working in big cities like Accra and Kumasi or abroad, and they employ labourers who work in these farms.

### **6.1.2 Effects of the structural adjustment Plan**

Increasingly, some of the social/ economic factors that lay some sort of a background or facilitated the Ghanaian women's decision to emigrate can be blamed on, in a very big way, the effects of the structural adjustment plan (SAP) in Ghana. The structural adjustment program implemented by the International Monetary Fund as a means of helping most African countries come out of debt ended up with many civil servants losing their jobs and those who stayed on had a reduced salary. Those who were once employed could no longer find jobs and as a result ended up in the informal sector. Most of my informants did refer to the negative consequences of the SAP and the negative consequence it has had on those whose survival was solely based on the informal sector activities. As a prelude to the migration of peoples of other African countries to South Africa is the fact that the states of Africa have experienced dramatic changes since colonial rulers transferred to their African successors. These states are burdened by debts and external direction of their policies. In 1999, their total external indebtedness amounted to approximately US \$236.000million (Williams 2001). What happened is that during the 1970's, governments in Africa borrowed money, far beyond their capacity to repay, from commercial banks, foreign governments and the World Bank. During the 1980's, these governments were confronted with declining exports and high real interest rates for their long and short-term debts. The debt crisis both created the need and provided the opportunity for the introduction of the structural adjustment policies by the IMF and the World Bank. The implementation of the SAP policies saw many citizens of

African countries, south of the Sahara being retrenched and thus the encroachment of the informal sector.

Back in Ghana, they claim, SAP has pushed many people who were employed in the formal sector to encroached on the informal sector activities. One of my key informants, Maria, puts it this way:

As a little girl, after dropping out of school because my parents could no longer afford school fees, I was sent to a hairdressing salon, where I learnt how to dress hair. After I completed my course, I opened my own hair salon where I was managing until many people who had been working with the government started opening salons. This business became so over flooded that I could hardly pay my rentals. By 1997 when I left Ghana, there was hardly a difference between those who went to school and those of us who did not because we were all doing the same things. Thus when I had the opportunity through Paullina who first came to South Africa and in 1994 and was repatriated in 1995 but returned in June of the following year, to come to South Africa, I did not hesitate.

Paullina and I know each other from way back in the 1980s when we both attended 'My source girls' Secondary School in Kumasi. I was born in Kumasi and spent most of my teenage years there. When I dropped out of school in 1981, I went to Accra where I lived with my mother's elder sister who was a dealer in beauty products. In Accra, I started braiding women's hair at home and at other times, I helped my mother's sister to sell in her shop. Before this time, I had no professional knowledge of hairdressing. When my mother's sister discovered that I was good with my fingers, she sent me back to Kumasi and registered me as an apprentice with King's Palace Beauty salon. I learnt hairdressing for two years and in 1985 I completed my course and went back to Accra. With the assistance of my mother's sister, (she considered me as her child especially because she did not have children and my mother was her only sister), I opened a hair salon in Accra which I ran until 1997 when I left Ghana.

When Paullina was in South Africa, we used to write to each other and I was surprised to see her back in Ghana just one year after she left. Since she had told me to be saving money to eventually come to South Africa, I had saved three hundred thousand cedis, which she borrowed and used in paying her travel fare back to South Africa. She promised to assist me in coming to South Africa, which she did. We are still good friends and I owe my present success partly to her coming to South Africa. If she hadn't come here, I wouldn't have been in this

country. I would say that I was succeeding with my business back at home until Structural Adjustment Plan came.

Presently, although I am succeeding in my business, spiritually I am not happy because of the means I used in securing my stay in this country. I am now married to a fellow Ghanaian but I am also married to a South African man. Although I do not have any relationship with the South African man, I feel that I am living in sin because I am married to two men. The situation is even worsened by the fact that my real husband (Ghanaian) is also married to a South African woman. When we both think about it we feel like going back home to face the economic hardship and be free from lies.

Another informant, Cecilia, also had similar sentiments when she said:

In South Africa, we are seen as the ones stealing South Africans' jobs. I do not blame South Africans when they say that because I have been there. I know how it feels when some super giant comes with all the knowledge and puts you out of business. The civil servants back in Ghana stole our jobs. With all the money they got when they were retrenched, they had all the capital to buy sophisticated equipment that we could not afford. They came and stole our jobs and we were put out of business.

These women who initially had been predisposed to self-employment and entrepreneurial activities are now seeking asylum in the international economies, with South Africa playing a crucial role in attracting them with its vast market potential. It now seems as though the survival of the fittest phenomenon is re-introducing itself in a country that has long passed the age of amphibians.

### **6.1.3 Social influence**

The “going abroad syndrome” perpetuated by family members of those who are abroad is a factor pushing many Ghanaians abroad. Families will do everything possible just to

have someone abroad. It is believed that once one member of the family is abroad, that family has made it in life since they can now rely on that person for financial assistance.

Recognising that Ghanaian men who were employed as lecturers in the different universities in South Africa had to travel with their spouses, most of whom knew only hairdressing as a career, it was obvious that they will occupy this sector. This group of women were the first to introduce hairdressing in South Africa, through Transkei, which was the first homeland to gain independence. This trend seems to have increased the presence of Ghanaian women in South Africa, who later brought their sisters and brothers to work in the hairdressing sector. A common saying by one of my informants ‘show me a Ghanaian community in South Africa and I will show you the hairdressers’.

The women in this study indicated that there are many hairdressers in Ghana and before most of them left, it had become common practice for two or three women, who are unrelated, to pool their resources together to run one hair salon. Under such circumstances, there would be the initial owner and the others attach themselves as ‘shareholders’. Some of these women then decided to leave the country and establish on their own after acquiring further skills from their co-shareholders. Also, most of them said that they heard of success stories told to them by people living in South Africa. Even those who were teachers in South Africa who went home to visit told them that there were not as many black hairdressers in South Africa as they are in Ghana and that by immigrating to South Africa, they would have the opportunity of establishing on their own and being successful.

## 6.2 Power relations and the economics of the family

For the women who form my sample population, whether they are married or single, entrepreneurship in South Africa has meant a shift in terms of decision making in their lives. The money they earn from their activities is administered by them. Having access to money and complete control over it is very important because it contributes to a woman's independence (Pellow 1977, Dei 1994). Their parents or husbands play a less significant role in the decision making process. Although they do have respect for either their husbands or parents, the main decisions are taken by these women. Most of the women I interviewed have separate bank accounts from their husbands (for those who are married) and they are the sole signatories to these accounts. They usually provide for the daily food and clothing requirements in the family. Other expenses like house rentals and medical requirements are met together with their husbands. The women I spoke to often expressed their reluctance to allow their spouses to have complete access to their finances. Abner expressed her feelings concerning the administration of her finances,:

I came to this country alone, suffered, and now that I have managed to establish my business I cannot allow my husband to control it. You know, if a man has control over your finances, he has control over you. I assist him with the paying of rents. If he asks for money, I give it to him. If I allow him to control the money, then anything I want I will have to ask from him. No. I have passed that level. Anything I want now I just go and buy it.

Abner is happy that her entrepreneurship has enabled her to be self-reliant and she doesn't have to depend on her husband for economic survival. She doesn't feel that having control of her own money means having control over her husband. She said that it just helps her to have an equal say in the day-to-day running of the family's finances. She

and others are happy that they add to the family's income. These women have developed a high level of self-esteem for themselves. The fact that they are very creative and always bring in new business ideas helps their businesses to prosper, at times more than those of their husbands'.

In terms of power relations which have to do with the old stereotype of a man being the main bread winner, these women who are high achievers are seen by other Ghanaian men as bossy. These women are not prepared to lay down their achievements simply to boost their husbands' masculine pride. Thus, they are prepared to negotiate with their husbands as long as it doesn't tamper with their economic independence.

Most of the Ghanaian women I interviewed are very ambitious and are struggling to become wealthy. They all have different strategies on how to prosper which at times conflict with those of their husbands. This does not suggest that their husbands are not willing to prosper but that most of the women are the innovators. The women see themselves as agents of their fortunes and are prepared to advance their lives and activities.

When I was in Ghana, I had thirty apprentices. It was a school in its own right. When I came to South Africa, I realized that it was expensive to open one and I also needed a license to do so. What I have been doing is hiring girls and paying them while at the same time teaching them. This is not my country. In Ghana you pay to learn. But here, they just come to look for work. I do it because I want a reason to stay. Even if the government doesn't see what I am doing, I am educating its citizens. Now that I have established two salons, I am trying to save enough money and then open a school of hairdressing. It may sound impossible, but I know I can do it. When I came to South Africa, I didn't have even a bed, let alone



a salon. Now I have two. Anything is possible. My husband thinks I am crazy. But I will make it (Abner).

It would be an over-statement on my part to say that these women enjoy absolute independence as the migration experience does not oust one's cultural practices as has been demonstrated in other parts of this work. Ghanaian culture stipulates that a man is supposed to take care of his household. Although the same culture also expects a woman, through specialisation to be engaged in profitable employment, it is the responsibility of the man to provide for his household. The men are still the heads of their households, especially as seen in the eyes of outsiders (Ghanaians in Durban). This is especially demonstrated in public gatherings when such men take all the decisions and the women submit to them.

### **6.3 The acquisition and transmission of hairdressing skills**

In post-apartheid South Africa, a small but significant number of women from Ghana are establishing themselves as professional hairdressers. This economic activity has enabled these women to be economically independent. Below, I will be discussing the various strategies which Ghanaian women use in acquiring and perfecting existing skills in South Africa. At emigration, most of these women left with hairdressing skills that enabled them to be self supporting when they first arrived in South Africa. Some on the other hand, relied on their cultural knowledge and have used the 'on-the -job' skill acquisition technique to establish themselves.

A long tradition of women's involvement in hairdressing in Ghana is a major contributing factor to the levels of success of these women. The medium mostly used in Ghana is apprenticeship. Under this system, skills are taught for specificity and technicality (Fluitman 1992). This system provides a woman with the ability to dress hair and also a means of transmitting that knowledge. I see an apprentice as someone who works with another person with the aim of acquiring similar skills. During the period of my fieldwork, I found out that apprentices learn firstly by observation and subsequently, by 'trial and error'. This is usually done by working on their fellow apprentices and also on new customers' hair. At the city centre hair salons, Ghanaian women do not teach their apprentices. They expect these apprentices to teach themselves. This system is well organized in Ghana, especially in the hairdressing salons. Ghanaian women are using it in South Africa since it is the medium through which they acquired their skills. Apprenticeship in Ghana I was told, is designed to complement schooling, not replace it.

Ghanaian women use the apprenticeship system in South Africa to transmit skills but not in the same way as it is used in Ghana. Through observation and questioning, I have established the different levels of entry and skill transmission from Ghanaian women to South African women. This is examined below.

Most of the South Africans who are employed in Ghanaian owned hair salons, are employed only with hair washing skills, whereas the Congolese who are employed come to South Africa as professional hairdressers.

Hairdressing is a practical field. During my period of fieldwork, I observed that whenever someone (whether a Ghanaian, Congolese or South African) comes to any of the salons looking for a job, the person is given a trial during a weekend when the business is busy. They are sent to take care of a client's hair and in the mean-time, the owner will be observing. The manner in which either hair relaxer or hair rollers are put on the client is the first indicating factor determining whether or not the person is a professional hairdresser. I describe this first stage as a form of an interview, but a very practical one in which only observation is done. Observation alone on my part was insufficient to explain how this type of interview is done. I will use the response from Paullina Kesiwah to explain the dynamics of this procedure. Please note here that it is the same procedure which is used in all the Ghanaian owned hair salons.

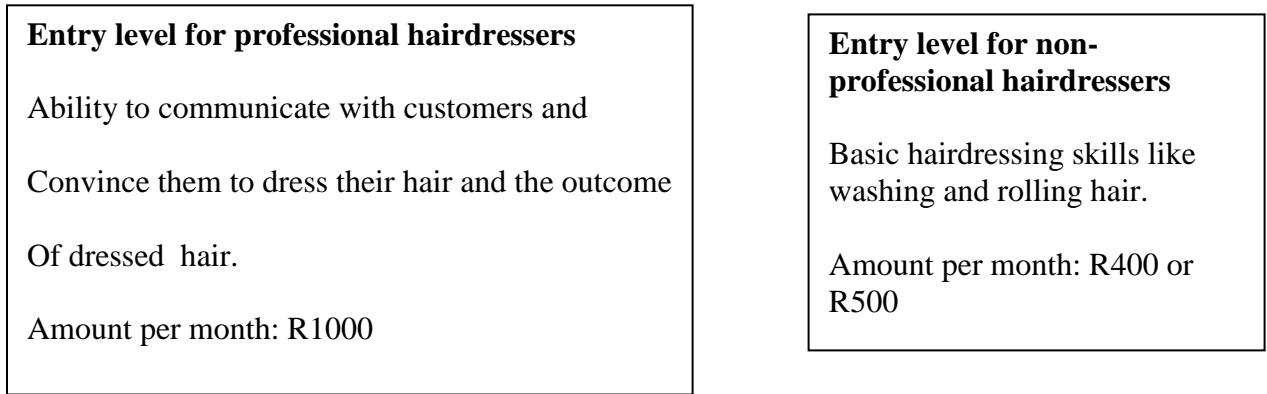
When a girl comes to my salon looking for a job, I do not tell her that there are no vacancies because probably she might have some new techniques which could boost my business. My main principle is 'if you say that you know how to dress hair, I don't dispute it, I give you the opportunity to prove it'. The moment the girl places rollers or relaxer on a customer's hair, I will know (being a professional myself), whether she is an experienced hairdresser. You know what? Professional hairdressers have a way of holding a styling comb and a non-professional cannot hold it the same way. Just observing the girl roll hair, I am able to tell whether such a person can work fast under pressure or is a slow person. A slow person is not taken because she will spend much time on one customer while others will be waiting in the queue and may even leave because she is slow. The way she picks a comb from a roller trolley, tells me where to place her.

When the prospective employee is graded as someone whose skills are needed, she and the employer sit down and discuss the mode of payment. In other towns or among South African hairdressers, the mode of payment is ten percent (10%) on every hairstyle done. But among Ghanaian women hairdressers, employees earn a standard salary at the end of

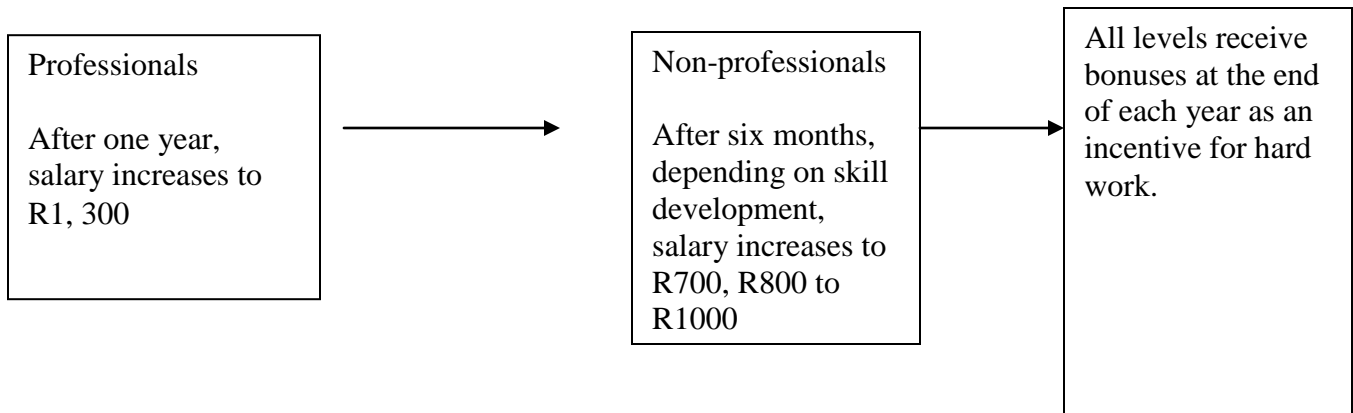
each month. Either mode of payment has its advantages and disadvantages for the employers. In peak seasons, the employer who uses the percentage system does not make as much profit as the one who uses the standard salary system. Also, when the business is not making a profit, those who use the standard salary system have to pay employees from their past savings. I realised that employees prefer the standard salary which they can budget with and not worry about business uncertainties.

At entry level, professional hairdressers are offered R1,000 per month and non-professionals start with R400 or R500. The women all indicated that they are not happy paying people who do not know how to dress hair who are supposed to be paying them. They said that they continue paying as a motivating factor for them staying in business (employing South Africans and transmitting skills). In Ghana, apprentices pay to learn. The girls who come in earning R400 a month subsequently learn and earn higher. As they spend time in the salon and learn and can be trusted with some customers' hair, their salaries are increased to R500, R600, R700, etc. The professionals end up with R1, 300 per month.

**Figure 1 Different level of workers in hair salons and their salaries**



**After six months to one year of working in a salon**



The figure above demonstrates how Ghanaian women have been able to bring structure into an economic activity which is usually seen by most people as a form of informal

activity. From one hair salon to another, whether run by a man or a woman, it is the same structure. It is interesting looking at the different levels how South African women enter at the level which requires only basic skills and after six months or one year they are able to be trusted with customers' hair.

Apart from the above, there are other means through which skills are transferred from Ghanaians to South Africans. At times some South Africans walk into Ghanaian hair salons and ask them to teach them specific braiding styles. At other times, they just observe how some styles are done.

Lack of access to credit facilities has not been a disincentive for these Ghanaian women. They have devised alternative ways of expanding their businesses. Present enjoyment is sacrificed, therefore, most of their money is saved, which is used in acquiring other businesses. In the situation where they lack professionalism in doing certain hairstyles, they hire South Africans and learn from them.

### **6.3.1 Skills transmission: the myth**

The apprenticeship system operates in such a way that upon completion, a person is supposed to be a master in that field. It is expected that after acquiring skills, a person should be the 'carbon copy' of the master. No gaps are expected since such a person can now move on and buy the necessary equipment to start his or her own business. Having taken a close look at the hairdressing set-up in Durban and the process of skill acquisition

and transmission, I am tempted to believe that it is not a complete skill transmission. The process is debatable and leaves a lot of room for questioning. All the Ghanaian men/women I spoke to claim that they are transmitting skills to South Africans.

I will begin my argument by looking at the point of entrance into hairdressing by some Ghanaian women who had no skills in hairdressing before coming to South Africa. When such women opened their first hair salons, they employed South Africans who had learnt hairdressing and who could style hair using the tong. Styling with the tong was something which was exclusive to South Africa and even the Ghanaians who came here as professional hair dressers hired South Africans who had such skills in order to have a range of other options of hair styles. It would be an over-sight for one to think that Ghanaians have not acquired any skills from South Africans. During the period when those who were hired worked in the salons, the Ghanaians quickly learnt these skills. This is clearly seen by the hybrid nature of some of their hair styles (a blend of braids which is originally from Ghana and sections styled with the tong which is South African).

Without the assistance of South Africans, Ghanaians can presently style hair with the tongs. Can the South Africans who are still working in Ghanaian-owned hair salons do the same? Skills transmission is ironical as far as the South Africans are concerned. Several months of observation in the salons showed that there is a huge gap. As I observe, I realized that Ghanaians are needed at any point in the salon, especially in relation to the styling of particular hair styles. These are seen as exclusive to the specialists. When a customer's hair has been washed, rolled, dried, and oiled, the last

step, which is styling, deserves the professional's touch. The South African beckons to the Ghanaian woman. From my observation and interpretation, what the South African is saying is that 'this is where my knowledge ends'. The customers themselves are aware of this process and would allow the South Africans to handle other steps but not the final one, styling. My question is why are South Africans who are working in these salons not able to style, especially the finger waves?

A clear answer may be difficult and this I attribute to the process of apprenticeship in the first place. In South Africa, since apprentices do not pay to acquire skills, no time is dedicated by the Ghanaian women to ensure that the appropriate skills are acquired. Who then is to blame? Is it the South Africans who come into the hair salons with basic skills of washing and rolling hair, expecting to be paid a salary at the end of each month or the Ghanaians who think that South Africans have to pay to learn how to dress hair? I believe that a proper negotiation should be done at the beginning, from when the South Africans come in at the entry level on how the skills are to be acquired and transmitted.

## **6.4 Channels of entrepreneurial success**

Success by these women is seen differently. Some judge success by their ability to stay in business. Others judge it by their ability to expand business and others, by their achievements back in Ghana. Generally, success comes from whom they employ. Those who do not have the necessary skills have to employ people who will build the customer



trust. The belief is that 'once a customer is satisfied, they will always come back for a hair-do'. The people they employ can build or destroy the business. What I realised is that 'efficiency' is the motto. These women have mastered the days that their businesses are busy, like Fridays and Saturdays. On such days, by 7am, their salons are open while their South African counter-parts open their salons at 8am or 830am. Also during public holidays, most of the salons owned by South Africans are closed whilst those owned by Ghanaians are open. During these days, customers who do not have time to dress their hair make use of the salons which are open. Most of salon owners indicated that by working on public holidays they have been able to attract new customers to their salons who become regular customers.

The Ghanaian women migrated knowing how to bargain which is frequently practiced everywhere in West Africa. Following this practice, there is always the price as seen on the price tag and the bargain price. It is very typical of West Africans not to pay the price seen on the price tag and thus will always ask for a discount. South Africans, on the other hand, hardly bargain. At times some South African customers go to the Ghanaian owned hair salons and the moment they are told the price for a hairdo, realising they cannot afford the money, they simply walk away. They are unable to tell the hairdressers the amount they can afford. For instance if a relaxer like 'Soft n free' costs R50 to relax hair in the salon and the customer has R40, they are embarrassed to say so. However, since the Ghanaian women are aware of and prepared for bargaining, they approach the customer in a bid to know whether they cannot afford the R50 or are just inquiring. When they realize that the customer is willing to have her hair dressed but cannot afford the

amount, they then inform her that they are willing to give a discount and then ask them how much they can afford. This strategy enables Ghanaians to have many customers, more than their South African counterparts.

From the different interviews, I realised that the rentals in Durban city centre for shops are very high, ranging from R6,000 to R11,000 per month. Most of the Ghanaian women I spoke to who once owned salons but are currently working for others declared that after paying their workers and electricity bills at the end of each month, they found it difficult to pay their rentals as well as their apartment rents where they live. That is the reason why Paullina said that; *'when one is doing business, one has to be in business'*. Below are some of the strategies she uses:

Personally I am able to continue in business because I always step back and check at the end of each month where all the money that comes in goes. For instance, in January 2004 I realized that I spent much money paying workers. So in February, I cutdown the number of workers from 15 to 11. Those I sent away were those who were lazy. Those were the ones who always came late to work and were always out of the salon when we had many customers. I used to have 5 Congolese but now I have only 2. There are 7 South Africans and 2 Ghanaian men. The Congolese girls know how to dress hair and some of them work very hard.

In the city centre, there are some areas where the rentals are high, ranging from R11, 000 to R12,000 per month. These areas are accessible to customers and are located near the major car parks like Nicol Square car park in the city centre. These areas attract many customers, especially the well-to-do women who are afraid of being 'pick-pocketed'. Along these major streets, the police are always on patrol making it difficult for thieves to pick-pocket. Most of the women who own salons along the major streets are the professionals who were the pioneers in the city centre. The salons found between streets

like major passages between big buildings and those located on either the fourth or fifth floors of big buildings are much cheaper to rent. Per month, the women who rent shops around these areas pay between R5,000 and R6,000. However, depending on the different individuals, the various options for opening salons are weighed before they venture into business.

Some of the women decide to start their businesses at the high rental section and when they have enough customers, they move to the cheaper areas and direct their customers to these areas. For this group of women, there is a common belief that a track record of success is essential at the initial start-up stage and thereafter, they can successfully operate anywhere. For the other group of women who have decided to operate their businesses at the high rental sections, customer safety and satisfaction is the key to success and they are prepared to pay the price to achieve this. From observation however, I realized that hair salons that are located along the major streets have been able to attract high profile women who can easily be distinguished by the type of car they drive and the cell phone type they use. Some drive and park their cars right in front of the salon so that while their hair is being done, they can keep an eye on their car. On the other hand, those salons located at the low rental areas have attracted low profile women. But would be misleading to say that low profile women do not go to salons in high rental areas. These women do go to any salon of their choice irrespective of the location. When I inquired how the Ghanaian women feel about their ability/inability to attract certain groups of customers, they all indicated that they are in South Africa to make money and it does not matter from which group the money comes.

Apart from the location strategy, other strategies like the production of business cards are used. Most of the Ghanaian women have business cards which are given to customers who come into their salon for a hairdo with their signatures on it. Amongst the women who utilize the business cards are Abner, Paullina, Cecilia and Mary. The first time customers come to their salons and have their hair done, a business card is given to them. The customers are then requested to bring the business cards each time they come to have their hair dressed. Subsequently, the Ghanaian women sign their signatures on the cards brought by their customers and they are told that when the signatures appear ten times, they are eligible for a free hairdo. With this strategy, whenever customers think of dressing their hair, the first thing they do is to look for their cards and they try to get the hairdressers to sign ten times so that they could get a free hairdo. These business cards Mary reckons go further than Durban and recalls how in 2002 she received a call from someone from the United States of America who was visiting South Africa. The lady said that she saw Mary's business card in her sister's purse and wanted her sister to direct her to Mary's salon. This was how during her visit to South Africa, she was able to have her hair dressed in Mary's salon.

Among other strategies, Ghanaian women decide, when they realise that they do not have many customers coming to their salons, to make specials and put them on a board which is placed in front of their salons. People passing by will see that they can dress their hair at a reduced amount and rush to the salon. On such days, prices are reduced by about 10-20%. This attracts many customers who would otherwise not have done their hair.

Choosing the right product for the customer's hair is a very important ingredient for success. Once a customer is satisfied with a product that has been used on her hair, she credits it to the hairdresser.

Another strategy frequently used by these women which also be seen as a means of cutting operational cost, is by letting another person use two square metres in their salons to sell cell phones and accessories. Although some of them use it as a marketing strategy, most introduce it when they are struggling to cope with the increase in rentals.

## **6.5 The effect of social networks on entrepreneurship**

Aldrich (1999) long ago emphasised that people draw on their social relations to support start-ups for businesses and also that social networks make social capital available to help newcomers start businesses. From the Ghanaian experience which will be demonstrated below, one can conclude that different types of relations give rise to social capital. These relations, however, are not fixed but fluid, depending on the needs of the individual in question. These needs vary, ranging from the need for start-up capital, having access to a niche market or creating rapport with customers. All these social relations at some point become social capital in different ways.

One of the most important factors I see in a social network required for entrepreneurship is its ability to provide the necessary resources for the prospective entrepreneur. Looking at the social networks around Ghanaian migrant women, one can conclude that most of their social networks involve more than one type of activity. They have created social ties that have ties with other social ties, which are separate from each other, yet interconnected for the purpose of operating and running their businesses.

Ghanaian migrants in South Africa are pioneer migrants and have consciously developed and built the networks which newcomers are enjoying for entrepreneurship. I will try here to demonstrate how, through the social networks of family and friends, Ghanaian women have established themselves in hairdressing.

Through the influence of one contact in South Africa, a vast network back in Ghana of friends, neighbours, acquaintances and families are established as entrepreneurs. Apart from these very direct contacts, there are other direct contacts of a common Ghanaian nationality. Some of the networks are rooted in social ties back in Ghana, while others are created in South Africa. Through the social network of Magdalene, a Ghanaian woman, who is not a hairdresser herself, but a secretary by profession, a whole group or social network of family, friends, neighbours, have been established in South Africa as hairdressers.

In January, 1983, Magdalene and her husband Joseph left Swaziland where he worked as a teacher and came to Ciskei, then a homeland under the apartheid system (while under

the apartheid government Africans from other African countries were not welcomed in the Republic of South Africa, they were welcomed in the Bantustans, as teachers in the black South African schools). In Ciskei, Magdalene got a job at the municipality as a secretary. When she was in Swaziland, she realised that it was the Ghanaians who introduced professional hairdressing there and in Transkei, it was nonexistent. Magdalene did not open a hairdressing salon in Swaziland. Upon getting the job, she decided to open a shop where African printed fabric was sold. Before they moved to Transkei, she and her husband went to the United Kingdom where she made contact with the Holland Prints company and became an agent in Bisho, located about two kilometers from King William's Town.

The local South Africans bought these materials which they liked very much as they gave them an African identity. Anyone who wanted to be 'African' had to wear these African prints as a public demonstration of who they were. As these prints are becoming fashionable, the people who came to buy often said that if they had someone who could sew them properly for them, they would be very happy. The South Africans started desiring West African styles since most of the wives of Ghanaian men who were employed as teachers wore them on regular basis. Thus, there became a need for someone with the expertise from Ghana to sew these materials. In September of the same year, Magdalene decided to bring her younger sister Diana, who had just finished her apprenticeship in dress-making in Ghana, to Ciskei.

When Diana arrived, she and Magdalene placed the sewing machine in the same shop so that people could easily choose their materials and give them to her to sew for them. Two months after her arrival, most the women also desired that their hair be dressed. This is because most of the other Ghanaian women who were married to teachers had already started dressing women's hair in their respective homes but were not authorized to open shops. It was easy for Magdalene because she was working at the municipality and knew most of the people. These contacts she used in acquiring a shop licence. Magdalene brought Cecilia, her mother's sister's daughter, to work in that shop which she partitioned into two sections; one section was for sewing while the other was for hairdressing. Cecilia worked in this salon for three years and decided, through the advice of her friend Augustine, who was her classmate in Sunyani Secondary school in Jesikan ( in Ghana) to relocate to Umlazi in Durban. Augustine was already running a salon at Umlazi and had kept in regular contact with Cecilia.

In 1987, Cecilia opened her salon at Umlazi and lived and worked there for five years. In 1992 when she decided as she said to 'take a chance' and come to Durban, she brought her younger sister Rosaline with her. While she was still at Umlazi, she had encouraged Rosaline to learn hairdressing which she completed in 1991. Rosaline worked with Cecilia and they both opened another hair salon for their mother's last child, Andrew, who now runs it.

Cecilia claims that through the influence of Magdalene, her mother's sister's daughter, they are all in South Africa, doing business. Magdalene also brought three other first



cousins; Steven, Ernest, and Anthony who are all running hair salons in Port Elizabeth. Apart from immediate family members, Cecilia said that they all have helped their friends to come to South Africa, who are running their businesses in the Eastern Cape.

Some of the women, like Paullina, believe that their success lies in the fact that they had been exposed to hairdressing right from when they were young girls and also because they chose it as a career as well as the type of networks which they establish whilst in Ghana and in South Africa.

I was a hairdresser back in Ghana when I was fifteen years old. I had a hair salon in Ghana. I attended a vocational school where I was taught how to dress hair. Indeed, hairdressing is my career. The school's name was 'My Source' Girls Vocational School in Kumasi. I attended this school for one year and dropped out because my parents could not afford to pay the fees. When I stayed at home, I had a friend who had a hair salon and for one year, I used to go there every day and plait women's hair. I then opened my salon and by the time I left Ghana, I had thirty apprentices. That was from 1990 to 1993.

I also believe that the people who enabled me to establish myself in South Africa in the first place and the town I started in is an important reason for my success. In 1994 I came to South Africa and lived in Nongoma (in KwaZulu-Natal) where one of my friend's brother back in Ghana was a teacher in one of the secondary schools. He opened a salon and then came back to Ghana and brought me to work for him. While in Ghana, we agreed that at the end of each month while I work for him, I will be paid R700. For me at that time, that amount was much when I converted to our Ghanaian Cedi. While in Nongoma, I realized that I was making a lot of money for him, at times making up to fifteen thousand rand per month. I then realized that he was cheating me. When I approached him and asked him to increase the amount, he refused and so I told him that I was going to start my own salon. Upon hearing this, he went to the immigration officials and reported that I was illegal. I was then deported.

In June 1995, I came back to South Africa, determined to start on my own. While I was in Nongoma, I had made Lucy, a Zulu-speaking lady, my friend and when I came back, she took me to Esikhaweni, where her parents live. At that time, I was the only foreigner there. Lucy had a Ghanaian boyfriend in Nongoma and allowed me to live in her parent's house for three days, while I looked for a place of my own. I rented a two-bedroom house and used the one bedroom to dress women's hair. This was in the J section of Esikhaweni.

In 1995 when I started dressing black women's hair, I was the one who introduced professional hairdressing in that area. If anyone asks of me in that township, many women still know me. Some still come here to Durban to have me dress their hair since they have trusted me with their hair. As my business grew in Esikhaweni, I hired three South Africans, whom I taught and paid R300 per month. It was worth much at that time.

My friend Cecilia (a fellow Ghanaian) who had opened a salon in Durban told me that I was actually wasting my skills in the township and that it was time to come to Durban where I could expand my business easily. I then told her to keep 'an eye open' for me in case there was any vacant shop. In 1997, she told me that there was a Ghanaian woman who was selling her salon because she was unable to cope with the rents. I was scared because of the high rentals. Moving from paying R700 to R9,000 was quite a risk, but she told me that within one week one could make money that would cover the rents. I bought this first salon for R25,000, from the money I had saved while dressing hair in Esikhaweni. I have just opened another salon in the same street which I took over from another Ghanaian woman who was not a professional herself but employed people to work for her. From September last year, she had been struggling to pay the rentals and decided to sell it. I bought it for R70,000 cash from the money I saved. I paid this amount over a period of three months before the keys were given to me. My husband and my younger brother Joseph, whom I brought from Ghana, are running it and I have employed five workers from home and sent them there. I spent much money to buy this salon and I understand that it will take some time before this new business starts becoming able to run itself. For now, I use some of the money from the first salon to cover the running cost of the other and send some of the customers from the first salon to it. I hope that by December this year, it should be able to be independent.

The women have used different strategies, from employing the right people to run their business with to developing new techniques like reducing producing business cards, something which they never did back in Ghana, to succeed. They have also been able transmit skills while at the same time, learn from the very people they employ. These strategies have made them competitive and their innovativeness makes them poised for success.

## **Chapter seven**

### **The impact of Ghanaian entrepreneurial activities on both home and host countries**

Migration and remittances are fast becoming closely related because as people move from one country to another, they maintain bonds with their families and friends left behind and continue their obligations towards each other using numerous means, including sending remittances to their countries of origin. Faist (2000) remarked that families increasingly have relatives living in more than one country who maintain a transnational network of communication. Remittances are seen as an important benefit for the sending countries and The World Bank has estimated that official remittances amounted to US\$31 billion in 1989 ( World Bank 1995). Preliminary data from the Ghana transnational networks research programme indicate that unregistered remittances can comprise as much as 65% of total remittances ([www.users2.fmg.uva/ghanatransnet](http://www.users2.fmg.uva/ghanatransnet)).

Although there is no direct relationship between migration and a person's economic development, most of the migrant women who were interviewed for this project still feel

strongly that their decision to migrate to South Africa was a good one. Certainly, this seems to be true when we look at their personal economic conditions in South Africa compared to those of their home country before emigration. They feel that they are better off in South Africa. With respect to their families back in Ghana, there is little reason why migrant women should not allow these economic benefits to “trickle-down” to their families. Looking at the fact that their lives have improved as a result of their decision to migrate to South Africa, the inevitable questions are:

- What are their commitments to their families back at home?
- What are their future plans with respect to immigration status?

The migrant women have no direct answers to these questions because it is an inter-play of complex forces, which cannot really be separated from each other. Most of the women have substantial responsibilities in their countries of origin.

## **7.1 Impact on home country**

The impact on home country which is easily calculated in terms of remittances is gaining increasing recognition internationally. The World Bank has estimated that official remittances amount to US\$31 billion in 1989 or over half of the total value of official development assistance

When a person is about to leave Ghana to come to South Africa, there is excitement among family members. The family at this point are already anticipating the end of poverty and suffering because one of them is going to open the road to prosperity. They

all rally, giving both financial and moral support to the person who is leaving. They perceive emigration as a good omen.

Financially, the family will contribute any amount that they can afford to sponsor this trip. Agatha related how both her mother and mother's sister sold their gold jewelry and expensive clothes to raise the air ticket for her trip to South Africa. At other times fathers of children wanting to travel abroad will sell property such as land or borrow money from money lenders. The child abroad is expected to work and send money back home to repay the debt or give back the money for the land which was sold with interest in order to repossess the land. Some parents sell their land to send their children abroad because they say that the land does not bring prosperity but their child going abroad will bring it.

In Ghana, it is not only the issue of going abroad that is conceived as a route to prosperity. When someone is leaving a village like Jesikan which is about 165 miles from Accra, the capital city, to go to Accra, it is seen as the first step towards prosperity. This feeling is very strong when one leaves the country to travel abroad, irrespective of the country one is going to. Here, it is interpreted as an obvious sign of greater things to come for the entire family. The perception in Ghana is that, the moment someone is able to enter an airplane to go abroad, it does not matter which country you go to. Everything out there is greener than at home. Most of Ghanaian women who had gone back home for a visit indicated that while at home during their visit, when they told people about their difficulty in establishing themselves in South Africa, no one believed them. This they think is because people who had traveled to countries like Europe and America never

went back and told the people what they suffered. They talked only about their achievements, portrayed by pictures they sent home, either with a newly acquired car or a hired one (something they would never have dreamt of owning while they were at home) or an apartment abroad.

On the spiritual side, there is a lot of secrecy surrounding people leaving Ghana. When people are leaving a village to go to a city, every one may be aware. Whether the person leaving comes from a family that practices Traditional African religion or Christianity, the information concerning the departure is held only among close kin. It is only when a person has left that the community or friends will hear about it. Immediately after a person's departure, rumours would spread and initially family members may agree with or deny the rumours. Such information tends to be hidden because of the general belief that there are powers that can challenge peoples' prosperity and since traveling is seen as prosperity, such information is kept within family members. Families believe that if they announce a person's departure from the country, something may stop that person from going. Christian families would fast and pray, to challenge those powers but would wait until the person leaves before their departure can be announced to everyone. Those who believe in Traditional African religion will consult the gods through the fetish priest and inform the ancestors to 'keep an eye on the person leaving' and bless him/her.

When someone has left the country, it is seen as for the good of every one in the family. At times friends also become very close to the one who has left. The expectations from people back in Ghana are very high such that they scare the person who is living in South

Africa. Six months after departure from Ghana, the women received letters from home demanding money. At times the amount of money expected at home is more than what the women can actually afford in South Africa. Back at home, people need money for school fees, to travel abroad, etc. These demands are not restricted to close kin. The women said that, in Ghana 'you do not draw a line'. Cousins write letters without informing the women's parents and when money is sent to them they would not inform others in the family. The only thing they can do is to show pictures which had been sent to them.

The women all said that when they receive such letters and fail to heed to their demands, they are 'painted black'. The general belief back in Ghana is that people who fail to send remittances home are selfish. It is a common saying in Ghana that 'if things are really difficult as some people abroad portray, why are they still living there, they should come back home'. Some of the women even feel embarrassed visiting home because of all these expectations, which come not only from family members but also from friends from as far back as primary school and the entire village. When these women go home, anyone who comes to welcome them comes with an expectant heart. Questions like 'was I on your list?' 'What did you bring for me?' Are frequently asked. When the person visiting from South Africa gives them, for instance, a shirt or a hair product, they would not hesitate to say that they need only money and not goods because they want to start a business. Mary emphasised that 'one cannot blame those who are left behind because one can see the genuineness of their requests'. Financially, things are difficult and the women indicated that the women left in hairdressing in Ghana are still where they were when the

migrants left Ghana. Most of the people back at home have trained and acquired skills but lack the capital to start utilising those skills. So seeing someone from abroad is an opportunity to get money to start a business.

When one person moves out of the country, everyone in the extended family expects her to come back and help them with their problems. When one person is living abroad, it is for the wellbeing of the entire family.

Amongst the women in Durban also, those who fail to send remittances home are looked down upon by others who do send money. The person will be the subject of gossip because of his or her inability to help those who are at home. In Durban interestingly, they all know those who send remittances and those who do not. This is because each time one of them is going home, people who have money send it to their family members at home. Since many people take turns in traveling, they all know who sent what and how much money was sent by whom. Also, due to the fact that they all live and work in the same city, they do discuss amongst themselves their families at home. This information often circulates through gossip.

For families back at home who have family members living abroad, one is able to notice a difference when the family is poor. For a poor family, money sent from South Africa makes a big difference. A house built in the village is an example of how much difference is made. Among others, Abner has built a house in which her mother and mother's sister live. Mary has built a house in Accra and rented it out and the money she



gets from it is used to take care of her parents. Apart from this, she renovated her parents house in the home village. She decided to build a house instead of buying taxis like her friend Cynthia, who cannot take care of her parents, even though the taxi was intended to take care of them. The drivers ended up eating the money and Cynthia had from time-to-time to send money from South Africa to repair the taxis when they got involved in accidents. Mary said that with the house, should a tenant refuse to pay his or her rental, the tenant is sent away.

Those who are left behind are proud of their kin who live abroad. When pictures are sent home, they are proudly displayed for anyone who cares to see. Paullina said that whenever short messages are sent through cell phones to family members or when she calls them, they will tell every one in the community and at times lie that she asked them to greet everyone. A phone call from South Africa becomes an issue of interest to every one in the village.

Paullina thinks that it is a huge mistake made by those who go back home and show only the green side of living abroad. This has now made people back at home believe that those who live abroad are living a prosperous life. She said that people back at home do not understand how two people who enter the same airplane will not have the same levels of prosperity. How can one woman be able to build a house and send money to pay for the school fees of her brothers and sisters and the other cannot?

## **7.2 The issue of return migration to Ghana**

For the younger women (between the ages of 25 and 35) in Durban, success in business is displayed by the expensive clothes, shoes and the perfumes they wear when they come to the salons. Clothes worth R500 or R1,000 as well as expensive shoes are worn in salons. The women justify this by claiming that the salons are their offices and they have to look 'well dressed'. Those who are much older invest in South Africa by buying a flat and also invest back in Ghana. When they plan to return to Ghana some day, they begin by starting a business in Ghana and ask some family member to run it. For instance they open a shop where hair products or shoes are sold. Others build houses and rent them out hoping that when they go back home, even if they do not have money, the money coming from the rentals will take care of their needs in old age.

For the women who have established themselves in South Africa (demonstrated by the ownership of more than one hair salon and an apartment), going back is a difficult decision. This is because amongst those who have returned to Ghana after living abroad, there is a lot of competition. Leaving South Africa means leaving one's customers who have made one prosperous. Going back is made even more difficult because the hairdressers back at home have already established themselves and the returnee will be going to start afresh. Even those who had hair salons in Ghana before leaving believe that their customers will be difficult to locate and might have moved on after five or six years after their departure to South Africa.

However, *'home is home and there is no place like home'* (Abner). Most of the women demonstrated a strong desire to return home some day. Most of them do not want to die in South Africa. This is the reason why one of their priorities is to build a house in Ghana where they can return some day. They do not cherish a situation whereby when they return, they would have to live in houses built by other people, because for them, it is an insult. A house built at home is proof of a real reason why they had to leave Ghana in the first place because living there would have meant never being able to own a house.

Amongst these women, there is competition in terms of their contribution back at home. When a fellow Ghanaian builds a three-bedroom house, the next person will want to build something bigger than that, either a four or five bed-room house. They all take pride in the fact that they have been able to build a house in Ghana and despise anyone who has not. This however depends on whether the person who has not built a house is struggling financially in South Africa or not. Should such a person buy expensive furniture or cars, that the person will really be despised.

One should not ignore the fact that whenever money is sent from South Africa to Ghana, it boosts the economy and every investment made by Ghanaians living here helps the Ghanaian economy. For instance in Jesikan, there are community projects in which each person who comes from South Africa is supposed to participate irrespective of whether the person is living in Ghana or abroad. Each village keeps a community list with the names of every member of that community. For those who are living in Jesikan, whenever there is a community project like building a community school or hall, once a

week or twice a month all the people will gather at the site to build, men and women. The men will be building while the women will provide building materials like carrying sand, clay, water, etc.

Those who are living abroad are also expected to contribute towards the building of projects by contributing about R200 to R300 per year. Since the villages are large, they are divided into streets to facilitate the collection of the money. From each street, one person is selected to keep the money when it is not taken to the bank. Usually an elderly woman is chosen. In the village, the names of all the people who are living abroad are known.

The rules concerning contribution towards community projects are strict and no one can escape them. For those who are living abroad, if they refuse to pay and happen to die abroad and their corpse is brought to the village, all the villagers will refuse to participate in the burial and the person cannot be buried. The family of the deceased is not permitted to dig the ground because the villagers do not recognise the deceased since when he/she was alive they refused to participate in community projects. Community ground is given only to community members and membership is proven by commitment in community projects. The family of the deceased will be asked to pay the entire amount the person was supposed to pay while he/she was alive before the funeral can be allowed to take place.

Even churches in the villages in Ghana keep registers of members who do not contribute their tithes in the churches and they also encounter similar problems when they die. When people who do not contribute tithes die, the pastors/priests do not recognise them and as such will refuse to perform the funeral service or even announce in church that someone has died. The Catholic, Anglican, Evangelical and Pentecostal churches all have the same practice. In the villages, it is the responsibility of the priests/pastors to announce that one of the community members 'has gone home' before people can go for the wake-keeping and funeral.

Also, people who are abroad contribute to the churches at home by buying musical instruments. This is not obligatory. For instance in 2002, Mary's husband bought a piano and donated it to the Evangelical Church in Jesikan. Others buy bibles, church hymn books and send them to the churches. They also contribute by sending money when a new church is being built or when an old one is being renovated.

Paullina feels that it is disgraceful for someone to wait until one dies and allow family members to go through this ordeal.

'I don't want that when I die instead of my body to be put to rest it is exposed to shame'. Whenever I go home, I give them \$100 which when exchanged is worth more than what is expected of me. This makes the people hold me in high esteem.

Some others abroad do not send money but their family members who are still living in the village always work for longer hours (on their behalf as well). At other times, some send money to family members and ask them to contribute on their behalf. Most of them

try to participate in community projects so that when they return, they will be accepted by the villagers and not treated as a stranger.

For most of the Ghanaians living in South Africa, returning home is imperative as they demonstrate by their continuous remittances sent home. Should they not send remittances home, it would mean that upon return, it would not only be the entire community rejecting them but their family members as well. This is one of their greatest fears as some indicated. While back at home, returning was not something they thought of since they were preoccupied with leaving and becoming prosperous like those who had gone ahead of them. When returning home becomes a reality, different plans are put in place and from the different interviews, these plans all point to one sector- entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is the only space which is available for these women upon return, an area which some started from and for which some could not raise the capital to enter.

There are a few reasons why entrepreneurship is the only space for these women. One of the reasons is related to their ages at return. Most the younger women in my sample who fall between the ages of 25 and 35 years are not very keen on returning, but those who are between the ages of 38 and 47 are already making plans to return. At this age, it will be difficult for them to secure employment in the civil service since they are already nearing their retirement age. The other reason is linked to their entrepreneurship whilst in South Africa. In South Africa, none of the women dressing hair have attempted to further their education since most of their days are spent in the salons.

A few young women from Ghana indicated that they would have loved to continue with their education because while in South Africa, the obstacle to them not being able to acquire university education in Ghana was lack of money, which is no longer a hindrance. They can now afford to pay their school fees but because of the nature of their jobs which needs their presence, they cannot afford to be absent. Some of them felt that there was not reason for them to study since the reason why people study is to make a living. They all felt that their type of activity is sufficient to take care of their needs and when they compare their lives with those who are in civil service, they all feel that they are better placed. They all use the amount of remittances sent home as well as how often one is able to visit home as the yardstick for this comparison. Their inability to acquire further education while abroad leaves them with no other option but entrepreneurship upon return.

### **7.3 The impact on the host country of Ghanaian entrepreneurship**

Ghanaian women's entrepreneurship is having an enormous impact in South Africa. This can be seen from various different points of view:

- The importance of their introduction of African printed fabrics, attire which is greatly valued by most black South Africans across social class, cannot be underestimated. These outfits, when worn by women in Parliament or in some important social gathering are an attempt to express Africa's ethnic fusion and

rich heritage. In contemporary times (post- apartheid), those African printed fabrics are being sown in different ways that demonstrates something of an Afro-centric look that portrays a blend of an appreciation of the African heritage and modern style.

- As part of their contribution to the economy of South Africa, all the women pay a yearly amount of R600 to the Joint Services Board in Durban as tax for their businesses.
- By employing South Africans and transmitting skills thereby being a source of empowerment for South African women.
- By spending some money in South Africa for their daily survival. For the younger women who adorn themselves with top brands of perfume fragrances, top brands of clothing and shoes, a substantial amount of money is spent in South Africa.
- By investing in properties in South Africa. Some of the women have bought flats in which they live.
- By the introduction of new hairstyles and hair products.



- It has led to cross-cultural marriages. Although most of them, especially those contracted by Ghanaian women to South African men can be seen as a form of ghost marriage because such marriages appear only on paper to permit the women to settle and run businesses in South Africa, some of the Ghanaian men live with their South African spouses. These marriages are usually arranged during the first and second year of stay in South Africa to allow these people to have residence permits, which they use in opening their hair salons. It is important to note that regular contacts are kept with their said spouses for any unforeseen action by the South African government. Although I was told by all the men/women that no one has ever come from the Department of Home Affairs to ask for their permits, they all make sure that they are on the safe side to secure these documents before opening their salons.

## **7.4 The gendered nature of hairdressing in South Africa**

One of the impacts of hairdressing in South Africa is that it has brought a slight shift in gender stereotype activities. Gender is one of the oldest forces shaping human life. It distinguishes between male and female activities (Glen 1999). In past decades, gender spaces have been fixed and not fluid as was initiated by the apprenticeship system back in Ghana. Under this system, skills are taught for specificity and technicality (Fluitman 1992). Thus back in Ghana, under the influence of the colonial type of education with the introduction of separate education for the different sexes, boys learnt to become

carpenters, bricklayers, electricians, plumbers etc, while girls learnt hairdressing, catering, dressmaking etc. I see an apprentice as someone who works with another person with the aim of acquiring similar skills. With the increasing presence of Ghanaians in South Africa, the above mentioned gender stereotyped activities seem to have become unimportant.

This I observed during several months of fieldwork when initially I intended investigating the reasons why Ghanaian women are succeeding as hairdressers in South Africa. As I struggled to locate informants for my study, I realized that gender is becoming unimportant as far as transnational activities are concerned. More Ghanaian men than women are found actively involved in hairdressing in South Africa. In Ghana, a woman and not a man is expected to learn hairdressing. According to my informants, girls who dropped out of school or whose parents could not afford school fees were sent to learn hairdressing. On the other hand, boys whose parents could not afford school fees were sent to acquire skills prescribed for men. In the past 15 years in South Africa, there seems to be a reconstruction of gender spaces especially with the encroachment by Ghanaian men on women's spaces. This 'hijacking' of Ghanaian women's social space has now led to competition for public spaces as men and women have to make similar choices in business.

Finding many men owning hair salons in Durban, a space which is supposed to be occupied by women, I then decided, to investigate this new occurrence. I was interested in finding out why men are now taking up careers as hairdressers and whether from local

to cross-border their decision would be the same. Most of the men however indicated that it was because of migration that they became involved in hairdressing. Among the men I interviewed, there were carpenters, electricians, shoe-menders, bricklayers, plumbers. Upon arrival in South Africa some of them realized that their skills could not be utilized because they all came in as refugees and therefore could not be given employment. Asumang Isaac, one of my informants said that; 'if you go to look for a job, they ask you for your identity book but in the salon, I don't need an identity book to work because I am working for a fellow Ghanaian'. On the other hand, some of them decided to learn hairdressing before leaving Ghana. Others had been hairdressers in countries like Cameroon and Nigeria before coming to South Africa.

When I asked these men whether they are proud of their new careers and whether they would feel the same way should they go back to Ghana, their feelings portrayed that it is only in transnationalism that gender becomes unimportant. They indicated that they are respected in South Africa but should they decide to go home, they cannot remain in hairdressing but would return to their careers or open shops to sell different goods. They believe that in old age it will be difficult for them to continue dressing women's since women are attracted to them now and come to their salons because they are young. Some said that South African women come to their salons because they believe that men have patience with them. What I observed during my fieldwork was that when girls come to these salons (owned and run by men) the Ghanaian men make jokes with them, which they enjoy. They all see hairdressing as a neat job and as a quick means of earning an income. Apart from those who came from other countries with capital to start their

businesses, most of them work for others for about a year or two before opening their own salons. During this period, they look for means of regularizing their stay in South Africa. A very popular means of doing this is to get involved in a marriage of convenience with a South African, or opening a shop using someone else's identity.

Thus, from domestic to cross-border, the border-lines of gender spaces become fluid in nature. Looking at the fluidity in gender construction of spaces across borders, it is obvious that such spaces cannot be constructed in a vacuum, since transnational forces tend to affect peoples choices of activities. The gender space in terms of decision-making in the household is also being affected by women's involvement in entrepreneurial activities in transnational spaces.

## **7.5 The embedded space of family life/business activity by gender**

One major observation which I made as far as gender representativity in hairdressing in Durban is concerned was that, although Ghanaian men are now assuming the activities of the other gender as far as financial survival is concerned, they are still tied to the traditional Ghanaian stereotype of a woman being responsible for the up-keep of the household (washing of clothes, cooking, taking care of children). Thus, although women are involved in similar business activities to men, Ghanaian women have integrated their entrepreneurial activities with their family/home responsibilities and sometimes struggle

to find a balance. For the latter, restaurants run by fellow Ghanaian women have lessened the burden of preparing lunch for their families as they all have resorted to buying from the restaurants for lunch. This is particularly the case with those who are married. When lunch is bought, some is kept for the children who, as a daily routine, pass by the salons from school to eat before heading for home. The food for the children however is purchased either from Kentucky Fried Chicken or Chicken Licken which are their favourites. These children have different preferences for food from their parents who will either eat kenkey and fried fish, yam flower and palm nut soup, or fried rice, or okro soup and maize meal.

Although gender activities are changing because of transnationalism for the Ghanaian Diaspora in Durban, gender roles in the home have maintained their stance. This is having a negative impact on Ghanaian women since both the men and women are in the same type of business, taking cognisance of the fact that business is about competition.

Most of the women indicated with annoyance that while they wake-up in the morning to prepare the children for school and breakfast for the entire family, their husbands remain on the bed and have enough rest. When they wake up, their only chore is to have a bath and eat and afterwards head for their work places. Most of the time, the women are the ones to wait for their domestic servants to come before they leave for the hair salons. On some occasions, should the domestic servant fail to arrive for work, it is the responsibility of the women to clean the house as well. When they all go home after each day's work, the women still have to cook while the men may relax and watch television.

As a result of the above, while hair salons run by men are opened as early as 7:30am, those run by women can only be opened by 8 am or earlier if they have managed to employ a Ghanaian man who is given the responsibility of opening the salon early. Most of the married women often go to their business sites after 9 am or by 8,30 am, at peak periods of business.

## **Chapter Eight**

### **Conclusion**

This study has set out to investigate how Ghanaian women use entrepreneurship as a window to other opportunities for life in South Africa, specifically in KwaZulu-Natal. The research acknowledges the usefulness of the qualitative approaches to the study of activities and lives and all the data gathered demonstrate the usefulness of these approaches. The literature reviewed provided me with a framework and guidelines on which I built my study although most of my findings show also contradictions and loopholes.

By carrying out research on African migrant women entrepreneurs in South Africa, an area which has been sidelined in studies of African migrant entrepreneurship, this study contributes to the literature in many significant ways;

- Firstly, by describing the processes and dynamics through which Ghanaian women gained entrance to South Africa and made the field of hairdressing their own, the study provides insights regarding the history of Ghanaian hairdressing in South Africa.

- Secondly, the study provides a framework for understanding the opportunistic tendencies of migrant women which expose their creativity.
- Thirdly, the study has clearly demonstrated that migration is not just a physical move but includes the migration of beliefs and practices, which are renegotiated in the country of abode.
- Fourthly, the study provides empirical evidence of women's economic empowerment and serves as a yardstick for other women to emulate, as most of these women *crossed the lines* from being job seekers to becoming employers. Their ability to structure interviews for their potential employees in a very unusual manner (a dual process of watching and determining the skill of the potential employee) is worth mentioning.
- Fifthly, the study is an indicator of the enormous contribution of Ghanaian women not only to the South African economy, but to the economy of Ghana as well.
- Sixthly, due to the portrayal of the skills that are transmitted to south Africans, this study challenges the Department Of Home Affairs to re-evaluate its categorisation of scarce skills, if foreign skills are needed for transmission to South Africans, then these Ghanaian women deserve the right to be issued with work permits.

The increasing presence of African women entrepreneurs in South Africa is a sign of economic and cultural dynamism. Their presence has also 'added a spice' to the tourist market. This has come about as a result of the fact that artifacts have also been brought



along-side their entrepreneurial style and skills and displayed at the various tourist attraction centers. Their presence is enhancing and expanding the entrepreneurial sector, and at the same time, skills are being passed on to South Africans.

Ghanaian women have brought diversification into the hairdressing sector in South Africa and the prosperity that they are creating will ripple through cities in KwaZulu-Natal. Their reputation as the best hairdressers is recalled from the early entry period when South Africans came in contact with Ghanaian women. This contact is traced only through hairdressing because they are the ones who introduced the different West African styles of hairdressing in South Africa. The hairdressing styles which these women introduced were very different from the South African styles. They reckon that around the 1990s, when customers who had long hair went to South African owned salons, their hair was cut short on the pretext that long hair was difficult to style. When such women went to the Ghanaian owned salons, they were encouraged to keep their hair long and were then able to demonstrate their professionalism by styling either fifteen or twenty steps (finger waves). The Ghanaian women told their customers that in their culture, it is known that 'a woman's beauty lies on her hair' and longer means more beautiful. South African women also came to learn that when long hair is shaped in any form, it looks beautiful.

The migration process and migrants' subsequent involvement in entrepreneurial activities in transnational spaces are opportunistic endeavours. Taking the step of leaving their home countries puts migrants at the point of rediscovery of both their imaginative as well

as their acquired skills. In their home countries however, these tendencies seem to be unexplored since reliance either on government or kin members are still other options. When such options become unavailable, migrants are left at the mercy of perceiving open spaces (opportunities) and investing or exploiting them. In attempting to investigate the reason why Ghanaians, specifically those who never had hairdressing as a career back in Ghana are succeeding as entrepreneurs, the researcher is brought to an intersection between transnationalism and the opportunistic tendencies of migrants.

My finding demonstrates that gendered spaces become unimportant or insignificant when people are involved in transnational spaces. This is because across borders, survival becomes the essential factor and ego or machoism is given a 'back seat'. Culture seems to be losing its place in the negotiation of gender activities across national boundaries. As more Ghanaian men become hairdressers across borders, there seems to be a renegotiation of gender roles. In Ghana, the culture stipulates different types of socialisation for both girls and boys, which are very distinct. This new trend demonstrates the fact that culture is not static but subject to change with global forces.

Ghanaian migrant women's involvement in entrepreneurship in South Africa is currently a huge success. By drawing upon the different activities and engagement with South Africans, hairdressing is being portrayed as an economic activity with a high level of impact, not only in the lives of the South Africans who are working in Ghanaian owned hair salons but to South African society as a whole. Also, by describing the insights

regarding their work and social environment, the dynamics of the lives of African migrant women is portrayed.

A closer insight into their lives portrayed that it is not only as a result of the entrepreneurial drive which is most often the focus of most economists and business analyst, but to some extent their religious beliefs. Payments of tithes and generous giving in church are portrayed by Ghanaian women as the pivot of their success. By entrepreneurial activities being embedded in their religious lives, there is a general consensus amongst them that such an atmosphere sets the pace for God's ultimate blessing to locate them. By being involved in an activity that gives them the opportunity to meet with many women, Ghanaian women believe that they are able to reach people with the gospel of Jesus Christ that would by no other means be possible. Some in this light see entrepreneurship as a means of fulfilling God's will in their lives. This is the reason why regular prayers are said in their salons and gospel radio channels are tuned to allow women who come in to listen and perhaps receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

Ghanaian women's entrepreneurship, although seen by most people and at times even the women themselves as a means of being economically independent and as a means of saving their families from financial poverty, this researcher has clearly demonstrated how their involvement in this business activity is producing benefits not only in South Africa, but in Ghana. Coming from a history of apartheid where black South African women were not given the opportunity of knowing how to dress hair in what seemed like the

Western fashion, Ghanaian women have brought in skills and transmitted them to South Africans, which they are now using to earn a living. Some of the Ghanaian women confirmed that some South African women have learnt from them and they now know how to dress hair professionally.

By providing employment to South Africans who before their encounter with these Ghanaians were unemployable because of lack of skills, they are not only transmitting skills, but rescuing entire families in South Africa. This is because the money that South Africans earn from the hair salons serves at times as the only source of income for their families. Most of the South African women working in Ghanaian owned hair salons I spoke to indicated that they are the sole bread winners for their families. Ghanaian women's contribution to the economy of South Africa has been demonstrated, is rewarding and does represent a sufficient opportunity for recognition by the South African government.

On the other hand, it is not only the families of these Ghanaian women in Ghana who are benefiting as a result of their entrepreneurship in South Africa but the economy of Ghana as well as the individual community. All the money that is sent to Ghana boosts the economy there in the form of the houses that are built and the taxis that are sent. A direct impact on the community is the regular financial contribution which is geared towards the development of community projects like the building of schools and roads.

In South Africa, the researcher found that Ghanaian migrant women's identity has been influenced by political, social and cultural factors. The formation of their identity is an ongoing process which is likely to be influenced not only by factors in South Africa, but also by globalisation. Looking at their identity in terms of gender roles and activities, I conclude that they are developing an identity that is more or less similar to the host country, as well as that of the home country. Being first generation migrants, there is a mixture of both what was uniquely Ghanaian or South African. However, their children who will be the second generation seem to be having an identity similar to that of host country. This is because at the moment, their children are interacting with South Africans in schools and speaking the local language, for instance Zulu, and seem to dislike traditional Ghanaian dishes like *Kenkey*, palm nut soup and yam flour.

Although the entrepreneurial activity of Ghanaian male migrants was not the major focus of this study, it has generated data, which reveals the impact of transnationalism on gender activities and gender spaces. The study therefore can contribute to the re-evaluation of gender roles and spaces and provides a framework for understanding the dynamics of how these roles and spaces change.

## References

Aldrich, H.E., Waldinger, R. 1990. Ethnicity and Entrepreneurship, in Annual Review of Sociology, 16.pp.111-135

Appadurai, A. 1991. "Global ethnoscaes: roles and queries for a transnational anthropology", in Fox, R.G.(ed), Recapturing Anthropology: working in the present. Santa Fe

Barot, R., 1999 Religion and migration., Salvation and wealth creation in the Swaminarayan movement. Paper presented at a conference on Migrant Families and Human Capital Formation in Europe: Home areas and Economic Vistas. Afrika-studies centrum, Leiden, Netherlands 19-21 November

Bendix, R., 1996 Max Weber. An intellectual portrait. London: Methuen.

Bernard, R. H. 1994. Research methods in Anthropology. qualitative and quantitative approaches. London: Sage

Bridge, S. et al 1998 Understanding enterprise, entrepreneurship and small business. New York: Palgrave.

Briggs, P., 1998 Guide to Ghana. London : Bradt

Bonacich, E., and Modell, J., 1980 The Economic Basis of Ethnic Solidarity. Berkeley: University of California Press

Boserup, E. 1970 Women's role in economic development. New York: St Martin's Press.

Cholewinski, B., 1997 Migrant workers in international Human Rights Law. Their protection in countries of employment. New York: Belhaven Press.

Comaroff, J., and Comaroff, J., 1999 Occult economies and the violence of abstraction: notes from the South African postcolony. American ethnologist 26 (2): 279-303

Cox, H., 1996. Fire from Heaven: the rise of pentecostal spirituality and the reshaping of religion in the Twenty-first Century. London: Addison-Wesley.

Curran, J. and Blackburn, R. A. 1991 Paths of enterprise. The future of the small business. London: Routledge.

Crush, J. et al 1991 South Africa's labour empire: A history of black migrancy to the gold mines. Cape Town: David Philip.

Crush, J. and McDonald, D. 1999 The lives and times of African migrants and immigrants in post apartheid South Africa. Cape Town: Idasa.

Cronje, G. J. et al 1996 Introduction to business management. Johannesburg: International Thompson Publishing.

Dasgupta, N. 1992 Petty trading in the Third World. Aveburg: Aldershot.

Dashefsky, A. 1976 Ethnic identity in society. New York: Rand McNally.

Dei, G.J.S., 1994 The women of a Ghanaian village: A study of social change. African Studies Review, 37 (2): 121-146.

Dodson, B., 1998 Women on the move: Gender and Cross-Border Migration to South Africa. Cape Town: SAMP Migration Series, no. 9

Douglas, M. 1954 The Lele of the Kasai” in Forde, (ed), African Worlds. London: Oxford University Press.

Douglas, M. 1992 Risk and Blame. Essays in Cultural Theory. London: Routledge.

Ember, C. R. and Ember, M 1996 Cultural Anthropology. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.



Gartner, W. B. and Gatewood, E. J. 1995 A longitudinal study of cognitive factors influencing start-up behaviours and success at venture creation. Journal of Business Venturing, 10: 371-391.

Gibb, A. A. 1987 Enterprise culture – Its meaning and implication for education and training. Journal of European Industrial Training.

Goffee, R. and Scase 1985 Women in Charge: The experience of female entrepreneurs. London: Allen and Unwin

Gundry, L. K. 1997 The leadership focus of women entrepreneurs at start-up and early growth stage. A leadership journal 2 (1) 997

Edelman, L. F. et al 2002. Internationalisation of small firms. International Small Business Journal 20 (1): 9-31

Esman, M, J. 1996 Diaspora and International Relations, in Hutchinson, J. and Smith, A. (eds), Ethnicity. New York: Oxford University Press

Faist, T. 2000 The volume and dynamics of international migration and transnational social spaces. England: Oxford University Press.

Fluitman, F., 1992 Traditional apprenticeship in West Africa: Recent Evidence and Policy Options. International Labour Organisation: Geneva

Goffee, R.R. 1985. Women in charge: The experience of female entrepreneurs. London: Allen and Unwin.

Glen, E. N., 1999 The social construction and institutionalisation of gender and race: An integrative framework. London: Sage publications.

Gupta, A. and Ferguson, J. 1997 Culture, Power: ethnography at the end of an era, in Gupta, A. and Ferguson, J. (eds), Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology London: Sage.

Hafkin, N. J. and Bay, E. G., 1976 Women in Africa: Studies in social and economic change. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Hall, S. 1996 Cultural Identity and Diaspora, in Hall, S. (ed), Questions of Cultural Identity. London: Sage.

Hall, S. 1998 Cultural identity and Diaspora in Rutherford, J. (ed.), Identity, Community, Culture, Difference. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

- Hammersley, M., 1990 The Dilemma of qualitative method. London: Routledge.
- Hannerz, U, 1990 Cosmopolitans and Locals in World Culture, in Featherstone, M, (ed), Global Culture: Culture, Nationalism, Globalisation and Modernity. London: Sage.
- Hannerz, U. 1996 Transnational connections. London: Routledge
- Haralambos, M. and Holborn, M., 1995 Sociology, Themes and perspectives. London: Collins Educational.
- Hofstede, G. 1994 Defining culture and its four dimensions. European forum for Management; Focus: Cross-Cultural Managenet Forum, 94 (1) 4.
- Harper, M. 1987 Small Business in the Third world. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Haviland, W. 1996 Cultural Anthropology. New York: Ted Buchholz.
- Kloosterman, R, and Rath, J, 2001 Immigrant entrepreneurs in advanced economies: Mixed embeddedness further explored. Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, Special issues on Immigrant Entrepreneurship. 27 (3) 189-202.
- Marshall, B. L., 1994 Engendering Modernity. Feminism, Social Theory and Social Change. Oxford: Polity Press

Mason, E. J. and Bramble, W.J. 1989 Understanding and conducting research: Application and education and the behavioural sciences. Singapore: McGraw-Hill International Edition.

Mattes, D. et al 2000 The brain gain and legal immigration to post-apartheid South Africa insight. African Migration (30) 21-30.

Matshidze, P.E., 2004. Pentecostalism and the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God in Thohoyandou South Africa. University of Stellenbosch, unpublished MA dissertation.

Meyer, B. and Geschiere, P. 1999 Globalisation and Identity: Dialectics of Flow and Closure. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Minnaar, A. and Hough, M. 1996 Causes, extent and impact of clandestine migration in selected southern African countries with specific reference to South Africa. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.

Mitchell, J. C., 1969 Social networks in urban situations. Analyses of personal relationships in central African towns. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Muzvidziwa, V. 2001 Zimbabwe's cross-border women traders: multiple identities and responses to new challenges. Journal of Contemporary African Studies.

Naidoo, S., 2004 Cash blows a new wave into hair care. Sunday Times, October 24.

Ojong, V.B. 2002 A study of independent African migrant women in KwaZulu-Natal: Their lives and work experiences. University of Zululand: unpublished MA dissertation.

Peberdy, S. and Crush, J. 1998. Trading places: Cross-Border traders and the South African informal sector. SAMP migration policy series, no. 6

Pellow, D. 1997 Women in Accra: Options for Autonomy. Michigan: Reference Publishing. INC

Pelto P. J., and Pelto, G. 1978 Anthropological Research: The structure of Inquiry. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Portes, A, and Sensenbrenner, J. 1993 Embeddedness and immigration: Notes on the social determinants of economic action. American Journal of Sociology 98 (6): 1320-1350

Rath, J, and Kloosterman, R. 2000 'Outsider's business'. Research on immigrant entrepreneurs in the Netherlands. International Migration Review 34 (3) pp.656-680

Reitzes, M. and Bam, S. 1998 Temporary necessities: the socio-economic impact of cross-border migrants in Gauteng and North West-a sectoral study. Centre for Policy Study Series: 66, Johannesburg

Robertson, C. 1984. Formal or Nonformal Education? Entrepreneurial women in Ghana. Comparative Education Review, 28, (4): 639, 658.

Rogerson, C. 1997 International Migration, Immigrant Entrepreneurs and South Africa's Small Enterprise Economy. SAMP Migration Policy Series, no3: Cape Town.

Rogerson, C. and Peberdy, S. 2000. Integration or isolation? African entrepreneurs in Johannesburg's urban economy. Draft paper presented for presentation at a meeting of the Thematic Network "Working on the Fringes: Immigrant Businesses, Economic Integration and Informal Practices", on the theme of "The Economic Embeddedness of Immigrant Enterprises", at The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 17-20.

Seale, C. 1998 Researching society and culture. London: SAGE Publications.

Skinner, C. 1999. 'Local Government in Transition- A Gendered Analysis of Trends in urban policy and practice regarding street trading in five South African cities. CSDS Research Report no. 18. University of Natal: Durban.

Spencer, D. and Bean, F. D. 1999 Self-employment concentration and earnings among Mexican immigrants in the U.S. The University of North Carolina Press-Social forces, 77 (3) 102-147.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J., 1990 Basic of qualitative research. London: Sage Publications.

Stoner, J. A.F. and Freeman, R. E. 1992. Management. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Sudarkasa, N., 1973. Where women work: A study of Yoruba women in the market place and the home. Museum of Anthropology, University of Michigan No. 53

Vawda, S. 1999. Foreign migrants, Governance and Local Development Strategies: A case study of international African migrants in Durban. Draft paper prepared for the 4<sup>th</sup> International congress of Ales Hrdicka, “World Anthropology at the turn of the century” Prague, Czech Republic. August 31- September 4<sup>th</sup>.

Woodward, K. 1997 ‘Concepts of Identity and Difference. London: Sage Publications

World Bank 1995. Workers in an integrating world. Washington DC: The World Bank.

Williams, G., 2001 Africa South of the Sahara. London: Europa Publications

Williamson, S. G. 1965 Akan religion and the Christian faith. Accra: Ghana Universities Press.

## **Appendix B**

### **Photographs**



(Figure 1) Finger waves, a hairstyle which is mostly done by Ghanaians.





(Figure 2) The hairstyle above is a typical example of a hybrid which is a mixture of Ghanaian wrapp and the cules made with the tong which is a South African style.



(Figure 3) The style above demonstrates half-banana, a Ghanaian style. The one below is a South African style.



(Figure 4) Dreadlocks, a South African style.



(Figure 5) Two women busy braiding hair. Braiding is mostly done by more than one person since braiding takes longer to style than an ordinary hairstyle.



(Figure 6) Nicol Square Parking. This section is towards Commercial Road where some hair salons are located.





(Figure 7) A hybrid of both Ghanaian and South African style.



(Figure 8) Ghanaian men working in a hair salon, a public space which was culturally reserved for women in Ghana.



(Figure 9) A low rental area.



(Figure 10) The International Redemptive Power Ministries which was used as a case study.



(Figure 11) Ghanaian style.



(Figure 12) The figure above demonstrates a busy day at a hair salon. The girls find some time to relax by dancing. See the comb in her jean pocket, typical of hairdressers.



(Figure 13) Nicol Square parking at the City Centre, showing both Commercial and Pine Streets.



(Figure 14) A Ghanaian man styling with a tong.





(Figure 15) A man putting rollers on a customer's hair while a fellow hairdresser (woman) relaxes on a chair (far right).



(Figure 16 above) ) High rental area around the Nicol square parking at the City Centre in Durban.

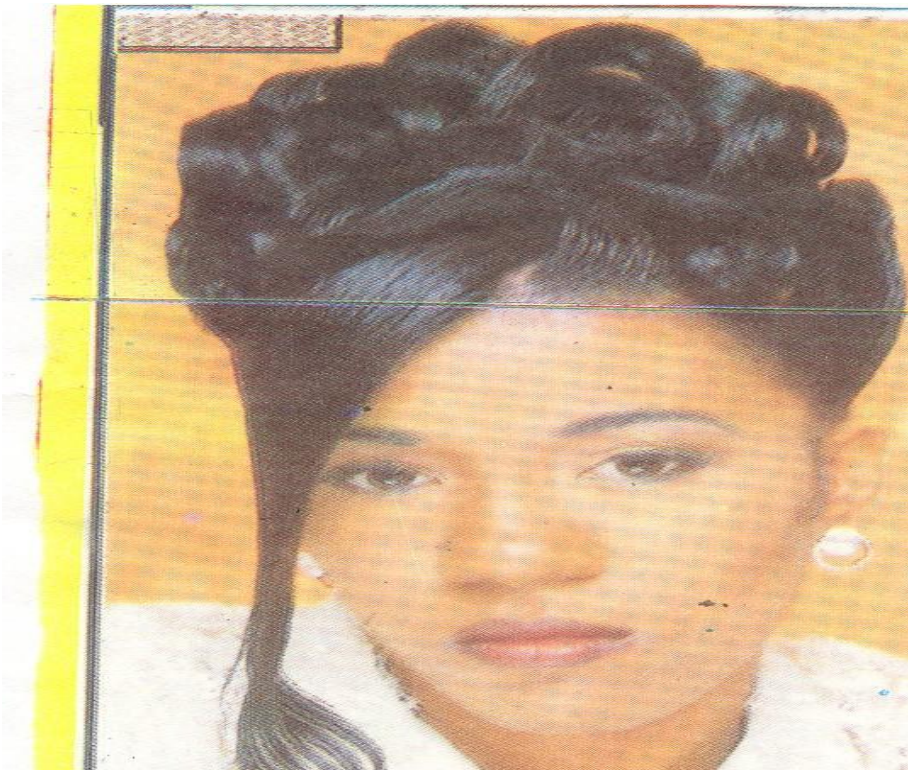




(Figure 17) Hair products displayed in a hair salon.



(Figure 18 above and figure 19 below) Displayed in hair magazines in almost all the hair salons.



(Figure 20 above and figure 21 below) Ghanaian hairstyles, which are done with hair pins.





(Figure 22 above and figure 23 below) A wedding ceremony of a Ghanaian female hairdresser. Check the traditional West African attire worn both by men and women.

