AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

OF THE

INFORMAL HIRING SITES

FOR DAY LABOURERS

IN TSHWANE

by

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that:

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE INFORMAL HIRING SITES FOR DAY LABOURERS IN TSHWANE

is my own authentic work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

SIGNATURE
L Xipu

DATE

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I dedicate this study to the following:

The memory of my late father and mother [Spompom and Majiminyana], who brought me into this world and raised me with tender love and care.

My family [of origin, procreation, nuclear, extended, blended, and reconstituted], for their unwavering support and understanding.

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SUMMARY

The purpose of the study was to locate the informal hiring sites for day labourers in Tshwane, to determine the approximate number of day labourers, to describe the nature of socio-economic activities taking place at the sites, and to make recommendations to address needs that have been identified. The research approach and methodology was exploratory, descriptive, quantitative and qualitative. In terms of the findings, 80 informal hiring sites were identified in Tshwane with approximately 3032 day labourers standing at the sites. Case studies were done on three sites and it was found that they were hazardous and lacked basic facilities such as shelter and toilets. Employer-employee interactions were also found to be haphazard and sometimes manipulative and exploitative. It is recommended that intervention programmes should be implemented which could include the provision of basic facilities, skills development, job search assistance and access to comprehensive social services.

KEY CONCEPTS

Day labourer; informal hiring site; day labour work; person-centred approach; critical theory.

Day Labourers surrounding a potential employer at the Pretoria North Site

Day labourers standing on the side of the road at the Gezina Site

A day labourer eating breakfast at the Newlands Site
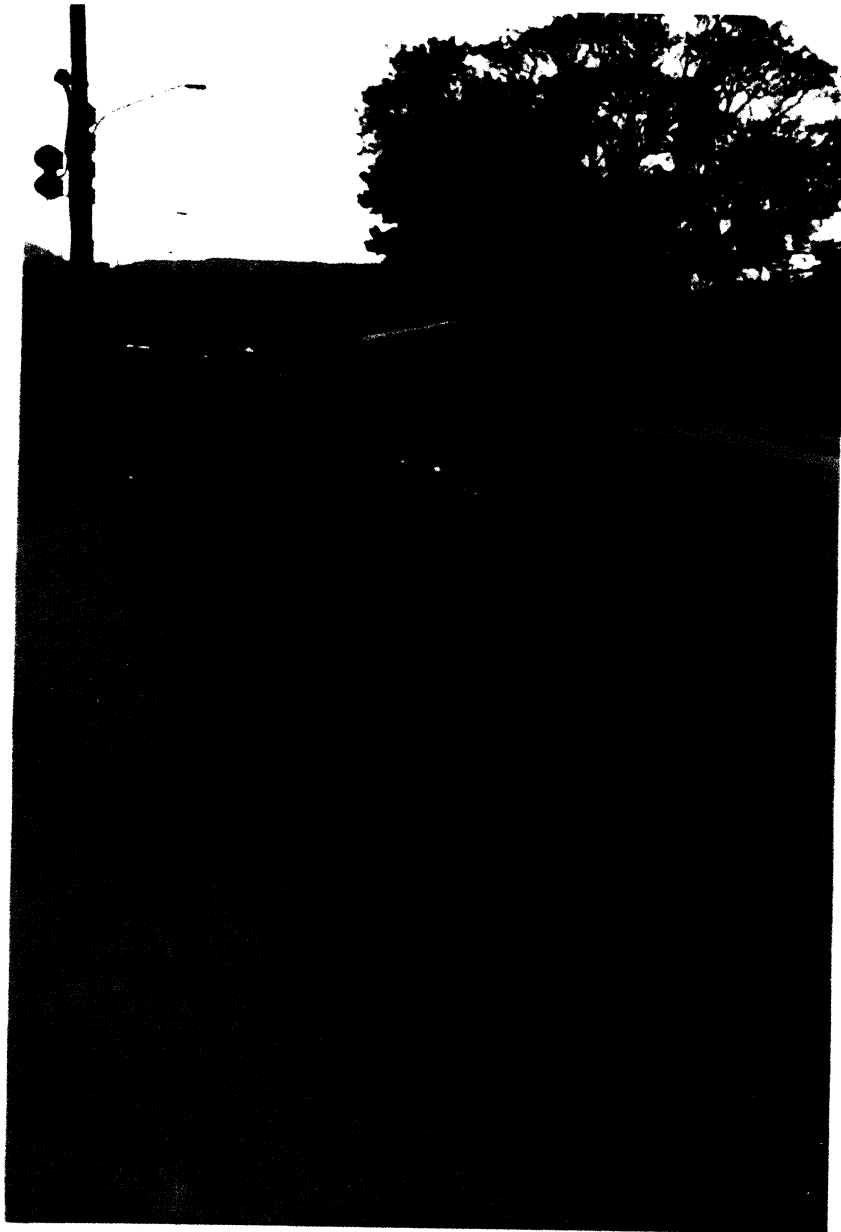
Tools displayed at Gezina

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Motivations for the study

Informal hiring sites – places where the unemployed gather and search for any kind of menial work – seem to be a growing feature in South Africa and in many parts of the world. The City of Tshwane in South Africa has a large number of day labourers [and possibly do many other cities] who assemble at these sites [street corners, pavements and car parking places and factory gates]. These sites seem to be a source of concern with regard to issues such as unemployment, poverty, crime and environmental degradation. It is against this background that a need to know more about these sites was identified.

This study forms part of a comprehensive research project on day labour work in Tshwane, which was supervised by Professor CJ Schenck with the following titles:

1.1.1 **"An Exploratory Study of the Informal Hiring Sites for Day Labourers in Tshwane"** [dissertation of limited scope] by Xipu [2009].

1.1.2 **"An Exploratory Study of the Perceptions of People Affecting and Affected by Day Labourers at Hiring Sites in Tshwane"** [dissertation of limited scope] by Nel [2007].

1.1.3 **"Men at the margins: Day Labourers in Tshwane"** [doctoral thesis] by Louw [2007].

The study topic 1.1.1 was the focus of this research study and is a dissertation of limited scope.

The study of the day labour phenomenon in South Africa resulted from an incident that took place in 2003 at Elardus Park [one of the suburbs in Tshwane] where

Professor Schenck and Dr. Louw noticed a group of black men standing at a street corner attempting to attract the attention of vehicles passing by. These men appeared to be poor and desperate. Their presence at the street corner in a residential suburb apparently caused uneasiness to some commuters and nearby residents who were concerned about crime, loitering and littering. Criminal activities had allegedly increased in the area. When making the initial contact with these men, Schenck and Louw [2005] found that these men were looking for work and were prepared to do any type of menial work just for a day or for an hour and were prepared to accept minimal pay for their work. Schenck & Louw did desktop research to find out if there had been studies on the phenomenon of men standing at street corners and pavements to search for work. They found that no research had been done on the topic in South Africa and that in the USA only Valenzuela [2000; 2002; 2003] and Theodore [2003], had done some research on day labour work. This led to the execution of an exploratory study on the phenomenon in Elardus Park which was published in 2005. More research studies were then conducted in Tshwane and subsequently, studies were extended to the whole of South Africa. This study is thus one part of a larger research process aimed at gaining an understanding of the day labour phenomenon in South Africa and it is also part of the author's MA activities.

1.2   Rationale for focussing on hiring sites

The rationale for studying informal hiring sites was motivated by the need to know more about the hiring sites in Tshwane: specifically, the geographical locations, physical features, and approximate number of people occupying the sites, and the activities and movements taking place during the course of the day. Knowing more about the sites is essential as it will provide information about the sites in Tshwane and it will contribute the research studies that have been done on the topic by Valenzuela [2000, 2002, 2003, 2006], Blaauw, Schenck & Louw [2006], Louw [2007], Nel [2007], Theodore [2003] and Turnovsky [2004]. The information that has

been generated from the study can be used as a planning tool to formulate appropriate intervention strategies.

1.3 Theoretical orientation

The theoretical approach used in the study was an integration of critical theory and the person-centred approach [Barbie, Mouton, Vorster & Prozesky, 1998; Chambers, 1982; Freire, 1970, 1993; Hope & Timmel, 1995; Korten & Klaus, 1984; Rogers, 1987].

Critical theory was found to be appropriate for the study of informal hiring sites as it challenges us to critically examine the social processes that impact on the lives of people. The study of social science is not only about gaining knowledge for knowledge's sake but about using that knowledge to intervene in order to make a difference in the lives of marginalised groups in society. Thus, in terms of this theory, the study of informal hiring sites should be accompanied by attempts to address the social needs of the day labourers.

The person-centred approach was also found to be suitable in the study of the sites as it emphasises that the focus should be on day labourers as persons and interacting with them should be based on the principles of empathy, unconditional acceptance, congruence, personal power and self-actualisation. Thus, with regard to this theory, the study of the day labourers at the sites should be carried out in a manner that is non-judgemental and humane and that displays a positive attitude as well as trust in the potential of day labourers to rise above their circumstances and to actively participate in intervention strategies aimed at assisting them to find solutions to their problems.

1.3.1 Critical theory

Critical theory is a theoretical perspective the origin, systematisation and development of which have been attributed to Kant, Marx, Horkheimer, and Habermas [Barbie et al. 1998: 39]. This approach is unique in the sense that it maintains that the study of social science should be accompanied by attempts to achieve transformation and emancipation in order to improve the conditions of marginalised groups in society. This differs from other theoretical paradigms which focus merely on understanding and interpreting the social world such as positivism, whose focus is on discovering universal objective truths about social reality, and interpretivism, which concentrates on how social reality is subjectively understood and interpreted.

Karl Marx

Barbie et al. [1998: 34] notes that in 1845 Karl Marx made a statement aimed at criticising the contemporary academics of his time. He said:

"The philosophers have interpreted the world. The thing is to change it"

The implication of Marx's statement for society in South Africa today is that the social problems that plague the marginalised sectors of our communities, such as unemployment and poverty, should be studied but such research projects should be accompanied by recommendations, strategies and action plans which must be implemented to tackle these problems with the goal of making a difference in the lives of the poor.

Paolo Freire

Freire [1970; 1993; Hope & Timmel, 1995: Book 1: 14 – 21] believes that the following principles are essential when working with vulnerable groups in

communities in attempts to bring about positive change: radical transformation, relevance, problem-posing, dialogue, action and reflection and conscientisation.

Radical transformation refers to a state of fundamental change which comes about when the root causes of a problem have been identified and addressed. It encourages us to go beyond the symptoms and to avoid superficial explanations and solutions. We need to identify and focus our attention on the underlying cause as this will enable us to intervene in a manner that will bring lasting and sustainable change to ensure that the poor are transformed from 'beings for others to beings for themselves'. [Freire, 1970: 55; 1993: 29; Hope & Timmel, 1995: Book 1: 16].

Relevance means that the particular issue that is focused upon should be relevant to the needs of the particular people. In order to achieve this we need to listen attentively to the people and to identify the generative themes that reflect their real concerns. [Freire, 1970: 78; 1993: 77; Hope & Timmel, 1995: Book 1: 16].

The term *problem-posing* refers to a process of critically thinking through a problem in order to gain a clear understanding and to identify an appropriate plan of action to intervene. This process starts by using codes that represent a particular problem in concrete terms, by relating the codes to the real life experiences of people, by asking 'but why' probing questions aimed at getting to the root causes of problem, and by developing an appropriate plan of action. [Freire, 1970: 62; 1993: 60; Hope & Timmel, 1995: Book 1: 19]

Dialogue refers to the conversations, discussions and sharing of ideas that takes place between people in the process of identifying problems and solutions. Freire maintains that such dialogue should be marked by mutual respect between participants and that the poor should be encouraged to break through the 'culture of silence' in order to express how they perceive their problems and to give input on the intervention

strategies aimed at addressing their problems. [Freire, 1970: 69; 1993: 73; Hope & Timmel, 1995: Book 1: 17]

Freire also maintains that the cycle of *action and reflection* is critical to effective intervention. We need to ensure that plans are implemented and are not merely words put on paper. We also need to reflect on the process and impact of implementation to determine whether the intended objectives are being achieved and to make the relevant adjustments where necessary. [Freire, 1970: 107; 1993: 106; Hope & Timmel, 1995: Book 1: 20].

Freire notes that the poor tend to be passive, apathetic, and silent. [Mohapi & Schenck, 2006: 150]. This happens as a result of their belief system whereby they uncritically accept that they were born inferior, they will die inferior and that this is their fate as nothing can change that. Conscientisation is the remedy for breaking from the oppression trap.

Speaking of *conscientisation* Freire [1993: 108] says the following:

"It is absolutely essential that the oppressed participate in the revolutionary process with an increasingly critical awareness of their role as subjects of the transformation"

Through it they become aware of their human dignity, their capabilities, and the fact that it is through their collective action that they can transform their situation from oppression to liberation.

Thus, when studying the informal hiring sites, in terms of Freire, we need to identify the generative themes of day labourers. This can provide a context for future intervention programmes where we can engage them in dialogues characterised by mutual respect, critically examining the root causes of the problems related to their

socio-economic experiences, in order to implement with them intervention programmes that will bring about fundamental lasting change in their lives.

Robert Chambers

Chambers [1983: 2] maintains that it is outrageous that there is still extreme poverty in this day and age when the world has so much wealth and affluence. He attributes this to the fact that poor are often exploited, dominated, ignored by the rich and that in some instances they are not seen and not heard. This has resulted in a situation where the rich have become richer and the poor have become trapped in the poverty cycle. He proposes that in order to bring about positive change in the lives of the poor we need to acknowledge that poor communities are complex and diverse, that they have essential indigenous knowledge and skills, and that they have the potential to grow.

The perception that *poor communities are complex and diverse* implies that we cannot make general sweeping statements about them as each is uniquely different. This also means that preconceived ideas made by outside professionals about analysing problems and identifying solutions are inappropriate. When working with poor communities we need to appreciate their diversity and to accept that development is a complex process which can manifest itself in ways that can be unpredictable, odd and unique. [Chambers 1983: 28].

The fact that *poor communities possess indigenous knowledge and skills* means that there is a lot that outside professionals can learn from them. This knowledge and skills can be used as a foundation on which development initiatives are built. Chambers is convinced that there should be a role reversal in community development processes which will be characterised by the poor also being regarded as experts in dealing with issues affecting their lives. [Chambers 1983: 87].

The belief that poor communities have the potential to grow indicates that we should have an optimistic attitude towards the poor and we should display trust in their inherent capacities to develop. They should therefore be given a significant role to play throughout the development process, from problem identification to planning, implementation, and evaluation. Chambers has formulated a number of participatory approaches such as Rapid Rural Appraisal [RRA] which 'fit the resources, problems and needs' of poor communities [Chambers, 1983: 201].

Thus, when conducting research on informal hiring sites, in terms of Chambers, we need to appreciate the complexity and diversity of day labour work, to learn from the day labourers about their experiences, and to encourage them to participate fully in intervention programmes aimed at addressing their problems as they are the experts in their situation. This will demonstrate that we are people-centred and that we have trust in the people's capabilities.

David Korten

David Korten is one of the proponents who advocated for a paradigm shift from problem-centred to person-centred approaches. His extensive work with Asian poor communities over a 30 year period convinced him that attempts by developed countries to help underdeveloped countries to achieve economic development have failed because they were implemented in a standardised blueprint manner that was top-down. He maintains that in order to make an impact on the lives of poor people we need to intervene in a manner that is bottom-up, focussing our attention more on the people than on their problems, acknowledging the cultural diversity of communities, and regarding the development process as a learning process where we learn to be effective, efficient and to expand. [Korten & Klauss, 1984: 184].

From Korten's perspective it can be deduced that the study of informal hiring sites should be characterised by an approach which is person-centred, bottom-up and which

seeks to learn from day labourers appropriate intervention strategies that can lead to the implementation of programmes marked by effectiveness, efficiency, and expansion. This perspective is congruent with those of Freire, Chambers, and Rogers.

1.3.2 Rogers' Person-Centred Approach

The Person-Centred Approach is a theoretical orientation that was formulated by the late Carl Rogers [8 January 1902 – 4 February 1987] which encourages us to treat our fellow men with warmth, unconditional acceptance and empathy as well as to display trust in their potential to achieve growth and self-actualisation. Rogers formulated 19 propositions that suggest various ways of understanding human behaviour and functioning. These propositions will be discussed in the context of understanding informal hiring sites:

- *The subjective perceptions and unique experiences of the self.* [Propositions 1, 2, and 7]. People exist in unique life worlds that are constantly changing and the best way to understand them is to perceive their experiences from their own frames of reference [Rogers, 1987: 483, 484, 494]. Informal hiring sites can thus be perceived as having unique features which are constantly changing and the best vantage point of understanding them is to adopt the frames of reference of the day labourers.

- *The influence of the development of the self structure and values on the perception of reality.* [Propositions 2, 8, 9, and 10]. The manner in which the self is structured and the way in which values are incorporated into the self influences how we perceive reality [Rogers, 1987: 484, 497, 498]. The perception of the socio-economic realities of day labourers is therefore influenced by the social factors that have shaped the formation of the sites as well as the value systems that predominate at the sites.

- *The importance of the concept of wholeness and the integration of the self.* [Proposition 3]. People should be perceived holistically in order to gain an in-depth understanding of their behaviour and functioning [Rogers, 1987: 486]. Focussing on only one aspect of peoples' behaviour could lead to distorted perceptions and misunderstandings. Informal hiring sites should be viewed holistically as integrated parts of social processes and not as isolated phenomena. This also means that the broader context of day labour work [such as the surrounding environment, residential area close to the sites, road commuters, business owners, the police and other relevant stakeholders] should be taken into consideration in order to get a holistic view of the phenomena.

- *The interaction of needs, behaviour and emotions.* [Propositions 4, 5, and 6]. Human behaviour can be regarded as the interplay of needs, behaviour and emotions. Needs which are perceived to be of high importance tend to evoke strong emotions and these emotions in turn serve as a motivation to act out certain behaviours [Rogers, 1987: 487, 491, 492]. The behaviour of day labourers at the sites characterised by standing at street corners, pointing a finger upwards and selling their labour just for the day could be motivated by the need to alleviate poverty, to satisfy their needs and to progress towards self-actualisation.

- *The preservation of the self.* [Propositions 4, 5, and 16]. Human behaviour is usually directed at ensuring the protection, survival and improvement of the self [Rogers, 1987: 487, 491, 515]. When day labourers people feel threatened they could behave in self-defensive ways, not disclosing information about themselves and could display behaviours that may be perceived as odd such as aggressiveness and being un-cooperative.

- *The manifestation of symbolised and unsymbolised experiences*. [Propositions 11, 13, 14 and 15]. Human behaviour is brought about by organic experiences that people are consciously aware of [symbolised experiences] as well as those that they are not consciously aware of [unsymbolised experiences]. Symbolised experiences reflect self awareness and are usually associated with psychological well being. Unsymbolised experiences are usually associated with psychopathology as they reflect poor self awareness, tension and stress [Rogers, 1987: 503, 509, 510, 513]. When working with day labourers at the informal hiring sites, the therapeutic goal will be to help them to symbolise more of their organic experiences so that they can achieve psychological well being.

- *The conditions necessary for change*. [Proposition 17]. People have the potential to change but they need a climate that is psychologically safe in order to take the necessary steps towards change [Rogers, 1987: 517]. When day labourers feel that they are not under any threat, in a climate that is non-judgemental and empathic, they can be motivated to explore aspects of themselves that require change and to take the essential steps towards positive change.

- *The emergence of the changed self*. [Propositions 18 and 19]. The new self that emerges following PCA therapeutic intervention usually displays congruence between the self, behaviour, and values [Rogers, 1987: 520, 522]. When day labourers symbolise more of their organic experiences, they will become more comfortable with themselves and others, behave in ways that reflect a deeper self-understanding, and progress towards development and self-actualisation.

Thus when conducting research studies on the informal hiring sites, from the above-mentioned theoretical perspectives, the research respondents should be treated with warmth and empathy, their subjective perceptions of their experiences should be acknowledged, and recommendations on intervention programmes should take their views into consideration and should demonstrate trust in their potential to grow and achieve self-actualisation. Their full participation should be encouraged with regard to programme identification, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

1.4 Research aim and objectives

The main aim of the research was to conduct an exploratory study of the informal hiring sites of Tshwane. The following were the specific objectives:

Objective 1:	To identify the approximate number of day labourers in Tshwane.
Objective 2:	To identify the physical location of the sites in Tshwane.
Objective 3:	To describe the surrounding features of the sites.
Objective 4:	To determine the socio-economic activities and the movement of day labourers taking place at the sites.
Objective 5:	Based on the findings, to make appropriate recommendations of what should be done to address the problems identified as it is envisaged that this study could pave the way for the formulation and implementation of intervention programmes aimed at addressing relevant needs.

1.5 Research questions

The study intended to furnish answers to the following focussed questions:

- Where are the informal hiring sites in Tshwane and what do they look like?

- Approximately how many day labourers are in Tshwane occupying the sites during the day?

- What time do they arrive and leave?

- What are the socio-economic activities and the movement of day labourers at the sites?

- Who picks them up?

- How many day labourers are picked up by employers?

- Based on the information gathered, what should be done to address identified needs?

1.6 Research methodology

The research approach was exploratory and descriptive and the methodology was quantitative and qualitative. This multi-method approach [Brewer & Hunter, 2006:63] was selected on the basis that it would provide the information that was required to respond to the aim and objectives of the study. The research method is discussed in depth in Chapter 3.

1.7 Ethical considerations

The following actions were undertaken by the researcher to ensure that the ethical rights of the participants were protected:

- The identities of the participants were protected and their names have not been disclosed.

- Prior permission to take and publish photographs was obtained from the participants and those who refused were not forced to participate.

- No false promises were made to the participants about how they would benefit from the findings of the study. This was done orally in response to the questions that were raised by the respondents during the study.

- It was explained to the participants that their participation was voluntary and that they were free to leave the process at any stage.

- It was ensured that no harm [such as exposure to police harassment and psychological trauma] would come to the participants as a result of participating in the study.

1.8 The value of the study

The study of the informal hiring sites is regarded as important for the following reasons:

- First, this study, as well as those of Louw [2007] and Nel [2007] laid the groundwork for a country-wide study on the day labour phenomena in South Africa. This topic has not really been researched before as there was no literature on hiring sites in South Africa.

- Second, this study was the exploratory phase for the formal research done by Louw [2007].

- Third, this study attempts to highlight the plight of day labourers who search for piece jobs at informal hiring sites. This could equip policy makers and other relevant stakeholders with information that can be used to formulate and implement relevant intervention programmes.

- Fourth, understanding the economic activities taking place at the sites can reveal critical employer-employee dynamics that need to be addressed in order to improve the situation at the sites.

- Fifth, the socio-economic problems that may be experienced at the sites is a subject that social workers and other human service professionals should know about and address.

- Sixth, the current study attempts to present an overview of the informal hiring sites and thus paves the way for further comprehensive studies to be conducted on the topic.

1.9 Limitations of the study

- The study was done as an MA dissertation of limited scope. Thus it could only address issues about informal hiring sites in a limited way.

- The study is descriptive of only three sites and not all sites have the same features.

- It is possible that not all the informal hiring sites in Tshwane were identified. The research findings are based on the sites that were identified by UNISA officials, 4th level BA [SW] students who participated in the study, and information from day labourers who were contacted during the study. Furthermore, sites also move and change. They move to places where work opportunities are available. Some are stable and others are transitory. It is therefore likely that some sites were missed.

1.10 The structure of the report

This research report is divided into 5 chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the research topic, theoretical orientation and methodology. Chapter 2 presents a discussion on hiring sites and the socio-political context of South Africa. Chapter 3 deals with the research method and the data collection process. In chapter 4 the research results are presented. Chapter 5 consists of data interpretation, discussion of results and recommendations.

1.11 Key concepts

Critical theory: A philosophical paradigm which emphasises that the study of social science should be accompanied by attempts to help marginalised groups in society [Barbie at al, 1998].

Day labourers: People who congregate at informal pick-up points, such as street corners, to seek for work for the day, by the hour or for a specific job [Valenzuela, 2002].

Day labour work: The practice of looking for work at informal hiring sites [Valenzuela, 2003].

Descriptive research: A type of research which strives to provide a detailed description of the characteristics of a phenomenon. Neuman [1997: 20] notes that the goals of this type of research are to accurately describe a process, mechanism or relationship of the aspects of the research topic, to provide a quantitative or thematic representation of the object of the study, and to clearly describe research data in a manner that can trigger new possible explanations.

Exploratory research: A type of research conducted to study a topic that is relatively unknown. According to Neuman [1997:20] the purpose this type of research is to enable researchers to familiarise themselves with the basic facts relating to the topic of the study, to formulate a clear understanding of the topic, and to determine the necessity of undertaking further research on the topic.

Informal hiring sites: Open-air geographical places, such as street corners, where day labourers seek employment [Valenzuela, 2003].

Job: Work which is done for pay or salary [Giddens, 1989].

Piece-job: A distinctly South African term which refers to a menial temporary job [Schenck & Louw, 2005].

Person-centred approach: A humanistic theoretical orientation that was formulated by the late Carl Rogers which maintains that, in a conducive psychological climate characterised by empathy and unconditional acceptance, people have the potential to achieve self-actualisation, and that the human qualities of therapists are more important than their skills and techniques [Corey, 1995: 263].

Unemployment: People, between 15 and 60 years, out of paid work, who desire to work and who are currently looking for work [Statistics South Africa, Census 2001].

1.12   Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the topic of day labour work and the theoretical orientation and the research methodology of the study. The following chapter will discuss the literature review on hiring sites.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW ON HIRING SITES

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter an in depth discussion on hiring sites which will focus on aspects such as a historical and contemporary overview, the South African socio-political context, and the attitude of the community towards the existence of hiring sites will be presented.

2.2 Historical overview of hiring sites

The existence of hiring sites probably commenced many centuries ago.

In Matthew chapter 20: 1 – 16 [Holy Bible, 2007: 623 – 624], Jesus speaks about the parable of the vineyard workers who gathered in the market place hoping to be hired just for the day, and those who were hired were paid a penny a day. This suggests that hiring sites could have existed during biblical times.

According to Aydelotte [1913, cited in Valenzuela, 2000: 2], hiring sites existed in European countries during medieval times where the unemployed usually gathered at designated open-air places and sold their labour to potential employers on a temporary basis.

United Kingdom

Around the 12th century in the UK, hiring sites were usually found in large cities such as Worcester. People seeking any type of menial work gathered regularly at these sites and were hired on a temporary basis mainly for ploughing the fields and for livestock herding. The employer-employee relationship was regulated by certain statutory laws to ensure that the system was effective and that the rights of all parties were protected.

For example, day labourers had to assemble at specifically designated places and were expected to bring their own tools. In turn, employers were expected to pay them reasonable amounts of money for their work. [Mund, 1948 cited in Valenzuela 2000: 2; Valenzuela 2003: 311].

United States of America

During the 16th century in the USA, day labourers were recruited from hiring sites by various companies such as the Potomac Company of Virginia to perform menial work including digging railway canals. The practice of hiring workers on a temporary basis appears to have had its advantages as compared to permanent employment, servitude, or slavery. This was due to the fact that temporary workers were only employed when work was available and could be laid off during recessions as employers were not obligated to keep them perpetually in employment. Martinez [1972, cited in Valenzuela, 2003: 312] states that around 1834 when agricultural work was one of the most common forms of economic activities in the USA, day labourers were recruited to work seasonally on farms and plantations when work was available. Today, there are approximately 117 000 day labourers in the USA [Valenzuela, 2002 cited in Louw, 2007: 99].

Republic of South Africa

South Africa's situation differs from European countries in the sense that the method used to recruit workers to perform menial jobs was not through hiring sites, but forced labour, servitude and slavery and informal hiring sites appear to have emerged only after the 1994 historical democratic elections.

Historically, Finnemore [2002: 17] notes that since 1652 when Jan van Riebeeck and the Dutch Settlers arrived in South Africa, they experienced an acute shortage of people to perform menial jobs. Subsequently, they not only forced the African indigenous population to provide menial cheap labour and servitude but by 1658 the

Cape Colony fully participated in the East African and East Indies slave trade. Slavery was widely practised until it was legally repealed in the 19th century. The practice of day labour work, which refers to working for an employer on a temporary basis, was non existent as servants and slaves worked perpetually for their masters in exchange for squatting rights and minimal wages.

Around 1867 diamond and gold were discovered in South Africa and this led to a process of rapid industrialisation. [Finnemore, 2002: 17]. Many job opportunities were created. However, employers recruited skilled workers from Europe and Australia who started their careers in elite positions, while, Africans were used as a pool of unskilled cheap labour. Statutory laws such as the Native Labour Regulations of 1911 [cited in Finnemore, 2002: 18] and the mandatory payment of Hut and Poll tax forced Africans to leave their pastoral lifestyles and to work for mining companies as labourers. Day labour work, a practice of constantly changing from one temporary employer to another, was almost non existent as it was illegal for African workers to continuously change jobs and strikes were forbidden.

The years 1948 to 1994 can be described as an era of apartheid racial discrimination and African resistance. The National Party which ruled the government implemented policies that advanced the interests of whites whilst marginalising Africans. For example, Hendrick Verwoerd, South Africa's Prime Minister from 1959 to 1966 made the following statement in 1953 [cited in Phillips, 1986: 52]:

> "There is no place for a Bantu in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour. What is the use of teaching a Bantu child Mathematics when he cannot use it in practice? Until now education drew him away from his own community by showing him the green pastures of European society which he is not allowed to graze."

During the apartheid era, informal hiring sites were non-existent as Africans were forbidden from randomly standing at street corners to sell their labour by laws such as the Influx Control Act of 1923 and the Group Areas Act of 1950. Much social turmoil, violence and bloodshed was experienced in the country in the struggle for liberation and democracy, costing the detention of many, including Nelson Mandela, and the death of many. The culmination of this was in 1994 when a democratically elected government was established, marking a new political dispensation in South Africa. [Finnemore, 2002: 31]. After the abolishment of the apartheid-related laws people started to stand at informal hiring sites hoping to be hired for menial jobs.

It can thus be seen, from the discussion above that, although informal hiring sites are a recent phenomenon in South Africa, they have been in existence over many centuries in countries overseas.

2.3 Contemporary overview of hiring sites

2.3.1 Classification of hiring sites

Hiring sites are not necessarily a haphazard phenomenon where day labourers stand in a disorganised manner. According to Valenzuela [2003: 326], hiring sites can be classified as **connected** or **unconnected** and **regulated** or **unregulated**.

The term **connected** sites refers to those sites which are situated next to certain specific companies or businesses and consists of day labourers who possess skills that are relevant for those companies. For example, a site situated next to a paint supply store and another one situated next to a gardening services company are examples of connected sites. Day labourers also advertise those tools of the trade which are relevant to those companies'/ businesses' products and services.

Unconnected sites are those sites that are not connected to any specific company and which consist of day labourers who possess a wide variety of skills. These sites are

usually situated at busy main roads where day labourers are conspicuous to prospective employers. For example, a hiring site where day labourers display tools for various vocations such as building, carpentry, gardening, and tiling can be regarded as an unconnected site. They usually stand at these sites for a number of reasons, such as being next to a garage where they can get water, or a shop where they can get food or a busy intersection where they are more visible to potential employers.

Regulated sites are those sites that have been formally established and which are managed by certain organisations. These sites are prevalent in the USA and are facilitated either by the state, non-governmental organisations, or temporary agencies [Meyer, 2003: 7; Peck & Theodore, 2001: 472]. None of these sites exist in South Africa.

Unregulated sites refer to those sites that have developed informally and which are not managed by any specific organisation. These sites appear to be prevalent in South Africa and one of the reasons this study was conducted was to obtain information about these sites.

The selection of the three case studies undertaken was based on Valenzuela's [2003: 326] criteria of the classification of sites. Two were **unconnected** and one was **connected**.

2.3.2   Informal hiring sites

Informal hiring sites are usually situated in open-air places such as street corners, pavements, car-parking areas, and factory gates. Standing at these conspicuous places have been found to be to be an effective job-search strategy for thousands of unemployed poor people [Valenzuela, Theodore, Melendez & Gonzales, 2006: 1]. It is estimated that in South Africa there are approximately 1000 informal hiring sites

where a minimum of 45 000 day labourers gather on a daily basis [Harmse, A; Blaauw, D & Schenck, R 2007: 7].

Primarily pulled to informal hiring sites in the hope of finding any type of work, day labourers tend to assemble from the early hours of the morning and sell their labour to potential employers who pass by. [Meyer, 2003: 6]. Through this strategy, day labourers have managed to obtain temporary employment for a variety of jobs such as handing out pamphlets, loading and offloading trucks, garbage removal, shelf-packing, construction work, painting, and gardening. [The Economist, 2003: 31].

Abram [2003: 15] notes that informal hiring sites can be described as a jungle as, in order to survive, day labourers need to be brave, fast and tough. With their insecure socio-economic status, they are usually at risk of experiencing extreme poverty, abuse, harm and even death. They are vulnerable as they have to stand at a site in anticipation of getting a piece-job and take whatever job they are offered no matter how dangerous, with no certainty that they will be fairly paid. According to Osterman [2003: 4] and The Economist [2003: 29], it has been found that employers tend to pay less than they promise and are likely to engage day labourers in jobs that are hazardous.

Gonzo & Plattner [2003: 45-46] conducted research on the informal hiring sites on the streets of Windhoek in Namibia and interviewed 160 day labourers. The focus of the study was on the psychological aspects of unemployment. Their findings indicate that being unemployed and searching for work by standing on the streets appears to be a harsh experience as day labourers tend to feel depressed, a sense of loss of control, helplessness and low self-esteem. These findings are consistent with Schenck & Louw [2005:93] who studied day labourers at Elardus Park in Tshwane and found that waiting for long hours at an open-air site is a difficult experience as day labourers are exposed to harsh climatic conditions.

Blaauw et al. [2006: 462] present the following demographic profile of day labourers gathering at the informal hiring sites in Tshwane:

Table 1: Demographic profile of day labourers in Tshwane

Number of respondents	242
Gender	Male = 97.5% Female = 2.5%
Race	Black
Country of origin	South Africa = 88% Zimbabwe = 7% Mozambique = 2.9% Unspecified = 2.1%
Age	61.2% younger than 30 years
Marital status	Married = 33% Living with a partner = 6.2% Separated or divorced = 3.7% Non respondents = 57.1%
Education	Passed grade 12 = 14% Passed grade 11 = 76% Never attended school = 5%
Skills training	No formal training = 40.9%
Average monthly income	Good month. R1033.33 – R1116.27 Bad month. R395.65 – R483.79

2.3.3   Formal hiring sites

Formal hiring sites are sites that are formally regulated by various organisations such as state-funded non-government organisations [NGO's], church institutions and agencies which do placements workers on a temporary basis ["temp" agencies]. The first formal site was probably established in the 1980's in California and there are

currently about 100 formal sites in the USA which are reported to be increasing at a high rate in the cities [Meyer, 2003: 7]. These sites are called by various names such as Hiring Halls [Peck & Theodore, 2001: 472], Day Labour Plazas [Meyer, 2003: 4], Work Centres [The Economist, 2003: 30], and Day Labour Shelters [Rivera & Wiseman, 2003: 1].

The purpose of the establishment of formal hiring sites is to improve the socio-economic situation of day labourers by ensuring that they do not stand at street corners and pavements to search for work and that they are paid what they are promised. [Valenzuela et al. 2006: 23]. Thus, they minimise exploitation and provide protection through labour laws. The sites also strive to protect the rights of other relevant stakeholders such as prospective employers, business owners and residents. They are often established in an area that is both accessible to day labourers and prospective employers and at an area that is not too close to residential areas. In addition, they strive to promote socially-appropriate behaviour as no alcohol abuse, illegal drugs and dangerous weapons are allowed [Rivera & Wiseman, 2003: 13].

Abram [2003: 8] notes that one of the most successful formal hiring sites is situated in Glendale, California. It is a project that is jointly coordinated by the Roman Catholic Church, the Local Government and the Police Department. The site is regulated by certain policies to ensure that it is a conducive place for effective day labour work to take place. It has an infrastructure facility which consists of picnic tables, garbage containers and public toilets. Day labourers are required to contribute a monthly fee of $25 per month towards the maintenance of the site. Billboards are erected in the town to encourage prospective employers to employ day labourers at the site.

Another formal site that operates efficiently is called Macehualli Work Centre and is situated in Arizona [The Economist, 2003: 29]. Day labourers appear to prefer to use the site instead of standing on street pavements where summer temperatures

sometimes rise to 40 degrees Celsius. The site is managed by an NGO which depends on charity donations for operational expenses. Day labourers are assisted to get piece-jobs, and it is ensured that they are paid reasonable rates – currently averaging $8 per hour – and arrangements are made for them to be returned to the site after the completions of the piece job. About 150 day labourers occupy the site on a daily basis and begin to gather as early as 5h00 am. Prospective employers who give day labourers work usually come from construction companies.

According to Peck & Theodore [2001: 471], a place in Chicago characterised by poor communities, a number of agencies have established formal hiring sites which specialise in the placement of day labourers. Local people who are unemployed usually depend on these sites to find piece jobs. The usual business names of these sites are: Labour World, Ready Men, Temps Unlimited, World of Temps, Good Workers, Minute Men, Flash Employment, Labourama, and Labour Power. "Temp" agencies tend to function more as business units than as charity organisations. They charge a fee for their placement services and in the process of mediating between day labourers and prospective employers they strive to maximise their profit. For example, Labour Ready, a Temporary Agency based in Tacoma, Washington, placed about 600 000 day labourers in 2002, earning $863 million in revenue.

2.4 Factors related to the growth of hiring sites

The number of hiring sites appears to be increasing at a rapid pace both locally and internationally. For example, in Japan in 1998, the number of day labourers who gather at hiring sites was estimated to be as high as 1, 26 million and in the USA the number of day labourers has doubled since 1995 being estimated at 117 000 as thousands of unemployed people gather at hiring sites to search for piece jobs [Gill, 2001: 2; Grow, 2003: 5; Louw, 2007: 99].

The growth of hiring sites can be ascribed to a number of factors such as unemployment, corporate downsizing, outsourcing, and the appeal of using a worker who is prepared to be paid less than other workers. Rifkin [1995: 53] notes that global unemployment has risen to the highest ever levels as approximately 800 million people are unemployed in the world. This is due to the emergence of software technologies which are replacing human beings with machines in almost every sector [agricultural, manufacturing, service] of the economy. Consequently, many workers have been laid off as departments have been dissolved, reduced or redesigned. For example, while Ford uses 400 people in one of its departments to perform certain functions, Mazda uses only 5 people to perform the same functions with the aid of its highly sophisticated technological system [Greenberg & Baron, 2000: 26].

Greenberg & Baron [2000: 25] also note that instead of closing certain departments and then re-establishing them through hiring outside service providers [outsourcing], companies sometimes dissolve certain job categories and then employ people on a ad hoc basis to perform these jobs. Through these flexible temporary workers, companies find it feasible to expand or decrease as required and to have access to labour in a cost-effective way when necessary.

2.5 Overview of the South African socio-political context related to the informal hiring sites

According to traditional practices predominant in African communities, the use of open-air places has been an important feature in the lives of people [Mohammad, 2006:27]. For example, meetings, ceremonies and traditional initiations are conducted in open-air places such as next to a kraal, under a tree, or in the open veld. From this perspective, informal hiring sites can be regarded as the landscape of Africa that unemployed Africans use meet and to attempt to address the socio-economic problems which relate to unemployment and poverty.

2.5.1 Unemployment in South Africa

2.5.1.1 Definition of unemployment

Unemployment is a serious social problem as it is associated with a number of adverse conditions such as poverty, stress, destitution, and indigence. Unemployment can be defined either by using the restricted or the expanded definition. Whereas in terms of the restricted definition [the official definition], it is defined as a situation in which people are out of work, need to work, desire to be given work, actively look for work, and are ready to start working, the expanded definition includes unemployed people who are not currently looking for work [Barker, 1999: 165]. The restricted definition of unemployment is usually used to determine the rate of unemployment in South Africa and its distinctive requirement is that the unemployed should be actively looking for work. It is in line with the definition of the International Labour Organisation. However, it excludes unemployed people who have stopped searching for work apparently due to the fact that they are discouraged and that they perceive their chances of successfully hired as slim. Mafiri [2002: 5] refers to this phenomenon as hidden unemployment as the unemployed are involved in doing activities which are not related to searching for work such as attending school and performing household chores. Day labourers seem to fit the restricted definition of unemployment as they are constantly searching for work at the hiring sites.

In terms of Statssa Community Survey of 2007 there are approximately 6 million [12.5%] unemployed [official restricted definition] people in South Africa. The prevalence of unemployment is highest amongst Africans [89%], followed by Coloureds [8%], and Whites [2%], and lowest amongst Indians [1%]. It is estimated that an extra 300 000 young people enter the job market annually. Stober [2004: 6] notes that although the country was in the midst of an economic boom in 2004, the formal economy was not going to create enough job opportunities to make an impact on reducing unemployment. The huge number of day labourers who gather at the informal hiring sites can thus be seen as the manifestation of unemployment in our

communities and an indication that this is one of the most critical challenges facing the country.

2.5.1.2 Types of unemployment

Mafiri [2002: 8-12] identifies the following types of unemployment:

- *Frictional unemployment.*

  This type of unemployment refers to a process where people who are unemployed do not just take the first job that is available but choose to remain unemployed while considering other opportunities and assessing their options. This usually happens when people perceive themselves as marketable and strive to get the best possible employment deal. This type of behaviour can be seen in some hiring sites where, for example, day labourers who are semi-skilled may choose not to take certain jobs [e.g. garbage removal] in the hope that they will later get better offers. However, frictional unemployment tends to be of short duration as sooner or later the unemployed commit themselves to the first available job in order to address their economic needs. [Mafiri, 2002: 8]

- *Cyclical unemployment.*

  This form of unemployment happens during cyclical recessionary times when companies do not have enough business to achieve the desired profit. During this period no job opportunities are created for new employees and sometimes existing workers are retrenched. When business booms again, employment opportunities are created and retrenched workers are sometimes reinstated. This type of unemployment seems to be becoming more prevalent in contemporary society as companies are restructuring themselves to increase their labour force when profit-making opportunities are good and to decrease staff during recessionary periods. Some companies tend to have a minimal

permanently employed staff and to hire more people on a temporary basis when extra hands are needed. Day labourers tend to fulfil the role of a contingency labour force and their chances of securing employment are sometimes influenced by the supply-demand cyclical processes of the economy. [Mafiri, 2002: 9].

- *Structural unemployment.*

  This type of unemployment happens as a result of structural imbalances which lead to the inadequacy of companies to create job opportunities for the unemployed. Examples of imbalances are a mismatch between needed skills and available skills, technological advances, and socio-economic policies which have a negative impact on the ability of companies to employ more staff. The problem with structural unemployment is that even during times when business is booming, the employment opportunities created are unable to make a significant impact on unemployment. This phenomenon seems to be present in the South African economic system as the gains of economic growth does not enable the millions of unemployed people to find employment. The growth of the informal sector and day labour work in particular, can be seen as a manifestation of structural unemployment as the formal sector is failing to absorb the unemployed. [Mafiri, 2002: 10].

- *Seasonal unemployment.*

  This form of unemployment is influenced by the seasons of the year. For example, in winter certain products and services are in demand such as warm clothes and heaters. Companies who provide these goods tend to have good profit making opportunities in winter and their business tends to slow down in summer. [Mafiri, 2002: 11]. Seasonal farmers also appear to be affected by seasonal changes. This implies that their ability to create employment opportunities is dependent on seasonal factors. Seasonal changes tend to affect

the economic activities at the hiring sites as the days are longer in summer and shorter in winter.

From the aforegoing discussion it can be seen that unemployment is indeed a serious and complex problem and that lasting solutions need be done at government policy level in order to effectively address the aspects related to structural unemployment as this appears to be one of the biggest stumbling blocks in reducing the unemployment rate in South Africa.

2.5.2 Poverty

2.5.2.1 Definition of poverty

According to Louw [2007: 33], poverty can be defined as an adverse economic situation characterised by the lack of material resources needed for human survival [absolute poverty], or the inability to sustain a level of socio-economic status regarded as normal in a particular community. Max Neef [2008: 1] states that a comprehensive definition of poverty goes beyond material deprivation to include non-economic factors such as the lack of the following: protection, leisure, friendships, and decision-making power.

According to the Human Sciences Research Council [2004: 6] it has been found that the proportion of people living in poverty in South Africa has not changed much during the periods between 1996 and 2001. This means that most people who were trapped in poverty in 1996 were found to be still living in poverty in 2001. For example, in 1996 it was estimated that 57% of the population was living below the poverty datum line. This figure was still unchanged in 2001. However, what is disturbing is that the depth of poverty has worsened as findings indicate that poor households are sinking deeper into poverty and the gap between the rich and the poor has widened. For example, in 1996 the poverty gap was found to be the equivalent of 6.7% [R56 billion] of the gross domestic product [GDP] and it rose to 8.3% [R81

billion] in 2001 [Human Science Research Council, 2004: 6; Meth & Dias, 2004: 59]. This is a source of concern as it suggests that poor people are trapped in the poverty cycle and that there is a barrier through which they have to break in order to achieve sustainable livelihoods.

2.5.2.2 Causes of poverty

Material aspects

Why do people become poor? Francis [2006: 8] states that the answer to this question can be conceptualized in terms of asset endowments, responses to socio-economic crises [such as ill health, death of the breadwinner, loss of income due to unemployment], as well as economic conditions at local, national and international level. Poverty is thus caused by the lack of asset accumulation, asset depletion, and the impact of socio-economic crises. People become poor when they have few material possessions, are unable to generate income, and are unable to recover from the impact of economic crises. A distinction can be made between transient poverty and chronic poverty. Transient poverty refers to poverty that is of a temporary nature where the person has the potential to overcome his adverse economic situation and to improve his living conditions. Chronic poverty is a type of poverty in which a person can be trapped for a long period. Francis [2006: 8] notes that research findings show that people who have remained poor for five years tend to be trapped in poverty throughout their lives.

South Africa has one of the poorest populations in the world with 57% of the population living below the poverty line, despite the implementation of various poverty alleviation strategies. [Human Science Research Council, 2004: 6]. Certain groups of people are particularly vulnerable to falling into a state of chronic poverty. These include African rural families, the unemployed, female-headed households,

child-headed households, the disabled, the elderly, HIV/AIDS orphans, the homeless and cross-border migrants.

This indicates that poor families are vulnerable and this is, to a certain extent, reflected in the emergence of informal hiring sites where day labourers desperately try to secure any piece job that is available in order to make provision for their families. [Vashishtha, 1990: 132]. It can thus be seen that material poverty is a serious and complex challenge which needs critical analysis and the search for long lasting solutions.

Non material aspects.

According to Max-Neef [cited in Louw, 2007: 33-44], attempts to alleviate poverty by focussing only on material aspects have proven to be ineffective and in some instances have worsened poverty. Max-Neef [2008: 2-3] developed a matrix of Fundamental Human Needs in which he identified nine human needs which have to be viewed as component parts of an integrated whole. These needs are:

- *The need to subsist.* This refers to basic human survival where a person achieves the necessary physical and mental health that can enable him/her to acquire resources to cope and to adapt successfully to the challenges of life.

- *The need to participate.* This refers to the person's need to share ideas, join in activities, to involve him/herself in some projects and to play a role in communal issues.

- *The need for protection.* People have a need for safety, security and the knowledge that their wellbeing is safeguarded from any threat. They also need social assistance systems that can serve as safety nets during times of crisis.

- *The need to be educated.* People are curious beings who need learning opportunities to develop intellectually and to increase their store of knowledge.

- *The need to create.* People have a need to initiate, originate, invent and design something. And, when they have the opportunity to work on something that they are passionate about, they tend to give their all to ensure that the outcome is successful.

- *The need for affection.* People need intimacy, warmth, love, politeness and friendliness. This need is also emphasised by Rogers [1987: 517] when he says that people tend to be more cooperative when an affectionate environment is characterised by warmth and unconditional acceptance is created.

- *The need for identity.* People have a need to belong and to know that there is a social group where they fit in. For example, belonging to a social support group of people who have similar challenges enables one to cope better with the adversities of life.

- *The need for freedom.* People need liberty, autonomy, independence and free will. This is a political need which provides a context for self determination in which people pursue their ambitions.

- *The need for relaxation.* People need leisure, recreation and entertainment. This enables them to enjoy the pleasures of life and to recharge their energies.

It can thus be seen that people have multiple complex needs and this requires us to view poverty holistically and to be aware of the need to focus on both the material and

non-material aspects. Poverty exists where any of these Fundamental Human Needs are not satisfied and this indicates that there are thus a range of poverties. It can also be deduced from the discussion on poverty that day labourers suffer the manifestations of poverty in various dimensions and attempts to alleviate their poverty should reflect a comprehensive and holistic approach.

2.5.3 Rapid urbanisation

Urbanisation, the process in which the number of people living in cities becomes more than those living in rural areas, appears to be accelerating at a very fast pace in South Africa. This process probably started in the 1950's and, currently, approximately 54% [24 million] of the country's population lives in the cities. [Finnemore, 2002: 45]. By 2010 it is estimated that approximately 73% [33.5 million] of the people will be living in cities. Urbanisation is most probably caused by the reduction of job opportunities in the rural areas and neighbouring countries. The other factor that seems to have played a role is the fact that the mining industry has laid off a substantial number of workers who used to provide for their families living in rural areas. This has forced whole families to leave rural areas and move to the cities to search for work.

According to Rivera and Wiseman [2003: 11], informal hiring sites tend to be a magnet for immigrants and foreigners and have thus played a role in the process of rapid urbanisation. Rapid urbanisation is sometimes associated with a number of social problems as it places demands on limited resources such as housing, water, electricity, and employment. Not all the inhabitants living in cities enjoy a life of wealth and opulence. A few people live in luxury characterised by huge houses, expensive cars and all the good things that money can buy. Some people live a modest life with limited financial resources which enable them to barely afford a small house and food to feed their families. Many city dwellers live in abject poverty with very little or no financial resources. Their houses are usually shacks that are made from

corrugated iron or sheets of plastics. They sometimes have no access to electricity and water and are forced to use open water drains and pit toilets. Life seems to be difficult for these people as they are not better off in the cities as compared to rural life as they still do not possess relevant socio-economic resources to satisfy their basic needs.

2.5.4 Government's response

The government of the day is committed to poverty alleviation, to the social protection of vulnerable groups, and to the promotion of the welfare of all people to ensure that they develop and have the opportunity to fulfil their potential as citizens throughout their lives.

In his State of the Nation Address [February 2007: 8] President Mbeki, speaking on poverty highlighted the following aspects:

- The poverty matrix of the country should be clearly defined.
- A database of families living in poverty should be developed.
- All relevant poverty alleviation programmes should be coordinated to ensure that services are accessible to poor families, especially the high numbers of women who are affected.
- The impact of intervention programmes should be constantly monitored and evaluated of the done to determine the extent to which the poor are graduating from a state of dependency to one of self-sufficiency.

Since the historical elections in 1994 South Africa has experienced exceptional change which has resulted in some gains and losses for poor people as summarised below:

Table 2: Summary of gains and losses of government's poverty alleviation policy for the poor

[NB the table has been formulated by the author based on the sources and discussion presented in pages 48-49]

Gains	Losses
Promulgation of a Constitution with a Bill of Human Rights and Progressive Labour Laws	Labourers in the informal sector not benefiting from the protection of progressive laws.
Increased access to Social Grants	Chronic poverty as social grants are below the poverty datum line.
Increased access to water, electricity and sanitation	Increasing inequality between the rich and the poor as the poor cannot afford to pay for these amenities.
Improved literacy and matric pass rate	Lack of technical skills.
Increased ownership of land and houses	Escalating crime leading to house burglaries
Improved performance of the economy	Slow employment growth which is not making an impact on reducing poverty

With regard to the gains [Gauteng Provincial Government, 2004: 15], the ANC-led government embarked on a process of transforming policies and legislation to ensure that effective services are delivered in an attempt to improve the socio-economic conditions of the poor. For example, the Constitution of South Africa of 1996, the Basic Conditions of Employment Act of 1997, the White Paper of Social Welfare of 1997, the White Paper on Population Policy of 1998, the Labour Relations Act of 1998, the Employment Equity Act of 1998, and the Skills Development Act of 1998 are regarded as legislative instruments aimed at creating a conducive environment for promoting socio-economic development. In addition, social grants have been made universally available to all people who qualify, resulting in the increase in the number

of beneficiaries from 2.6 million in 1994 to over 7 million in 2004. Other positive developments include increased access to housing, electricity, water, sanitation, health and education to millions of people who were previously disadvantaged.

However, in spite of the abovementioned gains, poor people have also experienced losses which include job losses in various sectors of the economy, the widening gap between the rich and the poor, chronic poverty, unemployment and the casualisation of work leading to the emergence of the day labour market. The Black Economic Empowerment initiatives have allegedly benefited a few African 'elites' and have not 'trickled down' to the poor masses [Nkem-Abonta, 2004: 9; Francis, 2006: 5-8]. This has led the disadvantaged communities to ask what further positive changes the ANC government will bring in their lives. The new South Africa still has serious social problems as it is gripped with escalating crime, violence and poverty. The optimism of the 1990s appears to have turned into gloom and the future prospects of many poor people looks bleak. Thus, political liberation is a necessary but not a sufficient condition to enable historically disadvantaged communities to live an acceptable quality of life if it is not accompanied by economic liberation. One of the many challenges facing the country is to promote the level of economic growth with the goal of creating job opportunities for millions of unemployed people in order to improve the quality of life for all.

2.6   Community's attitude to the existence of hiring sites

Mthembu [2004: 4] notes that numerous people in South African communities have been calling on local authorities to pass and enforce by-laws aimed at maintaining law and order in residential and industrial areas to ensure that cities are safe, consumer and investor friendly. Most calls are directed at the mushrooming of informal trading [of which informal hiring sites are an integral part], littering, and squatter camps. One of the by-laws [in Johannesburg Metropolitan City] stipulates that 1.5 metres of pavement space from the road should be kept clear as it is allocated to pedestrians.

Obstruction of the pavement could result in a fine of R300.00 [Mthembu, 2004: 4]. Informal hiring sites are usually situated on pavements and street corners which is prohibited space; hence, day labourers are often subjected to police raids. Currently, there are no by-laws on pavement obstruction in Tshwane; however, day labourers are still subjected to police clean-up raids.

In the USA there is currently an ongoing debate which reflects polarised views on hiring sites. [Perez, 2004: 18]. On the one hand they are viewed with suspicion which is sometimes manifested in hostile behaviour and physical violence. [Borchard, 2000: 5]. Day labourers who occupy the hiring sites are sometimes accused of being illegal immigrants engaging in criminal activities, causing a traffic hazard for road-users, loitering, being noisy, disorderly, urinating in public, whistling at women passing by, leaving trash in the area and stigmatising a neighbourhood. [Allen, 2003: 7; The Economist, 2003: 31]. Nel [2007: 52-71] notes other negative comments that have been made about day labourers in Tshwane which are listed below:

- They intimidate and scare prospective customers away.
- They increase the cost of security in an area.
- They lower the value of the property.
- They invade the personal space of the community.
- They restrict the movement of other people.
- They make residents and shop owners feel vulnerable to crime.

On the other hand, supporters of day labourers' rights argue that hiring sites are occupied by men who are desperate for one thing: work. They need to generate an income in order to provide for the needs of their families and they are prepared to work harder for less pay as well as to perform the most hazardous menial jobs. Activitists advocate that policies and laws should be put in place aimed at improving the socio-economic situations at the hiring sites such as the establishment of formal hiring sites where there are shelter, toilets and job-search assistance to ensure that

there is protection from exploitation and abuse [Al-Azar, 2003 17; Bolado, 2003: 32; Branigin, 2003: 5; Cruz, 2003: 61; Meyer; 2003: 2].

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter a discussion on hiring sites was presented which focused on various aspects such as a historical and contemporary overview, the South African socio-political context, and the attitude of the community towards the existence of hiring sites.

It can be seen that hiring sites are a complex issue: they are located in peoples' residential spaces and this presents a dilemma for policy makers at national, provincial and local government level. This is probably because there is a conflict of interest between promoting the safety and security of the citizens of the country, and, at the same time, promoting the self-determination and poverty alleviation strategies of the poor.

The following chapter discusses the research methodology used in the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHOD

3.1   Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methods used in the study. The approach was exploratory-descriptive and included both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies.

3.2   Research methodology

The methodology used in the study is what Brewer & Hunter [2006: 63] call a multi-method research approach. In this method quantitative and qualitative forms of data are collected and analysed in a single study. Historically, in social science, quantitative and qualitative forms or paradigms tended to be antagonistic toward each other as the former was criticised for dehumanising people by treating them in the same way as inanimate physical objects and the latter for failing to meet high scientific standards. However, around 1959, Campbell & Fiske [cited in Brewer & Hunter 2006: xiii] researched certain aspects of psychological phenomena and used a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods in their study. This encouraged other researchers to use mixed methods in their studies as they realised that the strengths of one method can be used to minimise the weaknesses of another method.

This study, in particular, was mostly qualitative with a small element of a quantitative aspect in that numerical data was collected on the approximate number of day labourers in Tshwane. The qualitative aspect involved the identification and observation of the informal hiring sites. This was followed by a case study [qualitative

method] involving the collection of thematic data from three sites regarding the surrounding features and the nature of socio-economic activities taking place at these sites.

3.3   The quantitative method

Quantitative research can be described as a method which expresses data in numerical terms and it is characterised by the requirement of clearly identifying the following before the data gathering phase: unit of analysis, population and sampling method. [Neuman, 1997: 110]. This method was chosen because it was found to be an appropriate mechanism to provide answers to some of the research questions, were critical to the study, which were to describe the approximate number of day labourers in Tshwane.

3.3.1   Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis refers to the type of unit a researcher uses when studying research objects. Some common units studied in social science include a person, a social group, an organisation, a community or a geographical area. [Neuman, 1997: 113]. In this study, the units of analysis were the geographical areas which are the individual informal hiring sites in Tshwane and the objectives of the study were to identify the physical location of these sites as well as to determine the approximate number of day labourers standing at these sites.

3.3.2   Target population

The target population of this study was the total number of informal hiring sites identified in Tshwane. In quantitative research the term target population refers to the

total pool of units that the researcher intends to study. Neuman [1997: 203] notes that a population is an abstract concept which is sometimes difficult to measure accurately, except when working with a small population. For example, populations such as members of a community, passengers in a train or out-patients in a hospital are difficult to freeze and measure as some people could be dying or moving out to other areas. This difficulty was also experienced with regard to the target population of this study as informal hiring sites are an unknown population that can be difficult to estimate, freeze and measure. Schenck & Louw [2005] and Valenzuela [2002] all agree that day labourers who occupy these sites are transient, elusive and sometimes difficult to study. Consequently, the sites move, grow smaller or bigger, depending on the demand and supply of work. The purpose of this study was to identify the physical location of these sites and to provide baseline data on the target population, thus paving the way for future studies to be done on the topic.

3.3.3 Sampling

Neuman [1997: 205] mentions that a sample is a proportion of the units of analysis selected from the target population. Samples are usually divided into two groups: probability and non-probability samples. Probability samples are based on the principles of randomness and can be classified as the following: simple, systematic, stratified, and cluster. Non-probability samples are not based on the principles of randomness and are used in special circumstances where it is difficult to select samples that truly represents the target population. These can be classified as haphazard, quota, purposive and snowballing. In this study, non-probability sampling, more specifically the snowballing technique, was used to identify the sites. This

method was chosen as a result of studying an unknown target population that had unique challenges.

3.3.4 Steps in the quantitative data collection process

The following steps were taken during the quantitative research phase.

Step one: The research task team conducted a series of meetings in which the topic was refined and the three research projects were identified.

Step two: A literature study on day labour work was conducted.

Step three: A data collection tool called the Broad Angled Scan [See Annexure B page 124] was formulated and piloted to ensure validity and reliability.

Step four: An e-mail was sent to the various departments of UNISA [main campus in Tshwane] requesting any person who has seen informal hiring sites in Tshwane to furnish details about the physical location of the sites and the approximate number of day labourers gathered at the sites.

Step five: Twenty [20] BA [SW] fourth year social work students were trained and sent to 43 sites to administer the data collection tool.

Step six: Reconnaissance by the research team to verify existing sites, identify new sites and do an estimate count of the day labourers.

Step seven: The data collected was analysed and this led to the identification of 80 sites and 3032 day labourers.

3.4 The qualitative method

The qualitative method was used by the researcher when he conducted three case studies on three selected informal hiring sites. Qualitative research is a method in

which data is expressed in the form of words [Neuman, 1997: 7]. Dissimilar to quantitative research where the units of analysis, target population and sampling procedure are clearly identified before the data gathering phase, the research design in qualitative research is usually broadly determined during the progression of the study in the data gathering phase [Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen. 1993: 67]. Thus, the qualitative design of this study was done on broad rather than specific terms and the techniques that were used were the following: documentation, observation, and informal interviews.

3.4.1 Documentation

The term **qualitative documents** refer to a broad range of written and symbolic records that can provide relevant information on the research topic. [Erlandson et al. 1993: 99]. In this study, documents in the form of information from the internet, newspaper articles, case studies and photographs were collected and used to provide answers on some of the research questions regarding the description of the surrounding features of the informal hiring sites and the nature of socio-economic activities taking place at the sites. This method was chosen as very little literature on Day Labour work was available. In addition, this topic is a public issue, hence newspaper articles and comments were included.

3.4.2 Observation

Qualitative observation refers to a process in which the researcher observes certain aspects at the research site with the aim of collecting relevant qualitative data. [Erlandson et al. 1993: 94-95]. In this study, the researcher paid regular visits to the three sites over a six month period. The observations focussed on the following:

- The environmental features of the sites, such as the infrastructure, which included the streets, pavements, grass, trees and chunks of stones and bricks on which the day labourers sat, the toilets and water.

- The activities which took place during the course of the day between the day labourers and other people that were affected by the sites, such as potential employers, commuters and businesses situated next to the sites. The focus was also on how labourers were picked up and what time they arrived and left the sites.

3.4.3 Informal interviews

Qualitative informal interviews are defined as a process in which the researcher involves the participants in dialogues and exchange of views regarding issues that are relevant to the topic of the study with the aim of gaining an understanding of the subjective perceptions of the participants. [Erlandson et al. 1993: 14; Neuman, 1997: 16]. In this study, the researcher interacted with approximately 105 day labourers at the three sites over a six month period and engaged them in informal conversations about their socio-economic experiences. The discussions were usually focused on a description of the daily activities at the sites, including processes of socialisation, mutual support and finding work. The informal interviews were part of the exploratory study, the information from which, helped when the research task team to draw up questionnaires for formal interviews for the study conducted by Louw [2007].

3.4.4 Steps in the qualitative research process

The following steps were taken during the qualitative phase.

Step 1: A literature study on hiring sites was done. The source of information was mostly from studies by Valenzuela [2000; 2002; 2003] and Theodore [2003] in America, by Blaauw [2005], Louw [2007], Schenck & Louw [2005] in South Africa and Gonzo & Plattner [2003] in Namibia by, newspaper articles and the internet.

Step 2: From the 80 sites identified during the quantitative phase, three sites were selected for case studies using a purposive sampling approach. The three sites at Newlands, Gezina, and Pretoria North were selected on the basis of their distinctive characteristics: Newlands is an up-market residential area, Gezina is a central business district, and Pretoria North is a middle-income residential area.

Step 3: Qualitative data was collected using documentation, observation and informal interviews [See Annexure B page 122-123]. The credibility and trustworthiness of the collected data was enhanced by means of what Erlandson et al. [1993: 28-29] call prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and peer debriefing. The researcher conducted regular visits to the three sites over a six month period [May 2004 – November 2004] and discussed his field notes with the supervisor and other members of the research task team.

Step 4: Data analysis was done on a continuous basis and was interlinked with data collection. A final process of analysis took place at the end of the six month period just before the compilation of the final report.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed in detail the research process which included qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The next chapter will focus on the presentation of the research results.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the research results will be presented. This will include the identification of the physical location of the informal hiring sites in Tshwane; the approximate number of day labourers in Tshwane; case studies of three sites which will reflect on the physical features of the sites, as well as the socio-economic activities and movement of day labourers at the sites.

4.2 Brief background of the City of Tshwane

According to Wikipedia [Pretoria – Wikipedia – online free encyclopaedia], the City of Tshwane is a Metropolitan Municipality, situated in the northern part of Gauteng Province, in which Pretoria and other surrounding areas are included. The process of changing the name from Pretoria to Tshwane [a topic which appears to be controversial among local residents] was endorsed on the 26 May 2005 by the South African Geographical Names Council but still has to be approved by the Minister of Arts and Culture.

Historically, Pretoria was established in 1855 by Martinus Pretorius, a leader of the Voortekkers. He named it to honour the memory of his father, Andries Pretorius, who became a hero when his army defeated Dingane's Zulu army in the Battle of the Blood River on the 16 December 1838 where 3000 Zulus were killed, three Afrikaner soldiers sustained slight injuries and the water in the Ncome river was 'turned into

blood'. Pretoria has, to a certain extent retained the negative image of being the 'capital of apartheid'. However this is being changed by the many positive political processes that have taken place in its Union Buildings, such as the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as the first black president of South Africa.

According to Wikipedia [Pretoria – Wikipedia – online free encyclopaedia], the city has a population of about 2 million, and the languages that are commonly used are Pedi [22%], Afrikaans [21%], Tswana [17%], Tsonga [10%], Zulu [8%] and English [7%]. It is regarded as one of South Africa's intellectual power houses with regard to academic institutions as the largest residential university [University of Pretoria] and the largest distance university [University of South Africa] in the country are situated within its borders. It is also one of the most an important industrial centres as it is host to heavy industries such as iron and steel casting as well as vehicle, train and machinery manufacture. It contributes about 8.55% of the country's GDP, making it the third largest contributor, after Johannesburg and Cape Town. Pretoria has suburbs which are very affluent such as Newlands. It is also surrounded by the poverty stricken townships of Atteridgeville, Mamelodi and Soshanguve. The informal hiring sites that were studied are located within its borders.

A portion of the city of Tshwane

4.3   **The physical location of the sites in 2004**

The findings of the study show that there were approximately **80** informal hiring sites with **3032** day labourers in Tshwane in 2004. This number is not conclusive as it is highly possible that other sites in Tshwane were not identified. Annexure A [page 116 – 120] provides a list of the sites identified with regard to the physical location. The sites are classified in terms of size [Valenzuela et al 2006; 28] as shown in the following table.

Table 2: The classification of sites

SIZE OF SITE	NUMBER OF SITES	%
Small 0 - 25	37	46
Medium Small-medium 26 – 35 Large-medium 36 - 50	 16 14	 20 17
Large 51 – 100	10	13
Mega 100+	3	4
TOTAL	**80**	**100**

4.4   Case studies of three sites

Below is an in depth discussion of the three sites selected for the study.

4.4.1   Case study 1. The 'energetic'site in Newlands.

Map of Newlands informal hiring site

Wedged in an up-market suburb of the City of Tshwane is an informal hiring site at

the corner of Roslyn and Gwen Street in Newlands. This area is in the eastern side of

Tshwane. Across Roslyn Avenue there is a large store selling various home

improvement items, a petrol filling station, and an open space covered in grass which

has trees and a stream of spring water running through it. The clusters of trees along

the stream are used by day labourers for shelter and privacy. Louw [2007: 163] notes

that on winter mornings smoke coming from open fires can be seen. The day

labourers are usually scattered along Roslyn Street but are mostly concentrated next to

the home improvement store. They occupy spaces where there is shelter and somewhere to sit.

4.4.1.1 Entry into the site

The researcher entered the site in May 2004 and exited in November 2004. Entry into the site was a challenge as he was not readily welcomed. He introduced himself and explained that he was a researcher from UNISA and that he would be coming to the site on several occasions and hoped that he could observe and interact with them. He told them that he would be observing the socio-economic activities taking place at the sites and their movements during the course of the day. The information collected would then be used to compile a research report which would contain recommendations on how the problems identified at the sites could be addressed. He also explained the ethics of research, emphasising that they are under no obligation to participate and that they have the right to refuse to have their photos taken.

In spite of this explanation he experienced some resistance. The day labourers were initially sceptical suspecting him of being from the African National Congress [ANC] government, the political ruling party, with the intention of chasing them away from the site.

"We have worked so hard to establish ourselves at this site and our chances of getting piece-jobs are better here. If we are removed from here where will our employers find us?"

In order to overcome the resistance, the researcher used the following person centred methods:

- **Freire's generative themes** [Freire, 1970: 78, 1993: 77; Hope & Timmel, 1995: Book 1: 16]. This method refers to a listening survey in which the researcher listens to the themes that emerge from the informal conversations of the people who are the focus of the study. The themes are those issues they are concerned about which sometimes evoke strong emotions. By listening to generative themes, the researcher was able determine relevant topics that were important to day labourers, to initiate relevant conversations and to develop rapport with them.

- **Rogers' Proposition 17** [Rogers, 1987: 517]. This method reflects Rogers's belief that people have the potential to change but they need a climate that is psychologically safe in order to take the necessary steps towards change. People tend to be defensive when they feel threatened yet are more cooperative under conditions where no threat is experienced. The researcher created such a non-threatening climate by displaying warmth, friendliness, politeness, empathy and unconditional acceptance.

It was after approximately four visits to the site that the day labourers began to reciprocate with a positive attitude towards the researcher. They began acknowledging his presence, responding positively to his greetings, asking more questions about the research project, and sharing their concerns about strange people who have harassed them at the site. It appears that their negative attitude was influenced by past experiences where they were harassed by government officials, members of the South African Police and the Metro police. They said that the officials of the government had informed them that there are complaints from the local

residents about crime, littering, and public disturbance and they accuse them of these problems. They then send the police to conduct clean-up raids in which the day labourers are forced into police vans and dropped off in far-away places. They displayed a strong sense of ownership of the site and said that it provides opportunities to get piece jobs.

"When we stand here we get a good chance of being given piece-jobs because the building contractors already know us and come to this place when they need workers."

4.4.1.2 Description of the physical features of the site

The site is in the open air, situated at a street corner on a pavement in the upmarket suburb of Newlands in the City of Tshwane. This is a busy street intersection as many commuters drive through entering and exiting the suburb. Across the street there is a fuel filling-station and a huge home improvement store which opens seven days a week. The presence of this store is most probably the reason for the location of the site, hence it is regarded as a **connected** site as day labourers usually display the stools of the trade related to home improvement work.
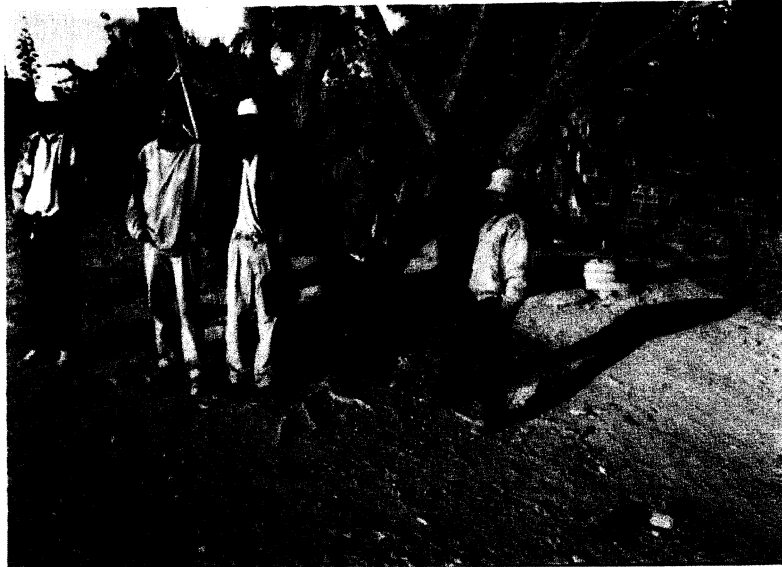
Day labourers at Newlands site

The site has no infrastructure for day labourers as there is no proper shelter, seating, water or toilets. The day labourers are thus vulnerable and exposed to the harsh extremities of inclement weather. They use the trees in Roslyn Avenue for shelter. However, the trees are insufficient to accommodate all day labourers, resulting in groups competing to occupy the spots which have trees. Usually the group which arrives first at the site chooses the best spot. The trees provide shade when it is hot and their branches are used to hang the plastic bags containing their belongings. They also lean against the trees when they are tired of sitting or standing. The shortcoming of the trees is that in winter they block the sun's rays and in summer they fail to provide protection against strong winds and rain. This affects the activities and movements of day labourers at the site as they tend to leave the site earlier in inclement weather. During heavy rains they usually go to the petrol filling station and stand under its shelter.

Large stones and bricks are used for seating. Sometimes the day labourers sit on the ground of the pavement. This provides them with temporary relief from standing and rushing towards prospective employers. However, they indicated that sitting for long periods tends to be uncomfortable as the surface is hard, cold in winter, and wet in summer after the rains. They thus spend some of the time standing or leaning against trees, street light poles, or the long walls of houses close to the site.

Water

As access to water is a problem at the site, the day labourers usually carry bottles of water in plastic bags especially on hot summer days in order to quench their thirst. In winter they tend not carry much water as they say cold water makes them catch flu easily as well as urinate frequently. They sometimes depend on the filling-station to provide them with water.

Toilets

The day labourers also depend on the filling-station for access to toilets and they use the open veld to urinate if they are denied access. The management of the filling station is unhappy about the situation and sometimes denies them access to shelter, water and toilets. The manager is worried that customers could be exposed to crime and car thefts. However, day labourers claim that they have reduced crime in the area as they do not allow troublemakers to stand at the site. The researcher noted that the walls of the houses close to the site are not as tall as the walls of the houses situated far from the site, which could suggest that the presence of day labourers provides some security and protection to their property.

Thus, it appears that lack of infrastructure at the site is a problem as day labourers are exposed to the harsh elements of weather and their dependence on the filling-station causes conflict between them and management.

4.4.1.3 Description of the day labourers who gather at the site.

The site can be regarded as a **large site,** in terms of Valenzuela's classification criteria, [Valenzuela et al. 2006: 28] as it is occupied by approximately 80 day labourers. They are all black and their ages range from 20 to 55. They speak various black languages such Sotho and Zulu and there are foreign nationals who speak English. A unique feature of this site is that many day labourers are fluent in Afrikaans.

"White employers in this area mostly speak Afrikaans and they like workers who know Afrikaans because they know that you will be able to understand instruction and do what they want."

They tend to divide themselves according to certain characteristics such as home language, age group, and friendships. These groups appear to develop naturally for various reasons such as shared interests, mutual understanding and support, cooperative behaviour, and desirable group pay-offs for members. These groups tend to compete to occupy a particular spot and for attracting the attention of prospective employers. The members also call each other when an employer wants to hire more workers.

What is also unique about this site is that the day labourers appear to be entrepreneurial and ambitious. They sometimes stand in the middle of street and make elaborate gestures to attract the attention of potential employers. They bring their own tools and energetically display them to prospective employers and for their labour they charge between R120.00 and R180.00 per day. They also carry plastic bags which usually contain overalls, lunch boxes and water bottles. They display a strong sense of ownership of the site and indicated that they do not wish to be relocated to another site.

4.4.1.4 Description of the movements and socio-economic activities

The movements and socio-economic activities of the day labourers are summarised in the table below.

Table 3: Movements, activities and time-frames at the sites

MOVEMENTS AND ACTIVITIES	TIME FRAME
Arrival at the site	+- 6h00
Day labourers are picked up by employers as per prearrangements	6h00 – 7h30
Increased canvassing to attract the attention of employers	7h30 – 10h00
Socialisation	10h00 – 14h30
Departure from the site	+-14h30

Arrival at the site

The activities at the site start as early as 6h00 and continue until about 14h30. The time spent at the site is, however, affected by seasonal changes and weather

conditions. The researcher visited the sites from May to November 2004, covering three seasons [winter, spring, and summer] and noted that the day labourers tend to arrive much earlier during summer than in winter.

Site functioning as a pick-up point.

During the early hours of the morning, [6h00 – 7h30], the site functions as a pick-up point as day labourers are picked up by employers based on specific prearrangements. The researcher noted that approximately 20 day labourers are picked up daily during this period. This number is about 25% of the total number of day labourers.

Increased canvassing to attract the attention employers

The times between 7h30 and 10h00 are marked by an increase of day labourers at the site and it is during this period that the number of day labourers reaches its peak. This is also the period when activities aimed at canvassing for work are most pronounced. Day labourers often put on their overalls and energetically point a finger upwards and display their tools to cars passing by, as well as to customers at the nearby hardware store and filling-station. The skills advertised include bricklaying, paving, plastering, carpentry and painting. They usually charge R120.00 to R180.00 per day for their labour. When a prospective employer stops at the site, the day labourers usually rush and surround the car. Some try to open the vehicle doors and others jump on the back of a van. Competition is fierce as each day labourer tries to gain the attention of the employer. The negotiation between the employer and employee is usually done in a hurried manner and the researcher noted that day labourers who speak and understand the Afrikaans language have an advantage over others. Over a six month period the researcher counted the number of day labourers who were lucky enough to be

employed between 7h30 and 10h00 and noted that an average of ten day labourers are employed during this period. This was about 13% of the total number of day labourers and when this figure is added to the 20 day labourers picked up early in the morning, the total number hired amounts to 38%.

A day labourer's bag containg tools, a water bottle and food.

Some prospective employers would also arrive at this time and inform specific labourers that they are negotiating contracts and that should they get the business, they will come and hire them for the day. Thus, when potential employers arrive at the site, they do not pick day labourer haphazardly, but look for specific workers who have worked satisfactorily for them in the past.

"Some of the labourers are very lucky as employers know them and they get piece-jobs almost every day. If these labourers are your friends, then they can recommend you when there is extra work to be done. It is important to prove yourself to the employer that you are a good worker so that he will hire you the next time around."

Socialisation

After 10h00, the mood changes from looking for work to socialising. It is as if the day labourers have accepted that they were not lucky in securing a job for the day, and they seemingly start animated conversations to distract themselves from the harsh realities of hunger, poverty and unemployment. Some form small groups and share their food and water. Others tend to isolate themselves and sit a distance away from the group. These lone day labourers informed the researcher that sitting alone gives them time to think about their situation. They also said that sometimes it is advantageous to sit alone as prospective employers tend to avoid groups and focus on a solitary day labourer. However, in spite of socialising, day labourers still keep a vigilant eye on cars passing by or customers at the home improvement store in case there is someone needing menial work to be done at his house.

Day labourers socialising at Roslyn street, Newlands

Departure from the site

At around 14h30 the day labourers start to leave the site. They did not clearly state where they go when they leave, but alluded to the fact that they live in surrounding

squatter settlement areas. The researcher noted that some of them use the open space between Gay and Lois Street, which has trees and running water, as a place to sleep.

Follow-up observation in 2008

The researcher made a follow-up visit to the site and noted the following:

- The size of the site, the movements and socio-economic activities of day labourers that were observed in 2004 are still the same.

- Tension still exists between the day labourers and the petrol filling station and the home improvement store and day labourers are forbidden to access the amenities of these business sites.

- The open-space between Gay and Lois Streets no longer exists as a retirement village has been built in that area. However, this has not affected the size of the site as there are still many [+-80] day labourers who gather at the site.

This indicates that the challenges associated with day labour work at this site are still prevalent and that there is a need for relevant intervention programmes to be implemented.

A retirement village built where day labourers used to sleep in Newlands

4.4.2 Case study 2. The 'militant' site in Gezina.

The site is an open air geographical area situated in the central business district of Gezina and occupies an entire street block i.e. Jacobs Street between Vortrekker and HF Verwoed streets. It is situated not far from a railway station which carries passengers between the city of Pretoria town and a nearby township. This is a busy trading area as there are a number of businesses selling home improvement equipment. On the northern side of Jacobs Street there is a huge home improvement store which opens seven days a week. The presence of this store is most probably the reason for the location of the site, hence it is regarded as a **connected site** [like the Newlands site] as the day labourers usually have skills related to home improvement work.

Map of Gezina informal hiring site.

4.4.2.1 **Entry into the site**

As at the Newlands site, the researcher entered the site in May 2004 and exited in November 2004, observing the site through winter, spring and summer. Entry into the site was a challenge as he was not readily welcomed and experienced negative behaviour, militancy, rebelliousness, and confrontation. He introduced himself and explained that he was a researcher from UNISA researching the site, that he would be coming there site on several occasions and hoped that he could observe and interact with them. He told them that he would be observing the socio-economic activities taking place at the site and their movements during the course of the day. The information collected would then be used to compile a research report which would contain recommendations on how the problems identified at the site could be addressed. He also explained the ethics of research, emphasising that they are under no obligation to participate and that they have the right to refuse to have their photos taken.

In spite of this explanation he experienced some resistance. The day labourers were initially sceptical and challenged him to state his allegiance whether to the day labourers or the business owners in the area. To deal with their resistance and negative attitudes, he used Roger's Proposition 17 [discussed in page 65] by displaying warmth, friendliness, and unconditional acceptance. He assured them that he was not sent by business owners to spy on them and that as a researcher his role was to interact with all stakeholders in a manner that is neutral and unbiased. After approximately six visits to the sites, a positive relationship began to develop and they began to talk to him about their problems and frustrations.

Day labourers standing on the side of the road at Gezina site

4.4.2.2 Description of the physical features of the site

As at Newlands the site has no infrastructure for day labourers as there is no proper shelter, seating, water and toilets. The day labourers are thus vulnerable and exposed to the harsh extremities of inclement weather. Unlike at Newlands, there are no trees in the street that they can be used for shelter. There is no filling-station where shelter, water and toilets could be accessed on occasions. It appears that they try to access water and toilets before they reach the site to ensure that they are minimally inconvenienced by the lack of these resources at the site.

What is unique about this site is the high level of conflict between the day labourers, commuters and shop owners. A caravan hiring company appears to be the only business that is sympathetic towards day labourers and allows them to put their belongings on their premises. Across the street is a home improvement store, which has good prospects for finding piece-jobs as customers sometimes need people to do menial jobs. The security guards at the store often chase day labourers from their premises and force them to stand across the street. The day labourers are very

unhappy about the situation and some of them stubbornly stand in the forbidden area, leading to conflict between them and the security guards.

Thus, it appears that the lack of infrastructure at the site is a problem as it is a source of tension between day labourers and business. This indicates that if there was proper access to shelter, toilets and water, the level of frustration displayed by day labourers would not be so high.

4.4.2.3 Description of the day labourers who gather at the site

The site can regarded as a **mega site,** in terms of Valenzuela's classification criteria, [Valenzuela et al. 2006: 28], as it is occupied by approximately 200 day labourers. They are all black and their age group ranges from 18 to 60. They speak various black languages such Sotho, Xhosa and Zulu and there are foreign nationals who claim to come from Zimbabwe who speak English.

According to a security guard, it appears that the older day labourers are more cooperative, reliable and consistent. In contrast, the young ones are alleged to be rebellious and unreliable, and tend to defiantly stand in 'forbidden' areas.

> "The younger ones stand next our premises defiantly, saying that this is a new democracy and that Mandela fought this land for them. That is why we [the security guards] call the police from time to time to clean up the streets."
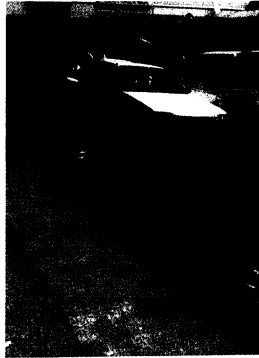
Day labourers sitting in a forbidden area at Gezina

The foreign nationals are less conspicuous and usually stand around the corner in HF Verwoed street. They informed the researcher that they fear police raids. They also said that they have a good relationship with the employers as employers come around the corner to specifically look for them. They can be distinguished by their darker skins and accents. When selling their labour they tend to point a finger upward and say 'pick me makhosi'. They are often blamed for accepting extremely low wages and for allegedly taking job opportunities away from South Africans:

> "These Makwerekweres are spoiling the employers by charging R20.00 per day when we charge R100.00. They must go back to Zimbabwe and leave us alone."

The researcher listened to the day labourers' complaints about the site and used Freire's generative themes [discussed on page 65] to summarise the themes as follows:

- Business owners do not allow them to stand next to their shops. They allegedly set vicious dogs to bite them and when they report the matter to the police nothing is done.

- A certain employer is alleged to have failed to pay a day labourer at the end of the day, saying that he will pick him up the following day and pay him the whole amount when the job is finished. That employer never kept his promise, thus robbing a day labourer of his pay.

- Another day labourer was paid R40.00 when he expected to be paid at least R80.00 as he felt that he had worked very hard that day. The employer did not negotiate the pay with him when he picked him up as the day labourer had to jump inside the van quickly to be ahead of other competing day labourers.

- Black employers tend to be worse than their white counterparts. They allegedly force day labourers to work harder for less pay, they do not provide lunch or transport back to the site or a convenient place when the job is finished.

- Some motorists driving through the site are hostile and reckless. Some day labourers have been hit by speeding cars and when they have reported the matter to the police, despite supplying registration numbers, nothing was done to arrest the perpetrators.

- Some corrupt police officials solicit bribes from day labourers who are illegal immigrants, thus plunging the day labourers further into poverty and desperation.

These complaints are issues that day labourers feel strongly about and they said that they need professional people to intervene. They also said that a formal hiring site with a proper infrastructure should be built for them as they find the environment at the site hostile.

Fig 1: Possible generative themes of day labourers at Gezina site
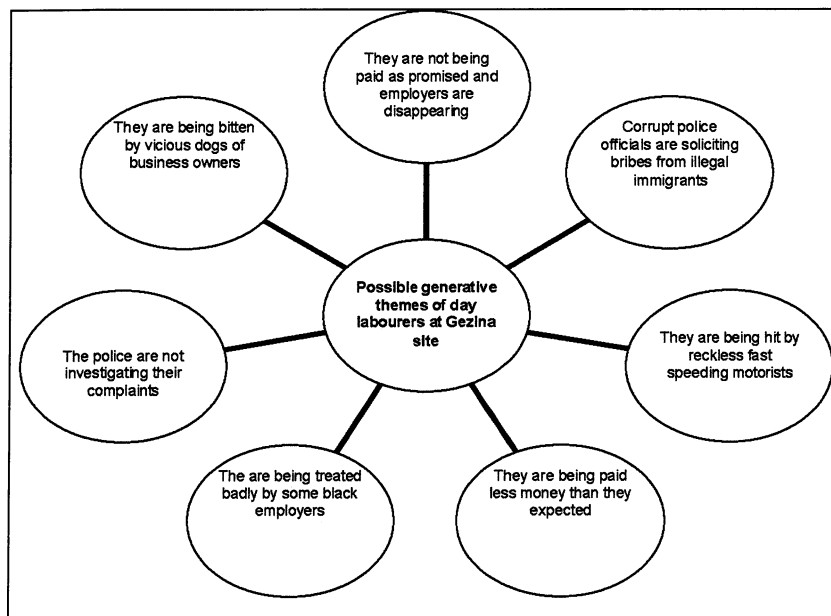
4.4.2.4 Description of the movements and socio-economic activities

Arrival at the site

As at Newlands site, the activities at this site start as early as 6h00 and continue until about 14h30. The time spent at the site is, however, affected by seasonal changes and weather conditions. The day labourers tend to arrive much earlier during summer than in winter.

Site functioning as a pick-up point.

During the early hours of the morning, [6h00 – 7h30], the site functions as a pick-up point as day labourers are picked up by employers according to specific prearrangements. They are usually picked up by construction companies who have short to medium term projects. The researcher noted that approximately 60 day labourers are picked up daily during this period. This means that at this site approximately 30% of the day labourers tend to have prearrangements with employers. The researcher noted that day labourers are happy to make such arrangements with employers as the employers know them personally and the piece-jobs they are offered last a week or two depending on the size of the job.

Increased canvassing to attract the attention of employers

The times between 7h30 and 10h00 are marked by an increase of day labourers at the site and it is during this period that the number of day labourers reaches its peak. This is also the time when day labourers vigorously attempt to sell their labour to cars passing by and to the customers of the home improvement store by pointing a finger upwards and with gestures try to attract the attention of potential employers. It is also

during this period that tension and conflict arises between the day labourers and business owners with regard to standing on 'forbidden' areas. Day labourers also display their tools on the pavement. The skills advertised include bricklaying, paving, plastering, carpentry and painting and they usually charge about R100.00 per day for their labour. As in Newlands, day labourers tend to rush and surround the vehicles of prospective employers and compete for their attention. It is a situation of the "survival of the fastest". Over six months the researcher counted the number of day labourers who were lucky to be employed and noted that an average of 24 day labourers are employed during these hours. This is about 12% of the total number of day labourers and when this figure is added to the 60 day labourers, who are picked up early in the morning, the total employed amounts to 42%.

Tools displayed by day labourers in Gezina

Socialisation

After 10h00, the mood changes from looking for work to engaging in social activities. Some day labourers disappear and others play gambling games such poker and

'¹morabaraba'. They also tend to engage in animated conversations about a variety of topics such as women, alcohol and crime.

Conversations about women usually revolve around girlfriends, sex and entertainment. Some day labourers boast of having multiple girlfriends and laugh at those who have only one or none. They also talk about how girls fight over them. The entertainment of girlfriends usually takes place in shebeens [places that sell alcohol] where there is a lot of partying and drinking. They also talk about notorious gangsters in the township and how they are terrorising communities. The researcher noted that these conversations are usually associated with laughter and jokes. It appears that the day labourers may be using these topics to distract themselves from the harsh realities of their lives and help them to transcend the challenges of poverty.

It appears that to some day labourers piece-jobs are not 'real' jobs, but simply a strategy to obtain 'pocket' money. They seem to depend on their families for sustenance. Therefore they use the money they earn on entertainment.

"When I earn 'a draad' [R100.00], I like to spend it by going to a tavern with my friends where there is Kwaito music, to have cold beers with 'isifebe' [a sexy woman] sitting next to me."

Alcohol abuse appears to be one of the social pathologies at this site as some of the day labourers tend to engage in excessive drinking. Once they get paid they do not come to the site the following day even when prearrangements have been made to

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¹ Morabaraba is one of Africa's popular board games which involve tactically maneuvering small objects such as stones across a board.

pick them up. They come back when their money is finished. One employer informed the researcher that if you want to get these skilled workers who have drinking problems, you must go to the site as early as possible, because after 10h00, they start drinking and show no interest getting a piece job. The researcher did not experience this kind of behaviour at Newlands as its day labourers appeared to be more ambitious, reliable and focussed on using their income to sustain their families.

Departure from the site

At around 14h30, as in Newlands, they start to leave the site. When the researcher inquired where they go and their answers were vague but it appears that they live in nearby squatter settlements. The researcher sensed that the reason they were avoiding the topic was probably because some of them were homeless and others had homes in far-away rural areas.

Follow-up observation in 2008

The researcher made a follow-up visit to the site and noted the following:

- The observations of size of the site, the movements and socio-economic activities of day labourers observed in 2004 are still the same.

- Tension seems to have eased between the day labourers and the security guards of the home improvement store and day labourers are allowed to stand in previously forbidden areas and to canvass inside the car park area of the home improvement store. The reason for this could be that the ongoing research studies that have been done on the topic may have created some awareness on the plight of day labourers and has made some community members and the authorities more sympathetic to their situation.

- The park at Flowers Street which was previously denied to them is now accessible and has public toilets and water. Although no formal pronouncement was made by the authorities, the day labourers are no longer chased away and the public toilets and water taps are no longer locked.

- The xenophobic attacks which took place in May 2008 in Tshwane appear to have affected day labourers who are foreign nationals. The researcher noted that they have become less conspicuous than they were previously and they have moved further into Jacobs street, away from the South African day labourers.

This indicates that the challenges associated with day labour work at this site have, to a certain extent been addressed, but there is still a need to address the social pathologies identified at the site by implementing relevant intervention programmes. These will be further discussed under the recommendations section.

4.4.3   **Case study 3. The 'apathetic' site in Pretoria North**

Map of Pretoria North informal hiring site.
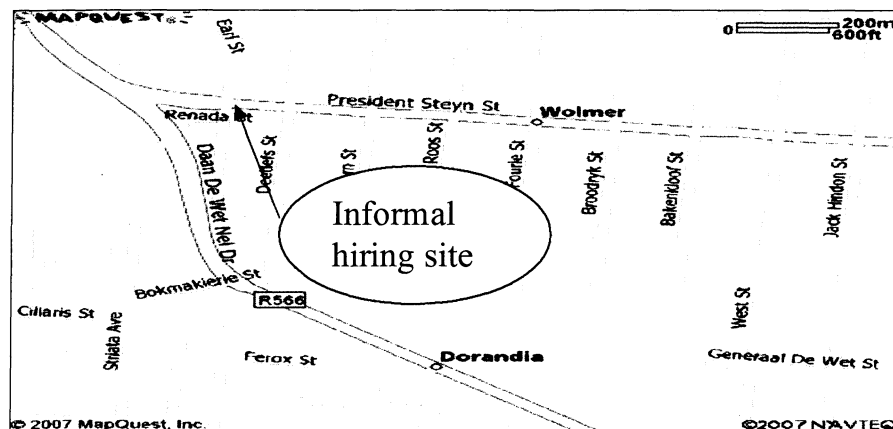
Wedged in Pretoria North, a middle–income suburb of the City of Tshwane is an informal hiring site at the corner of President Steyn and Eeufees Street. This area is located in the north of the City of Tshwane. Across President Steyn Street there is a supermarket selling various grocery items and opposite the street there is a nursery selling plants and gardening accessories. As in Gezina there are no trees along the street nor a petrol filling station nearby. The day labourers usually sit on bricks on the pavement next to the nursery as they are forbidden to stand on the pavement next to the supermarket. They also stand at the corner of President Steyn and Eeufees streets.

4.4.3.1 Entry into the site

As at the Newlands and Gezina sites, the researcher entered the site in May 2004 and exited in November 2004. Entry into the site was a challenge. He was not readily welcomed and experienced a sense of apathy, gloom, and disinterest. He introduced himself and explained that he was researcher from UNISA doing research on the site and that he would be coming to the site on several occasions with a view to interacting with them. He told them that he would be observing the socio-economic activities taking place at the site and their movements during the course of the day. The information collected would then be used to compile a research report which would contain recommendations on how the problems identified at the sites could be addressed. He also explained the ethical aspect of research, emphasising that they are under no obligation to participate and that they have the right to refuse to have their photos taken.

A day labourer seated alone at Pretoria North

In spite of this explanation he found it difficult to develop rapport with the day labourers. They initially believed he was a potential employer and inquired if he could provide them with piece jobs immediately. Most of them drifted away when he explained that he is doing research and that the benefits to them could come only in the middle to long term, if the research recommendations were implemented. The researcher used Rogers' Proposition 17 [discussed in page 65] to develop rapport with the day labourers. He strove to create a safe psychological environment characterised by warmth, friendliness, genuine interest, and unconditional acceptance. After approximately four visits to the site the day labourers began to respond to his conversation. He listened to their stories, using Freire's generative themes [discussed on page 61], and noted that their initial negative attitude was influenced by their desperation to get piece jobs in order to relieve their immediate material needs.

Photo taken in 2008 of day labourers at Pretoria North site

4.4.3.2 Description of the physical features of the sites

As at the other sites, the site is an open-air geographical area located at a street corner and on a pavement. The site is situated next to a supermarket and a nursery. There is no infrastructure providing shelter, seating, water and toilets. Day labourers usually sit on the pavement on bricks or blocks of cement. They sometimes go to the nearby supermarket to ask for water and to use the public toilet, but are usually denied access. The researcher asked them what do they do if there is no access to water and toilets. They responded that they access water and toilets at a railway station about 10 kilometres away before they come to the site. When they get pressed and thirsty at the site, they just ignore those sensations until they leave the site. When it rains they usually leave the site early as there is no shelter. They are therefore exposed to the harsh elements of weather. This site initially developed as a pick-up point as President Steyn Street is the main route to enter and exit Pretoria North. It was thus convenient for employers as it is far away from the railway station where there are huge crowds

"Day labour work is the most feasible way of generating income. You don't need an ID document or certificates to get a job. In order to survive you need to keep a low profile, to stay away from the police, to get a girlfriend who is a stay-in domestic worker for accommodation, and to impress your employer the day you get a chance to do a piece-job. I don't want to go back to Zimbabwe because there is poverty there. At least here I can work, save money and send it to my family in Zimbabwe."

What is unique about this site is that the day labourers appear to be hungrier and more desperate. The 'energy' of Newlands and the 'militancy' of Gezina are missing. A sense of extreme poverty and gloom appears to overshadow the site. Instead of pointing a finger upwards and making gestures to attract potential employers, the day labourers just stare at potential employers with grimaces and eyes filled with anticipation. They do not bring any tools and for their labour they charge between R30.00 and R50.00 per day [the lowest compared to Gezina's R100.00 and Newlands' maximum of R180]. They usually wear old faded jeans and torn T-shirts blotched with paint. They refused to have their photos taken but in 2008 the researcher managed to take some photos with their permission.

"Life is tough when you don't have a permanent job and when your family is far away. Sometimes we stay for two days without food."

In spite of these challenges they choose to stay at the site as it seems to symbolise the hope of getting a job.

4.4.3.4 Description of the socio-economic activities taking place and the movement of day labourers at the site during the course of the day

Arrival at the site

As at the Newlands and Gezina sites, the activities at the site start as early as 6h00 and continue until about 14h30. This time spent at the site is, however, affected by seasonal changes and weather conditions. The day labourers tend to arrive much earlier during summer than in winter.

Site functioning as a pick-up point.

During the early hours of the morning, [6h00 – 7h30], the site functions more as a pick-up point as day labourers are picked up by employers in terms of specific prearrangements. They are usually picked up by construction companies which have short to medium term projects. The researcher noted that approximately 10 day labourers were picked up daily during this period. This means that at this site approximately 34% of the day labourers tend to have prearrangements with employers. The researcher also noted that day labourers are happy to make such arrangements with employers who know them personally and that the piece-jobs they are offered last a week or two depending on the size of the job.

Increased canvassing to attract the attention employers

The times between 7h30 and 14h00 are marked by an increase of day labourers at the site and it is during this period that the number of day labourers reaches its maximum number of about 29. The skills advertised include carpentry, painting and gardening. They do not display tools but inform potential employers verbally of the skills they

possess. They usually charge from R30.00 to R50.00 per day for their labour. When a prospective employer stops at the site, the day labourers usually look intently at the vehicle and will rush and jump on the back of the van when they are selected. Competition is fierce as each day labour tries to respond and outrun the others. The negotiation between the employer and employee is usually done in a hurried manner and the researcher noted that day labourers tend to accept any offer for menial jobs without any complaint. They usually say that they can do "any job". An average of five day labourers are employed during this period. This is about 17% of the total number of day labourers and when this figure is added to the 10 day labourers, who are picked up early in the morning, the total employed amounts to 51%.

The researcher also noted that there is a gardening service in Eeufees Street which hires day labourers on a regular basis. To get a piece-job in the gardening service, a day labourer needs to have networking contacts with regular workers, especially with edge-trimmers, who seem to enjoy the highest status in the gardening service field.

> "When you befriend an edge trimmer and buy him 'itakana' [liquor] regularly, you are sure to become one of the regulars in the gardening service."

Socialisation

The researcher noted that the day labourers do not spend much time socialising as happens at the Newlands and Gezina sites. They tend to keep separate from each other only to re-group when they depart from the site. The researcher asked why they do that. They responded by saying that they found it beneficial to divide themselves and

stand at strategic points at the site, so that, if an employer stands at one end of the site and is looking for more workers, then he [the day labourer] can call his group members from the other side of the site. In this manner, they occupy all the corners of the site and thus increase their chances of getting piece-jobs. They seem to come together when they share food and soon after eating they return to the strategic points.

Departure from the site

Around 14h30, as at the Newlands and Gezina sites, they start to leave the site. However, some remain until about 15h30 and then leave the site. They did not clearly state where they went when they left the site, but alluded to the fact that they live in surrounding squatter settlement areas and they depend on the train to for affordable transport.
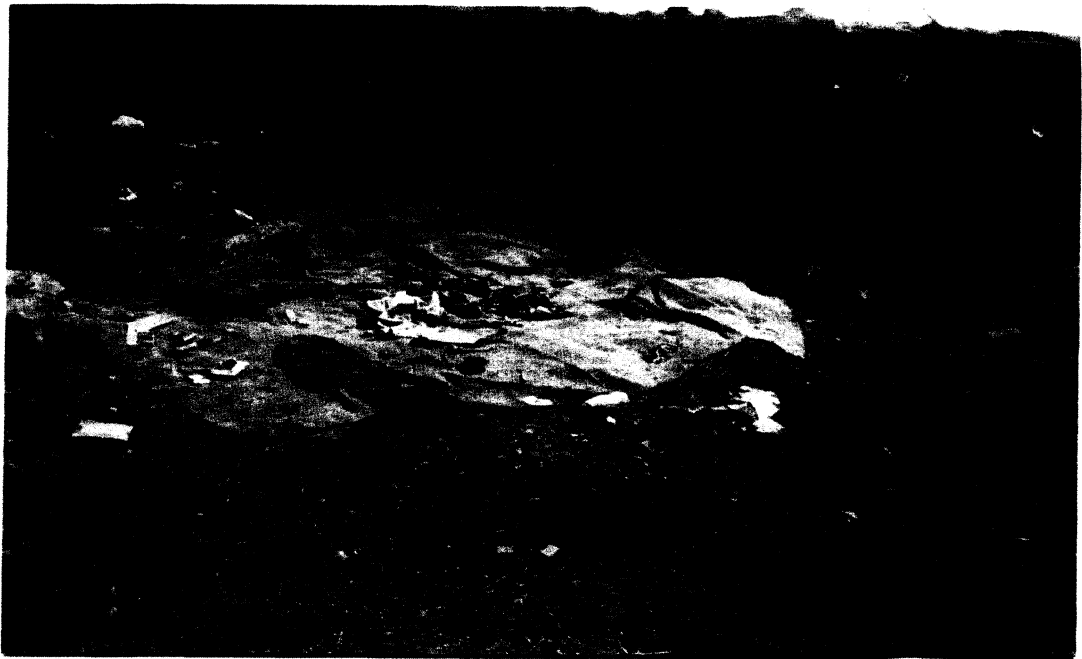
A place where a homeless day labourer sleeps in Pretoria North

Follow-up observation in 2008

The researcher made a follow-up visit to the site and noted the following:

- The size of the site has grown bigger with approximately 60 day labourers. However, the movements and socio-economic activities of day labourers that were observed in 2004 are still the same.

- Tension seems to have eased between the day labourers and the supermarket as they are allowed to stand in previously forbidden areas and to canvass inside the car parking area of the supermarket store.

- There is a petrol filling station further along President Steyn Street where they are sometimes allowed to access toilets and water.

This indicates that the challenges associated with day labour work at this site have, to a certain extent been addressed, but there is still a need to address the lack of infrastructure at the site by implementing relevant intervention programmes. These will be further discussed under the recommendations section in the next chapter.

4.5   Conclusion

In this chapter the research results were presented. This included the identification of the physical location of the informal hiring sites in Tshwane; determining the approximate number of day labourers in Tshwane; case studies which were conducted on three sites which reflected the physical features of the sites, the socio-economic activities and movement of day labourers at the sites. The following chapter will present an integration of the patterns of the three sites and discuss the analysis and interpretation of the findings.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH INTERPRETATION, DISCUSSION AND

RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the interpretation and discussion of the research findings and recommendations will be presented.

5.2 The interpretation and discussion of the findings

The interpretation and discussion of the findings will be organised in terms of the aim and objectives of the study. The main goal of the study was to describe the informal hiring sites in Tshwane. The following were the specific objectives:

Objective 1: The identification of the approximate number of day labourers in Tshwane.

Objective 2: The identification of the physical location of the sites.

Objective 3: The description of the surrounding features of the sites.

Objective 4: The description of the socio-economic activities and the movement of day labourers taking place at the sites during the course of the day.

Objective 5: Based on the findings, the formulation of recommendations on what should be done to address the problems identified as it is envisaged that this study could pave the way for the formulation and implementation of intervention programmes aimed at addressing relevant needs.

5.2.1   The identification of the approximate number of day labourers in Tshwane.

Annexure A [page 109-113] provides a list of the sites that were identified with regard to the physical location, suburb, and number of day labourers standing at the sites. From the information presented it can be seen that there were approximately **3032** day labourers occupying **80** sites in Tshwane. This number is not static as day labour work is a fluid phenomenon. New sites develop and other sites move, depending on the demand and supply of work. It is thus possible that, since the study was done, new sites have developed in Tshwane with more day labourers. Furthermore, Harmse et al. [2007: 7] note that there are approximately 45 000 day labourers occupying about 1000 sites throughout South Africa, and, this number could be increasing due to the deepening crises of poverty and unemployment. This indicates that day labour work is a reality in our country and thus it is imperative for society to be consciously aware of a class of society that appears to be marginalised by economic hardships.

5.2.2   The identification of the physical location of the sites.

From the information provided in Annexure A, it can be seen that there are approximately **80** informal hiring sites in Tshwane. According to Valenzuela et al. [2006; 28] the sites can be classified according to size ranging from small to mega, depending on the number of day labourers occupying the site.

Chart 5.1. The Classification of the sites

Classification of Informal Hiring Sites in Tshwane
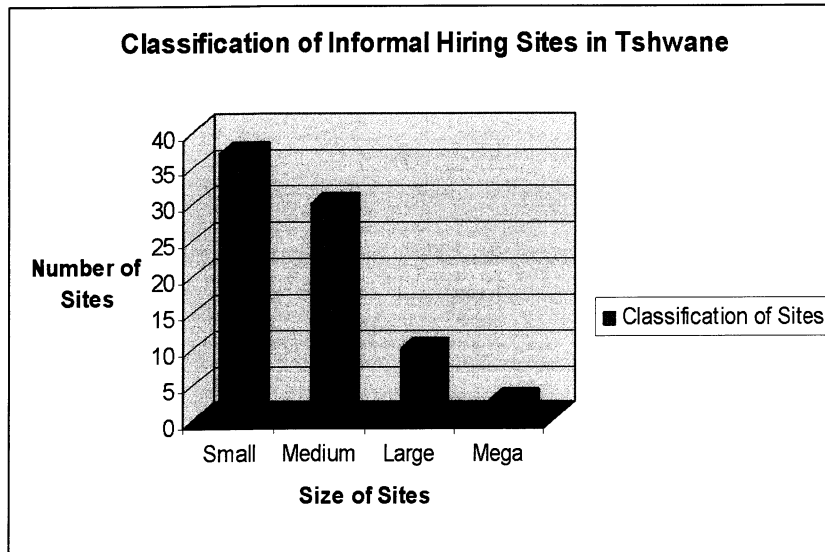
From the information presented in the preceding chapter it can be seen that most of sites in Tshwane are small [46%], followed by medium [37%] and large [13%] respectively, and that there are very few mega-sized sites [4%]. This information is presented in the chart above. This information is also not conclusive as there possibly are more sites that have not been identified.

5.2.3   The description of the surrounding features of the sites.

Fig 2: Surrounding features if the sites
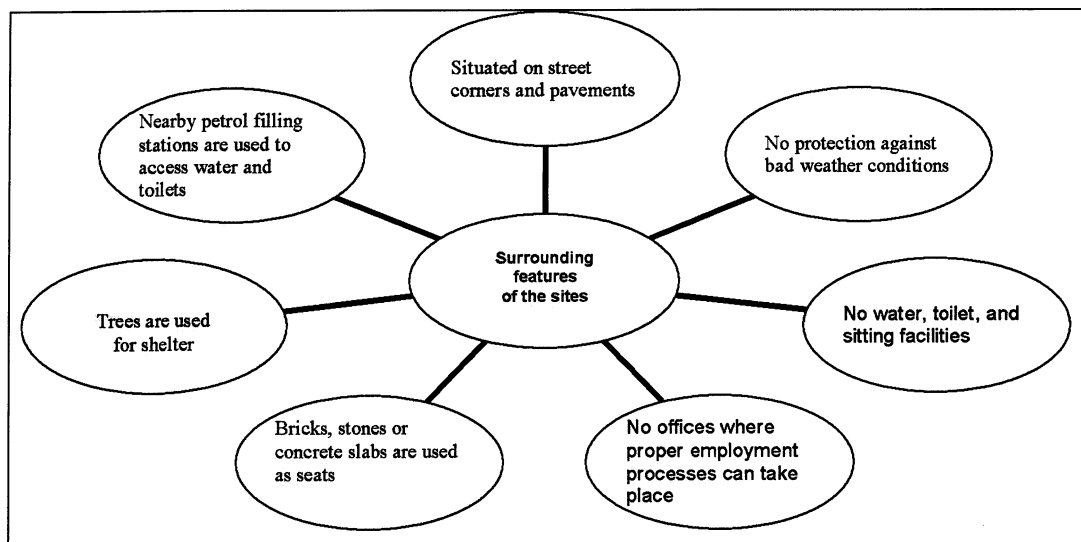
The information gathered from the three case studies reflects that the fact that informal hiring sites are situated at street corners and on pavements. They lack infrastructure such offices, toilets, water, chairs, shelter and relevant services. This has forced day labourers to develop creative ways to make up for the lack of infrastructure to ensure that the sites are feasible for socio-economic purposes. For example they use the following instruments:

A site where day labourers sit on bricks and concrete blocks

- Bricks and blocks of concrete to sit on.

- Water bottles to carry water from home to the site.

- Public toilets at petrol filling-stations

- Trees to provide shelter against sunshine.
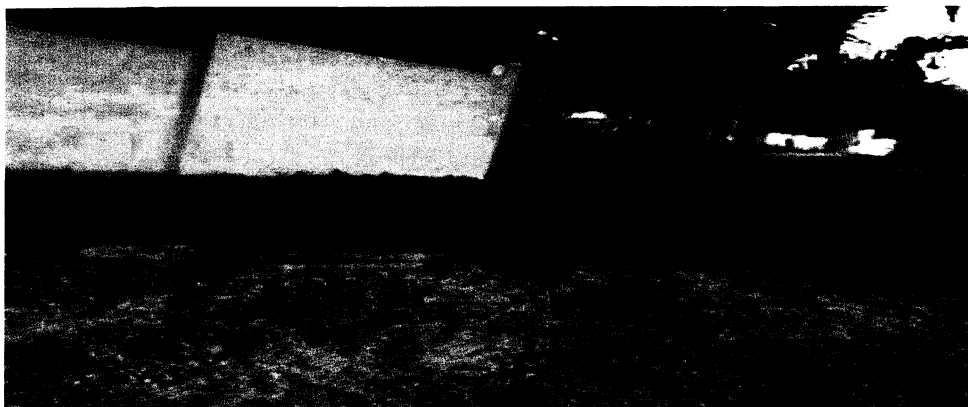
A site where day labourers use tress to provide shelter

- Job negotiations are done through gestures and by rushing toward the vehicles of potential employers.

A site where job negotiations are conducted inside a car.

However, in spite of these creative ideas, informal hiring sites do not appear to be appropriate as their presence tends to generate conflict between day labourers and local residents for the following reasons:

- Street corners and pavements in a residential or business area are open spaces which are an important part of a community's character. They enhance a community's sense of being by providing a common ground where local citizens can meet, walk and commute. From this perspective, informal hiring sites can be seen as an invasion of the community's space.

- The other concern is that street corners and pavements should be regulated and maintained to ensure they are safe and user-friendly for both commuters and pedestrians. The presence of day labourers at the sites could be experienced as

affecting one's quality of life in terms of convenience and the quality of the community's public places. The negative perceptions of residents are exacerbated by the high levels of crime and violence in our country.

- Another concern is that street corners and pavements are kept clean and healthy. This can be done by limiting waste, littering and air pollution, and nurturing and improving biodiversity to ensure that the quality of the environment is preserved for future generations. Due to lack of facilities at the sites, the day labourers tend to urinate in public and to leave litter in the area, thus contributing towards environmental degradation.

A site that has been affected by littering
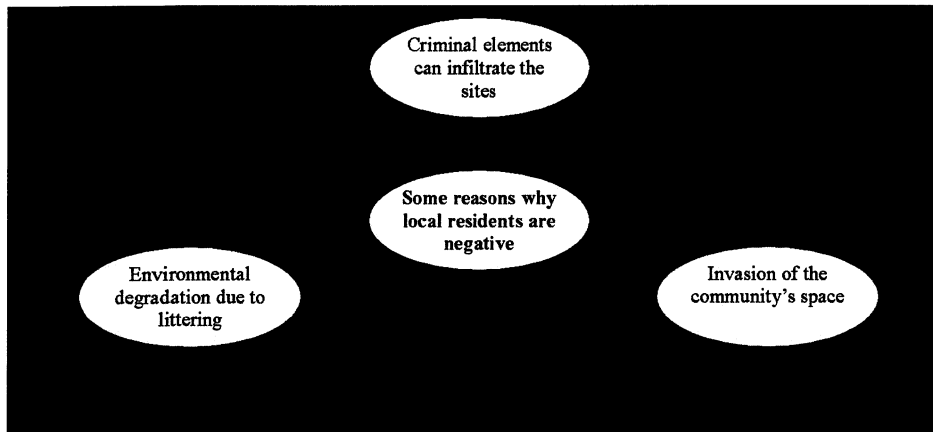
Fig 3: Some reasons why local residents have negative perceptions of day labourers

The researcher noted that there was no communication between the day labourers and the residents living in close proximity of the hiring sites.

5.2.4   The description of the movement and socio-economic activities

Fig 4: The movement cycle of day labourers at the sites
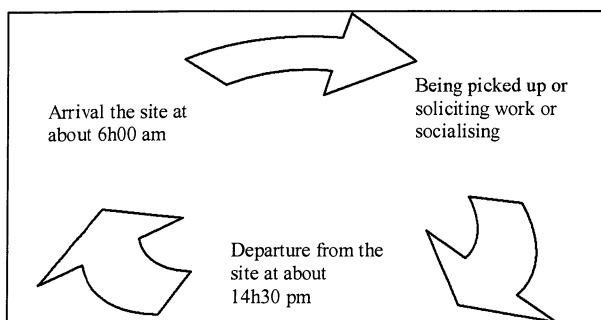
- *Arrival and departure from the sites*. Day labourers usually arrive at about 6h00 in the morning at the sites. Those that have been lucky to get jobs are picked up by their employers and transported to the work sites and usually depart from there to return home after the work has been done. Those that do not get piece jobs hang around at the sites and usually leave at about 14h30. This observation is consistent with the research findings of Gonzo & Plattner [2003: 59], and Valenzuela et al. [2006: 4] who noted that there appears to be

a general pattern with regard to the arrival and departure of day labourers at the sites. This observation indicates that the movement of day labourers to and from the sites follows a more-or-less fixed routine and that chances of getting a piece-job are much better in the early hours of the morning than in the afternoon.

- *Impact of seasonal changes.* The researcher noted that seasonal factors have an impact on the movement of day labourers at the sites. Inclement weather such as extreme heat, cold, rain and wind tends to reduce the number of day labourers standing at the sites. This can be attributed to the fact that day labourers are exposed to the harsh elements of weather as the sites are in the open. Valenzuela et al. [2006: 4] also concurs and states that the number of day labourers standing at the sites differs in accordance with seasonal changes. Conditions at the hiring sites seem to be uncomfortable due to the lack of appropriate infrastructure resulting in the day labourers being to inclement weather.

- *Economic activities.* The activities of day labourers at the sites are predominantly geared towards searching for work. This involves attracting the attention of potential employers by using a variety of techniques such as pointing a finger upwards, displaying tools and rushing towards an employer's vehicle which has stopped at the site. The situation is competitive as getting work is not guaranteed for all, but depends on luck and one's ability to convince employers that one is the best candidate for the job. Employment negotiations are hurried as an employer, usually sitting inside his vehicle, has

to choose a labourer from a group that has surrounded him. There is usually no time for job interviews or to verify the credentials and competencies of the potential employee. Thus, the employment process is as risky for the employer as it is for the employee and sometimes results in disappointment, unfulfilled promises and exploitation. Valenzuela et al. [2006: 14] mentions that due to the unregulated nature of the employment process, there have been reported incidents of exploitation and wage theft which indicates that informal hiring sites are not always conducive to the practice of proper ethical employment practices.

- *Social activities.*

The two holes and stones are used to play 'morabaraba' game

Informal hiring sites are also a place where social activities take place. They include animated conversations, playing games, initiating friendships, networking and the provision of mutual support. These activities usually take place during the latter part of the morning after it has been established that

attempts to find work have been fruitless on that particular day. Conversations include a number of subjects such as work opportunities in other places [such as other sites where lots of day labourers were employed], women [e.g. sexual experiences with girlfriends], entertainment [e.g. partying at shebeens], and crime [e.g. gangsterism in the townships]. The game that is most popular amongst day labourers seems to be 'morabaraba' [defined in page 84].

Social activities also involve sharing food, water, cigarettes and the provision of mutual emotional support. Gonzo & Plattner [2003: 66] state that social support has been found to be an important buffer against the stress of unemployment, particularly significant at informal hiring sites, where day labourers may experience helplessness and loss of control.
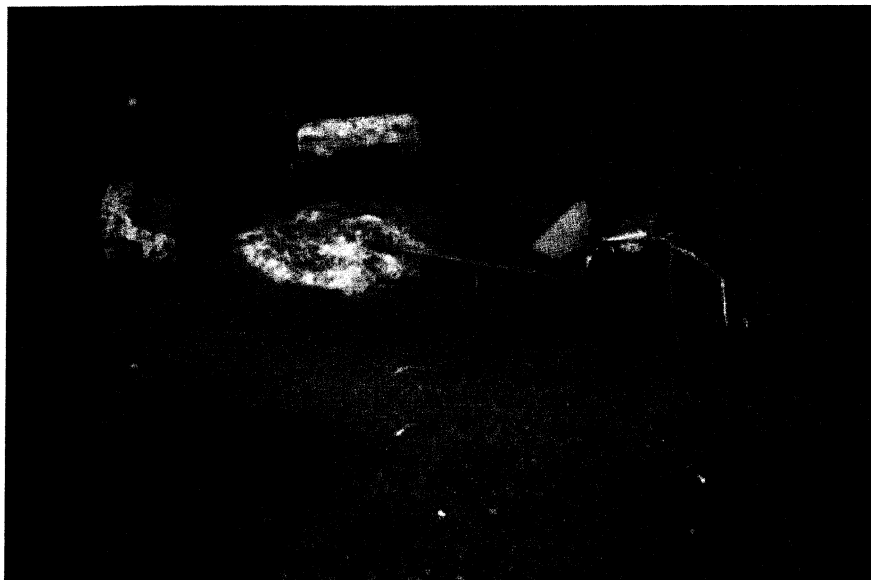
A fire was made at a site during a cold winter's day where day labourers held animated conversations

A group of friends socialising at the Pretoria North Site during one afternoon

5.3   Recommendations

In the light of the findings of the study the following is recommended:

5.3.1   *The establishment of day labourers' forum to facilitate need assessment and*

planning.

Support groups among day labourers could be organised where they meet

regularly in order to share their experiences. Such meetings could provide a forum

for mutual support and engagement with relevant stakeholders such as

government officials, local residents, potential employers, the private sector and

non-governmental organisations. This process could provide day labourers with an

opportunity to express their views on possible intervention strategies related to

challenges experienced at the hiring sites. It is crucial for policy makers at

national, provincial, and local government level and other stakeholders to

acknowledge that, in order to reach a lasting solution to problems, people who are

directly affected should be consulted and that their input should be incorporated resolutions taken. This will ensure that they buy in to the process and that their human dignity is restored.

5.3.2   *The formalisation of hiring sites.*

As the research findings have shown informal hiring sites tend to be hazardous as they lack infrastructure such as toilets, seating, water, and shelter, leading to a situation where day labourers are exposed to the harsh elements of weather and to exploitation by scrupulous employers, it would be desirable to establish formal hiring sites. However, it should be determined whether day labourers support formal hiring sites as they might argue that it might take away their individualism and sense of ownership. This process could thus follow a multi-sectorial approach in which various stakeholders participate. This could include representatives of day labourers, local residents, relevant government departments at national, provincial and local level, academic institutions, private sector companies and non-governmental organisations. The input from the various stakeholders would ensure that the formal hiring sites are situated in places that are appropriate, and that the necessary amenities are provided. In addition, policies on the regulation of the employer-employee relationship, recruitment procedures and norms and standards for job performance and remuneration could be initiated. Formal hiring sites have been successfully implemented in the USA [discussed in pages 32 - 34] and it has been proven that they have significantly improved the socio-economic circumstances of day labourers.

However, it should be noted that informal hiring sites are a current reality and will not disappear overnight as long as there is high unemployment. Steps should also be taken to improve conditions in terms of ensuring day labourers' access to basic facilities such as water and toilets, and the regulation of employment processes to protect both the day labourers and the employers. This also needs engagement by multi-sectorial stakeholders.

5.3.3 *Skills development programmes.*

The findings of the research show that the hiring sites are occupied by workers who are utilised to perform menial jobs as they are unskilled and semi-skilled. This indicates that there is a need for skills development programmes to be implemented to empower day labourers to be more marketable and to enhance their income-generation potential. The content of the programmes could be determined by the needs of the day labourers as well as the type of skills needed in the market place. The Department of Labour could play a significant role in identifying a suitable trainer and allocating a budget for the training programmes. Relevant policies need to be put in place to ensure that day labourers are accommodated in the current skills development programmes as they are presently excluded from the [2]SETA learnership programmes due to the fact that they are not permanently employed.

5.3.4 *Job search assistance and placement strategies.*

The research findings have clearly shown that the primary purpose of informal hiring sites to enable them to search for work. The biggest challenges that day labourers face is finding work on a regular basis and ensuring fair compensation for their hard

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[2] SETA refers to Special Education Teacher Assistance programmes where employers, who are given financial incentives by the Department of Labour, provide skills development training to their employees.

labour. The current job search strategies of day labourers include pointing a finger upwards and displaying the tools of their trades. These could be extended to include other creative options such as displaying bill boards and posters and producing certificates and reference letters. In addition, if formal hiring sites could be established, the management of the sites could play a mediating role in employer-employee negotiations to ensure that workers are employed regularly and are paid what they deserve. The literature review has shown that the formal hiring sites established in the USA have played a significant role in assisting day labourers find regular work and ensuring that they are paid a decent wage.

5.3.5 *Access to comprehensive social services.*

Informal hiring sites are clearly poverty pockets in our society as day labourers are poor and destitute. The Constitution of the country states that all vulnerable citizens should be provided with the necessary care, assistance and support to ensure that their quality of life is enhanced and that their human dignity is restored. A comprehensive service delivery programme involving relevant government departments could be formulated and implemented at the sites to ensure that day labourers have access to appropriate social services. More specifically the following departments can render the following services:

Table 5: Integrated service delivery

Department	Service
Social Development in partnership with NGO's	• Social grants. • Food parcels. • Counselling.
Health	• Mobile clinics • Healthy lifestyles campaigns
Public Works	• Expanded Public Works Programme • Stipends
Education	• Skills development • Adult Basic Education and Training
Labour	• Job placements • Learnerships
Home Affairs	• Identity document registrations

5.3.6 *Further research on hiring sites.*

A literature review on hiring sites has shown that very little research has been done on the topic and this was an exploratory study. This clearly indicates that there is a need for further research to be done at masters and doctor's level to examine more aspects about this phenomenon.

5.4 Conclusion

This study focussed on the informal hiring sites in Tshwane and the results of the study clearly indicated that attention should be paid to the harsh experiences of the unemployed at the sites. The vision of an economically viable South Africa cannot be reached without the creation of an environment which promotes appropriate employment practices. In particular, the findings of adverse socio-economic conditions at the sites should be a major concern for South African politicians since

the future prospects of a nation with vast numbers of unemployed vulnerable people cannot be promising.

Owing to the country's apartheid past which marginalised the majority of its people by limiting access to wealth creation opportunities, education and skills development needs to play a central role in empowering day labourers at the sites to overcome their situation of unemployment. The Department of Education, in partnership with the Department of Labour, have the responsibility of make the necessary training available and to equip day labourers with relevant skills to find employment or even to become entrepreneurs and employers themselves. Perhaps volunteer work and internships could be promoted during the roll-out of skill development programmes in order to acquaint day labourers with marketable skills for the employment sector and employers with skilled prospective job candidates.

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ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A

List of informal hiring sites in Tshwane.

Site number	Physical location	Suburb	Number of day labourers
1	Corner Hendrick Verwoed and Theunis van Niekerk Street	Wierda Park	+-7
2	Corner Theunis van Niekerk and Linderburg Street	Wierda Park	+-12
3	Corner Theunis van Niekerk and Escourt Street	Wierda Park	+-16
4	Corner Bremer and Cross Street	Pretoria Gardens	+-30
5	Centurion Value Centre	Centurion	+-25
6	Corner Clifton and Lenchen Avenue	Centurion	+-13
7	Corner Clifton and Cantonment Street	Centurion	+-34
8	Corner Monument and Station Road	Centurion	+-12
9	Corner Burger and Station Road	Centurion	+-15
10	Corner Union and Station Road	Centurion	+-100
11	Corner Nellmapius and Corn Wood Street	Cornwall Hill	+-15
12	Corner Hertzog and van Rynveld Street	Pierre van Rynveld	+-29
13	Corner Elephant and Skilpad Street	Monument Park	+-28

14	Corner Barnard and Allandale Street	Elarduspark	+-63
15	Corner Barnard and Delmas Street	Elarduspark	+-60
16	Corner Devillabois and Jacques Street	Moreleta Park	+-50
17	Corner Rubenstein and Witdoring Street	Moreleta Park	+-32
18	Corner Devillabois and Wekker Street	Moreleta Park	+-20
19	Between Tilly and Wekker Street	Moreleta Park	+-20
20	Garsfontein Street near Pretoria East Hospital	Moreleta Park	+-30
21	Corner Roslyn and Gwen Street	Newlands	+-85
22	Corner St Bernard and Hans Strydom Street	Garsfontein	+-9
23	Corner St Bernard and Helderkruin Street	Garsfontein	+-30
24	Between Atterbury and Sea Cottage Street	Garsfontein	+-10
25	Corner Atterbury and Cliffendale Street	Garsfontein	+-12
26	Corner Atterbury and Jacqueline Street	Garsfontein	+-30
27	Corner Atterbury and Kitson Street	Garsfontein	+-17
28	Corner Dely and Albert Street	Water Kloof	+-20
29	Corner Dely and Julius Jeppe Street	Water Kloof	+-12
30	Corner Thomas Edison and 13th Avenue	Menlopark	+-9

31	Corner Lynnwood and Rubida Street	Lynnwood Ridge	+-18
32	Corner Lynnwood and Simon Vermooten Street	Die Wilgers	+-14
33	Corner Margaritha and Moller Street	Meyers Park	+-15
34	Corner Keuning and Watermeyer Street	Meyers Park	+-14
35	Corner Simon Vermooten and Kent Street	Meyers Park	+-61
36	Between Stormvoel and Rinie Street	Eesterus	+-15
37	Corner Stormvoel and Baviaans Poort Street	East Lynne	+-65
38	Corner Baviaans Poort and Boslorie Street	East Lynne	+-15
39	Corner Boslorie and Koekoek Street	East Lynne	+-75
40	Corner Chamberlain and 18th Avenue	Gezina	+-15
41	Corner Frates and 15th Avenue	Gezina	+-30
42	Corner Jacobs and 14th Avenue	Gezina	+-80
43	Corner Adcock and 13th Avenue	Gezina	+-80
44	Corner Voortrekker and Jacobs Street	Gezina	+-200
45	Corner DF Malan and Boom Street	Marabastad	+-100
46	Wonderboom Station	Pretoria North	+-150
47	Corner Brits and West Street	Pretoria North	+-29

48	Corner President Steyn and Earl Street	Pretoria North	+-50
49	Corner Trichard and Botha Avenue	Zwartkop	+-23
50	Corner Ruimte and Willem Botha Avenue	Wierda Park	+-50
51	Corner DF Malan and Theodore Street	Kloofsig	+-42
52	Corner DF Malan and Cantonment Street	Lyttleton Manor	+-30
53	Corner Watermeyer and Hettie Street	Silverton	+-15
54	Corner DF Malan and Struben Street	Marabastad	+-40
55	Corner Braam Pretorious and Aldo Street	Magalieskruin	+-25
56	Along Piet Rautenbach Street	Pretoria North	+-22
57	Along Kotzenberg Street	Pretoria North	+-20
58	Along Watermeyer Street	Silverton	+-19
59	Corner Napier and Moot Street	Daspoort	+-25
60	Corner Charl Cillier and Moot Street	Daspoort	+-37
61	Corner Redelinghys and Moot Street	Daspoort	+-17
62	Between Garsfontein and Delphnie Street	Garsfontein	+-30
63	Between Struben, Schubart and Bosman Street	Pretoria CBD	+-40
64	Faerie Glen Hypermarket	Faerie Glen	+-40

65	Along Waterbok Street	Nina Park	+-7
66	Corner Potgieter and Proes Street	Pretoria CBD	+-20
67	Along Doreen Street	The Reeds	+-50
68	Corner President Steyn and Eeufees Street	Pretoria North	+-29
69	Along Kruger Street	Kloofsig	+-20
70	Corner HF Verwoed and Flower Street	Gezina	+-80
71	Babelegi Samca Tile Factory	Hammanskraal	+-150
72	Corner Hercules and Olympus Street	Moreleta Park	+-50
73	Corner Atterbury and Garsfontein Street	Garsfontein	+-30
74	Corner Atterbury and Hans Strydom Street	Faerie Glen	+-15
75	Corner Gerhard and Clifton Street	Lyttleton	+-50
76	Corner John Voster and Dale Street	Centurion	+-35
77	Corner DF Malan and Von Hagen Street	Marabastad	+-30
78	Corner Kirkness and Hertzog Street	Rynveld	+-40
79	Corner Jan Van Riebeeck and Station Street	Pretoria CBD	+-50
80	Corner Fred Nielson and Paul Kruger Street	Mayville	+-30

ANNEXURE B

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

ANNEXURE B1

<u>SITE OBSERVATION SCHEDULE</u>

SITE: _____

SITE ADDRESS: _____

SITE NUMBER: _____

DATE: _____

WEEKDAY: _____

WEATHER: _____

ARRIVAL TIME: _____

DEPARTURE TIME: _____

NUMBER OF DAY LABOURERS
ON SITE: _____

NUMBER OF DAY LABOURERS
SPOKEN TO: _____

APPROXIMATE
AGE GROUPS: _____

GENDER: _____

RACE: _____

PREDOMINANT LANGUAGES
SPOKEN: _____

SKILLS
ADVERTISED: _____

FACILITIES
ON SITE: _____

MOVEMENT OF DAY LABOURERS TO AND
FROM SITE: _____

TYPE OF EMPLOYERS WHO PICK
THEM UP: _____

NEGOTIATION
PATTERNS: _____

AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAY LABOURERS
PICKED UP: _____

SOCIAL
ACTVITIES: _____

ANNEXURE B2

DAY LABOURER INFORMAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

SITE: _____

SITE ADDRESS: _____

DATE: _____

TIME: _____

DURATION: _____

CONTENT OF INTERVIEW

1. At what times do you arrive and depart from this site?

2. Approximately how many day labourers gather at this site?

3. What skills do you advertise?

4. What other skills are usually advertised by others at this site?

5. For what kind of jobs are workers usually hired?

6. Where do you sit when you are tired of standing?

7. Where do you access drinking water?

8. Where do you access the toilet?

9. How much do you charge for your labour on a daily basis?

10. What strategies do you use to get piece-jobs?

11. How do you protect yourself from bad weather?

12. What do you do during the course of the day?

13. What social activities do you engage in?

14. Do you have any complaints about this site?

15. What should be done to improve this site?

ANNEXURE B3: BROAD ANGLED SCAN TOOL

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS eg.

Movement of the people:

Who picks them up?

Negotiation patterns:

Anything interesting:

OTHER INFORMATION (If yes - provide details)

People selling food:

People providing food:

Providing tools:

Religeous activities:

Administrative assistance:

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT:

Residential area: Income group:

Shops: (describe)

Name of shop: Type of business:

Name of shop: Type of business:

Name of shop: Type of business:

Name of shop: Type of business:

Name of shop: Type of business:
Transport hub:(eg. train
station, taxi rank)   Open spaces / fields:

Other:

OTHER KNOWN SITES