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A POLITICAL LANDSCAPE OF STREET TRADER ORGANISATIONS IN INNER CITY JOHANNESBURG, POST OPERATION CLEAN SWEEP

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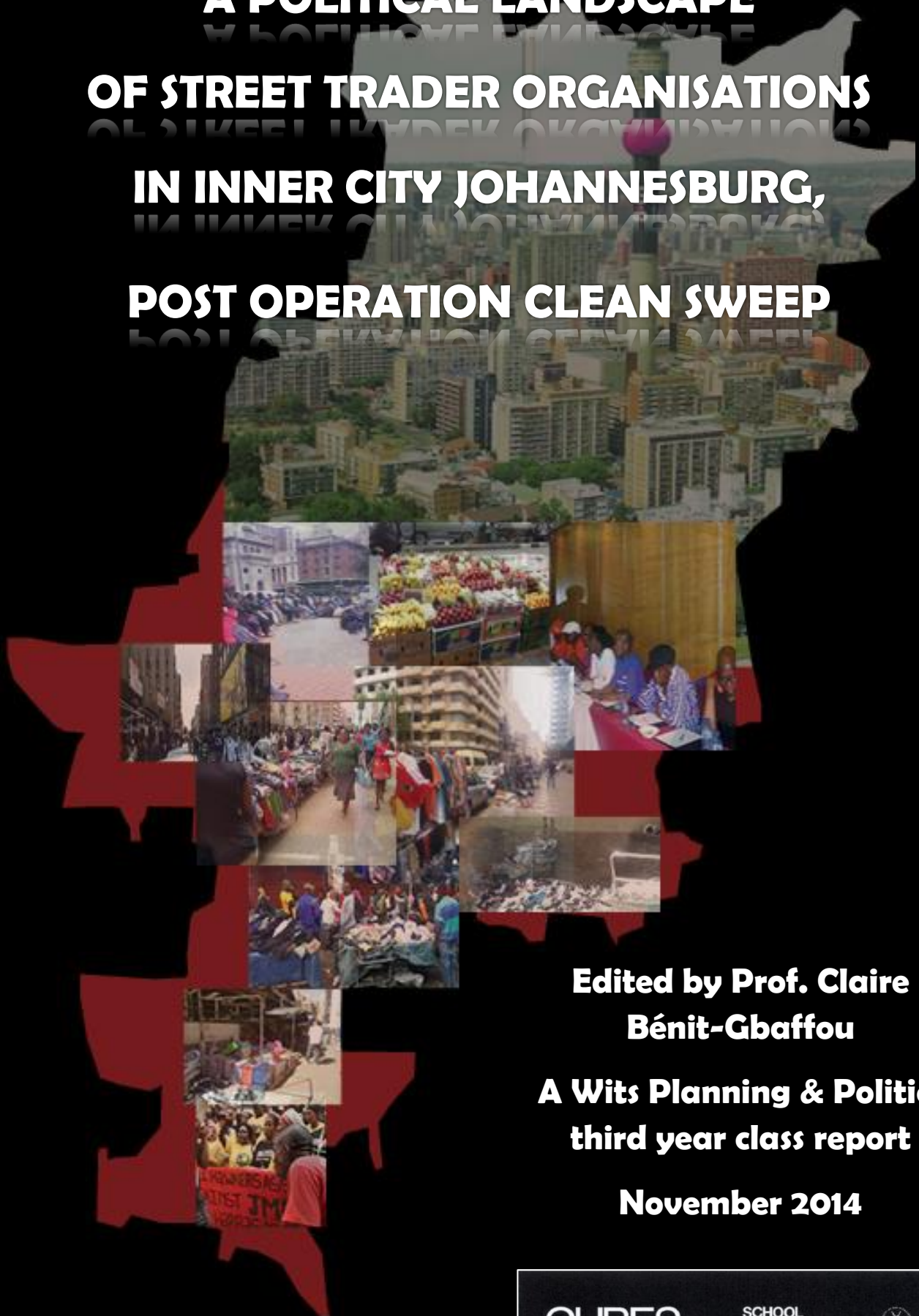
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Edited by Prof. Claire Bénit-Gbaffou

A Wits Planning & Politics third year class report

November 2014

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CENTRE FOR URBANISM & BUILT ENVIRONMENT STUDIES
SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE PLANNING

A POLITICAL LANDSCAPE OF STREET TRADER ORGANISATIONS IN INNER CITY JOHANNESBURG, POST OPERATION CLEAN SWEEP

Claire Bénit-Gbaffou (ed.)

A Wits Third year Planning and Politics Students Research Report,
November 2014

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We wish to thank the street trader organizations, for having –sometimes a bit reluctantly and fearfully, at least initially- granted us the opportunity of conducting research on and with them. It has been an enlightening encounter, frustrating at times, surprising often, eye opening always.

We express our gratitude to CUBES, the Planning Programme and the School of Architecture at Wits, for their support, trust and sympathy. They are offering a unique home where this type of teaching, research and civic engagement initiative is not only possible, but is also valued and celebrated.

I, as the editor of the report and facilitator of the course, wish to thank this extraordinary group of Planning and Politics students, who have pushed their own boundaries to contribute to this report, as their first, deep research experience.

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List of acronyms

ACHIB	African Council of Hawkers and Informal Businesses
ATO	African Traders Organisation
CBD	Central Business District
CID	City Improvement District
CJP	Central Johannesburg Partnership
CoJ	City of Johannesburg
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
DED	Department of Economic Development
ESSET	Ecumenical Services for Socio Economic Transformation
GHA	Gauteng Hawkers Association
GIDA	Gauteng Informal Development Association
ITF	Informal Traders Forum
JDA	Johannesburg Development Agency
JMPD	Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department
MTC	Metropolitan Trading Company
NAFCOC	National African Federated Chambers of Commerce
NUT	Nigerian Traders Association
OVOAHA	One Voice of All Hawkers Association
RID	Retail Improvement District
SAITF	South African Informal Traders Forum
SANTRA	South African National Traders Retail Alliance
SAPS	South African Police Service
SARHA	South Africa Railway Hawkers Association

INTRODUCTION - WHY STUDY STREET TRADER ORGANISATIONS IN JOHANNESBURG?

Claire Bénit-Gbaffou

With

Patience Bokasa, Ashlyn Jackson, Siyabonga Manzini, Musa Mhlogo, Mpho Mohloboli & Malambule Nkosi

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Background to this research

It is more than a year after Operation Clean Sweep, where in October 2013 the City of Johannesburg brutally evicted all traders from the streets of inner city Johannesburg. Most of these traders did not belong to street trading organisations, did not have an easy recourse to a language of "rights" as most of them were trading "illegally" in the inner city. Most of them were not organised neither making collective claims, but were used to adopting a politics of invisibility, of every day arrangements and constant mobility. In this context, what is the relevance of street trading organisations: why this research?

The response to this question is three-fold.

First, street trading organisations seem to be the victim of a double prejudice: a political one, that discards their leadership as opportunistic, their protests as "popcorn", their organisations as "fly-by-night", un-representative and irremediably divided. And, to a lesser extent, there is also an academic prejudice against street trading organisations, not considered as forming an authentic "social movement", or at least seldom included in this field of study (see for instance a number of books devoted to social movements in South Africa - Ballard et al. 2006; Dawson and Sinwell 2012): because of their divisions, their lack of clear -let alone radical- ideological position, and their intrinsic fragility and fluidity.

Yet, street trader organisations persist. Their leaders might change affiliation but continue struggling for a cause, build knowledge and networks, identity and resources, seize opportunities and respond to constraints. They are in existence because there is a structural oppression of street trading, all across the world, with a few exceptions. Street trading is generally, for a variety of reasons, expelled or severely restricted, from centers in Cities of the South (Bénit-Gbaffou 2014a). Except where street traders have been extremely organised, using their collective vote to render politicians accountable – like in Indian cities for instance (Sinha & Roever 2011, Bhowik 2014), local authorities across the world have continuously oppressed street traders, particularly in inner cities that often are only conceived as the shop window of a sanitised world class city, after having been the symbol of colonial order.

The second response is that, if it was not for street trading organisations, Operation Clean Sweep could have succeeded, if not in sustainably chasing away traders from inner city streets, at least in temporarily interrupting livelihoods for a longer period of time, and in legitimising the fact that street traders can and should be treated as human waste (who invented the term "clean sweep"?). Even if divided, street trader organisations have organised, opposed and successfully delegitimised such a brutal, arbitrary and contemptuous way for the state to solve urban issues. The City will have to find other ways, legal ways – and in the process, the content of its restrictive policy might be affected. In fact, it already has, as the number of legal street traders envisaged by the City has shifted

from 1500 in November 2013[1] to 3700 in August 2014[2], to a future 7500[3], or even up to 10000 (at least in the medium term).

Research, informal politics and street trader organisations

Most international academic literature hardly considers street trader organisations as an object of research. Street trading organisations are often too fragmented and fragile, too locally focused and politically weak, too short lived or fluid, to be construed as an authentic "social movement" – whatever it may mean. Furthermore, they are seen as representing the tip of the iceberg, focusing mostly on legal traders and protecting those traders' (legitimate but narrow) interests, while ignoring a majority of traders who adopt other types of politics. It is relatively recently perhaps that scholars have highlighted the "changing politics" of informality, and paid more attention to the collective agency of informal traders conceptualised as "workers" (Lindell 2010a).

Far from being analysed through the lens of "radical contention" or "insurgent citizenship" (Holston 2008), street traders are often analysed as a collective of atomised individuals – forming what Asef Bayat (1997) calls "uncivil society", as they assert their right to the city not by overt contention and mass mobilisation, but by the power of inertia, of the "quiet encroachement of the ordinary". Bayat analyse the mass of traders as only related only by what he calls "passive networks", mutual visual acknowledgement and minimal street solidarity, based on the common occupation of a street and a shared alertness to the coming of the police. Lindell (2010b) considers street traders' "voice", but qualify it as weak as opposed to the other option of "exit" – whilst only a minority of traders, those granted legal rights to trade in generally restrictive municipal frameworks, would play the "loyalty" card, notably by assisting the municipality in chasing "the illegals".

Partha Chatterjee (2004) helps us reconsider street trader organisations as perhaps the epitomy of the "political society", that he defines by the informal status of its members, making their recourse to a language of "rights" more difficult, and the likelihood of their recourses to "arrangements" and "favours" more likely. He maps the messy contours of informal politics, but does not dismiss its power, as it is ultimately based on the informal masses' democratic voting power, that they can use as leverage to gain tolerance if not full recognition from state officials.

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[1] According to a document presented by the Informal Trading Task Team to the disgruntled street trading organisations, just after starting Operation Clean Sweep (CoJ November 2013)

[2] Verbal commitment given in the partiicpatory process started by the City of Johannesburg (Promulgation and Designation of Trading Spaces in the Inner City, August 2014) to "accommodate all legal traders" – their number (3700) being based on the registered traders on the City and the Central Johannesburg databases (with an intentional ambiguity on the terms registered / legal).

[3] A declaration by the Member of the Mayoral Committee, Ruby Mathang, captured in the newspapers (Moatshe 2014) and confirmed in a subsequent meeting by City officials (17.09.2014), even mentioning the possible figure of 10000 legal trading spaces to be created in the inner city in the medium term.

Most authors studying the politics and governance of street trading as forms of informal politics, focus on the individual arrangements between traders and officials, through bribery and pragmatism, as an everyday mode of regulation (Anjaria 2010). These politics of arrangement are only occasionally disrupted by waves of repression, global event or national elections, which are the rare moments where street traders might feel the need for organisations: then ephemeral organisations would "pop-up". Whilst this might be the reality of a majority of traders – traders organisations themselves complain about the lack of loyalty of their "members", calling organisations in times of crisis but disappearing as soon as issues are solved, this understanding presents serious issues, that any serious historical study of street trading organisations will contest. This report, even if only starting to scratch the surface of street trading organisations, demonstrates that organisations do not just "pop up". Organisations have histories. They have an existence, and a degree of continuity even if they are often extremely personalised. Their leaders are active, working hard – yes, fighting for positions and status and perhaps money, like any leader (Bénit-Gbaffou and Katsaura 2014); but also sacrificing their business to mediate, solve issues, confront, alert the media, go on the ground; or, attend meetings, read documents, prepare inputs and submissions, debate with lawyers and academics. Their battles might be invisible, as the result of their action in most cases are limited to temporarily blocking further municipal repression. There is, in South Africa, limited evidence of their influence over policy or long-lasting change in the practices of the state (and the local state in particular) towards the sector. But, if organisations are sometimes dormant, if leadership level of commitment and activity is uneven in time, if leaders are often changing affiliation, there are also strong elements of continuity that are often overlooked –they are responses to structural inequalities and injustices in Cities of the South.

Oren Yiftachel (2009) and Ananya Roy (2009) usefully replace these informal politics in what Yiftachel calls "grey spaces", whilst Roy dubs "informality as the idiom of urbanisation". Both argue that it is the state that intentionally creates informality as a mode of government, of subjection or of domination. Roy puts the state at the heart of the definition of informality. By deciding on laws and regulations that push a majority of people to break them (because of survival needs); that are ill-adapted and non-responsive to social needs; that are disconnected from every day realities, the state is the one that criminalises, illegalises, informalises people and the City. Putting a majority of people in the position of breaking the law everyday gives the State, Roy argues, a lot of power - although not unproblematic and effective, she further argues. Yiftachel terms "grey spaces" the position in which informal people, the uncivil society, the political society, have been placed. The state has the arbitrary power to legalise or to destroy these grey spaces – and lingers, uses this uncertainty to create a permanent state of despondency and fear amongst the group it has chosen to victimise.

These theorisations of informal politics help map the terrain, we argue, from which to unpack the complexity and messiness of street trader organisations – not easy or straightforward "social movements" (but, which ones are, really?) with a clear ideology or even interest. See for instance the difficulty they have in challenging the legal-versus-illegal trader divide: should they fight for a universal legalisation of all existing traders, like more powerful organisations in India have successfully advocated, and inscribed into national legislation? Very few street trading organisations

openly adopt this motto in South Africa, very few make it an explicit and strong claim, very few contest the number of legal spaces arbitrarily and opaquely decided by the City. All agree that traders should be free to trade and able to develop, but which traders?

Street trader organisations in South Africa, and in Johannesburg– often discredited, seldom taken seriously

Street trader leaders are too often deemed "opportunistic" by the press[4] (and even at times some academic literature). Their protests are generally derogatorily called "popcorn protests"; their legitimacy is constantly questioned on the altar of their multiplicity, narrow interest and chronic division. The State, but also various types of NGOs, insist on only engaging in policy debate with a united body of legitimate trader representatives – and are quick to discredit street traders organisations, as lacking continuity, legitimacy, representativeness, and strategic vision. This prerequisite for engagement – unity of the sector, a collective awareness subsuming groups' contradictory interests and centripetal tendencies, an ability to develop strategic thinking- certainly is based on practical reasons. But it is also a form of political hypocrisy, as the state is far from being innocent of the divisions among street traders and their organisations - it is a bit too easy to claim that they are what prevents state's own meaningful engagement with the sector, if they are also the state's making.

Two street trader organisations successfully challenged Operation Clean Sweep in Court – on the ground that the City had acted unlawfully by chasing legal traders from the streets (as a matter of "convenience", the City argued, as sorting the "legal" from the "illegal" traders was complicated). This court decision in reality reopened the streets to both legal and illegal traders. But, and the reports' narratives make it shockingly obvious - Operation Clean Sweep started by an agreement between the City, the block leaders and most organisation leadership: the City was about to embark on a "clean sweep", to end (once and for all?) with illegalities, and chase away all "illegal traders". At the meeting where this was announced, on the 30th of September 2014, block leaders were requested to help the police sort out the "legals" from the "illegals"– nobody contested, everyone agreed: it was time to do away with the "illegal" traders. Not one organisation stood up against it, even those whose constituencies are partly made of unauthorised traders – sacrificed to the altar of the majority of their constituents, which (legitimately) complain about those unmanaged traders who do not pay rent, do not clean the public space, and just sit in front of them and steal their customers. When traders started to contest the "clean sweep", was when police officers, far from consulting with block leaders in their eviction drive, indiscriminately chased authorised and non-authorised traders. This was also the take of the lawyers – understandably, it was easier to win a case on the City

[4] See for instance Virgil James, 2011, One Voice Hawkers' march purely opportunistic, 13 April, Johannesburg News,

contradicting its own legislation and unilaterally suspending the trading licenses it had itself allocated.

Ultimately, the Constitutional ruling went further than condemning the City for chasing away "legal traders" too – it qualified the operation as an act of "humiliation and degradation" and stated the City's attitude "may well border on the cynical"[5]. Ultimately, all traders went back to trade on the streets. Ultimately, the City has to rework and find legal ways to respond to its challenges in terms of managing street trading – which might entail (who knows?) the realisation that the creation of scarcity of trading spaces contains by definition its own failure– the "illegalisation" of the majority of street traders can only lead to management by repression or management by corruption, none of which is particularly efficient to manage the streets in a sustained way, in a democratic society (Bénit-Gbaffou 2014a).

Operation Clean Sweep, and the disruption of thousands of families' livelihoods, directly and indirectly, was halted thanks to street trading organisations – SAITF and SANTRA, ATO to some extent, being at the forefront of the confrontation with the City, leading the litigation. They might have fought for narrow interests ("legal traders"), out of an efficient legal strategy or out of response to their main members' immediate interests: but the victory is for all, as stated by GIDA, an organisation that refuses to "throw stones". This only is enough to justify an interest for these complex, fraught, struggling, paradoxical, and courageous organisations.

Operation Clean Sweep and the political landscape of street trading organisations in Johannesburg

Has Operation Clean Sweep created collective awareness that street trader organisations need to overcome their divisions? Or has it revealed, and also perhaps created, lines of factures between them?

Operation Clean Sweep certainly has altered and reshaped the political landscape of street trading organisations. SAITF and SANTRA, the two organisations at the forefront of litigation which have eventually won in Constitutional Court, not only have gained visibility in the eyes of the traders. They also have gained a certain type of leverage on State officials– they are no longer treated with negligence and the City legal adviser is now constantly invited at each of their encounters. Is this leading to increased respect and consideration in engagements between the City and the sector (or part of it)? Or is it making constructive engagement impossible because of fear and distrust now rigidified into legal battles (but was constructive engagement ever going to happen)? For SAITF and SANTRA finally, Operation Clean Sweep is also changing the way they work and are structured.

[5] SERI, 2014, Con Court slams Operation Clean Sweep as an act of "humiliation and degradation", Press statement, 4 April. http://www.seri-sa.org/images/SAITF_Press_release_4April2014.pdf

With new resources – legal advisers, increased membership numbers, and often block leaders joining organisations, former informal ways of doing are challenged. SAITF takes more of a legal edge and institutionalises its modus operandi; SANTRA might need to go beyond personal networking and consolidate and restructure the linkages between leadership and the ground.

Operation Clean Sweep has also severed the few, fraught but existing, channels of communication between the City and street trading leaders: street trading organisations as well as block leaders[6]. The Informal Trader Forum, chaired by the Department of Economic Development – that was strongly criticised for precisely its divide and rule strategies, and its inability (some say intentional) to construct and follow up on meaningful and strategic inputs from the sector, is now missed as at least having provided a space where to minimally engage with the City. The monthly block leaders meetings (decried by organisations as spaces of corruption and undermining of the sector) are showing by their absence how every day practical issues cannot be resolved out of a permanent link between traders and the City. Johannesburg Property Company (JPC), now managing markets and street traders to replace the (half) defunct Metropolitan Trading Company, turns a deaf ear to traders and grounded officials' concerns, and tell them to "put your concern in writing and talk to my lawyer". This interruption of communication channels is not compensated by the once-off participatory (and rather sanitised - deprived of any key and robust debate) workshops organised by the Department of Economic Development during the month of August 2014, to "promulgate and designate trading spaces in the inner city" afresh,. These workshops, calling each "stakeholder" in turn and separately (informal traders, academics, business and property owners, security, transport, residents…), have called for all groups and individual to send "submissions" to the City – on the basis of which DED will propose a way forward, without any of the key choices having being discussed (how many traders are there? How many traders is the City able or willing to accommodate in the inner city? … key issues on which to base any meaningful discussion to be).

Hence, this research: taking street trading organisations seriously, as our object of research: puzzling, exciting, frustrating, messy: divided and plural yet very aware of forming a sector; full of opaque practices and heroic battles, of untold stories and contradictory accounts. This is where Wits third year planning and politics students were thrown – in the guided context however of an ongoing and passionate engagement of CUBES and of their lecturer in the subject matter. The task at hand (that could only be carried jointly: with students, lecturer, and trader organisations together) was then to investigate, quite practically and concretely: what do street trading organisations do? How do they understand what they do? How do they do what they mandate themselves to do? Who do they

[6] Block leaders are elected by traders at the block level, to represent them at the City level. They are often construed by organisations as undermining them, 'sold out' to the City, and lacking strategic perspective - but they are also the most grounded representatives of traders. Through this research we were exposed to interesting insights on their modes of working, an under-researched area yet crucial to understand past and current street trading management in Johannesburg.

represent, who do they claim they represent? And, in the context of the inner city, dense and diverse, shaped by competing land uses and rival organisations as the center is the place to be – where are their constituencies located?

How the research process was constructed

CUBES, the Center for Urbanism and the Built Environment Studies, takes pride in locating itself at the intersection of excellent academic research, high quality university education, and responsible civic involvement. This research was one of the opportunities not only to demonstrate it, but also to construct it. Easier said than done – but the objectives were relatively clear, if not simple: holding the three dimensions together, the ones feeding the others, whilst managing the potential contradictions or tensions that might occur between the three objectives. The context was relatively favourable. There was a terrain of engagement with street trading organisations, having called CUBES for research support, and with whom a relationship of relative (if cautious) trust was being constructed. There was a course with limited number of students, just entering adulthood (19 third year planning and politics students), and committing six hours a week for 13 weeks for the course (three hours being more directly linked to the research project itself). There was senior academic capacity to guide, comment and edit the work at each step, to make it reach a certain academic standard. There was ultimately departmental and school's support for the initiative.

CUBES research support to trader organisation – a condition for the research to happen / Contributing to supporting trader organisations through research

This research could not have happened without the agreement and support of street trader organisations.

To ask relatively inexperienced (even if in training) students to conduct interviews, be invited to meetings of street trading organisations, and collate information in writing, for the purpose of publication - in the aftermath of a municipal eviction drive, and in the context of intense competition between organisations- was quite a risk to take. What made this risk worth taking, was the relationship established though CUBES with seven trader organisations – not all, but most of those active in the inner city of contemporary Johannesburg. A relationship not of full trust, but of incremental encounter, mutual discovery, and partly shared, partly reciprocal interest. Early 2014, just after the traders went back to trade thanks to the Constitutional Court urgent interdict to the City, several organisations approached CUBES to request that it sets up a research support team for traders organisations, so that they would have something to bring to the table, should the City want to engage in negotiations. After confrontation, some organisations indeed wanted to prepare constructive ways forward – and were asking quite specific questions to researchers: where should traders trade in the inner city, and where should they not: can this be decided, and how? And, how could, how should street trading be managed, in the respect of efficiency and equity?

CUBES had had a longstanding relationship with SANTRA in particular, since it conducted the Yeoville Studio (2010-2012), a community oriented research project focused on Yeoville, and where the question of unauthorised street traders in Rockey Raleigh had become the key issue. CUBES had provided research assistance to the sector in a number of occasions in a variety of participatory platforms, and started building academic expertise and interest on the sector[7].

CUBES set up monthly workshops for traders, that have been ongoing since early 2014 – focusing on presenting and debating research results on the two questions at hand, but more and more caught in the immediacy and urgency of responding to municipal movements, proposals and processes, that needed debate, unpacking and strategic thinking, and where CUBES provided a platform for organisations to meet. One request though, coming from some organisations, that CUBES could not, would not answer (at least not directly), was to help the sector unite and overcome its divisions. These divisions were present but did not dominate the workshops; they were often puzzling to CUBES staff and leading to unexpected dynamics. We were clear in our response to that request, stating that we were not professional mediators nor politicians, and that our mandate in CUBES platform was research support – even if of course, through the process of the workshops, engagement with research, debates on ideas, we were partly (but actively) contributing to build elements of unity. In this context, research on street trading organisations appeared both important for us – academic-activists- to better understand this platform's dynamics, what was important to tackle, to debate, to deal with. And possibly important for organisations themselves: as familiar they are with the history of the 'sector', it is to be suspected that there is also a lot they do not know about the other organisations – what they have in common as well as some specificities, their perceptions being partly marred in rivalry. Beyond the detail of each organisation's profile, it might also be illuminating for organisations to reflect about strategic choices, positioning, outcomes, at a more general level than their own organisation.

Yet, it was not easy to convince organisations to come on board beyond the formal acceptance of the project, that I had presented, also in writing, for each organisation to receive, read and debate with their leadership. All organisations accepted – but I think they saw the research initially as a way to reciprocate CUBES favour (of our time and support) more than as something valuable for their organisation. Some of them probably even saw this profiling as a threat: although they did not say it explicitly and accepted the project, some organisations proved initially extremely difficult to research, reluctant to give appointments to students, giving very general statements and being elusive in response to a number of questions. Other organisations were on the contrary very open and forthcoming, eager to show students their actions and their efficiency, and to see it publicised. This caution was fully understandable: the project from the start was to publish a compilation of trader organisation's profiles – to make information public, which of course is always a risk, especially in

[7] See CUBES website for more details on the history of this engagement. See also Bénit-Gbaffou forthcoming.

the terrain of informal politics where the way things work is sometimes opaque and needs to remain so. Besides, leaders did not know to what extent the students, even if well-intentioned, would not harm them through their report; and they could not be sure – even if the process was outlined in the letter presenting the project, including feedback to organisations - that they would have a degree of control or oversight over what was to be written.

Things really changed when the draft reports were submitted to each organisation (each one only seeing its own report for feedback, not circulated to others). Perhaps it is only then that leadership realised the importance of the report, either positively (as something interesting, for marketing, legitimation, self or collective strategic reflection), or negatively (as something where a form of damage control needed to be exerted, because it was really going to be published after all!). Whatever the case, the feedback on reports through one to one, face to face discussion – that I ran, sometimes accompanied by students (lecture time had run out, and it was over and above their expected work)- was a set of incredible moments of encounters, debates, discovery, and openings. The launch of this report (Wednesday 19 November 2014), the subsequent debates between academia and street trader leaders, will tell if the research has been of any use to the sector.

Involving students – taking chances, pushing boundaries, class and life lessons

Some words about how this report was constructed. Students were teamed in groups of two to four (one student dropped and he was in a group of two, so the remaining student courageously continued, with my support), with consideration given to a politics and planning students mix, and each group was attributed one of the seven organisations to research: ACHIB, ATO, GIDA, NUT, One Voice, SAITF, SANTRA.

Students made oral presentations in class, so that all could see their progress, offer comments, but also to expose the whole class to all organisations, to share research experiences and to start drawing comparisons. There was a funny moment where all teams were stating that "My organisation is the umbrella body for all other organisations", "My organisation was key in defeating Operation Clean Sweep", "My organisation is all over the inner City and is the biggest of all". By having these class presentations, not only did the students start arguing about the merits of "their" organisation (in a process of adoption and identification that was touching): they started understanding bias, self-presentation as self-promotion, and the gap between ideals & aspirations and realities. They understood the need to both analyse discourses and focus on actions, examples, stories, case studies, to ground these discourses.

The next step was for students to submit their draft report – I graded these drafts to give them a sense of where they were, and sent detailed comments for revision, followed by consultation sessions with each team. Students then submitted what was supposed to be a final team report – that I thoroughly edited so that it could be submitted to trader organisations for their feedback. In the meantime, identifying gaps in the reports, I would alert the students' team and give them one more chance to raise their marks by addressing the gap. Most of them took the chance, so I assessed and

edited the reports again, until all reports were ready for submission to trader organisations for their feedback.

Figure I.1 – Students' personal reflections on the project



Source: Extracts from students' individual reflection on the project, end October 2014.

During that time, students were expected to engage in a second task and in another type of team work. In order to produce a full report and not just a compilation of individual reports, each student had to choose between three teams: the synthesis team (in charge of writing the introduction and conclusion, drawing comparisons and general reflection based on the seven organisations' profiles); the graphics team (in charge of the mapping, pictures, cover page, aesthetics of the report); and the editing team (in charge of editing the full report, putting it together, formatting and harmonising it, filling in the gaps). Initially the editing team was also in charge of having the report reviewed by expert commentators – but it was soon clear that this was an unrealistic expectation from my side.

In the meantime, because the semester was coming to an end, students were exhausted and soon to start exams, I drove most of the feedback sessions with a delegate of each organisation leadership – inviting students to these sessions (some took it up), as I was very frustrated that they could not attend these key moments concluding the research process. Those who attended these sessions shared my exhilaration.

The class work did generate a few passionate discussions between students, creativity, enthusiasm, students going beyond expectations and duty (see pictures on the back cover of this report). But it was also the end of the semester, students had pushed themselves beyond what could be expected, and to some extent the class dynamics did not reach its full potential. I ended up doing a lot of the editing, substantially restructuring some chapters, and – when incorporating the feedback from traders organisations, sometimes substantially changing the chapters[8]. I rewrote the introduction and conclusion – students had had good ideas that I integrated when I could, but not sufficiently developed for a published report.

Some students, enthralled by the project, and in spite of their state of fatigue and tension in exam period, went out of their way to assist even beyond the marks: I want to acknowledge in particular Malambule Nkosi, Mmbulaheni Khwashaba, Noma Dladla and Nokwanda Kgomo (organisation of the launch of the report), Zee Mazamane (webpage, photos), Noma Dladla, Sphamandla Hlela, and Uzuzakhe Ngantweni (fixing the maps).

Students learnt a lot. About who governs in the City of the South -a question at the core of the course- and how complex the response can be, whether one is pessimistic (the City is trying to conduct a clean sweep through legal means, will eventually continue making the life of street traders a misery), or optimistic (traders are managing to block the City from erring, and through trial and error, informality and bribery, and perhaps even some policy change, they are able to stay and trade in the inner city – even if in uncertain and permanently impermanent settings). About what research

[8] In cases of substantive input on structure and content from my part, I have added my name as last author to the students' chapter, after informing them.

is, what it entails, that it is never simply about extracting information, that it requires complex interactions and processes, iterations, patience, and commitment. About their city and their City, about Operation Clean Sweep that they had often not fully understood. About street trader as people with families, as entrepreneurs with skills, as politicians with complicated mandates. About team work, learning to work with different skills and personalities, to accept different levels of commitment, to look beyond "I did my job, now I don't care", and take initiative and leadership when needed. About life and growing up, about not working only for marks, about pushing one's boundaries, about being responsible of what one writes.

A biased report? Avoiding romanticisation, claiming sympathy

The methodology used by students relied mainly on interviews with a variety of leaders of the organisation they had to profile. They were tasked to interview several leaders in different functions, especially when there were different levels and scales to the organisation. They tried to complement these interviews with observations – by requesting from leadership a tour of the parts of the inner city where an organisation's membership was concentrated or present; and often embarking on such tour on their own. They were advised to try and attend meetings to further observe the workings of the organisation (agenda, debates, issues, relationship between leadership and membership and within the executive committee), but it was more the exception than the rule. They were requested to zoom on at least one case study of organisations' actions and possible achievements.

Students were surprised to experience so much distrust, and perhaps also disinterest – visible through their difficulty to secure follow up interviews, to get answers to questions other than evasive and general. Although it was a slightly painful experience (that I had not anticipated to this extent), they learnt a lot. They learnt that often it was their way of asking questions that led to evasive responses: "How is your relationship to the City?" "Good". "You are Nigerians, do you sell drugs?" "…" (this one was not actually raised, but almost!). They learnt about ethics, and the basic requirement in research, especially on informal politics, of "not to harm". They understood why, even without having dark secrets to hide, some leaders could be reluctant to see some information published in the Johannesburg context; how some information could be used in sinister ways by officials or even competing organisations; and how to try and limit this possibility (although it is of course never fully under control). They learnt generally that it always is a challenge to make research relevant and meaningful to the people you are researching – it requires a specific effort: an understanding of issues, clarity and iteration of communication, and flexibility in reshaping the research project if needs be. And even though this, immediate and practical usefulness of one's research is never guaranteed[9].

[9] I am not talking here about the usefulness of research for academic purposes, which has other dimensions, time frames and criteria – and has its own legitimacy, that tends to be discarded and yet is fundamental to research. I am only here

Of course, this is a biased report. Not biased in the sense of unreliable – but biased in the sense of privileging one side of the story. First, because each team cannot say they did a full research on one street trading organisation – which would have entailed cross-checking information from outside of the organisation; or at least seeing the organisation from the inside during a longer period of time. Here the reports are largely informed by what each organisation wanted to show us of itself: they rely mostly on interviews with leadership. Of course, these can be, and often were, quite deep interviews. Students have brought in contextual knowledge, tested consistency and tried to make sense of contradictions. There is therefore a level of triangulation: both by comparing and contrasting what different leaders of the same organisations argued, and by hearing what each organisation had to say about others. This is was a difficult material to handle, though, because of the publicity of the report. We tried our best to balance the analytical interest of the alternative, generally critical, view from a rival organisation, and the possible conflict or harm that would emerge from such publication. It is understood that critical statements on a rival organisation are also to be understood as discourses, elaborated from a specific position and with specific objectives.

Nevertheless, even if we cannot claim to have done full-fledged research on street trading organisations – because of the time for this research, keeping in mind that this is a first research experience for the students- it is, I would argue, a very interesting and original research on street trading organisations, starting to fill what is definitely a gap in research. Other authors of course have written about street trading organisations in South Africa (the review of which could not be completed for this report): Lund and Skinner 1999, Motala 2002, Horn 2003, Tissington 2009, Matjomane 2013, Pezzano forthcoming, to name a few. But it could be argued that these contributions mostly studied organisations from spaces of engagement with the state - evaluating the state of organisation in street trading, with a view of understanding their mobilisation and strategic capacity. Or, they have developed monographs of specific organisations, and captured a part of the history of these organisations. Few are looking at organisations as such – from the perspective of leadership with key choices to make within a constrained context, in terms of strategies, structure, formalisation, accountability, efficiency, repertoires of action, alliances, etc.

So, this report *does* contain mistakes, misrepresentations, blatant omissions and exaggerations (see for instance the number of members claimed by each organisation). We see it as a first step, to start discussions and reflections – and we believe its findings are sufficiently exciting to do that. We expect comments and additions including from trader organisations themselves, now reading the other organisations' profiles. Eventually we might workshop some of the cross-cutting issues with trader organisations as well, and get activist and academic experts' reviews of the report.

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trying to unpack one dimension of research usefulness, which is the direct and practical usefulness to the subjects of the research themselves. This dimension does not exist in all research, but it was certainly present here, at least as an objective and ambition.

It is a biased report in a second sense – and I could say here unashamedly biased: in the sense that it does take a sympathetic view of street trader organisation. Not only in their battles against the City's restrictive approaches and their ongoing quest for recognition, legalisation and regulation (the same battles, the same quests since the early 2000s). But also, perhaps, in better understanding the constraints under which they work and the strategic choices they have to make, between immediate benefit of their members, and longer term policy change without which the same battles are to be fought over and over again; between fighting to protect and develop one's membership, or working towards the whole sector, at the risk of losing ground and members. Students (and I previously, I must admit) tend to be very judgemental – "this organisation has not had elections since its creation!", "It does not hold meetings!" "This one is chasing away traders to put its own members!" "This one acknowledges that its members are paying bribes to the police!'. It is not necessarily a bad thing to be normative, and choices are made by organisations that can and perhaps need be judged or at least assessed. But it is important first to suspend judgement and understand the reasons for an organisation's choices, its position, the constraints it faces and the opportunities that these choices open or respond to. Encountering the leaders and iteratively interacting with them possibly makes it of course easier to understand conditions and more difficult to assert a judgement.

Our hope is to have avoided romanticisation and naivity – it was certainly not our take, nor our inclination (being personally a bit more seasoned in the politics of organisation, having sometimes learnt the hard ways in unruly workshops). Our hope is to have gone beyond just scratching the surface of organisations, in spite of the bias of "profiling" rather than fully "researching" each organisation. Our hope is that the overarching reflections triggered by this report will make us, academics and trader leaders, progress in our quest of understanding, of strategizing and of justice.

A political landscape - Outline of the report

The report is still structured along the lines of individual chapters for individual organisations. But through incorporating trader leaders' feedback, and structuring the chapters so that they highlight echoes, contrasts and comparisons between street trader organisations, a narrative (or a political landscape, to use the image that reflects the Planning cum Politics course) starts to emerge.

The report could have ordered the chapters in many different ways, and the outline of the report is a mix of various criteria. We could have ordered them by date of creation, starting with ACHIB, the "mother of all trader organisations in Johannesburg", as it calls itself rightfully. Or by size, from the smallest to the biggest or *vice versa*. Or, depending on the focus of organisations, for instance along a continuum between protection of traders (and political advocacy) and development of traders (economic empowerment). Or, along another continuum on the scale of action: between the micro-local focus on a few blocks, to the national level. Or, depending on the repertoire of mobilisation: from the most antagonistic to the least confrontational - this would have been tricky, given that many organisations in fact use both contention and cooperation.

We started with ACHIB, indeed the "mother" of all organisations: because of its longevity, it has had time to shift and to reflect on its own positions and strategies, and moved from fighting side by side with the traders harassed by the police (initially under apartheid), to rather lobbying national government for changes in policy. It also shifted its focus from the political to the economic empowerment of traders, as the political seemed to reach a dead-end whilst there were more opportunities perhaps for economic empowerment.

The report then moves to the "big three", which to some extent were born out of ACHIB, and can be considered the three biggest players in street trading politics currently – because of their size, visibility and ability to mobilise. These are SANTRA and SAITF, the two victorious litigators, accommodating the changes that Operation Clean Sweep brought to their organisation, and trying to re-establish a constructive dialogue with the City. And One Voice, sticking to street politics and mass protests, refusing to antagonise the City too drastically, and which shares with the two others the desire to promote traders' self-management of the trading spaces.

Following One Voice, we had to present GIDA, which could be seen as an off-spring of One Voice that has not splintered (many executive members belong to both organisations), and focuses on the development of cooperatives and cross-border trading in the Southern African region – both at business and policy framework level. This opening to the continent led us naturally to end the report with the two small but focused foreign-based trader organisations, NUT and ATO. These organisation navigate differently the relationship with the City Council, the former through a politics of legal compliance, integration and invisibility; the latter by mixing a strong business profile with a capacity for confrontation). Both propose quite similar models of street trading management at the street level, rendered tighter perhaps by the fear of losing trading spaces in a context where xenophobia abound, amongst city officials and traders themselves.

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CHAPTER 1 – AFRICAN COOPERATIVE FOR HAWKERS AND INFORMAL BUSINESSES (ACHIB)

Siyabonga Manzini & Claire Bénit-Gbaffou



Figure 1.1 –ACHIB executive members gather at Sonnyboy's stall, as he is about to move into a formal store in Park Station.
© Manzini, 30 October 2014.

Figure 1.2 – ACHIB: A 2014 Profile

Name: African Cooperative for Hawkers and Informal Business (ACHIB)

Date of creation: 1986

Nature of organization: Registered cooperative since 2006

Chairperson (National): Lawrence Mavundla

Chairperson (Gauteng): Sonnyboy Ntsukwini

Secretary (Gauteng): Rumbidzai Kangara

Structure of the organization: national structure and provincial branches

Office: Orion House, Jorissen Street, Braamfontein

Regular meetings: in NAFCOC – not at local level

Membership Number: 33 000

Members' location: National –Limpopo, Eastern Cape, Gauteng mostly

Membership fee: R500 per year

Registration form: Yes, to NAFCOC of which ACHIB is an affiliate

Members' identity: All informal traders (street, market, spaza)

Members trading status: Legal traders mostly

Aims of organisation: Supporting the informal economy: access to training, physical infrastructure, micro-loans and capital for development, tenders.

Acknowledgements

We wish to dedicate this report to Mr Victor Mabaso, Deputy Secretary of ACHIB Gauteng, who did not spare his efforts for that report to be completed. Through his tenacity and desire to see ACHIB recognised and celebrated, in line with the commitment of his whole life, he was central to bringing key respondents onto the table.

We extend our gratitude to S'bu Mavundla, ACHIB Deputy Secretary General, for his illuminating comments, and for the time he repeatedly granted us to rectify or complement the information forming the basis of this research. To Rumbidzai Kangara, the ACHIB Gauteng General Secretary, who told us her story as a trader and as a leader in ways that we could only partly capture here, but revealed a vivid part of the history of our city. To Sonnyboy Ntsukwini, ACHIB Gauteng Chairperson, who shared with us his joy of moving into his new trading space.

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Introduction

It is often argued that in spite of a long and vocal presence, street trader's organizations remain feeble, owing to historical fragmentation, low accountability and representativeness of their leaderships, as well as difficult access to decision making processes (Pezzano forthcoming). The feeble nature of participation and governance with regards the street traders organisations is embedded not only from non-linear trajectories and non-transparent behaviours of the associations and their leaders, but also from the unethical behaviours of public authorities (Pezzano, 2012).This report documents some of the evolving approach, achievements, setbacks as well as strategies which have been used by the African Cooperative for Hawkers and Informal Business organisation (ACHIB).

This report was put together through a series of interviews with the leadership of ACHIB, based in Johannesburg. Two leaders were interviewed in depth: Mr S'bu Mavundla (ACHIB Deputy Secretary General) and Mr Victor Mabaso (ACHIB Gauteng Deputy Chairperson), who were the contacts provided by Prof Claire Bénit-Gbaffou. They were both very helpful and open. The challenge was time constraints as the research took place in a period when the organisation was extremely busy with several programmes, most notably the "iACHIB Mayibuye Campaign", that made it difficult for leadership to find time to talk to me. It was also not easy to interact with Mr Mabaso as he is based in Daveyton district: it was difficult to reach him over the phone or via email. Moreover, from his position as an executive of the East Rand (and not Johannesburg specifically), often he did not feel free to discuss certain issues as he stated he was not in a position to.

We tried to compensate for this difficult access to leadership first by interviewing three street traders, who were either members, or at least once members of ACHIB, and who are still trading in inner city Johannesburg. However, these street traders were very suspicious, and felt they were not free to answer some questions which were put to them. It would seem that they preferred discussing what they wanted, rather than responding to questions put to them. The demands of operating as a trader in the late afternoon when it is busy were also contributing factors impeding the research process.

Internet research also assisted me in compiling this report, and ACHIB being a relatively big and well established organisation proved to be advantageous. A spatial understanding of ACHIB's membership distribution, and some of the local issues shaping its vision, are rather a disappointment in this report, but the nature of the of the organisation being a national one, not only focused in Johannesburg, as well as many street traders not having a very close relationship with ACHIB currently, made it very difficult to compile, especially as far as maps are concerned.

Bringing the draft report to ACHIB office to give the executive space for feedback (03 November 2014) helped complement and clarify the information we had managed to gather. Follow up interview with Mr Mavundla and Mabaso were granted; Ms Rumbidzai Kangara told us her trading

and leadership history in Johannesburg; and we were granted a short tour or ACHIB membership in Park Station, where we finally met and shortly interviewed Mr Sonnyboy Ntukwini.

As ACHIB is the oldest street trader organisation, having been created in 1986, and still in existence in Johannesburg – it is difficult to avoid looking at its history, and how its focus, politics, activities have shifted over the year, depending on political opportunities, contexts, as well as leadership trajectory. This report will start with ACHIB's vision today, then unpack ACHIB's history and the shifts in its focus and scale of action that led to this current vision. The third section will look at the structure of the organisation, its leadership. The fourth will discuss a few of its achievements.

How ACHIB Sees Itself Today

ACHIB deputy secretary, S'bu Mavundla argues that ACHIB's drive is the fight against poverty and unemployment: in an informal trade environment, it is easier to get into business, from as little as R100.

He believes that street trading does not get the respect it deserves, as he is aware of people who have actually bought houses and those who have taken their children to universities from this very business. He believes that street trading has a huge impact on our economy. He backs his claim by mentioning that during Operation Clean Sweep, the Johannesburg Fresh Produce Market lost a lot of business, as street traders could no longer buy goods to sell, as they were not allowed to trade on the streets any longer. He maintains as well that shop owners in Kerk Street complained that after the hawkers were removed, it affected their business, as now people never came to buy other things.

According to him, the main aim of the organisation is to enable traders to trade, and the leadership is adamant that in order to influence that, they need to intervene at the highest level, meaning to influence the legislation and policy making at a national level, e.g. parliamentary or SALGA level.

> "When the Metro police confiscate goods from the informal traders, they do so because they get instructions from authorities. These instructions come from bylaws, which were passed long before the democratic government came into power. When one confronts the metro police as a street trader organization, they reply 'We do not legislate, we implement'. ACHIB is in the process of confronting the issue of bylaws which we believe discriminate against informal traders". (S'bu Mavundla September 2014)

The organisation sees itself as concerned with intervening at policy level, as they hold the belief that it is better to fight the system top-down. If you try to fight bottom-up, you confront people that will tell that they are not responsible for making the policies, and the battle is likely to be in vain.

> "This has been our approach. We are losing a bit of members but our interest is to improve the lives of informal traders, not primarily to increase our numbers. Our interest is beyond that. It is for instance to have more structures like Bree traders mall, where our people don't ned to stop trading because of weather conditions." (S'bu Mavundla November 2014)

The organisation has a broad vision. Primarily, ACHIB's vision is to see their informal traders move from one stage to the other: ACHIB does not want someone to be proud that they have been street traders for 20 years, but rather they want to see an individual who begins as a street trader, and then goes on to venture in a bigger business environment such as owning or running some sort of manufacturing plant for instance. They want street trading to become an entry point for business people with very little capital, and thereafter advance to a higher level through informal trading. When they do so, they moreover leave a space in the informal trading market to enable new and younger people to also utilise informal trading as the door to bigger business.



Figure 1.3 - How ACHIB presents itself online in 2014
Source: http://www.ihawk.co.za/achib.htm

ACHIB's business orientation is visible in its online marketing, where the form as well as the content of its profile emphasizes the business nature of the informal economy, called here 'micro-business' and referring to its 'corporate culture', and the business-oriented character of ACHIB.

> "We need to think differently about street trading. We are encouraging micro-businesses. On the streets, if properly accommodated, traders should be viewed as business people, not a nuisance. In this respect Operation Clean Sweep was a very offensive expression of this perception. Clean sweeping people? What did that mean anyway?" (S'bu Mavundla, November 2014)

ACHIB, the Oldest Street Trader Organisation in Johannesburg

The acronym ACHIB initially stood for African Council for Hawkers and Informal Businesses, when the organisation was established in 1986 in Johannesburg by Lawrence Mavundla, with the

help of a few others. ACHIB boasts being the first informal trader's organisation to be established. Mavundla is still ACHIB's president today.

The creation of ACHIB (1986)

"ACHIB was formed because black people were not allowed to trade nor do business during the apartheid era", argues S'bu Mavundla, ACHIB Deputy General Secretary.

The story of ACHIB is often told as the story of Lawrence Mavundla himself – a charismatic young leader having been retrenched from the mining sector in 1985 after organising a strike (as part of the National Union of Mineworkers), resorting to hawking in the streets of Johannesburg, seeing its potential but also deeply shocked by the brutality of police continuous harassment against hawkers.

> "Traveling to work one morning in 1986, he noticed several street hawkers being chased by a group of policemen. Most scattered in different directions, but one 101-year-old woman, Granny Harriet Moyo, couldn't run fast enough to escape the police. Her produce was crushed under the wheels of a police van, and she was badly injured when police threw her into their metal-backed truck. […] Disturbed by the experience, Mavundla began to investigate the regular police harassment experienced by street vendors part of a government effort to keep them out of white areas. To provide a political voice for these small entrepreneurs, he founded the organization that became the African Council of Hawkers and Informal Businesses (ACHIB)." (Clark, 1989).

The story, that has attained the status of a myth, is told slightly differently in the biography of Leon Louw – the founder of the Free Market Foundation, a struggle activist, doing pro-bono legal work in the defence of hawkers and other informal workers, and who drafted the 1991 Business Act, a key piece of legislation opening the way for informal trader to develop their business, and still defining their right to trade in urban spaces today.

Figure 1.4 - Leon Louw's account of the creation of ACHIB

"When he was an article clerk at one of South Africa's leading law firms, his activist life took a new turn due to an event that changed his life and lead ultimately to the work he does now:

"Every day I saw and occasionally patronised an old black lady who would sell fruit on the sidewalk outside our law offices. One day I saw the police kick her basket of fruit into the street, and chase her down around the corner where they caught and arrested her. They threw her violently into their police van, and drove off. I dropped what I was doing and followed. They took her to central Johannesburg police station where I spent the rest of the day trying to get her released."

Louw asked his employer to investigate the plight of informal black traders and to provide them with legal defense. After telling him that it was "none of their business", his employer reluctantly allowed Louw to work pro bono for illegal street vendors, taxi operators and cottage industries. It was at this point that Louw first found himself questioning Marxism, especially its anti-business and anti-individual liberty dogma, which he would later abandon, by virtue of what he observed "in the real world", as he puts it.

In defense of informal traders, Louw began to work with a trade unionist from the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), Lawrence Mavundla, who, like Louw, had been enraged by the notorious "Granny Moyo" incident – she died due to head injuries suffered when tossed into a police van – and other atrocities perpetrated against what Louw saw as aspirant black capitalists. He teamed up with Mavundla's African

Chamber of Hawkers and Informal Businesses (ACHIB). His work entailed representing street vendors in court cases, reclaiming their confiscated merchandise, seeking injunctions against illegal raids, arrests and brutality, confronting and obstructing police who were harassing small enterprise owners, and organising or joining protest action.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leon_Louw

This meant that ACHIB membership grew quickly in a few years' time: from initial 250 to 40000 in 1991 (Pezzano forthcoming), mostly based in Johannesburg at the time.



Laurence Mavundla will be one of the leaders of this new nation. A ninth-grade dropout from Empande High School in Natal province, Mavundla was first employed underground at the East Driefontein mine, where he rose to the position of shift controller and became a shop steward for the National Union of Mineworkers, the country's largest union. After organizing a strike in 1985, he was arrested, denied bail, and spent a short time in jail.

Over the years, Mavundla held a variety of other positions in the trade union movement—as a farm worker, a railway laborer, and a sorter in the Johannesburg post office. Traveling to work one morning in 1986, he noticed several street hawkers being chased by a group of policemen. Most scattered in different directions, but one 101-year-old woman,

Laurence Mavundla, who organized South Africa's street vendors: "We don't want your charity, white man."

the last of the many encounters she had with police during her 58 years hawking fruits and vegetables. "How much money did she spend on fines for earning an honest living?" Mavundla asked at the memorial service. "How many days did she spend in jail? We honor her braveness for not giving up and hawking until her last day on earth. Granny Moyo, your spirit lives on and that is why we can sell freely today."

One only needs to walk down Jeppe Street, the heart of the hawkers' community in Johannesburg, to sense the vibrancy of the hawker trade. Just blocks from the third-class (formerly "black") railway terminal and one of the world's largest taxi stands, the casual shopper can find products ranging from peanuts, fruit, and lambs' heads to jewelry, handbags, and hair conditioners. Despite liquor regulations, beer is freely available. This is the thriving center of small-scale black enterprise

Figure 1.5 - A portrait of Lawrence Mavundla in the late 1980s

Source: Clark M, 1989, South Africa's Blacks are realizing their Quiet Economic Power: can Apartheid Survive? *Reason, Free Minds and Free Markets*: "the Quiet Revolution".

Developing business networks, lobbying the state, defending members (early 1990s – mid 2000s)

Lawrence Mavundla embarked the hawkers on a number of struggle actions that were multiplying at the time - civil disobedience campaigns[1], company boycotts, international campaigns, and ACHIB quickly became a powerful organisation, able to lobby the City Council, and supported by a number of private companies perhaps foreseeing the collapse of the apartheid regime and interested in reaching the Black consumer market.

> "In Johannesburg ACHIB has been actively lobbying city authorities on behalf of black hawkers in a campaign to end the repression of street traders (Mavundla 1988). To secure the support of the large business sector, ACHIB threatened to mobilise a Black consumer boycott on the products of those enterprises which failed to respond to their campaign. In addition ACHIB has established a marketing arm in order to link supportive enterprises to the distribution channels into the black consumer market established by the hawkers. Finally, the organisation has gone as far as to assist a company wishing to launch new products geared to black consumers in urging their sponsorship of retrenched mineworkers as licensed hawkers." (Rogerson, 1990, p. 127)

For instance, as early as 1990, ACHIB struck a deal with a major insurance broker in 1990, "securing the first ever insurance cover for hawkers, spaza shops and other informal businesses". This was achieved through the formal company supporting informal traders in opening a bank account though which the insurance premium could be paid: the

> "training of ACHIB staff to open transmission accounts on behalf of their members. For many, this will be their first bank account. The premium is built into ACHIB's existing subscription fee. An added bonus for Achib is that the scheme encourages members to pay subscription fees and, at the same time, saves administration costs in collecting fees." [2]

This link to formal businesses, and this positioning in the Black market was to remain, and to actually develop, as a key feature of ACHIB over its history. What was most centrally at stake at the time, however, was to fight the apartheid legislation and the harsh and chronic repression of street hawkers in the inner city of Johannesburg. But these business networks, and ACHIB's positioning in a rising Black economy and market, definitely were an asset in ACHIB's lobbying power towards the municipal authorities.

Mavundla's ACHIB, as the first and single hawkers organisation, was granted the right by the City Council to issue trading permits- a prerogative that certainly helped the organisation to gain membership and credibility against the hawkers. A journalist tells the story of ACHIB and Mavundla in those terms:

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[1] Malunga M, 1988, We won't obey, say traders ... and 23 are arrested. *Weekly Mail*, 26 August 1988, http://mg.co.za/article/1988-08-26-00-we-wont-obey-say-traders-and-23-are-arrested.

[2] Allen, B, 1990, New brokers' scheme for hawkers gets off the ground: Getting informal, *Insurance Times and Investments,* Vol:3.2. http://www.insurance-times.net/article/new-brokers%E2%80%99-scheme-hawkers-gets-ground.

"Within a few years the Johannesburg City Council granted Mavundla a super hawker licence. Traditionally, many white farmers and merchants were in this position. A holder of a super licence had the privilege of issuing licences to others to peddle within a certain area. This also meant they were able to dispense with direct applications to a local municipality council. Mavundla used the position to mobilise people and form an organisation which would advance the interests of this sector.

Although licences were being issued, there were other issues to deal with. The by-laws continued to restrict hawking to certain places or even prohibit hawkers outright. Harassment was constant as police were on the look-out for illegal hawkers, which meant any hawker could be approached for his or her credentials. Achib became a platform to mobilise for changes in legislation and fair treatment of hawkers and informal traders. […] Achib emerged at the right time. It positioned itself as a change agent. Restrictive by-laws were its main target. It called on financial institutions to open their coffers to the micro-enterprises whose operators had neither the collateral required nor the accounting skills to show how their businesses had been performing."

Figure 1.6 - Hawkers' platform fulfilling a need
Source: Mabogoane M, *City Press*, 23 November 2003.

In this transition period (late 1980s to late 1990s), ACHIB's efforts were three-fold:

► They worked at consolidating networks and support from the private sector, which it did successfully in a number of instances, granting access of street traders to a number of resources: loans, insurance, cheaper products bought in bulk, business training, etc. This was quite successful in a number of ways,

► ACHIB attempted to influence national policy, which it did successfully in the early 1990s, through for instance the 1991 Business Act. Dialogue at national level, for instance in the Trade and Industry Portfolio Committee hearing to discuss the National Small Business Amendment Bill (May 2003), entail ACHIB making direct submissions and claims to the Minister on matter of national importance.

Later in the 1990s, as street trading regulation and management becomes a municipal prerogative, ACHIB attempts to influence Johannesburg policies and by-laws, at the local level – with far less success. The late 1990s and early 2000s constituted a period of increased restriction of street trading (with the vision of their short and medium term relocations into markets). However, it was also a time of ACHIB expansion beyond Johannesburg, and becoming a truly national organisation (see below, section on membership).

► In the context of increasingly restrictive practices towards street traders by the City of Johannesburg by the late 1990s, and in continuity with the earlier apartheid period (where ACHIB needed to be constantly on the ground, alert to daily police harassment and defending individual traders victims of state repressive practice), ACHIB's third focus is more classically to defend its members against police harassment and other daily challenges on the ground, in the streets of Johannesburg. This activity, in the absence of progress in negotiating with the City, quickly turned into a divisive exercise, where ACHIB was at the forefront of violent xenophobic attacks against

foreign street traders, multiplying in the late 1990s[3], to the point of being finger pointed by the Human Rights Watch:

> "Since at least 1994 ACHIB has led a vocal campaign against foreign hawkers. ACHIB believes 40 per cent of hawkers are foreigners. ACHIB blames foreigners for increasing crime, overpopulation and failing wages, and accuses foreigners of selling stolen rotten and expired goods. ACHIB has organised a series of anti-foreigner meetings and marches, and it has successfully negotiated a neighbourhood watch programme with the police, in which ACHIB affiliated members place suspected undocumented migrants under community arrest and hand them over to the police. Considering the official anti-foreigner stance of ACHIB, Human Rights Watch feels that this cooperation between the South African Police and ACHIB is inappropriate and might invite abuse." (Human Right Watch, 1998: 129).

Beyond this international condemnation, it seems ACHIB lost some of its stamina, exhausting itself in endless battles with the City of Johannesburg, increasing divisions within the informal sector (probably fuelled by a politics of divide and rule in the City of Johannesburg) – as many other street trader organisations were developing, some splintering from ACHIB.

It is interesting to retrace some of this history and follow the most vocal leaders – who at the time were ACHIB executive members, and have not necessarily changed the nature of their claims and actions today under other affiliations. It is ACHIB in fact that has changed since (See **Figure 1.7** below)

Figure 1.7 - The more things change… Livingstone in ACHIB 2004, Livingstone in SANTRA 2014

"ACHIB general secretary, Livingstone Mantanga, told SAPA the planned march followed ACHIB not having had a reply to a request by street vendors to meet with Sol Cowan, the councillor responsible for informal business issues, to discuss the removal issue. "Since last week, people have been removed from Bree and Wanderers streets," said Mantanga. He said that in May ACHIB had been promised that the council would host a "policy dialogue workshop" with the hawkers to debate and review council policies on their businesses. However, hawkers said they had not been given the opportunity to debate the policy documents before the council embarked on the "daily mass attacks on hawkers".

Source: SAPA 2003

"[…] Mr. Livingstone Mantanga [SANTRA Chair] visited the MEC's office this morning. The purpose for his visit was to submit a complaint about the informal traders who were evicted and their goods confiscated by Metro Police at President Street 2 weeks ago. […] They indicated that they are willing to engage the City on the matter, however, their challenge is that the City is not willing to engage them. My mandate from the MEC's office is to request that you escalate the matter and for the matter to be given attention as soon as possible between the City and JMPD. Attached is the list of all traders that were removed from President Street by JMPD"

Source: Extract from an email exchange between Gauteng MEC and City of Johannesburg, communicated by SANTRA, 15 September 2014.

[3] This violence amongst traders also took place in the context of financial crisis in the City of Johannesburg, vastly paralysed in its action; and inefficient – restructuring- police service, leading to rocketing crime levels, especially in the inner city.

The impossibility of change that is manifested by the permanence of issues, the way they are framed and contested (harassment of traders, lack of engagement with the City), has been one of the causes of ACHIB's change of focus in the following period.

It does not mean there were not some victories, and ACHIB claims for instance it played an important role in attaining demarcated spaces in which traders were capacitated to trade in the area of Faraday, De Villiers St, Eloft St, Kerk St as well as Joubert St, in the mid-2000s. The municipality appointed some ACHIB leadership members to be part of the management team which oversaw the demarcation process.

Change of name, change of focus? 'C' for Cooperative (2006-2014)

In 2006, 20 years after its establishment, ACHIB changed or rather modified its name, from African Council for Hawkers and Informal Business to African Cooperative for Hawkers and Informal Business, also changing its logo with the process.

The change was due to the fact that initially the organisation was advocacy-centred meaning that it was just a voice for the members - informal street traders- as it spoke on behalf of them. However, the organisation then came to the realisation that the needs of informal traders were now beyond advocacy; there was now a need to empower their members economically. The organisation saw it a necessity to try and enable street traders to compete with retailers, as at that point in time, S'bu Mavundla points out,

> "There was an influx of malls being built in the townships and as a result spaza shops in the townships were dying."

It became crucial to develop members' ability to compete and re-formalise as a cooperative in order to be able to buy in bulk and at lower prices. Hence,

> "The name of the organisation was changed or should I say modified to represent the direction that the organisation was taking, which was to now commercialise the organisation. This meant that members were now not only benefitting from being represented by the organisation, but also benefitted from value added services such collective (bulk) buying" (S'bu Mavundla, 2014)

> "ACHIB's initiative to safeguard the livelihoods of the 137 000 hawkers it counts as members has been to become a co-operative so that it can purchase as a single entity on their behalf. The idea is to create a network of branded MyStore Co-operatives in townships, owned by entrepreneurs that will act as wholesalers to the retailers in the group. By creating a large national buying organization that delivers stock to centrally located MyStores, ACHIB believes it can reduce retailers' costs by about 10%."[4]

[4] Bisseker C, 2006, Retailers' drive into the township market threatens spaza shops, *Financial Mail*, 28 September 2006 http://www.eprop.co.za/commercial-property-news/item/7487-Retailers-drive-into-the-township-market-threatens-spaza-shops.html

In parallel to this shift towards a more economic and business focus for the organisation, ACHIB starts disengaging from 'battles on the ground', that have not proved to lead to significant structural or policy change since the late 1990s in Johannesburg. This is what leads to the statements mentioned above (see 1. ACHIB's vision): the conviction that ACHIB needs to focus on the national level rather than waste its energy at the local level where it has only a defensive or blocking power, but is constantly confronted to the same issues repeated over time (police harassment of traders).

To some extent, Lawrence Mavundla's political trajectory of the time reflects and inspires this shift in the organisation. Mavundla becomes in 2009 the president of NAFCOC, the National African Federated Chamber of Commerce and Industry. NAFCOC, formed in 1964 by a group of business people led by legendary businessman Dr Richard Maponya, is arguably one of this country's oldest and largest business chambers. The organisation has for many years stood as a defender and voice of small business people of South Africa. NAFCOC's main objective is to promote and encourage the development of black business in South Africa and thereby draw the black majority into economic activity and decision making. It aims to promote a spirit of co-operation and unity among black business people, to encourage self-help in the black community and full participation in the economy of the country.

ACHIB becomes affiliated to NAFCOC, and Lawrence is from 2009 to date (with a brief interruption in his presidency at NAFCOC in 2013) the president or chair of both organisations. This certainly does open business opportunities for ACHIB – in terms of consolidating its access to funding and resources, its networks with formal businesses, its access to state sponsored programmes and tenders (see **Figure 1.8** below)

Figure 1.8 - The benefits of becoming a NAFCOC member

- Entitlement to all benefits that are offered by sectors
- Collective sectoral decision–making (through Conferences / Summits / Strategic Sessions etc.)
- Partnerships established with Government and State Owned Enterprises e. g. Department of Trade & Industry and its Business Units and State Owned Enterprises like Transnet; ESKOM, TELKOM etc.
- Representation in all the Government structures and / or Departments
- Representation / Participation in NEDLAC
- Representation on the Boards of Government Paratstatals
- Involvement in the Local, District, Regional , Provincial municipalities Contracts and Tenders
- Participate in NAFCOC shared business at all levels and sectors

Source: NAFCOC new membership policy, communicated by ACHIB in 2014

It does also increase its credibility and ability, through NAFCOC, to be a key player in policy and political decisions at a national level, that in turn may give ACHIB the space to influence local government 'from the top'. ACHIB is working now towards working closely with national and local governments to provide a better deal for hawkers. Lobbying at national level to set up decentralised structured at provincial and local government level, based on regular and nation-wide roadshow to

convince local authorities to incorporate representatives of ACHIB in local economic development programmes, ACHIB continues to look for ways in which it can be integrated into local governance.

However, as Lawrence Mavundla's personal profile grew and as he worked his way to the top of NAFCOC, ACHIB experienced ups and downs. The founder of the Law Review Project, Leon Louw, who has worked closely with ACHIB for many years, stated that:

> "ACHIB can become so inactive that they appear to have vanished, and then suddenly they will re-emerge again in another form. One month they will have one set of offices, the next they will be somewhere else and the next you will not be able to contact them at all… The only thing stable about ACHIB is its instability" (Louw, quoted in Pezzano, 2012).

If ACHIB becomes more visible in state and policy circles, ACHIB on the ground is weakened and no longer as visible to its core constituency. The new position of Mavundla as the President of NAFCOC, it has been argued, could have also weakened ACHIB, as it means he has less time to devote to ACHIB. This, linked the personalized, the kind of patrimonial leadership of Mavundla, which then caused the organisation to lose visibility and membership, argues Pezzano (2012). But perhaps more structurally, what can account for ACHIB decreasing visibility for street traders is the structural shift – from direct and everyday engagement on the ground battles of the street, to a national and policy focus. ACHIB is putting itself in a position where it no longer is able to protect and to defend individual traders from concrete and immediate challenges they are faced with.

Structure of ACHIB

ACHIB is a truly national organisation, with branches across the country. Along the national committee, there are several provincial executive committee – we focused on the Gauteng one, itself divided into several districts or areas.

Executive committees

In 2014, our respondents presented ACHIB national structure as follows:

- President (Mr Lawrence Mavundla)
- Vice President (Ms Victoria Mali)
- Secretary General (Ms Tshidi Mphaki)
- Deputy Secretary General (Mr S'bu Mavundla)
- Treasurer (Ms Hilda Plaatjies)
- National Co-ordinator (Mr Enock Chisane)
- National Chairperson (Thokozile Sahlupo)

ACHIB Gauteng branch is composed as follows, with each executive committee members representing a specific region:

- Chairperson: Sonnyboy Ntsukwini (Sedibeng)
- Vice Chairperson: Victor Mabaso (Ekurhuleni)
- Secretary General: Rumbidzai Kangara (Johannesburg)
- Deputy Secretary General: Amanda Jagger (Johannesburg)
- Treasurer: Prince Zulu (Johannesburg)

ACHIB in Gauteng is divided into five districts or regions: Mogale, Johannesburg Central, Sedibeng, Tshwane and Ekurhuleni. Four representatives per region (20 people in total) come to the provincial election, and elect the five office bearers. It happened in the last election that Johannesburg is overrepresented amongst the 5 office bearers. However, these office bearers (the everyday working committee) work with a broader executive committee, five other members that they nominate so that each region is represented.

The Provincial Chair's role is to represent NAFCOC in Gauteng. The Secretary and her Deputy are in charge with the administration of ACHIB in the Province, and responsible for engagement with external stakeholders. The Deputy Chair looks into the regions and is in charge with mobilization. The Treasurer deals with finances and fundraising.

The link between provincial and national structures works as follows. There is the National Council of ACHIB, which consists of 4 members from each of the 9 provinces, so that all the provinces are represented. Out of the 36 provincial representatives, the top 7 (the national structure) is elected. It is the 36 representatives that vote amongst each other for the top 7 which comes among them. All these leaders are voted in and this is done every 5 years, with the last election having been held in 2011. (see **Figure 1.9** below for portraits of ACHIB leaders).

Leaders Portraits

Figure 1.9 - Leaders Profiles

Lawrence Bhekinkosi Mavundla



"Lawrence Mavundla is the Founder and President of ACHIB, one of the key constituencies of Nafcoc, which he also leads as the National President since 2009.

Mavundla was born in the district of Eshowe in KZN. After high school he went on to work in the mines, ending up as a Shift Controller at East Driefontein Gold Mine. He was part of the formation of the National Union of Mine Workers, (NUM) where he became a shop steward. He was fired after organizing a strike. He was later arrested at Carletonville for helping organising the strike and send to Potchefstroom prison for nine months. He also worked briefly as an organizer for Railways Harbor's & Allied union and also for the Post Telecommunications workers union. Mavundla left his work as mine employee in the 1980s to start his own informal business in the streets of Johannesburg. He founded ACHIB in 1986 to fight for the trading rights of Blacks who faced a barrage of racist and discriminatory laws which prevented them from enterprising independently.

Mavundla sits on many boards including the Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA), a subsidiary of the State Owned Enterprise, The Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) and is also the Deputy President of the Black Business Council (BBC) where one of his key responsibilities is enterprise development. He remains a key and consistent authority in matters affecting small business.

Source: http://www.africagrowth.com and http://topwomenawards.co.za/2013-judges/

Victor Mabaso



Victor Mabaso is ACHIB Deputy Chairperson for Gauteng. He was born in 1945 and grew up in an environment which encouraged informal trading, as a form of independent entrepreneurship and political autonomy. His father, based in Alexandra Township, was an employee of PUTCO, the municipal bus company. He was encouraged by the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) to "do something on his own", and he started to collect municipal employees overalls over the week-end and propose an informal cleaning service. Victor Mabaso was therefore exposed to the practice of informal trade as a means to gain autonomy, as well as to PAC ideas. He became a member of the PAC branch while he was in Daveyton high school, and was expelled because of his political activities before he could complete matric.

With his first pay from being a caddie, Victor Mabaso bought a camera, and began life as a street photographer. Photography was his passion, but it was difficult for him to keep a position because of his political activities with PAC. He remembers for instance having been mandated by the PAC to conscientise Daveyton hostel leaders, which he did and according to him did a lot to prevent violence to erupt between hostel and township in the late 1980s. He also recalls working for the Benoni Post, a white suburban newspaper, and managing to introduce, through his photographs, sporting news from the township. His business as street photograph however got disturbed as Mr Mabaso got detained for 98 days. Almost immediately after being released, in 1986, the he met Lawrence Mavundla whom he helped establish ACHIB, making him one of the founder members of ACHIB. When Mr Mabaso was to begin getting a detainees grant from the Council of Churches, he asked the money to be directly sent to ACHIB, in order for them to buy him stock, as he feared that he would otherwise waste the money. This ensured that Mr Mabaso joined the organisation when it was only five months old, and he has never looked back, as ACHIB remains the only street trader's organisation that he has been part of.

He continued to trade as a photographer but soon realised that the broad shift of the photography industry to digital photography made his trade less competitive. Therefore he traded food products in Daveyton, until today where he is considering training in digital photography to come back to his passion.

In ACHIB he occupied the position of organizer, and established ACHIB branches in a number of regions – Grobbersdaal, Witbank, Rustenburg. What matters most to him is to educate traders about their rights, and police officers about their duties. 'Traders should not abandon their goods when the police come and want to confiscate. They should stay and make police officers write a list of the goods confiscated. That will discourage them". He remembers having food products confiscated, purposefully letting them rot in the police custody, then going to the police and claiming the traders' goods, and threatening lawsuit against the police for theft – this made the police far more respectful of street traders, for a while!

S'bu Mavundla



S'bu Mavundla was born in KZN, where, being the cousin of Lawrence Mavundla, he got exposed to street trading politics in general and ACHIB in particular. He became a member of ACHIB in 2003, when he was still in tertiary education. As he came to Johannesburg in 2006, he started working for ACHIB in an administrative capacity. He was elected the Deputy Secretary General in 2011, in ACHIB national structure. "It was in an ACHIB conference in 2011. Some of our leaders had just left ACHIB, this had created a leadership vacuum. I was representing young people; that was a buzz word at the time. I was then nominated and elected in the executive".

S'bu still plays the role of being an office manager in ACHIB's offices in Braamfontein. He further holds other positions in other organisations, which includes NAFCOC Youth Chamber, where he is the organisation's Youth Treasurer to date; and being the CEO of USB Capital Group.

Rumbidzai Kangara



Rumbidzai ('Rumbi') Kangara is the Secretary General of ACHIB Gauteng. She is also the Chairpeson of the Women's Chamber for ACHIB Gauteng, the Deputy Secretary of the Women's Chamber for NAFCOC Gauteng, and the Treasurer of NAFCOC Johannesburg.

She was born in Zimbabwe and came to South Africa in 1991 as she had found a job in a clothing company. The company closed down, she found another job as a manager in an arts and craft company. She was doing well but wanted to have something on her own, so she started from scratch, selling African clothing as a mobile trader, in the inner city and thetownships. Through an ingenious system of discount versus collection of second hand clothes from her customers, she managed to save some funds and was able to secure a trading stall in Bruma Lake Flea Market.

Through her courage, strong will and business acumen, she soon was able to open a formal store in Bruma Market, then a second, up to six. She had joined ACHIB by the time, and was nominated and then elected as ACHIB Provincial secretary. She also became the market trader leader, and soon many of the 600 market traders were ACHIB members.

However, the market managing company went bankrupt in 2010, and she soon discovered that the owner had sold the land to a Chinese company, without informing or involving the traders in the transactions. The Chinese started sending letters of eviction to traders, notwithstanding the fact that traders had a lease still valid for 3 years. Through a mix of possible corruption and bribery, constructive eviction (cutting services in the market for instance) and intimidation (Rumbi was brutally arrested for fraud, theft and intimidation for

trying to organize the market and the traders – the judge immediately dismissed the case; she lost all her shops and her stock), Bruma Lake Market battle was lost.

Rumbi has started reconstructing her business, with the support of ACHIB. She is considering following up in Constitutional Court the case of Bruma Lake, but is now focusing on building a new market for arts and crafts, whilst working as arts and crafts providers for airports and malls. She still has a passion for African business empowerment and is considering creating a National African Skills Development Center.

For more details on Rumbi's story, see annexure 2 in this report.

ACHIB office

ACHIB national offices are located in the Orion House building, located on Jorrissen Street in the core of Braamfontein. As one can see from the figures, ACHIB has very decent and formal offices in Braamfontein – a part of the inner city paradoxically where street trading has been prohibited since 1999. They are quite indicative of the fact that ACHIB is a well-established organisation with a rich history. Homage is rendered to its founder and president Lawrence Mavundla; meeting spaces and white boards testify to internal debates, statement posted on the walls call to the national ambition of ACHIB ('rural and township businesses'), having shifted from its initial focus on Johannesburg inner city street trading.

Offices however were not bustling with activity at the time when the picture was taken. Asked about the number of offices that ACHIB has or rents nationwide, S'bu responded that

> "We do not have many physical offices, but we have presence wherever NAFCOC has an office, which means we have presence in each and every province, ACHIB has a desk in every NAFCOC office."

ACHIB might have gained support, access to resources and to national policy platforms through its affiliation to NAFCOC under a shared president- but it might also have lost part of its specificity – has it become a department of NAFCOC specialising on small and micro-businesses, with limited links to the ground?

ACHIB financial resources

ACHIB is part of the NAFCOC. At NAFCOC, there's a standard membership fee of R500 per year that each member pays, and becomes both a member of NAFCOC and of ACHIB.

On the application form (see annexure), one then ticks or indicates the specific organisation which they intend on joining (here ACHIB), and the money then goes to that specifically chosen organisation's bank account. Mr S'bu Mavundla likened the relationship to one which COSATU has, whereby the union has affiliate unions such as NUM. In a similar way, within the NAFCOC federation, there are different sectoral business organisations of which ACHIB is one of (see **Annexure** below).

Talking about donations as a source of income for the organisation is, S'bu Mavundla said,

> "In the past we use to have international donors while we also got support from corporate. Manufacturers such as your Unilever, Nestle and Tiger Brands used to support our initiative. But now when I think about it, donations constitute less than 2% of ACHIBs revenue. In recent years we've had problems with donations, now they are not supportive and I don't know why, maybe it's because of the financial situation where everyone is trying to save as much as they can."

For funds, the organisation is dependant largely on membership fees, but also they have their own investments, which are vital in sustaining the organisation, such as paying salaries as well as office space.

> "ACHIB is a shareholder in one of NAFCOC's investment companies called Silver Vanity (a NAFCOC investment consortium). Some income comes from those investments. It's a multi programme investment company which invests in many industries such as property. Our biggest property portfolio right now is one at Gallagher Estates, where we, through Silver Vanity, own the Pan African Parliament." (S'bu Mavundla, 2014)

Further, mentioned in Lawrence Mavundla's online profile[5], ACHIB holds equity shares in some of this country's premier corporations, including Barloworld and Cell C.

Membership of ACHIB

ACHIB operates in 9 provinces, and acts as a body serving the needs of a variety of informal traders and micro businesses, including small and spaza shop owners and street traders. It focuses on legal or authorised traders.

ACHIB does not have an audited and updated data base of its membership. An interviewee estimated that the number is around 33 000 nationally, this being the number of people that have renewed their membership status. The number changes each year as new people join while others decline to renew. The ceiling number of members of ACHIB stands at around 130 000, ACHIB historical high - this number seems to include even the members that haven't renewed their membership with the organisation.

The organisation is not only limited to South Africans. It is open to foreign nationals who are informal traders and who are legally in this country and in possession of a work permit.

Geographic Location

Initially rooted in Johannesburg, where Mavundla led his campaigns in the late 1980s to open up the city to Black hawkers, ACHIB has over the years expanded and become a truly national organisation, with members and representatives throughout the nine South African provinces. In this process, part of its membership and activities have tended to shift from big metropolitan areas

[5] http://www.africagrowth.com

towards smaller towns, where local authorities are also more supportive generally of micro businesses and local economic development.

The organisation faces a lot of challenges across all provinces, especially in big centres, such as Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town, East London, Umtata as well as Port Elizabeth. Municipalities of small towns usually tolerate street trading, and they hardly have to intervene as such, but can focus on what has become their key interest, training and development programme for micro-businesses. Furthermore, some membership might have been lost in metropolitan areas due to the competition of other street trading organisations: "as we spread nationally, other people have established their organisations in the big cities. We might have neglected the ground in certain areas like Johannesburg. But in the smallest of towns, wherever you go, ACHIB has members" (S'bu Mavundla, November 2014).

ACHIB is indeed the only informal trader organisation that can claim a national footprint. The location of its rallies in 2003 gives an indication of its national ambition. Currently, ACHIB's core membership is, according to S'bu Mavundla, primarily located in Limpopo; then in the Eastern Cape, and thirdly in Gauteng. ACHIB has fewer members, but still a presence, in other Provinces (Western Cape and Kwazulu Natal).

ACHIB rallies in 2003

11 June 2003 North West Rally Rustenburg City
09 July 2003 Eastern Cape Rally Kwanobuhle City Hall
23 July 2003 KZN Rally Kwanombonambi
06 August 2003 Northern Cape Rally Kimberly City Hall
20 August 2003 Western Cape Rally Gugulethu City Hall
03 September 2003 Mpumalanga Rally Nelspruit City Hall
17 September 2003 Free State Rally Qwaqwa City Hall
24 September 2003 Limpopo Rally Polokwane City Hall
24 October 2003 Gauteng Rally Johannesburg City Hall
02 November 2003 National Small Rally Standard Bank Arena

Source: Submission of ACHIB to the Portfolio committee of Trade and Industries , 2003 (http://www.pmg.org.za/docs/2003/appendices/030527achib.htm)

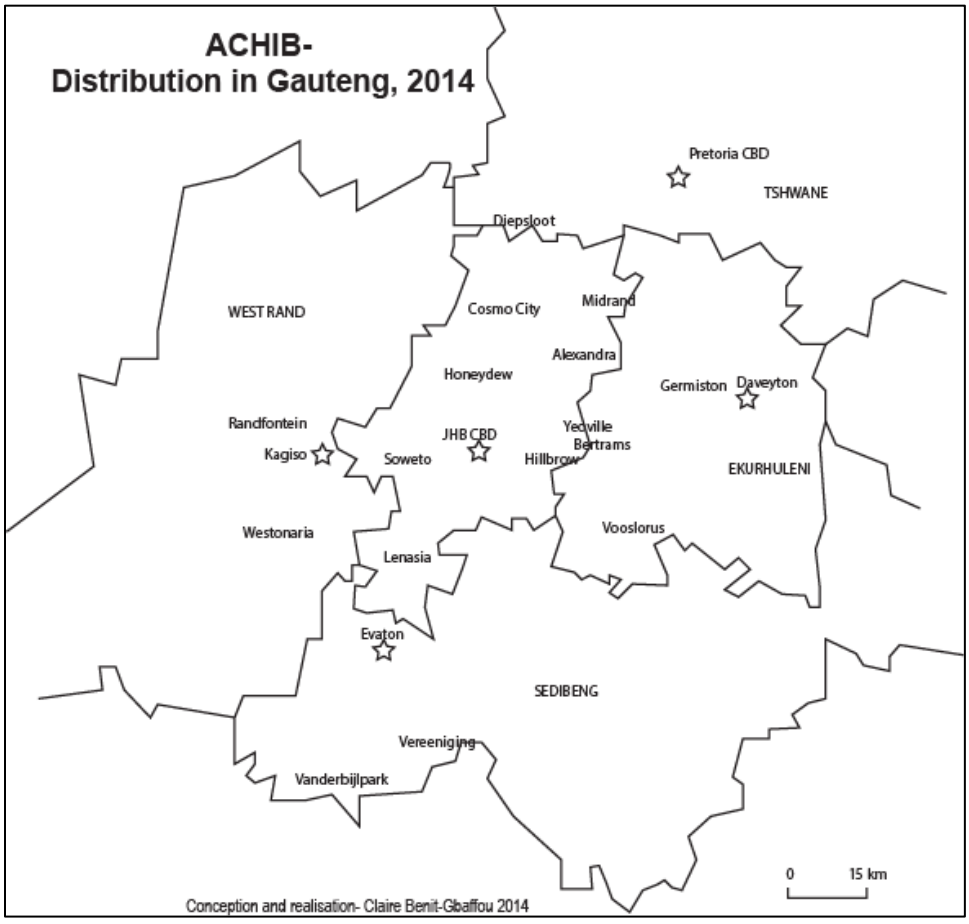
ACHIB rallies in 2014 Mayibuye Campaign (in process)
Johannesburg (COSATU House launch)
Sedibeng
Tshwane
Daveyton (Ekurhuleni)
Kagiso (WestRrand).
Next: either Kwa-Zulu Natal or the North West.

Source: Victor Mabaso, 2014.

Figure 1.10 - ACHIB rallies' location, 2003 and 2014

The (incomplete) comparison between 2003 and 2014 indicates that ACHIB – in a period of low membership- is refocusing its mobilisation strategies and activities in Gauteng. ACHIB intends to continue its national mobilization campaign early next year, according to S'bu Mavundla:

> "We started in Gauteng to see how it worked, as we have easy access to membership in Gauteng, and also because it has been a bit neglected in the past years. We aim at taking the campaign across the country, starting by the provinces bordering Gauteng such as North West, Mpumalanga, Free State for a start."



Map 1.1– Regional distribution of ACHIB membership, 2014

Former Members of ACHIB

Most of the time, reports Victor Mabaso, when ACHIB leadership goes out on the streets, people ask them where ACHIB is, and has been for the past at least three to four years. Their response is usually that ACHIB is there, but is trying to speak with policy makers, so that when ACHIB comes back, then they have something meaningful to offer, because what separates ACHIB from other organisations is that, ACHIB is able to speak directly to policy makers, whereas other informal trading organisations in Johannesburg focus more on advocacy alone.

Siyabonga has been going to former members of ACHIB to get their views, and has managed to interview three street traders who preferred to remain anonymous, and be referred to as A, B and C. The three respondents are female traders operating in Kerk Street.

Interviewee A was reluctant to give out information on ACHIB at first, to a point that it was as if she had never really even heard of the name of the organisation at all. However, she did know ACHIB, and was actually a member during the 1990s. Interviewee A put it on record that it was through ACHIB that the section of Kerk Street is today a market for street traders, with a shelter to shield them from the rain. She recalled that it was ACHIB together with Mbazima Shilowa who made it possible. However, beyond that, she was very critical of ACHIB, saying that

> "They were active back then, now I don't know what they do. But they lost the battle! We are still harassed by the metro police. […] ACHIB became interested only in selling shirts. Like all street traders organisations, their interest is money and they end up forgetting to fight for people".

She made an example that once, the metro police would harass ad injure street traders, and that street traders organisations would then succeed in getting money for the compensation of the injured in court, yet the street traders themselves would not get to see the end of that money.

Interviewee B was also aware of ACHIB and had a very similar view to the one held by A, as she complained about an ACHIB leader that use to promise her a stand, which she never got. A former member of ACHIB, she did not cite any positives and generally criticised street trading organisations for being ineffective against city authorities, who have been an obstacle ever since.

Interviewee C, on the other hand readily spoke highly of ACHIB, however she did not specify or give details on the reasons for her praise. Interviewee C was younger compared to the first two interviewees, and spoke of recent interaction with ACHIB. She mentioned that ACHIB was helping her by training her to become a better street trader, though she didn't come out clear as to whether that training was yet to come or if it was still in progress. She maintained that it was an ACHIB member from Park Station that she was in contact with.

2014 Mayibuye Campaign Road show

To respond to the decreasing visibility of ACHIB on the ground, the organisation is currently running *ACHIB Mayibuye Campaign*, through which they hope to get all their members to renew, as well as to make sure that their members get access to the services that are mentioned on the programme. "Mayibuye" means "Let it return" in isiZulu. The reason behind the choice of the name used for the campaign boils down to the acknowledgement, by the organisation itself, that there has been a vacuum left in the informal traders 'market'. The leadership of ACHIB claims that they do not compete with other street trading organisations, as they go as far as teasing that 'we are not competing in the same league'. They argue that no other street trading organisation offers the type of programmes that they offer and thus when the time is right, drawing members back will not be a problem.

Through the Mayibuye Campaign, ACHIB wants to appeal again to the masses on the ground. However, the interviewee maintains that the organisation does not want to compete with the already existing small organisations; rather they want to work with them, because, he claims, "all of them come from ACHIB in the first place". He maintains that many of the leaders as well as members from other organisations have in the past been part of ACHIB, and have left the organisation for many different reasons - some being disgruntled, others seeing an opportunity to start their own different informal trading organisations, with different agendas or different leadership. However, he maintains strongly that the campaign is named "Mayibuye" as a result of people having enquired about where ACHIB has been, and them wanting ACHIB to resume their ground efforts of representing traders, as many of them question the value of some of the many street trading organisations which have emerged recently.

What ACHIB Has Achieved

> "ACHIB was able to get funds from US AID to maintain an office in Johannesburg for some years, employing 17 people and offering legal assistance to hawkers against municipal prosecution; to make agreement with wholesalers who supplied ACHIB members at low prices; to establish the ACHIB Wholesalers, their own company with branches in different South African cities, and then the National Hawkers Co-operative (NHC); to set financial aid programmes with the First National Bank (FNB), NBS Bank, Anglo-American Corporation (AAC), Richards Bay Minerals, which give micro-loans on the model of stokvel, owing to DBSA security on 25-50% of loans." (Pezzano forthcoming)

Starting as the only street trader organisation to defend the right of hawkers to trade in inner city Johannesburg, ACHIB has evolved into focusing on the economic development of its members considered as businessmen (through training, access to loans and insurance, to lower prices for goods purchased, and business opportunities through tenders), and institutional and policy matters, mostly at the national level.

Helping individual traders to develop as business people

S'bu Mavundla gave an account of an ACHIB member who has become the provincial chairperson of the organization, Sonnyboy Ntsukwini. Labelling him as "the product of ACHIB's development", S'bu explains that the provincial chairperson started off as a street trader, and just in September this year, the organisation had assisted him in gaining access to a store in Park station which previously sold food. ACHIB has supported this member to develop a business plan on the way forward for the shop (see **Figure 1.1**, where ACHIB provincial executive members gather around Sonnyboy's stall, that he is about to leave for the shop).

> "We always seek opportunities to grow our members, and this was an opportunity to demonstrate it to our members in Gauteng. We wanted to showcase our efforts starting with the Provincial chairperson: he cannot lead other people where he needs to be led. He needs to showcase that ACHIB can lead. See for instance, our former Secretary General, Mlungisi Ngwenya: when he started

> he was a barber. Today he owns a storage facility in Park Station. Look also as our Deputy Chair, Victoria Mali, we also helped her" (S'bu Mavundla, November 2014)

Sonnyboy Nsukwini proudly explains that "Mavundla sponsored me, I am still waiting for his stock from him, which will come from Pretoria". Excitement is written all over his face. The name of his shop will be the "Busy Corner". He will now be leaving his previous trading space which is only a stone's throw away from the Cook House, located in a small market selling just outside the Wanderers Taxi Rank. His previous trading space will be occupied by another member, who is probably hoping to be following in the same footsteps.

When asked about the role ACHIB played in this success story, S'bu explains:

> "PRASA had trading spaces available around Park Station, in the Cook House: we advocated with them to make the space available for our members. We sent a proposal to PRASA, I personally helped Sonnyboy with the proposal, submission, application form. It started in 2102, we kept submitting documents for the same stall. It took a long time - perhaps because of change of management in PRASA. Nevertheless we worked on it relentlessly and he finally got it. We are now trying to help him to buy in bulk. His shop could become a distribution point in the Cook House, where he sells to all the other kitchens nearby, where he becomes their supplier. Through our distribution agreement with Shield[6], all traders in Park Station would buy from him; he would consolidate all the orders and get cheaper prices." (S'bu Mavundla, November 2014).

ACHIB does not only assist its leadership, but through agreements with big companies like Shield and Coca Cola, is able to supply its members with equipment and cheaper products:

> "In 2012 we distributed over 350 trolleys branded Coca Cola, for our members to move around, selling Coca Cola Products from their trolleys. In Fact Coca Cola was distributing through us. Since then, thanks to this relationship we can obtain equipment. For instance, in the Cook House, all the fridges derive from this relationship, our of our initiative. We argued that if fridges were provided in our stalls, our members could access their stock and load their trolleys on a continuous basis.

Another case is celebrated by NAFCOC News Letter (December 2013), retracing the history of "Victoria Mali, the daring hawker who dared to dream". What follows are extracts from this newsletter.

Figure 1.11- A success story for Victoria Mali, ACHIB Deputy Chair

"She came to Johannesburg from the Eastern cape 29 years ago as a young woman of 23 years of age. […] Victoria, says of her background: 'I grew up in a very impoverished environment and had to herd my family's live stock (Cattle), we had to wake up as early as 04:00 am to drive the cattle to the pastures and then prepare to reach school by 07:30, I also had to fight a lot over patriarchal discrimination that would be imposed on me as a little girl herding cattle' […]

[6] Shield Cash and Carry is "a voluntary buying association. They purchase products in bulk on behalf of their 633 members. These members are comprised of wholesale or retail food business owners in South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and Swaziland." (http://www.archsoftware.co.za/p_masscash.htm)

She began working at NuMetro Cinemas selling tickets in Johannesburg until 1992 when the cinema was closed. Suddenly she found herself without a job and she had to make ends meet. She went to the market to buy oranges and other fruits for resale in the streets of Johannesburg.

Then one day she met the leader of hawkers. […] The place was Johannesburg City Hall. The occasion was the 6th Annual National Conference of the African Cooperative for Hawkers and Informal Traders (ACHIB). […] Victoria says that she was mesmerised by this dashing preacher of hawkers' rights that she got her membership of ACHIB that day.

Five years later she became an active member of NAFCOC. In NAFCOC, she reveals, found a worthy big brother who could fight for her rights side by side with ACHIB. She says the rich history of NAFCOC and that the organisation remains active means that it is doing something right.

Today, almost two decades later, Victoria runs a business at Johannesburg's Park Station that employs 133 people, made up of 120 porters and car guards, eight baggage handling staff and five catering staff. Her business centres on providing porters to carry travellers' luggage from one point to another of the vast Park Station. She also runs a baggage kiosk where Travellers can store their luggage for a fee while they attend to other chores before their travelling time. She tops this with a restaurant that provides food to travellers at Park Station.

Victoria is the Deputy President of ACHIB and also the Treasurer General of NAFCOC's Women's Chamber. She is also a Council Member of the NAFCOC Council, the supreme decision making body of NAFCOC.

She also has very strong words for the Johannesburg City fathers, "Our local government is fighting its own people. Many hawkers have stopped trading as they have been forcibly driven away from their trading stalls by the City of Joburg, all in the name of bringing order to the city. But how is this so? […] Lawrence Mavundla and his band of hawkers had running battles with the apartheid government as they fought for the freedom to enterprise. And now they are facing the same challenges that they had before democracy. Any act by authorities that takes away food from the mouths of hard working citizens can never be right!" Ms Mali said."

Source: http://www.nafcoc.org.za/media/Khwebo Newslettet V2.pd

Lobbying Towards the Establishment of the Ministry of Small Business Development

ACHIB, together with NAFCOC, have continuously lobbied national government (through parliament and the DTI in particular) for proper structures, programmes and mechanisms to protect, support, and develop micro businesses. Through NAFCOC, ACHIB has gained recognition by various sectors of the state and is consulted when it comes to defining or redefining such programmes.

NAFCOC and ACHIB were both invited to make submissions about the 2003 National Small Business Amendment Bill by the Trade and Industry Portfolio Committee – and notably to discuss institutions in charge of the development of small businesses, as the former Small Business Development Council was dismissed.

Figure 1.12- NAFCOC and ACHIB's 2003 proposals for national institutions to support small business development

"NAFCOC [is] of the opinion that Government is not sufficiently aware of all the peculiarities within the business sector. Instead of establishing a broad-based body to service small businesses, such as the previous Small Business Development Council (SBDC), Government should look for organised business structures, and capacitate them to operate more efficiently. In establishing the SBDC, the Minister's intentions had been noble, but this idea clearly had not worked. Mr Phaahla suggested that instead, Government should interact with the informal business sector in order to understand their problems, and out of that interaction, develop a strategy. He further proposed that the Minister of Trade and Industry, or alternatively the Deputy Minister, possibly along with a Deputy Director-General and several other Chief Director's, be charged with directly focusing on small business development and the business upliftment of the historically disadvantaged […]

Like Mr Phaahla, Mr Lawrence Mavundla (National President: ACHIB) [does] not support the idea of a national body, where the powers and information would be fed downwards. Rather, he felt that local authorities should be leaders in economic development. He suggested a programme which starts at the level of the local authorities, where the issue of small business is attended to by mayors and premiers first. By way of offering an explanation for his proposal, he said that if ACHIB officials found it difficult to access those officials in the offices of the Ministry, then it was worse for those people "in the street". In the past, small business development had been housed with the MEC of Finance, with unsatisfactory results. In the future, the consultative structure should be placed at the bottom, at the local authority level, and go up from there."

Minutes from the Trade and Industry Portfolio Committee, National Small Business Amendment Bill Hearings, 27 May 2003 (http://www.pmg.org.za/docs/2003/minutes/030527pctrade.htm)

This type of discussion and engagement between the higher levels of the state and NAFCOC-ACHIB, is still ongoing, with NAFCOC and ACHIB (as its micro and informal business branch) being recognised as key stakeholders in the matter.

> "Two or three weeks ago, we were invited to a parliamentary committee of small business development where we made a submission of informal trading being an employment creator, one in which harassment still takes place, through policies made by municipalities which results in the police confiscating goods sold by street traders, where police just take goods without giving an inventory of what was taken, thus making it impossible for traders to reclaim their goods". (S'bu Mavundla, 2014)

S'bu Mavundla maintains that it was following ACHIB's request (for 15 years) that the new ministry of Small Business Development, which is headed by Lindiwe Zulu, was established early 2014. He states that Secretary General Gwede Mantashe played a vital role in this regard, after a series of meetings with ACHIB in 2013. It was also down to the establishment of this ministry that ACHIB went to Parliament, to advise the minister on what this new ministry could do for the sector.

> "I believe that the future of the economy of South Africa is in the hands of small businesses and with the formation of a ministry mandated to look into the affairs of small business in the country under the leadership of Minister Lindiwe Zulu, I believe the economy of the country will begin to show growth" (Lawrence Mavundla, NAFCOC, 2014).

This is definitely an achievement for ACHIB and for the sector and has been recognised as such by several other trader organisations - and it seems that this ministry might be helpful to the cause of the street trader organisations, starting also to put more pressure on local governments to review their repressive approaches to street trading.

> "It is at this ministerial level that we intend to tackle the issue of continuous harassment of informal businesses, as illustrated in Operation Clean Sweep. In her first speech, the Minister mentioned informal traders, how to better their lives, through for instance bulk buying. She takes advice from organizations like us. When she speaks of access to finance, it is something we have been arguing for all along. We understand these - bulk buying, finance, business training…- are value added items, not at the core of our organization – the core issue being to have street trading recognized as an entry point into business." (S'bu Mavundla November 2014).

On the Operation Clean Sweep

ACHIB was not very active in resisting the Operation Clean Sweep which took place in 2013.The interviewees conceded that, the organisation viewed challenging the municipality as well as going to court as a cost, while they saw the process as not really helping to eliminate the real challenge. For them court processes that followed did not mean that the problem was solved, as it only meant that people could go back and trade yet, they are still subjected to harassment as well as the confiscation of their goods.

For them the bigger problem which had to be solved was that of policy makers, and the bylaws from which harassments stem. They were also not involved because this sort of problem (Clean Sweep) is for them not only limited to Johannesburg, they have experienced such in places such as Rustenburg, and in other municipalities in Gauteng, hence if the organisation had to then intervene in all these municipalities, they would never finish or achieve something meaningful.

S'bu goes on to explain:

> "The organisation believes in intervening at the highest level, at SALGA level or the department of cooperative governance, as success here, would mean success for all the other municipalities in South Africa. Remember ACHIB has interest not only in Gauteng but throughout South Africa".

However, the information above was from the national leadership, and when the provincial leadership was asked about ACHIBs role during the OCS, the answer was slightly different. The Gauteng general secretary explained that ACHIB's (and more especially its president Mavundla's) long standing relationship with Pro Bono lawyers was pivotal in bringing about intervention by the constitutional court which led to traders being able to return to the streets. She also added that during OCS, ACHIB was busy lobbying the government at national level and not marching in the streets as the organisation believes in "finding amicable solutions".

The interviewee joked that ACHIB sees the other informal trading organisations as their offsprings, and hence they work with them. He mentions that more often than not these organisations are usually asking for help from ACHIB. For instance, some street trading organisation leaders were calling ACHIB's president, Lawrence Mavundla, asking him to intervene during the Clean Sweep operation. But of course, it could be argued that street traders organisations were calling NAFCOC president rather than ACHIB's, in the person of Lawrence Mavundla.

The respondent maintained that they do work with other street trading organisations, however when asked if it wouldn't be better had the other organisations not broken away from ACHIB in the first place, he maintained that it wouldn't necessarily be better due to different egos, as some people refuse to be directed, on the less he still admitted that, that would afford informal traders a louder voice. Interestingly, the interviewee claimed that the other organisations do not possess a louder voice than ACHIBs.

Establishing ACHIB's Distribution Wholesalers

The organisation has over the years attempted to establish its own distribution wholesalers, so as to provide cheaper goods to traders. In the past it managed to establish three of such wholesalers, which were owned and run by the hawkers themselves.

> "These wholesalers were selling a mix of stokvel goods, goods for people who mainly wanted to buy in bulk, they were responding to the needs of clients. 60 % of the customers were street traders while the rest was the general public which wanted to buy in bulk." (S'bu Mavundla 2014)

There was one in Limpopo, one in Johannesburg as well as one in Kwa-Zulu Natal. The South African government assisted in setting up these wholesalers. S'bu explained that

> "The first wholesaler was established at Park Station in December 2006, the second was established in Limpopo in June 2008, and they both closed down in 2013. The last was established in August 2008 in KZN (Mpaphala) and only lasted a year due to many dynamics, it was handed back to the trust. The wholesale which was established in Limpopo was highly funded by the government; I remember Collins Shabane was the MEC for economic development at the time".

Figure 1.13 - Limpopo Premier welcomes ACHIB wholesaler

"We are delighted that ACHIB has seen the need to consider establishing its own cooperative bank to service its 130000 members in the second economy. This banking model would enable ACHIB members to share responsibility, risks and profits amongst others. We believe the Mzansi Account and the Cooperative Banks Bill, will come in handy to make the informal sector more bankable. There are already many successful community and village bank models around the world to look up to. The resounding success of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh is one such model."

Speech by Limpopo Premier Sello Moloto, at ACHIB 21st Annual Conference, 15/07/2007 (http://www.polity.org.za/article/sa-moloto-african-cooperative-for-hawkers-and-informal-business-conference-15092007-2007-09-15)

The wholesalers were meant to make it easier for the organisation to negotiate on behalf of its members with the likes of manufacturers such as Unilever, as they would be able to buy in bulk for cheaper prices and these manufacturers would then directly deliver the stock in these centres.

ACHIB was looking to have these wholesalers in every district municipality. However, while they had only managed to establish three, it became apparent that the hawkers who were running these wholesalers lacked capacity and skill, and the collapse of these wholesalers became inevitable. This was a low, yet ACHIB maintains that there was a lot that the organisation learned from this experience.

It was down to this experience for instance, that ACHIB realised that there was a need to move away from physical wholesalers, to virtual wholesalers, in the form of the new VBS cards which they offer the members, which allow the members to buy goods at a lower price at any Massmart stores, while the manufacturers are responsible for the storage of the goods, which they once attempted by setting up these wholesalers.

VBS bank, which stands for Venda Building Society, is a bank from Limpopo which was established by citizens of Venda so that they could borrow money to build their houses. It was their own financial institution which they used to fund the construction of houses .VBS mutual bank now wants to broaden its scope beyond Venda, and are now looking to achieve that goal by using ACHIB. Through ACHIB they are hoping to get a national footprint by attracting members of ACHIB to also become depositors with them and use their services in the process. What seems beneficial to ACHIB in this relationship is that members of ACHIB become shareholders of VBS mutual bank, depending on how much they have on their account at the point of cashing options.

The VBS card is one of the programme that has been presented in the 2014 Mayibuye Road Show, encouraging street traders to open both business accounts and personal account, so that they are better able to treat informal trading as a serious business and separate it from personal matters. "What one needs is just R50, Identity document as well as proof of residence to open an account at VBS", explained S'bu Mavundla. The benefits offered to VBS-ACHIB members consist of access to stock at low prices, access to credit, access to loans and business training. These programmes are offered in partnership with the VBS mutual bank, which provides the savings element, together with loans to members to grow their business. Also, the same cards that VBS will be issuing out to their members is the same card that SEFA (Small Entreprise Finance Agency) will load money into, which will then allow street traders to go to any of the Massmart's stores and buy on credit, and also get preferential pricing, which the traders wouldn't get individually. Free business training is also offered, where among other things, compliance is encouraged, through for example informal traders being encouraged to register their businesses with SARS. Not that they are subject to taxation (most of them earn too low an income), rather this is simply done for compliance purposes.

Interestingly, one does not need to become a member of ACHIB in order to access their new programmes. The organisation is convinced that, after accessing such beneficial programmes which are associated with ACHIB, many traders will realise the efforts that ACHIB puts in for its members, and as a result will join it on a formal and permanent basis.

Furthermore, ACHIB is now looking at ways of reviving its former wholesalers, having learnt the lessons from passed mistakes.

> "We are looking at our investment to fund the wholesalers. We want to have our members benefiting from preferential pricing, and for that it is better to own distribution channels. But we can't do it all at the same time, all across the country. We are looking at restarting the Limpopo wholesaler, as we have our own building and equipment there. What we need now is a good management system. Previously, it was members managed – ACHIB members whose previous experience was running a spaza: they

were overwhelmed, they did not get training, they just could not develop the skill. Now, we just want to start the wholesaler, so that it benefits traders as customers: we will hire professional who are skilled and accountable to run it." (S'bu Mavundla, November 2014).

Conclusion - What Gives ACHIB the Edge?

This report has shown that ACHIB is a big organisation which has over time modified its approach in supporting informal business. It also has a broad scope, in that it is a national organisation which does not focus only in Johannesburg, but which involves itself with many different programmes, across the country. It also associates its self with many other sectors which have different interests in how they go about supporting business: its alliance with NAFCOC gave ACHIB easier access to policy circles and state tenders for its members; its current alliance with VBS might open economic benefit to its members – the risk being, in both cases, that ACHIB "vanishes" under two more powerful and directly influential partners.

These two directions – attempt to influence policy and institutions to support black empowerment and small businesses; taking business seriously in the informal sector by providing access to loans, insurance, business training, and bulk purchase – are definitely ACHIB's two strong points. Focusing on these two areas, which require a lot of focus and investment (establishing and maintaining the networks, seizing opportunities, crafting mutually beneficial alliances), might be more developmental than repeating over and over again the ground battles against police harassment and restrictive municipal policies – where little progress has been made since the late 1990s. But ACHIB has also realised what it has cost the organisation to cut itself from the ground and its daily struggles – membership decline, loss of visibility, of credibility and representativeness. It is also impossible to develop entrepreneurship and business capacities in a context of constant police harassment – this being a real limitation to ACHIB's developmental programmes. Solutions might be to come back to the ground and start re-engaging those battles (with the pressure from the top that ACHIB has been trying to mobilise), or, as stated by the ACHIB leaders interviewed, to work together with the organisations that are doing the work on the ground.

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Annexure

Figure 1.14 - Application form used by NAFCOC.

N.A.F.C.O.C.
RISE IN FAITH

National African Federated Chamber of Commerce & Industry
Membership Services - P O Box 784580 Sandton 2146
Website: www.nafcoc.org.za - Email: Membership@nafcoc.org.za
NAFCOC 13 SUMMER STREET, SUMMER PLACE
RIVONIA 2128
Tell 011 807 5063, Fax 011 807 9818/ 086 561 6627

WOMEN'S CHAMBER ☐ *Please indicate the Chamber of your choice with an X* YOUTH CHAMBER ☐

PROVINCE:

DISTRICT:

NAFCOC KZN		NAFCOC GAUTENG	
NAFCOC E CAPE		NAFCOC NORTH W	
NAFCOC N CAPE		NAFCOC MPUMALANGA	
NAFCOC W CAPE		NAFCOC FREE STATE	
NAFCOC LIMPOPO			

AFRICAN CO-OPRATIVE OF HAWKERS & INFORMAL BUSINESS (ACHIB)

NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL CHAMBER (NIC)

S.A LISSURE,TOURISM &HOSPITALITY TOURISM ASSOCIATION (SALTHA)

NATIONAL AFRICAN FEDERATED TRANSPORT ORGANISATION (NAFTO)

NATIONAL FEDERATED CONSTRUCTION (NAFCON)

NATIONAL FEDERATED FARMERS UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA (NAFU)

SAFETY,SECURITY AND CLEANING (NAFSEC)

SOUTH AFRICAN MINING & ENERGY CO-OPERATIVE (SAMEC)

OTHER

RETAIL
S.A PANEL BEATERS ASS
S.A FUNERAL PARLASS
FINANCE,INSURANCE &BANKING
PROPERTY & REAL ESTATE
INFORMATION SYSYTEMS,ELECTRONICS &TELECOMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT)

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

I/ We apply to be admitted as a member of NAFCOC. I declare that I have the authority to act on behalf of and to bind the applicant, and that, if admitted as member, will be bound by the Constitution, Rules and Regulations of the Chamber in operation during our term of membership.

COMPANY/ IDIVIDUAL DETAILS

Name of Business:	Business Registration: (CIPRO)
Business Owner:	ID no of Owner:
Postal Address:	Vat Registration no:
Business Street Address:	
Tel	Fax:
Cell	E-mail

STRUCTURED AS: (MARK WITH AN X)

CC	Parastatal	NGO	Public Co	(Pty) Ltd	Section 21	Sole Proprietor	Trust	Other

TYPE OF BUSINESS (MARK WITH AN X)

Manufacturer		Retailer		Distributor		Wholesaler	
Services		Exporters		Importer		Informal	
Specific Product and Services							

BUSINESS CLASSIFICATION

Small Micro Medium Enterprise (SMME)		Grand Maker		Government Agency/ Parastatals		National Forum	

International Chamber		Local Chamber		Cooperative/ Stockvel		NGO	

MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE AND FEES:

Membership fees must accompany this application form. Annual Membership is automatically renewed upon payment of membership fees. Membership fees, according to the Federations Constitution, are subject to review each year by the NAFCOC Council. Once your Membership application has been received and membership fees have been processed, you will be contacted by a Membership Service Representative from NAFCOC Head Office regarding your Membership Certificate. You will then also be listed as part of the verified database for procurement purposes.

MEMBERSHIP CATERGORY

Category	Select	Associate Members	Grant Maker
Turnover (Range)			
Number of Employees			
Annual Subscription fees (Inc VAT) a twelve month period from the date of joining is included.	**Affilied sectoral member** R500,00	**Corporate Member** Platinum R100k Gold R 50k Silver R 15k Small Enterprises R 3.5k	**Honorary –Free** (Subject to approval / acceptance by the FEDERAL Council)

METHOD OF PAYMENT	METHOD OF PAYMENT	METHOD OF PAYMENT
Cash Deposit Fax deposit slip to 011807 9816 / 086 537 6823	**Cheque Deposit** Payable to :NAFCOC fax deposit slip to 011 807 9816 / 086 551 6527	**Electronic Transfer** Email electronic Banking Payment notification to Fax 086 551 6527

Select Banking Detail Below

Bank												
Account No												
Branch Code												
Branch No												

0	0	0	N	N	P	H										

Signature :---------- Name (Print)---------- Date :----------

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY: TO BE COMPLETED BY AQUIRING NAFCOC OFFICE:

Date	Day	Month	Year	Approved by authorized signature :
Recommended :Constituency member/sector				
Approval by NAFCOC Federal Admin				

BANKING DETAILS

SECTOR	BANK NAME	ACCOUNT NO	BRANCH NO	BRANCH NAME
SALTHA (TOURISM)	FNB	62175079584	260950	
NAFCON (CONTRUCTION)	FNB	62344378254		CENTURION
NIC (MANUFACTURING)	STD	020215568	012442	KEMPTON PARK
ACHIB (INFORMAL BUSINESS)	ABSA	4066214798		GHANDI SQUARE
NAFTO (TRANSPORT)	FNB	62179994902		RIVONIA
NAFSEC(CLEANING & SECURITY)	NED BANK	1011345137	270250	FOX STREET
NAFU (AGRICULTURE)	ABSA	9271863199		
SAMEC (MINING)	NED BANK	1119024021	111905	POLOKWANE
OTHER (SECTORS)	ABSA	4058920193	632005	160 JAN SMUTS AVENUE
RETAIL	FNB	62349876708	254605	SANDTON

Figure 1.15 – Rumbidzai Kangara's story

Transcription from interview, conducted by Claire Bénit-Gbaffou, ACHIB offices, 03 November 2014.

How I started trading

I was born in Harare, Zimbabwe. At the age of 16, I was working as the assistant to the Secretary General of the embassy of Czechoslovakia in Harare. Now when the Slovaks and the Czechs split, the embassy closed, and my boss was transferred to Canada. However, he did not want me to stay without a job, so he referred me to a Russian clothing company that was operating in South Africa. That is how I came to South Africa, in 1993. I worked with that company for some time, then it closed, and I got another job as a manager in an arts and craft company. That company was very successful, and it happened that I married one of the sons of the company owner. I did well there, but I had nothing that I owned, and I told my husband, 'I need to start something on my own'.

So in 1997, I started something on my own. I left my mother in law running the company – I had nothing. A close friend of hers advised me and gave me good ideas, and put me in touch with a lady in Park Station, Sheila. She gave me some stock, African clothing and I started selling it as a mobile trader. She would sell me an item for R80, I would sell it for 150 or even R200. She would give me the stock as consignment, meaning I would not pay anything in advance, I would take the stock, sell what I could, and pay her back when I had sold, or give her the stock back if I hadn't.

I started trading in clinics and hospitals, Brenthurst clinic because I did not have transport money. My stock was finished in a glimpse! I then went to sell in Dobsonville, which was being developed with all the RDP houses being built there. I made good money there. Often I would sell at 50% of the price, and then come and collect the rest at the end of the month. But there were transport costs, that I could not always afford. So I started saying 'if you don't have the money to pay, you can pay 50% of the price and give me your old clothes that you no longer wear'. Then I would go to Park station, which has a huge footprint, open my china bag, R5, R5 for a clothing item, I would sit there, and sometimes with 100 cloth items I would make R500 like that.

Formalising and growing the business

Now, I was no longer waiting for someone. This helped me open a shop in Bruma Lake flea market. This was about 1999-2000. As I had been working for my mother in law in an arts and craft company, I had a good relationship with Bruma Market management, so I managed to get a stall. I even asked them to allow me to trade without paying in advance, and only paying the rent after I had sold. Well, the first day I sold all my stock. There were so many people coming there, locals, white people, tourists… so initially I only sold table cloth, and I kept the African clothing for the location. But some tourists asked, 'don't you have African clothing?' So I spoke to a friend who was travelling to Zimbabwe, she agreed to invest in the business, put R4000 aside, buy African clothing in Zim where it is cheaper, and send the goods to me. Hey, a group of people from the US called me, 'what do you have?', the stock had just arrived the day before. I was lucky. That day I made R12.000. I made history for myself!

Then around 2000, I opened a permanent store. I did not want to be casual anymore. They gave me a shop at Bruma Lake market, and a discount, as a start-up and an entrepreneurial woman. You know I was appointed amongst the few successful entrepreneurs in the Flea Market? There was even a national programme, to select and train young emerging entrepreneurs. I was on the panel of judges; I was also doing the training, together with the flea market manager, Marc Israelson. This man too was my mentor.

Business was working well, I could open a second shop, also arts and crafts, also in Bruma, in 2002. I diversified to deal with stone carving, wood carving, batiks… in 2006 I now had 6 stalls in that market, selling different products. 4 of them were joint stalls, it was the biggest stall in Bruma, and well stocked. People would come and write my profile, shoot films in my shop, to illustrate entrepreneurship success stories.

Fights start

Before my business went to 6 stalls, I started to fight with the one I thought was the owner of the market, and also one of my mentor, Marc Israelson. The first fight was around 2000, I was just getting in, and the rents for the stall were too high. I was a member of ACHIB, and also representing a number of market traders. I had been a member of ACHIB since 1999, when I saw ACHIB doing a roadshow in Park Station. Since then, I had been bringing new members to ACHIB, from Bruma Lake market – more than 40 traders. In 2000 I was requested to be the Secretary of the Provincial branch for ACHIB – but I did not have so much time for the organisation, as my business was requesting most of my time.

In this fight with the market manage, I received assistance from ACHIB. Mr Mavundla helped a lot. In fact at the time, if you fought with Israelson, you would know that tomorrow you pack your things and go. But now he feared Mavundla, and he did not dare chasing us. So, more people started joining ACHIB, market traders, even hawkers nearby, perhaps 1000 traders would now join ACHIB from this part of town. They were seeing us fight, they were also provided with a bank card, 'Who is it', that is less costly than other banks because of its agreement with ACHIB. So, we won that fight, Israelson did not raise the rent that much. The rent was higher than in East gate, but Bruma was also a better location. We fought for lower rents, not knowing that Israelson himself was renting, not owning.

In 2007, the issue started again. I understand now that Israelson had lots of costs, lots of credits to cover, and he wanted to milk more from traders to cover those costs. But he never told us. We went back to ACHIB. Mavundla reported that the guy was now desperate 'I am so stressed with this place'. But he never really explained to us. And the guy went bankrupt. The market started to shrink. People from his management office were starting to steal from him, cheat him. For instance they would say 'we are spending this amount on marketing the flea market, hiring buses… we would say to Israelson, 'we see nothing of the sot. No buses are coming'. But he would respond that we talk too much, he no longer trusted us. But basically, from 2005 to 2010, this market was running itself, because of the quality of its products: not because of the marketing strategy, that did not exist. So, the market managing company became liquidated. The market was purchased by a group of Chinese, this was in 2010. They see us like nothing. They decided to demolish the market, without consulting us.

We ended up going to court. The traders asked me to stand up as the chairperson of the market, together with my market trader committee. I was elected the chairperson by the 600 traders in the market. So I went to court as the chairperson, but using ACHIB as a backup, as ACHIB provincial secretary.

Losing the battle for Bruma Flea Market

The Chinese approached me several times, with offers to make. I refused their 'offers'. I said, 'I don't take my people to the drain. I'll stand with them. I won't let them down. I want to get clean, not dirty wealth.' I refused the offers and after a while they stopped offering. But some of my committee members accepted such offers and turned against me. I was left alone. The Chinese took advantage of our division and eventually demolished the market. The lawyers also turned against me,

and left the court case to collapse, giving rather arguments to the opposition, the Chinese. I was insulted, accused and my goods confiscated. The law is for the rich.

Fighting requires time, and I had to focus on the fight, not my business. It meant my business started declining – this is the biggest challenge for SMMEs, it is impossible to delegate, people start stealing from you. I reduced the number of my shops to 2, sold the rest. But people were stealing the stock, the shops went into arrears. I needed to pay R6500 for each shop as rent.

The management company went into litigation, but also, the owner sold the property to the Chinese. We still had a lease running for 3 years, till 2013. The property value was R16 millions, and we could have bought it as the traders. But the Chinese bought it cash with R46 millions – we did not know about the deal. We were not properly consulted as traders. That is what we argued in court, trying to buy the land back. But with the committee turning against me, then the lawyer, we lost.

So, with this battle, I managed to get the traders to stay for 6 months in the market. In June 2010 we all started receiving letters of eviction from the Chinese, even though our lease was still valid. But the Chinese stopped managing the market. They left it without security and cleaning. So us as the committee started organising ourselves to secure and clean the place. We put one person at the gate collecting R2, R2 to pay for toiletries and security. After a week, the police came to arrest me. After that, too, there was the theft of all cables for the market – I don't know today if this was organised or not. Then the water was cut, we wondered if it was the Chinese owners' making. Finally they evicted us, in January 2011. Our lease was no longer valid, as we had stopped paying the rent since June (our first eviction notice). It was R450.000 needed per month for the whole market, nobody could afford to pay, as business was going down.

Looking deep into the battle

The fight had a huge personal cost for me. I was arrested, threatened. My goods were confiscated by the Red Ants, for a value of R350.000. I lost all my business. The traders committee was divided, the lawyer betrayed us.

The first time was 2010, 200 Red Ants came to the market and tried to confiscate our goods. I don't know who sent them, if it was the liquidation company to recover costs, or if it was the Chinese to intimidate us. The market traders and their workers however did not let the Red Ants anywhere near to my stock. They took their spears, their hammers, whatever, and started fighting the Red Ants, fighting the police and their cars, throwing stones. I was not there, I was in a meeting at NAFCOC offices. I know I owed money, but I never had received a letter notifying about the confiscation of goods. Mavundla tried to assist, calling his contact in Police. But it was the traders who fought. The lawyer also said 'Rumbi, don't panic, I'm there for you, nothing is going to happen.'

Now a few months later, the police came back to arrest me -that was in December, I remember, 4 days before Christmas. I just had given birth to my last born – during all the fight I was pregnant. After a week of trying to organise the market management, the police came to arrest me. I saw them enter my shop, I thought they were some minister's body guards. Heavily armed. I did not notice as I was in the shop, but there were about 15 police cars gathering around my shop. I asked why they were arresting me, they first refused to answer, then they replied that the charges were 'Fraud, Theft, and Intimidation'. They handcuffed me, pushed me around, prohibited me from using my phone, rushed me into a car. Now all the police cars all went in all directions, this one to Jeppe, this one to Central, this one to Cleveland, this one to Hillbrow, just to confuse the traders so that they would not know where I was taken. Then I was brought to Cleveland police station, the police officer there said 'but I know this lady!' and he allowed me to make a phone call. Now the lawyer did not answer, but the traders came to me, and told the police 'arrest us too!'. We negotiated my bail, to R2000, and

the traders collected money to pay for it. Later, in court, early 2011, the judge immediately dismissed the case – there was no case. But the arrest had consequences for me: it was put on my Home Affairs record, as I was applying for citizenship. So I had to put that on hold. And, more broadly, now all traders were all intimidated by what had happened, they did not feel so strong anymore. So when the Chinese finally closed the market in January 2011 there was no more resistance.

We had approached the City for support, but in vain. We approached DED. The Chinese had offered us a place not far from Bruma Lake, but this place was not appropriate for business. The Chinese themselves had tried several times to make business there and failed. We called the City, so that they could see for themselves that it was not a good place for business. The officials agreed with us, but refused to put it in writing, 'we don't want to be implicated in an legal action.' Later, DED called me back, and asked me to find an amicable solution with them, that they could facilitate the meeting. I said no way.

We also had approached Johannesburg Property Company, in fact we spoke to a junior official who did not know the matter and tried to help. He was almost fired for his attempt to help, it seemed the big bosses were already on the side of the Chinese.

Now, the case was taken to the Constitutional Court, on the ground that us, traders, had not been properly consulted in the sale of the market – it is in fact still hanging. The case had been lost in High court, due to the market committee's own division and the lawyer's betrayal. It was a private lawyer, we were paying for him, because we thought, 'no, pro bono lawyers are too easy to bribe'. And the lawyer had told me once, 'they made me offer and I refused'. But then he might have accepted the next offer, as what he filed was eventually supporting our opponents. It was very painful. All the work we had done, building this market, bringing the 600 traders to be one… I fought so hard.

So now, I had no more money. ACHIB through NAFCOC advised another lawyer for us, and then also Len Louw, from the Law Review, he put us in touch with the ones involved in fighting Operation Clean Sweep, SERI. I left it there, with them – there is no progress that I know of, I need to focus on reconstructing my business.

Starting again

The traders mobilised to support me and my children; they collected R15.000 and gave it to me to support and thank me. Now I started a business again: I do chain supply in arts and craft products. I supply airports, city malls, all over South Africa, and even overseas. I design some of the products myself, and have transformed my home into an arts and craft manufacturing workshop, sowing and stone carving. I am also trying to start a new art and craft market in Kensington, based on my networks with artists and craftsmen, and am busy looking for an appropriate piece of land.

CHAPTER 2 - SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL TRADERS & RETAILERS ALLIANCE (SANTRA)

Patience Bosaka, Zintathu Mazamane, Malambule Nkosi
& Claire Bénit-Gbaffou



Figure 2.1 – SANTRA's contention through social networks
Source: Edmund Elias twitter account, accessed November 2014.

Figure 2.2 – SANTRA: a 2014 profile

Name: South African National Traders and Retailers Alliance (SANTRA)

Date of creation: 2005

Nature of organization: Non Profit Organisation, that has been registered in 2008-2009, in the process of re-registering.

Chairperson: Livingstone Mantanga

Secretary/ Spokes person: Edmund Elias

Organisational structure: A strong and connected executive leadership. A number of inner city block leaders have recently joined the organization.

Regular meetings? No – executive committee members are constantly in touch however.

Office: Used to have one (burnt down), about to open a new one.

Membership number: SANTRA claims about 3000

Members' location: Mostly Johannesburg inner city: Park Station, Retail Improvement District, Bree mall; and Yeoville, Hillbrow. Some members in Soweto.

Membership Fee: R150 joining fee, then R50 per month.

Registration Form: Yes

Members identity: Street traders

Members trading status: Mostly authorized traders, but also a number of unauthorized ones

Aims of the organization: Protect the traders' right to trade; Promote policies and regulations (at local, provincial and national level) that are more supportive to micro-businesses (seen as 'the people's economy')

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Again we would to send our deepest appreciation to SANTRA for allowing us to do this research, and in particular to all SANTRA leaders who afforded us their valuable time, Mr Livinstone Mantanga, Mr Edmund Elias, Miss Martha Motsoetsoe, Miss Khosi Thango, Miss Thenjiwe Ngwenya, Mr Brown Nsimande and Mr Geoffrey Nemakonde. This project would not have been possible without each and every person's contribution. Thank you.

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Introduction

The South African National Traders and Retailers Alliance (SANTRA) is one of many street trading organizations that emerged to respond to the contested terrain of street trading, and that can be said to have been influential in altering city policies and practices regarding informal trading in inner city Johannesburg. In the particular context of the October 2013 Operation Clean Sweep, SANTRA was one of the two organizations which challenged the City in court, and won the case, allowing street traders to return to their trading space until further notice. With this background and the Operation Clean Sweep Constitutional court victory in mind, this research aims to investigate how SANTRA is able to influence change and challenge the city.

The chapter analyses how SANTRA has been active since its emergence in 2005, and how it has continued to try and influence state and city interventions. Matjomane (2013) celebrates SANTRA's originality amongst the trader organizations she analyses, because of the multiple repertoires of action that SANTRA has adopted in trying to influence policy on informal trading: petitions, media campaigns, social networks, court cases and sometimes cooperation and development of pilot projects in alliance with the corporate sector. In the context of Operation Clean Sweep (OCS), after vain attempts to negotiate with the City, SANTRA (together with SAITF) has, through an eventually successful litigation, managed to withhold the City to some extent from continuing with evictions of traders. The thread in our chapter will be to try and unpack how Operation Clean Sweep has affected the organization. The chapter will first examine SANTRA's structure, leadership and membership. It will then look at its goals and visions and how they are manifested in a number of SANTRA's actions that can be considered as achievements for the organization.

Our research was largely based on:
• Interviews conducted with a variety of SANTRA leaders, ranging from block leaders to the members of the executive committee (see reference list at the end of this chapter).
• Press release published by Edmund (SANTRA's spokesperson) which were sent through emails, to government officials—the premier of Gauteng, the president's office, the media (Talk Radio presenter, Daily Sun, Sowetan) etc.
• Elias' social media posts, such as twitter, capturing images and stories, were also used and analysed.
• Attending CUBES trader workshops or receiving their minutes helped to get some suggestions of organizations can deal with challenges
• A tour around Park Station, where a number of member of SANTRA trade, was first organized for the whole class and then for our research group, with SANTRA chair. It was important for us to observe the situation of the surrounding and the conditions in which the membership is based.
• There were efforts made to attend one or two of the organization's meetings but throughout the course of research, no meetings were held, or perhaps we were not informed about them.

The challenges we faced was that most of the interviewees were not forthcoming and fully open when answering questions.

They were afraid of "saying the wrong things" and that limited the information we got for the research. Mr. Brown for example, answered questions as if he had rehearsed them and whenever we would ask questions from his personal experience, he was almost dismissive of them. When we asked him about the organization, he would say "SANTRA is better and different from other organisations but that is not to say that SANTRA is perfect". But he would not elaborate on this.

Most of the block leaders we interviewed only joined the organization last year, during or in the aftermath of Operation Clean Sweep, so they didn't know much about the history of the organization, the structure of the executive and the connections. They didn't even know about the visions and objectives of SANTRA. "Ask Mantanga [SANTRA's chairperson], he knows everything"; that was the answer to most of our questions about the organization. Only one person out of the five block leaders interviewed had been a member of SANTRA before Operation Clean Sweep - with an exception of the executive members who were also block leaders (Edmund Elias and Geoffrey Nemakonde).

On several occasions, some of the executive members of the committee were not responding to our emails or communications and this challenged the progress of our research. This might be because they did not have time to respond, were not willing to answer our questions, were not really interested in the research, or even because the questions were too confidential for them. To some extent it was even more difficult with block leaders, who did not take us very seriously at times – one made us wait for 2 hours before showing up to the interview, without warning; they would not even call to postpone and sometimes not even pick up the phone. When the leaders did not pitch for the interviews we had scheduled, we would go around the streets where SANTRA's membership is based and look for more block leaders - that is how we dealt with cancellation of interviews.

It was sometimes scary walking in the inner city considering that we were mainly girls. People were intimidated and a bit rude to us because we had cameras, writing pads and recording utensils. They probably thought that were journalists and we were going to expose them but we also felt unwelcome within the spaces, like we were going to be robbed off our belongings.

All the block leaders and even executive committee members (for a longer time in the organization) were not certain about the exact number of traders that SANTRA has, as well as the total number of block leaders. They kept referring us to the chairman of the organization for much of the information we asked. This was evident when we asked Geoffrey Nemakonde about the membership of SANTRA and he couldn't confirm it or at least estimate it, yet he is the secretary of SANTRA. Almost all block leaders except Geoffrey would mention Mantanga only, when they talk about the leadership of SANTRA. This is surprising because SANTRA has a whole executive; it is not only Mantanga but other members exist too. If the organization was united and all involved in the running of the organization, then what would cause them to keep referring us to one person Mantanga who knows everything about the organization. It made us wonder why it is one person's responsibility to know the ins and outs of the entire organization. It also reflected the absence or the scarcity of general meetings, where members could have a chance of getting to know the

organization better, and its leadership in particular. It seems that in fact most of the mobilization and consultation of members is done by Mantanga on a daily and individual basis, when he walks in the streets. This is a bit different from the duties he described, as more a representative function: "to look for sponsors, lawyers and represent workers when they have problems." (Mantanga, interview 2014)

What is SANTRA?

SANTRA is, like many other street trader organizations in Johannesburg, a street trading organization that seeks to represents the interests of street traders in Johannesburg inner city. As asserted by Matjomane (2013) street traders are undermined or excluded from economic policy decision making and implementation, and their right and ability to conduct their business (often, not always, of a survivalist nature) is constantly threatened. Consequently street traders have mobilized to challenge the City and to try and influence informal trading conditions inflicted by the local government, and to argue for recognition and responsive policy implementation that will include rather than destroy informal trading. Mamokete argues that SANTRA's specificity on this terrain is to work on policy, at the local but also provincial and national levels (2013).

Foundation of SANTRA

According to Geoffrey, Mantanga and Edmund, SANTRA was established in 2005, founded by members who were from other organizations previously: ACHIB, Gauteng Hawkers Association, Informal Business Forum, and Iliso la Bantu Hawkers Association. The four organizations gathered in 2004 to form a crisis committee, in response to the continuous harassment of street traders by local government that had been ongoing since2002:

> "The crisis committee was created to address the usual stuff, metro police taking hawkers goods and no proper policy for informal traders. Mantanga led the committee and we met with the former Mayor Amos Masondo to voice out our demands" (Elias, 2014).

The committee collapsed due to "conflicts about finance… I am not sure" (Elias, 2014) and four members: Mantanga, Mawisa, Tshoane and Edmund left the crisis committee to form SANTRA.

SANTRA's Leadership Structure

Executive committee	Location of each leader
Chairman- Mr. Livingstone Mantanga	Park station
Vice Chairman- Mrs. Mandisa Mawisa	Soweto
Secretary General- Mr. Geoffrey Nemakonde	Bree street
Vice Secretary General- Mrs. Eunicah Tshoane	Yeoville
Treasurer/Spokesperson– Mr. Edmund Elias	Joubert Street

Figure 2.3 - Structure of the executive committee of SANTRA, 2014

The structure of the organization leadership is revealing of SANTRA's strongholds. Three of the key leaders (Chair, Secretary and Spokesperson) are located in close vicinity to one another, not far from Park Station. SANTRA extends to Yeoville in the North east, and has some representatives in Soweto: to some extent the two female executive committee members represent these two different constituencies and areas.

Operation Clean Sweep, SANTRA's firm stance and action against it, and its successful engagement in litigation, have broadened the organisation's membership, and perhaps planted the seed of a structural change – as a number of inner city block leaders have joined the organisation and partly transform it. "SANTRA to an extent has worked based on personal interactions; it has been a little bit of a one man thing. This basis was changed by Operation Clean Sweep", elaborates one of the leaders. Block leaders currently praise the organisations for being "people oriented" (see **Figure 2.5**), and the chairperson Mantanga is in constant contact with them, which is still possible to some extent thanks to their spatial concentration in the inner city (see **map 2.1**). However, it is not clear yet that the inclusion of block leaders in SANTRA has transformed the structure of the organisation itself (through for instance regular, more formal meetings of the executive committee with block leaders, as is the case in SAITF for instance). Brown (2014), one of the block leaders who recently joined SANTRA, mentioned that the organization has sub-structures that assist in the management of the organization - although the names of the members from the sub-structures were not mentioned. It was difficult tracking who they were, as Mantanga (Chairman) was always a reference point when the interviews tried to investigate further information regarding the leadership roles and who is responsible. Mantanga has been difficult to get hold of, as he was caught in many urgent crises during the time of our research: so we remain inconclusive in this regard. However it seems that leadership is thinking about decentralized powers and sharing of roles to make the organization functional and efficient. Nemakonde and Mantanga for instance mention 'organisers' and 'street committees' – a feature that does not yet exist systematically in SANTRA.

Executive Committee	Organisers	Street committees
- Fundraising and management of funds and assets - Financial accounting - Formulation of home rules - Appointment of attorneys and necessary professionals - Develop policy inputs - Supports and protects members' interests - Calls meetings and prepare agendas	- Assist the executive - Recruit new members - Assist street committees at the block level	- Receive queries and complaints, solve them or take them to the executive - Help organisers to mobilise and recruit new members - Communicate information to members

Figure 2.4 – Leaders' vision for a new structure for SANTRA (2014)

Leadership on the Ground: Profiles

This structure is usefully complemented and grounded, by portraying SANTRA's actual leaders. The executive committee leadership seemed a bit reluctant, in particular of talking about oneself, but nevertheless we learnt a lot from its members. Block leaders (also recently in SANTRA) were more willing, or in a position, to talk both about themselves and about the local issues.

Figure 2.5 – Portraits of SANTRA leaders

Name: Livingstone Mantanga

Born: Port Elizabeth

Age: 56

Education: Standard 9

Current position in SANTRA: Chairman

Occupation: Activist



Brief history: After living school, he started working in Johannesburg Mines from 1977, where he participated in the 1985 mining strike and was banned as a communist by the chamber of mines. He was an African National Congress (ANC) member as the time, but now his no longer a member of any political party. In 1986 he started trading in Park Station where he only traded for 3 years selling tomatoes and potatoes. He is currently not trading and is chairing the organization. He is a former executive member of ACHIB.

Name: Name: Geoffrey Nemakonde

Age: 48

Education: Standard 8

Current position in SANTRA: Secretary General and a block leader for Bree street.

Occupation: Street Trader; fruits and vegetables on Bree street.



Brief history: He started trading in 1986 selling cloths part time during weekends, as he was also working in a private firm. He got retrenched in 1989 and started trading full time selling fruits and veggies. He is currently trading at corner Eloff and Bree Street and he has a demarcated space. He was a member of ACHIB but left in 1994 because "Ne ba sena nako ya batho" (Nemakonde, 2014) meaning ACHIB doesn't pay attention to the people's needs. He didn't join any organization until 2008, where he joined SANTRA, because "SANTRA is for the people". Geoffrey became a block leader because the traders knew that he was vocal against the harassment of street traders by the City and the JPMD. His duties as a block leader are to take complaints of traders to the executive and give feed back to the members. He also attends meetings on behalf of the members and assists members where he can.

Name: Edmund Elias

Born: Johannesburg Hillbrow

Age: 69

Education: Standard 10

Current position in SANTRA: Treasurer and Spokesperson, as well as block leader on Joubert stret.

Occupation: Street Trader, second hand books, on Joubert Street



Brief History: Edmund is a former member the Gauteng Hawkers Alliance (GHA), then the Informal Business Forum (IBF). He founded SANTRA with three other members (Livingstone, Mandisa, Eunicah) He has been SANTRA's spokesperson for 4 years. He started that trading in the inner city from 1992 selling books; he has a demarcated space in

Joubert Street. He also sells books to firms, old age homes, and hospitals, and insists that 'Blacks do read! They form the bulk of my customers.'

Name: Martha Matsageng

Age: 55

Education: standard 6

Position in SANTRA: block leader for Wanderers St.

Current occupation: Street Trader in Wanderers St, selling veggies, hats and scuffs



Brief history: Martha started trading from an early age in the village, but came to trade in Johannesburg in 1983. She joined SANTRA last year (2013) in October and maintains that she chose SANTRA because "*ayibeki imali phambili kodwa ilwelwa amalungelo e. imali la estradini kuma members ache*"- meaning "I joined SANTRA because SANTRA does not put money forward unlike One Voice which places money first"

Name: Nsimande Brown

Age: 50

Education: none

Position in SANTRA: Block leader in Bok Street

Current occupation: Street Trader



Brief History: Mr Brown also known as Mdala (Old man) began trading in 1985 during weekends, he traded as a part time trader to make extra money. His full time job was to work in the mines. He heard of Mantanga from other traders and joined SANTRA because "*SANTRA e eteletsa pele batho ba yona and e re tshwara ka go lekana*", "SANTRA prioritizes its people and treats everyone equally,with no feelings of inferiority between leaders and ordinary members". And when asked if other organizations do not do the same, he states "*ga ke itse ka tse dingwe*"-"I don't know about others".

Name: Khosi Thango

Born:

Age: 45

Education: Standard 8

Position in SANTRA: Block leader on Noord Street

Occupation: Street Trader, vegetable



Brief History: She started trading in 2004 in De Villiers Street, while she was on the waiting list to get a demarcated stall and was moved in 2009 when she got a stall in Noord Street. She states that she joined SANTRA in 2013 because the MTC failed to represent and help them during Operation Clean Sweep and so she recruited some of the other traders so they can all join SANTRA. These caused conflicts as other

traders who were with her in De Villiers felt that she was acting like a leader they did not elect, telling them what to do. She however joined SANTRA because "SANTRA stands against the City"

Name: Lindiwe Khumalo (not her real name)

Age: 39

Education: Standard 9

Position in SANTRA: Block leader on Van Brandis

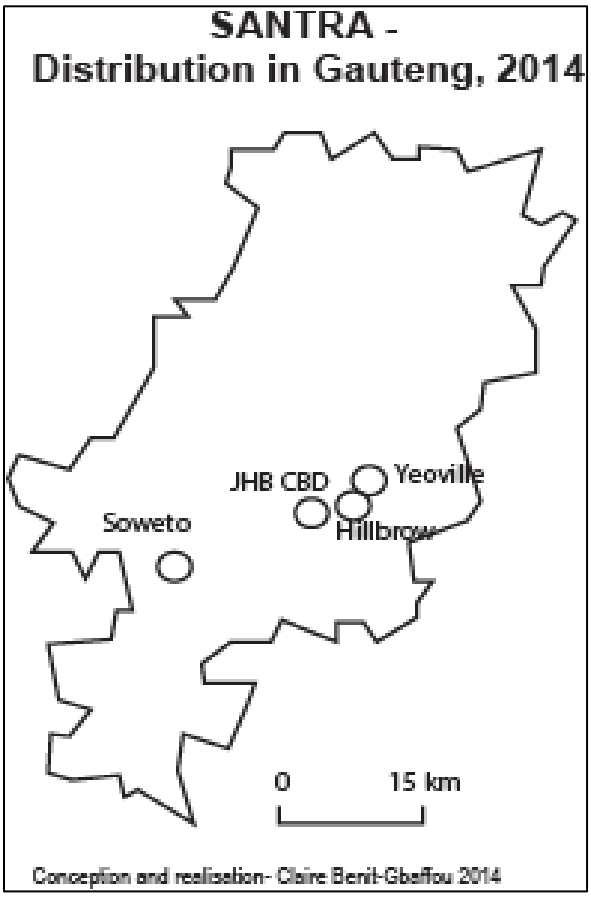
Occupation: Food Trader on Van Brandis street.

Brief History: She joined SANTRA in 2007 for "protection". She was elected as block leader in 2012 because "people liked me, I don't know why they elected me". She states that she does not get harassed nor bothered by the JMPD but there is a guy selling *fat koks* (fat cakes) in front of her and the JMPD always take his stock and eat it. No one in her street has a demarcated stall. Their biggest trouble is crime and lack of facilities like toilets or access to water - important because they sell food.

Membership of SANTRA

According to Mantanga (2014) SANTRA has a membership of 5000 street traders in Gauteng, including 3000 in the inner City, with 60 block leaders. SANTRA represents mostly street traders.

Location of members



◄ Map 2.1 – Location of SANTRA membership 2014 (citywide)

SANTRA is mostly based in the inner city, with members also located in Yeoville main street (Rockey Raleigh, where it competes with One Voice for members), Hillbrow main street (Pretoria Street, idem). It also has members in Soweto.

In inner city more specifically (**Map 2.2**), SANTRA's members are concentrated in the Retail Improvement district and around Park station – what could be said to be prime street trading space, as on a mobility path between Park station and Gandhi square to the South. Its extensions on Bree street is threatened by new trading prohibition as a "long street", supposedly not tradable as it would cause too much congestion).

Each of these areas has its representative or executive committee member in the executive committee (See **Figure 2.3**. and **Map 2.1**). We did not have time to get clarify on whether it is each leader who mobilized around her trading space, and crystallized membership; or if it was a purposeful composition of the executive set up to represent each area in leadership.

Map 2.2 – Location of SANTRA members in inner city Johannesburg



Conception and realisation: Uzuzakhe Ngwantweni, 2014.
NB: This map is based on indications from SANTRA leaders, and not on a systematic survey. It is only indicative.

SANTRA spatial distribution includes, in quite contrasted ways, very regulated trading space (the Retail Improvement District is a City Improvement District and its governance falls under Central Johannesburg Partnership, a business coalition with vested interest in the inner city), and that often has been showcased as a model or at least an example of successful precinct level street trading management (Bénit-Gbaffou 2014); semi-regulated but quite chaotic trading spaces as around Park Station, where legal and illegal traders co-exist in an extremely vibrant mobility node, where

SANTRA had been attempted to propose a precinct management plan, in partnership with the CJP, to the City (SANTRA-CJP 2014). In Yeoville, SANTRA has been attempting to have Rockey Raleigh street traders legalised, but with limited success, in particular due to the opposition of Yeoville market traders.

Joining SANTRA

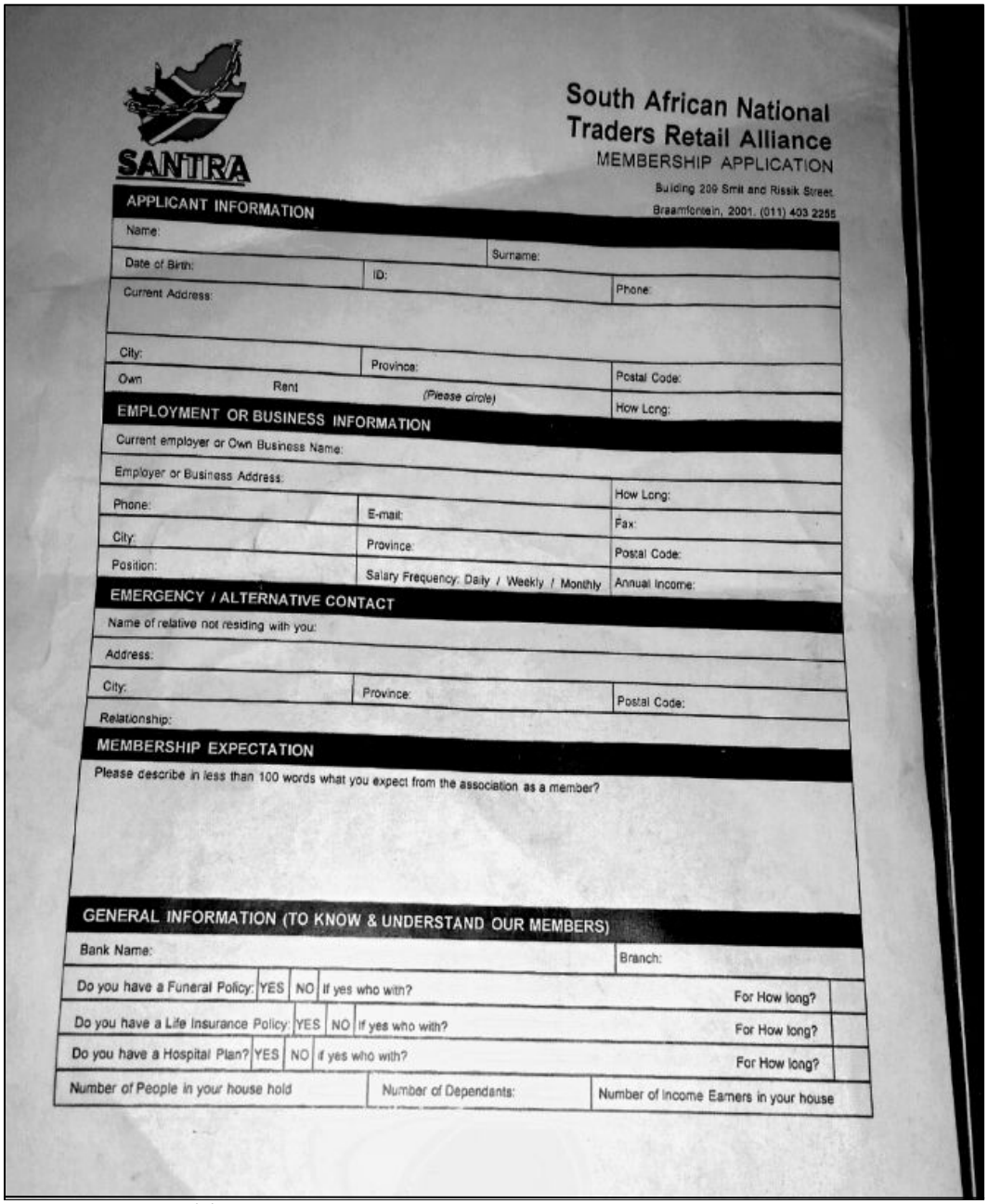
Many SANTRA's members have smart cards and are legal traders operating under the Metropolitan Trading Company (MTC). Others are located in privately owned districts (managed within the City Improvement Districts such as the Retail Improvement District, by the Central Johannesburg Partnership (CJP), a business coalition, through a private service provider – generally Urban Genesis Management). It is likely that most traders managed in CIDs do not have smart cards since the CJP street traders database is distinct from the MTC database. SANTRA's chairperson maintains that all SANTRA traders are legally trading:

> "Anyone who has a legal demarcated trading space is allowed to join SANTRA regardless of being a South African or non-South African" (Mantanga 2014).

It was however also apparent during our fieldwork that there are unlicensed traders (without smart cards nor demarcated spaces) who members of SANTRA, and even sometimes SANTRA representatives. For instance, an interview was conducted with a women block leader who mentioned that, she has been selling food since 2006 in the inner city without a smart card and without a demarcated space. The confusion on proof of legal trading (smart card, demarcated site) is increased by the fragmented management of street traders, shared between CJP and MTC.

Further, the membership form does not ask the question of the status (authorized, un-authorised, or in between) of future trader members (see **Figure 2.5**).

Evident as well from the membership form, SANTRA tries to expand its appeal to members by asking them what they would expect from the association so that they can be a responsive and democratic organization: survey about members' access to health coverage and various social services, numbers of dependents (that can be useful when traders need to mobilize and assert the number of people affected by a suspension of trading), and questions about expectations towards the organization. And indeed, leadership is always in contact with the members helping them in any possible way: all people we interviewed said "SANTRA is always there when we need it, not only in matters relating to trading but also household and personal issues".



SANTRA

South African National Traders Retail Alliance

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Building 209 Smit and Rissik Street
Braamfontein, 2001. (011) 403 2255

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name: | Surname:

Date of Birth: | ID: | Phone:

Current Address:

City: | Province: | Postal Code:

Own Rent (Please circle) | How Long:

EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS INFORMATION

Current employer or Own Business Name:

Employer or Business Address: | How Long:

Phone: | E-mail: | Fax:

City: | Province: | Postal Code:

Position: | Salary Frequency: Daily / Weekly / Monthly | Annual Income:

EMERGENCY / ALTERNATIVE CONTACT

Name of relative not residing with you:

Address:

City: | Province: | Postal Code:

Relationship:

MEMBERSHIP EXPECTATION

Please describe in less than 100 words what you expect from the association as a member?

GENERAL INFORMATION (TO KNOW & UNDERSTAND OUR MEMBERS)

Bank Name: | Branch:

Do you have a Funeral Policy: YES NO If yes who with? For How long?

Do you have a Life Insurance Policy: YES NO If yes who with? For How long?

Do you have a Hospital Plan? YES NO If yes who with? For How long?

Number of People in your house hold | Number of Dependants: | Number of Income Earners in your house

Figure 2.6 - SANTRA Membership Form
© Bosaka 2014

Membership Fees

New members have to pay R150 as a joining fee to be part of the organization and thereafter, they have to pay an amount of R50 every month. Payment is, like in many organization, rather irregular and ad hoc, but in the recent spate of activities led by the organization (including, after the Court case, several issues of harassment of legal traders), members see the immediate benefit of contributing and are currently collecting funding for leadership and to re-open an office. Mantanga states that

"The membership money helps the leaders to communicate whenever they have to attend meetings and pay a certain fee to the chairperson since he is not trading but assisting members on daily basis. This money also pays for the office and stationary".

Figure 2.7 - Payment of executive committee members, 2014

Executive committee	Remunerations
Chairman- Mr. Livingstone Mantanga	R5000
Vice Chairman- Mrs. Mandisa Mawisa	R3000
Secretary General- Mr. Geoffrey Nemakonde	R3000
Vice Secretary General-Mrs. Eunicah Tshoane	R3000
Treasurer/Spokesperson– Mr. Edmund Elias	R3000

Paying leadership is uncommon, or uncommonly recognized, amongst street trading organization. However, given the intensity of leadership activity, lobbying, commenting, meeting, pressurizing, organizing, especially in times of contention with the City (a largely dominant feature of the last ten years), professionalizing leadership by paying them a stipend, a compensation for time lost on business, or a form of salary, does not appear illegitimate.

Formalising SANTRA

As part of this effort at formalization of the organisation, SANTRA established an office, set on 209 Smit Street. The office provided a place for meetings and apparently there were SANTA meetings every Wednesdays. However, it burnt in May 2014, and since then meetings have become scarcer. As stated above, SANTRA members are currently collecting funding to secure another inner city office.

Elias (2014) explains that the fees collected were also used for the formal launch of the organization that was held in April 2014. Before that, SANTRA was not a registered organization – or rather, it had registered but "a longtime ago, like 5 or 6 years, and we need to refresh it to correspond to the current situation" (Elias 2014). For instance, SANTRA has not held elections for its executive committee for a long time, and there are due very soon – but SANTRA has prioritised the struggle against trader victimization in the past year, vis a vis the formal consolidation of the organization: elections are seen as potentially bringing disruption and division, temporarily weakening the organization in a time of crisis. This incomplete formalization might have prevented SANTRA from taking the lead in the court case against the City (which was taken by SAITF, already a registered trader organization by end 2013).

The launch of the new SANTRA in April 2014 (**Figure 2.8**), in the aftermath of Operation Clean Sweep, was a success, with about 700 persons attended (Elias 2014). SANTRA's tweets to media presses such as the SABC, SAPA news, as well as to officials such as City of JoburgZA, precidencyZA, Parkstau, David_Mantashe, Gweba_Mantashe etc. highlights SANTRA's extended networking tactics to voice out its ideas and connect to officials. This launch has now to be complemented by elections of the executive committee.

SANTRA'S Goals and Visions

SANTRA's aims are to first and foremost to protect the traders' individual right to trade, free of harassment, but also to influence policy and regulations more broadly (at local but also provincial and national level), to be more supportive of micro-businesses, that Elias terms "the people's economy".

These broad goals of the organisation are on the one hand expressed along the lines of traders rights at national level (showing SANTRA's focus on policy, regulation and national vision for the country), on the other hand focused on the advancement of their own members (protection and development). Beyond these goals, however, the visions that SANTRA leaders express for the city, street trading and street traders, are more diverse, and sometimes express levels of internal debates and contradictions within the organisation, based on challenges encountered on the ground.

Street Traders as Business People

An important dimension of SANTRA's vision, which is shared by all SANTRA leadership albeit with different nuances, is to enhance the image of street traders as business people:

> "The City needs to help street traders grow and not trade in the street for the rest of their lives, there needs to be training and funding invested in the economic empowerment of poor people." (Nemakonde 2014)

> "In the past SANTRA came up with a business plan to manufacture candles and juice but due to the lack of financial support it was unable to go through with its vision. […] SANTRA amongst other things came with programs to uplift the people, programmes like opportunities in franchise programs and industrial programs. Although SANTRA has been facing a problem of financial support from the government institutions, it still endures" (Mantanga, 2014).

Edmund would further like to see traders being facilitated, managed in clean and a safe environment, through collaboration with the private sector like in city improvement districts. He proposes mobile kiosks to address the issue of demarcating spaces, in this way traders can be mobile and flexible in a managed way, and change their image to fit in a well-managed city (see **Figure 2.7**).

Another dimension of SANTRA's self-representation as a full and legitimate business sector seeking recognition and management lies in their (recent) alliance and collaboration with the Central Johannesburg Partnership (CJP), which manages the Retail Improvement District where and around which most SANTRA members and leaders are located. Not only has it given SANTRA leadership a perspective on precinct-based management (within the CID) and the possibility it opened for traders protection and development; it has also contributed to build trust and highlight the mutual benefits traders and business could build when working together at a local level. It is on this basis that SANTRA and CJP are attempting to propose a pilot model to the City of Johannesburg, for managing street trading around Park Station, where traders supported by the business sector would take the lead in managing street trading in the area (SANTRA-CJP 2014).

Figure 2.8 (a & b): Edmund illustrates the success of the launch (Elias, 2014)



Figure 2.9 – Edmund's vision for branded and formalised trading kiosks.
Source: Outdoor street vending 2013





Figure 2.10 – SANTRA managed trading spaces in the Retail Improvement District

© Bénit-Gbaffou 2014

Figure 2.11 – Heavy pedestrian flows make Wanderers Taxi Rank an attractive business location for both authorised an unauthorised traders. © Mazamane 2014



Figure 2.12 (a & b) – Elias tweets politicians as JMPD confiscates goods from legal traders in 2014
Source: Elias tweets accessed October 2014





SANTRA's Visions of Membership and the City: Grappling with Internal Divisions

Other issues are more contested within SANTRA, perhaps because it corresponds to important challenges encountered by SANTRA members on the ground, to which leadership has different types of responses. Different leaders have different ways of expressing what they feel is at the core of SANTRA's identity and what exactly SANTRA is fighting for, on the issue of "legal" and "illegal" traders, often intertwined (although not exactly equivalent) to the issue of foreign and South African traders:

> "Everybody who is allowed to trade in the inner city is allowed to trade. We recruit everyone who has a site to trade whether they are legal or not legal." (Mantanga, 2014)

> "SANTRA represents both South African and foreign traders. It does not matter if they have permits, smart cards to trade or not". (Elias, 2014)

> "SANTRA only represents South Africans and who are legal to the City to trade, but nationality is not a big deal" (Nemakonde 2014)

Here there are common points – traders need to be allowed to trade in the street, and to be managed, rather than criminalized and harassed: this vision talks to SANTRA's constituency, exclusively made of street traders. There are also differing statements, such as the Chair concerned about limiting the number of traders allowed to trade and criticizing the 'illegals', whereas the spokesperson rather aims at legitimizing all traders through legalization, changing the image and perception of street trading and street traders. But the Chair himself is caught in the contradiction of wanting to grow the organization and recruit more members (many of which are not licensed), or wanting to protect licensed members from increasing competition. In practice, it seems a number of SANTRA members do not have smart cards or a demarcated trading space, but it has not been possible to estimate in what proportion.

This divide is however also expressed and experienced sometimes as a divide between South African and foreign traders, and it is not uncommon to hear xenophobic statements from traders on the ground. Many block leaders indeed express their fear and dislike of foreign traders, that they feel threaten their livelihoods. A few traders expressed intimations that SANTRA is special to them "because it represents the rights of South Africans as according to the Bill of Rights", which is understood as not accommodating foreign nationals.

> "SA Constitution allows South African citizens the freedom to trade, not foreigner. […] "There are few SA traders because they don't pay bribes and lots of foreigners because they bribe the police; it's a problem because they are taking space for SA traders. The officials care more about the money than the people's rights hence they take bribes and kick out SA traders. […] Foreigners are not from here so they shouldn't take space for SA traders. If I had to go to Mozambique, would I be allowed to trade? No…so why should they be allowed to trade in our country? […] There are only 5 South Africans traders in Bree the rest are foreigners" (Nemakonde 2014)

> "There are 10 000 foreigners every year taking our jobs […] Why should foreigners trade making our live difficult" (Thango 2014)
>
> "Here we are not able to make money anymore because the city is full of foreigners and they are selling in front of us without demarcated spaces, taking our customers and the end of the month we have to pay rent[1]. […] The boys who sell in front of us mug people and they cause crime" (Matsageng 2014)

Where does this pervasive xenophobia come from? We investigated further a case study to better understand the lived experience of traders – who also have a role of block leader- on the ground, listening to the story of Martha and Khosi, two block leaders on Wanderers street.

Embedding Vision – Lived Challenges on the Ground

Martha Matsageng says she struggles to make profit from her stand because the (illegal and foreign) traders standing in front of her site block customers from seeing or even supporting her (See **Figure 2.8**). "It is not fair, they don't pay rent and they take our customers", she says. She also complains that the formal shops close to her stand are also sold to foreign traders, which she feels might threaten her business further. More than an issue of nationality though, it is an issue of the legal/illegal divide between traders, and it talks to the impossibility of management and regulation of street trading in a given space, where so few legal spaces are actually provided - pushing newcomers to just create a trading space for himself, in very precarious conditions and out of any regulatory framework.

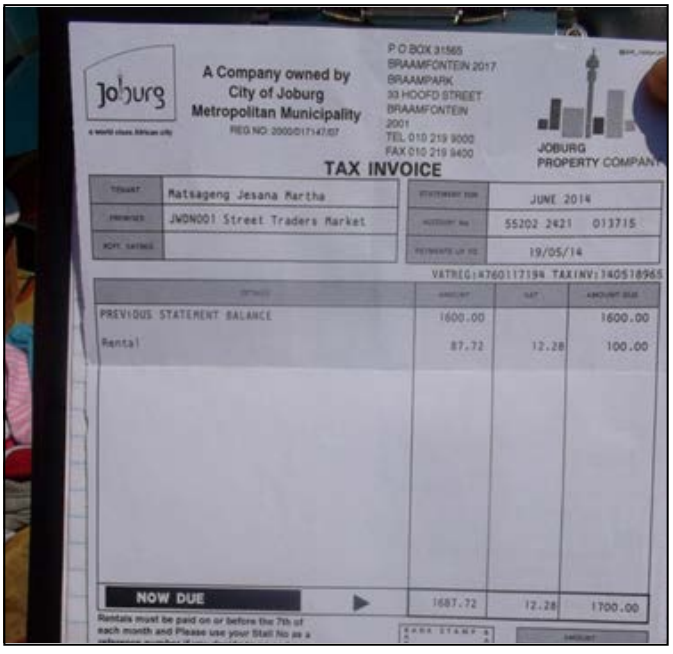


Figure 2.13 – Martha's invoice from JPC
Source: Martha's personal archive, communicated to authors

In broader perspective, Martha's business is also made uncertain and fragile by JMPD harassment and the lack of security over her right to trade. She has been tremendously affected by Operation Clean Sweep. She showed us for instance the invoice sent by Johannesburg Property Company (JPC), showing accumulated debt since Operation Clean Sweep.

She complains about the invoice (Figure **2.13**) the police and she was not trading during the three months suspension. "The police should be the ones to owe me money instead!", she

[1] "lana sekugcwele ama foreigners, bona nje nalana phambi kwami kudayisa bona basithathela ama customers kodwa makuphela inyanaga kwamele sibhadale"

argues. She also states that even though she pays rent monthly, the JMPD continue to harass the traders: "Metro police bothers us and sometimes we get beaten up[2]" (Matsereng, 2014).

Whilst the lived reality of survival in the street takes the figure of harsh competition with foreign traders, a deeper understanding can construe the issue as one of scarcity of legal trading spaces (due to City policy choices) and the lack of management of street trading that this choices entail.

A Tough Choice for SANTRA Executive Committee

This reality of xenophobia amongst SANTRA members gives the executive committee a difficult choice. It is now up to the executive committee to make choices about how to respond to the challenges of its members – embarking on xenophobic statement as an easier and straightforward reflection of members experiences and feelings (and the pressure from membership to embark SANTRA as an organisation on a xenophobic drive is strong), or attempting at deconstructing xenophobia by advocating for more legal trading spaces, negotiated locally with traders and other stakeholders, and effectively managed so that traders, whilst possibly competing as business people do, do not undermine one another.

Both trends are currently coexisting within SANTRA executive committee, and we can only state that the internal debate is still in process, explicitly or implicitly.

For instance, during negotiations with the City during Operation Clean Sweep, SANTRA leadership expressed to the City and other street trader organisations that it wanted to adopt quotas for South African versus foreign traders, following an 80 % / 20 % rule. This position is often reminded in public meetings by competing trader organizations such as SAITF – in order to show how SAITF is inclusive in contrast to SANTRA (CUBES workshop, 27 August 2014). But this SANTRA statement is also not abided to by all SANTRA leadership – some executive committee members insist that all traders trading in the inner city are legitimate and should be legalized:

> "I want the City to legitimize traders so they can empower them. Secure trader's legal rights and change the image of traders in the city". (Elias, 2014)

More and more, the understanding that xenophobia is mainly born out of too few legal trading spaces authorised by the City, leading to lack of street trading management, is shared and expressed by all executive committee members:

> **"**The City must open up all public spaces for street traders to trade freely without intimidation from the JMPD and for the City to manage the spaces to avoid chaos such as illegal traders using unmarked places as trading spaces." (Mantanga, 2014)

Emphasis on more legal trading spaces for traders, proper management of street trading, and finding negotiated and acceptable local solutions, is what has been highlighted in SANTRA's submission to

[2] "I metro iyasihlupha futhi iyasishaya kwesinye isikhathi"—"

the City of Johannesburg, in the participatory process it has embarked on to redefine legal trading spaces in Johannesburg inner city, following the Court Case. No mention is made of quotas, xenophobia and foreign traders – rather SANTRA urges the city to better balance supply and demand for legal trading spaces. This seems a courageous and constructive way of addressing the cause (and not the symptom) of the challenges encountered by SANTRA's members on the ground:

> "The City of Johannesburg needs to table exact details of its proposed legal trading spaces. This - together with the data base, will give an accurate reflection of the supply and demand imbalance for legal trading space and provide an opportunity on how to manage the situation in a manner that benefits all without impacting negatively on some. Given rampant uncontrolled corruption, failure to attempt to deal with the supply and demand for legal trading space head on, will fuel a massive grey underground economy - through necessity by those who desperately need to feed their families. […] Proclamation and prohibitions in heavily pedestrianized areas are meaningless without sustainable public space management". (SANTRA submission to the City of Johannesburg, 2014).

SANTRA's Achievements

According to Matjomane (2013), SANTRA uses a variety of repertoires of contention to try and influence policy and practice towards street trading, at a variety of levels of the state. It engages at national, at provincial and at municipal level – but finds it often more effective to lobby at higher levels of government to that they put pressure the City of Johannesburg, which SANTRA has felt is not being very responsive to traders' claims.

Using both constructive engagements and contention

SANTRA makes numerous inputs in various policy processes and discussions, and attempts at reframing 'the informal sector' as 'micro-economy' or 'micro-business' to be taken seriously at national level as 'the people's economy' (SANTRA 2013). SANTRA's inputs into policy and regulation processes are ad hoc, depending on existing processes and invitations, where they are considered by various levels of government as a key stakeholder. Livingstone for instance recalls that SANTRA was part of the process debating the City new street trading bylaws, but their suggestions were never considered. SANTRA's 2013 submission to the Gauteng Legislature Economic Summit is now further considered by the National Department of Small Businesses to shape its way forward (email, Edmund Elias, October 2014).

In parallel to these policy inputs at various levels, SANTRA's more regular actions are focused on responding to crises, victimisation of their members, and occurrence of abuse by the City – which happen on an everyday basis.

SANTRA is known for its use of petitions, media statements (especially on the radio and TV but also in the written press), and social networks (email and twitter) involving an extremely large network encompassing the Presidency, National and Provincial government top politicians and officials, City of Johannesburg, academia, NGOs and the media. SANTRA occasionally participates

in protests but it is not its main mode of mobilisation – some leaders state that protests have not led to significant change in their experience; sending petitions to the Presidency has proved more efficient.

They engage in negotiations in various participatory platforms (the Informal Traders Forum, other participation process such as the Growth and Development Strategy process, etc.) and have always tried to look for negotiated solutions with City officials and other stakeholders. But they also are using strong means of pressure and to not hesitate to go to Court against the City or city departments when dialogue fails.

SANTRA's use of the court during operation Clean Sweep if of course present in all minds at the time of this research. It seemed important to deepen our understanding of SANTRA's narrative during and in the aftermath of this operation.

Operation Clean Sweep saga

Some leaders of SANTRA had attended a meeting a day before the Operation with the City officials and it was announced that the City was going to be cleaned up – however no one mentioned anything about the evictions of traders.

> "SANTRA only found out about OCS a day before the evictions by a JMPD spokesperson, which was on the 30th September and Legal members of SANTRA were then removed, confiscated and some brutalized." (Mantanga, 2014).

This triggered protests by other organizations, while SANTRA decided to confront the city of Johannesburg on the matter through lawyers, to put pressure on the City so as to be able to engage with it - specifically aiming to speak to a Member of the Mayoral Committee Ross Greef. MMC Greef promised to get back to SANTRA on the 23rd of October, meanwhile the operation continued. The name of the lawyer they used was Michael Jonson and Candice Pillay who are public lawyers (represent them without any charges) from a firm called Routledge Modise. Leon Louw who is part of a free market organisation is the one who helped them with the lawyer and Mantanga and Edmund have known him for about 10 years now.

SANTRA furthermore contacted COSATU on the 25th October for representation, challenging the City on the plan it claimed to have for street traders. SANTRA and its lawyers then took the matter to the Constitutional court on the 5th of December as traders were still getting disposed with no reference of any legal authority to do so, and the High Court had dismissed the case stating that it's not urgent. Three months later, the case was won against the City and street traders were allowed back in the city.

Since the court decision, the City of Johannesburg has been embarking on a two-fold, contradictory process. On the one hand, the Department of Economic Development has opened a participatory process to re-demarcate trading spaces in inner city Johannesburg, and SANTRA has been making submissions in this process – both on its own (see annexure, SANTRA 2014), and jointly with all

the other traders organisations. On the other hand, the Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department has continued to evict traders from the streets, including traders theoretically protected by the court case list.

Ongoing Police Harassment of Street Traders

SANTRA has been kept very busy monitoring, reporting and contesting these evictions – that the City claims is part of ongoing by law enforcements. But what is the point of redefining who are the legal traders and has the right and a space to trade, whilst at the same time continuing to criminalise traders who do not have a smart card?

Figure 2.12 is Edmund's twitter showing the JMPD police on the 20th of September when they were kicking away legal traders from their stalls. These are the kinds of battles that SANTRA is fighting against on a daily basis. Edmund claims that SANTRA has been successful each time it fought specific evictions, but has not manage to change the City's practice and behaviour towards street traders more generally.

The organization's biggest challenge continues to be chronic JPMD harassment. It their biggest challenge because it happens frequently and usually when it happens, traders' goods are confiscated and they operate at a loss instead of making profit. It has gone far to a point where the police harass even the legal traders who are smart card holders and are in demarcated areas.

The interview with an unlicensed block leader was quite interesting because she revealed that she is not harassed or even bothered by the JPMD yet she does not have a demarcated space. She does not pay rent and she is not even registered to trade. This was quite surprising to us because thus far it had seemed to us like the JMPD terrifies all traders and we would have assumed that a trader whose not registered would encounter even greater anxiety – in our view it doesn't make sense for legal traders to be harassed while some illegal traders do their business without fear of the JMPD misconduct. (**Figure 2.12a**).

SANTRA's means of action are media and social network to pressure on the City (on **Figure 2.12b**, the post is sent to the Gauteng Premier and ANC deputy Chair David Makhura, who has shown sympathy and support for street traders in the past); and possible court action that SANTRA is currently envisaging. But protection from JMPD actions remains ad hoc and continuously needs to be reiterated, in the absence of broader structural reform of City policies, by-laws and practices.

This has led recently to more direct action in the form of physical resistance to the police, as on Sunday the 12 of October 2014 where legal traders around Baragwanath Hospital faced once again with JMPD harassment, revolted jointly with their customers against what was seen as unfair harassment. The crowd trapped some of the police vans to stop them from taking their stock. SANTRA reported widely on the matter (**Figure 2.14**).

This spontaneous action by traders and customers shows both that perceptions of street trading by the public might not be as biased against them as depicted by City officials. It also demonstrates a

level of discouragement and distrust by the public in any legal, policy or political way of solving the issue – that might turn into violent confrontation. SANTRA nevertheless through its media and court actions continues to attempt to raise the issue at a broader policy and political level.

Figure 2.14 - SANTRA email statement on JMPD continuous harassment of street traders, 12 October 2014

From: Edmund Elias <santra.edmund@gmail.com>

Sent: 12 October 2014 11:22 PM

To: president@po.gov.za; premier@gpg.gov.za; presidency@po.gov.za; Parks Tau; sydneyn@joburg.org.za; rubym@joburg.org.za; Ravi Naidoo; Barbara Ziyane (GPGDED); zbambo@dsbd.gov.za; JBooysen@dsbd.gov.za; Claire Benit-Gbaffou; Candice Pillay; Nomzamo Zondo; Patience Bosaka; anne. steffny; Ayanda Williams; Matron Mhlanga ATO; Amanda Mawela; Monica Albonico; Khulekani Magubane; Phumulani Ndlovu; mantanga.santra@gmail.com; Geofrey Nemakonde; Luke Mckend; rofhiwa madzena; Jabulane Kumalo; news@dailysun.co.za; Gerald Dumas; Daniël Swart; Willie van der Schyf; info@etv.co.za; Emelia Motsai; editor@sowetan.co.za; economicfreedomstruggle@gmail.com; Steven Friedman; mxolisi.xayiya@gauteng.gov.za; Hans Jooste; Pat Horn (StreetNet International);Anna Cox; starnews@inl.co.za; info@classicfm.co.za; Virgil James; Jolidee.matongo@gauteng.gov.za; Lavelle J. Nomdo; Phillip Molekoa; Marc Gbaffou; Maurice Smithers; George Mahlangu; Meggan Saville; Dinkied@pprotect.org;**Cc:** radionews@sabc.co.za; monwabisi mcopela; Stefanie Seeger; sithole@sacities.net; Collen Lemawane; mokoenaa@sabc.co.za; John Motlogelwa; moneri tongwane; ntshidite@sabc.co.za; ntlatik@sabc.co.za; newsdesk@sowetan.co.za; news@citypress.co.za; news@citizen.co.za; news@newsflash.co.za; newsdesk@mg.co.za; Niren Tolsi; Greg Nicolson; Gerald Olitzki; Subesh Pillay;Tasmi Quazi; Jennifer Groeneveld; Robyn Kirk; Raisa Cole; John Robbie Show; Redi Tlhabi Show Account; comms@sapa.org.za; Khumo Sello; Todd Lethata; Kate Tissington; Tanya Zack; Steven Tau Citizen; vnkabinde@thedti.gov.za; Victor Mabaso ACHIB; Paul Mcnally; The WASP; Mpho Matsipa; Shereza Sibanda; Giorgis Moges Ethiopian Association

12 October 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - JOHANNESBURG METRO POLICE TRAPPED AS PUBLIC UNITE TO PROTECT BARAGWANATH STREET TRADERS

In a day of high drama the usual Johannesburg Metro Police grabbing street traders stock at the Baragwanath taxi rank in Soweto today took a different turn as members of the public, large numbers of taxi drivers and street traders all United to prevent JMPD trucks carrying confiscated goods grabbed from street traders from leaving the area Police re enforcements were called in to free the trapped officers and their vehicles

Five people were arrested […]

SANTRA CALLS FOR PRESIDENTIAL INTERVENTION to correct an ongoing and rapidly deteriorating Johannesburg informal trading fiasco that now threatens to spiral out of control There is no developmental policy in place All that is happening is police being turned on non criminals - branded by those in power as"illegal"

None of the "íllegals" are ever brought to court - institutionalised theft of their possessions is the norm

The promised engagement process has collapsed

Further media releases will be issued as johannesburg is also removing legal traders from CBD trading sites in blatant violation if last years Constitutional Court ruling that protected them

The question of contempt of court is being considered by our legal team with further court action imminent

Conclusion

SANTRA has been active for a period of nine years and throughout these years it has been fighting for street traders in different ways, has gained knowledge of the sector, policies and regulations, gained credibility as a key role player in the informal economy, and has forged alliances with a number of stakeholders including in various levels of the state, in the media, in academia and in the business community. It has established and maintained direct communication connections with the

mayor of Johannesburg, the provincial government, the COSATU, the secretary general of the ANC Gwede Mantashe and the office of the president Zuma (Elias, 2014).

SANTRA uses multiple means and connections to mobilize and to challenge the situation of traders in the inner city. It mainly uses social media and its vast network as a conduit to raise awareness, demand accountability from the municipality, and change perceptions around street trading and street traders across society.

It aims at cooperating with the City and other stakeholders, and is always ready to sit at a table to bring constructive solutions to issues, but is also able to be radical in critiquing abuse and illegal, dishonest or destructive practices from City agents. It is as a last recourse, when negotiations fail, that SANTA has recourse to the Court, that it has used in a number of occurrences since its creation thanks to the support of pro-bono legal teams – the most recent and visible one being the Constitutional court case against the City led Operation Clean Sweep, led jointly with another prominent street trader organisation, SAITF. Through its action in response to the Operation, SANTRA gained popularity and experienced increase in its membership after its court victory, including a number of block leaders whose inclusion in the organisation might change some of its modes of working. Another after effect of OCS for SANTRA has been an increased pressure for formalisation of the organisation – registration, hiring of an office, official launch of the ogranisation.

Through its connections and its long experience in fighting for the wellbeing of traders, SANTRA has been able to influence some of the decisions that the City is taking with regards to street traders. It is obvious that the organization will not just change policy of street traders in overnight but the small victories are building a profile and a reputation that make it a key stakeholder in decision making in the city.

SANTRA as an organization has achieved and won some battles to protect traders but it still has some internal battles such as leaders sharing the same vision about the organization, to know more about the organization and perhaps be more unified, as some leaders have stated on the interviews. One of the unresolved issues that the organization that need to sorted out and addressed properly is xenophobia – a feeling that is common on the ground, and that is evidently triggered by the City of Johannesburg's approach to street trading, criminalising the sector and rendering it unmanageable. If leaders of SANTRA can work on their challenges within the organization, that would open room for further growth and for the organization to succeed in carrying out their progressive vision for the traders and for our post-apartheid cities.

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Feedback on draft report

Elias, Edmund, SANTRA: Spokesperson. Feedback captured by Claire Bénit-Gbaffou, Parktown, 28.10.2014.

Annexure ►

Figure 2.15 – SANTRA's submission to the City of Johannesburg, in the 2014 Promulgation and Designation of Trading Spaces in the Inner City

From: **Edmund Elias** <santra.edmund@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Aug 28, 2014 at 1:13 PM
Subject: SANTRA SUBMISSION INFORMAL TRADING
To: Gerald Dumas <GeraldD@joburg.org.za>, xolani nxumalo <xolaninx@joburg.org.za>

28 august 2014

CITY OF JOHANNESBURG TRACK RECORD (CREDIBILITY ISSSUE)

PROCESS TO DATE
The COJ ignored a written request for an all inclusive engagement process and a method of dealing with short term problematic issues submitted in writing on 24 February 2014

motion was presented to the full Johannesburg City Council (approved by mayoral committee 20 March 2014) as a forerunner to prohibition of inner city street trading on many CBD sidewalks, 21 May 2014. This motion was not the product of any engagement with the informal sector. It was in fact secretly prepared and submitted

A meeting called by COJ and described as part of a consultative process was held with informal traders on 28 July 2014 Our legal representatives made two written requests for advance sight of documents to be tabled at this meeting by COJ This request was ignored We could not conduct meaningful debate on documents that were kept secret until the meeting began- It was collectively agreed that the meeting was a COJ briefing session on the COJ document - neither consultation or engagement.

To date a fundamentally flawed process causing mistrust and alarm - particularly with a parallel on the ground situation in which some traders are branded as illegal and ordered to move

Acts of bad faith and secrecy are the norm

THE FUTURE PROCESS - OUR EXPECTATIONS

An all inclusive engagement process involving all affected and relevant stakeholders - leading to a multi stakeholder mechanism - regular genuine engagement

The COJ to submit a revised document for debate and discussion 14 days prior to any engagement process to enable all participants to make research based responses

The so called second round - whilst a first round has not yet happened - needs to be fully transparent, - the terms of reference agreed upon by all before the beginning of the process - We need timelines and clear rules of engagement 14 days prior to any planed meetings

To suspend ongoing punitive action against traders as what is being described as "law enforcement" by a corruption riddled JMPD. Bring illegal traders to court

Suspension of actions by officials who are informing certain traders to find "alternative spaces

CITY OF JOHANNESBURG DOCUMENT

POLICY REVIEW BEFORE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OLD
Policy and by-law review is mooted for 2015 whilst implementation (prohibitions and proclamations) are suggested immediately.

It makes absolutely no sense to implement old out dated policy and enforce supporting by-laws now whilst advocating review in a years time

We say policy and by-law review before major operational actions

Our proposal is a joint mechanism to deal with localized problematic issues with immediate effect - until policy review has run its course

CITY OF JOHANNESBURG UNFAIR ANTI STREET TRADING BIAS
Emphasis is placed on crime grime and obstructions caused by street traders - with photographs included whilst it is no mention is made of the fact that this scenario only applies to unmanaged public spaces - The city accepts no culpability for the unmanaged status of most city sidewalks.

The document makes no mention of the fact that few or no complaints are being received where sidewalks are managed in City Improvement Districts

DATA BASE
The situation on the ground demands a comprehensive and complete data base of all inner city people conducting economic activity from public spaces This needs to include documentation and other detail including number of dependents per trader etc. This number needs to then be balanced with number of available spaces and identification of possible additional potentially viable spaces

PROPOSED LEGAL TRADING SPACES
The City of Johannesburg needs to table exact details of its proposed legal trading spaces This - together with the data base will give an accurate reflection of the supply and demand imbalance for legal trading space and provide an opportunity on how to manage the situation in a manner that benefits all without impacting negatively on some

DANGER OF AN ILLEGAL GREY ECONOMY
Given rampant uncontrolled corruption, failure to attempt to deal with the supply and demand for legal trading space head on, will fuel a massive grey underground economy - through necessity by those who desperately need to feed their families

PUBLIC SPACE MANAGEMENT
Proclamation and prohibitions in heavily pedestrianized areas are meaningless without sustainable public space management. There is a Johannesburg model that works reasonably

well. JMPD are hardly needed in this management zone Adequate security and cleaning are vital components

PILOT PROJECTS - CERTAIN DIVERSE AREAS TO BE IDENTIFIED
We propose, whilst policy and by-law review takes place, that a series of pilot public space management projects be considered - involving proven successful managers / regional entities in partnership with the city of Johannesburg

CONCLUSION
Public conversation is presently being used by SANTRA because there is no genuine engagement process in place and The City of Johannesburg continues to site un researched utterances to the effect that public opinion is the reason for restrictive and prohibitive actions by the city against street traders - there is a need to publicly test those arguments and be afforded an opportunity to respond

We seek a real deal for thousands of small traders in need of work but not at the expense of other stakeholders - an integrated trading plan is the solution - one city - one economy -Our vision

LIVINGSTONE MANTANGA
Chairperson SANTRA
083 476 3782

CHAPTER 3 - SOUTH AFRICAN INFORMAL TRADERS FORUM (SAITF)

Ashlyn Jackson, Nokwanda Kgomo, Mpho Mohloboli, Musa Mhlongo, & Claire Bénit-Gbaffou



Figure 3.1 – SAITF General Meeting, 21 August 2014, Beyers Naude Square, Johannesburg Inner City.
© Mhlongo 2014

Figure 3.2 – South African Informal Traders Forum: A 2014 Profile

Name: South African Informal Traders Forum (SAITF)

Date of creation: 2006

Nature of organization: Non-Profit organisation, registered in 2012.

Chairperson: Sam Khasibe (National structure) and Bethuel Nomavuka (Gauteng structure)

Secretary/ Spokesperson: Brian Phaaloh (National structure) and Ben Letseka (Gauteng structure)

Organisation's structure: A number of affiliates in Gauteng; block leaders in the inner city.

Regular meetings? Yes – monthly general meetings, executive committee meetings.

Office: No

Membership Number: Claiming 9000 traders

Members' location: In Johannesburg: inner city (around Park Station, in Fashion District, and Bree Mall); Yeoville market, Midrand and Bara malls; Diepsloot, Alexandra. In the rest of Gauteng: Vooslorus, West Rand, Vereeniging.

Membership fee: R200 as a once off payment; individuals donate R10 on a monthly, quarterly or yearly basis depending on the individuals' capacity.

Registration form: Yes (but we have not seen it)

Members' identity: Street traders, market traders

Members trading status: registered and unregistered

Aims of organisation: To be acknowledged as existing and valid economic sector contributing to the improvement of the economy in its entirety; and as legitimate partner in policy making and trading management

Motto: 'Nothing For Us Without Us'

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, we would like to thank CUBES for giving us the opportunity to conduct this research which has provided us with several perspectives in terms of how politics really happen at the ground level and creating the environment within which the interviews could be conducted.

To our lecturer, Claire Benit-Gbaffou, we are very grateful for vast amount of work that you helped us in, especially with regards to how to go about in doing the research and also in contacting the people that were needed for this project to be a success.

To the SAITF executive committee, we are deeply grateful for giving us the opportunity to sit down and talk with you, and also getting to know not only the organisation but you as individuals as well as for opening your doors to us as students doing an academic research profile on your organisation.

Special thanks to Phumulani Ndlovu and Brian Phaaloh, who also provided us with in depth information on the organisation and also its affiliates, and alerted us on how the perspective from street traders as compared to someone from the outside is very different.

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Introduction

This chapter focuses on the South African Informal Traders Forum (SAITF), which can be described as one of the prominent street trader organisations in Johannesburg, in terms of its size and political influence. It can be characterised today as "a force to be reckoned with", especially since Operation Clean Sweep. SAITF has indeed recently made headlines, as being at the forefront of the Constitutional Court case traders won against the City of Johannesburg.

Our approach

Even if this success has certainly changed SAITF's stature, visibility and perhaps *modus operandi* in the political landscape of Johannesburg informal economy, SAITF is not limited to this episode. Its longer term mission has been described by one of its leaders to be centered on "informally formalising the informal sector", which could mean that they want informal workers to be recognised but not fully formalized - as most experiences of formalisation have led to social exclusion. SAITF's key word seems to be around 'recognition' – as captured in its motto 'nothing for us without us': recognition of informal traders as contributors to the economy, recognition of their organisations as authentic partners that should be included in planning their present and future.

Our approach has been framed around the very prominent Operation Clean Sweep Battle – both to understand what it changed for SAITF, and to understand what drives SAITF besides it, though understanding its history and its more localized actions. The chapter, after reflecting briefly on our research methodology and its challenges, presents SAITF's history, leadership and organizational structure, before unpacking its membership and its actions.

Our methodology

In doing our research we conducted various interviews with the main executive committee members, at national, provincial and also local levels - including the leaders of some of its affiliates. We interviewed Mr Phumulani Ndlovu (SAITF Gauteng branch Deputy Chairperson, and chair of SAITF affiliate Iketsetse), Mr Sam Khasibe (SAITF Chairperson), and Mr Brian Phaaloh, (SAITF General Secretary), as well as two block leaders operating in the inner city.

It took us a very long time to be able to access SAITF leadership, even though SAITF had agreed to the research through CUBES. Our initial interview was a group one, at SERI office after SAITF leaders had met with them (DATE), and only lasted for 20 minutes as the leaders had little time. This did not allow for in-depth conversations – and it was then a struggle to secure a second interview. We were kindly invited however to SAITF public meetings, and we attended two of them: a general meeting conducted with the members of SAITF and its affiliates at Beyers Naude square (21.08.2014) (**figure 3.1**.), and a meeting with block leaders in Bree Taxi Rank (15.10.2014). Leadership - the Chairperson, Secretary and the Treasurer- granted us, after the meeting, a few moments to ask complementary questions, but again, it was impossible to sit down and take the time to enter into a conversation. Getting leadership to answer the questions we had in mind proved

impossible –because of time and place of the interviews, but also because, since we always met them as a group, they would give us well guarded and very general answers.

Being invited to SAITF meetings however was important – and when comparing with our classmates we understood that few street traderorganisations have general meetings. In fact no other team in our class was able to attend such meetings, be it because they just did not occur for the three months of the research, or because students were not invited to attend.

Figure 3.3. How SAITF general meeting was disrupted by JMPD

"SAITF had their general meeting on the 15th of October 2014. It was a meeting for SAITF ordinary members of all regions, leadership, and also SERI as SAITF advisors. SERI in particular wanted to hand in the pamphlets it had developed around the Business Act, and address a few other issues.

The meeting was supposed to be held in a City Hall venue, but the venue was under construction, so a City official redirected us to Beyers Naude Park as a meeting space, next to City Hall. He said, 'I will communicate with JMPD'. Half way through the meeting, JMPD showed up, interrupted the meeting saying: 'Traders cannot be there, the law does not allow for it. You can't be more than 15 people gathering without authorisation, otherwise it is an illegal gathering'. They did not want to listen to the traders who tried to explain what had happened.

"It does not shift from the previous government. Then the limit was 5 people, beyond that it was an illegal gathering. No they have added 10 people, for me there is not much of a difference.", remarked Phumulani Ndlovu, Deputy Chair of SAITF Gauteng.

It reminded us how fragile informal organisations are, how difficult it is to build collective mobilisation in these conditions, how easy it is for municipal authorities to use stringent legislation to disrupt their efforts."

Thankfully, we were able to get in contact with Phumulani Ndlovu, SAITF Gauteng Deputy Chair – he had been delegated by SAITF to interact with CUBES and research but was on leave at the time we started the project. He helped us tremendously in clarifying most of the information we had gathered ourselves and also from the brief encounter we had had with the executive committee. Phumulani was of great help in reconnecting us with the executive committee as well. It was also clear that some of the information that we were provided with was sometimes contradictory or inconsistent, though for instance discussion with other groups that were interviewing other trader organisations. We also talked to the street traders who are members of SAITF to find out their own opinions which helped us fill in some of the gaps.

As a result of these challenges and delays, we could never ask, as we had hoped, for a SAITF leader to give us a tour of the inner city areas where SAITF members trade, that could have allowed us to ground SAITF action in more localized battles or successes. As a result, this profile of SAITF somehow is a bird eyes' view, and often lacks the degree of details and case studies that other chapters offer. This was partly compensated however in depth feedback sessions on our draft report, with Phumulani Ndlovu.

Why was it so difficult to interview SAITF leaders? We understood this challenge as the fear and distrust that trader organisations have in the very tense environment of the aftermath of Operation

Clean Sweep and the still ongoing court case, and therefore, leaders might have feared that any written record of SAITF leadership words could be used by various parties for purposes beyond their control. Possibly the litigation turn taken by SAITF, at the forefront of the court case, lead to a rising distrust and reluctance to talk to outsiders, and an understanding of words as potential legal weapon before being communication tools. Perhaps also they did not fully trust our research intentions and our emerging skills, and would fear that we publish quotes or statements without discerning their possible damage; or did not see the value or relevance of the research for their organization – also in a context of harsh competition between street trader organisations. But to us, this fear and distrust means that often key information, central to the development, identity and nature of the organisation were omitted from the responses we got in our interviews, despite all our efforts and offers to feedback, and this was quite a disappointment for us.

A history of SAITF

The name SAITF is an acronym for the South African Informal Traders Forum. According to Brian Phaaloh (2014) the secretary of SAITF,

> "the organisation represents a number of groups or collective organisations of street traders, market traders, mall traders, transit traders. All those involved within the informal economy sector are welcome affiliates within the organisation".

From the fore made statement, it seems that the organisation seeks to represent various types of trading practices operating within the informal sector, meaning in less regulated environment and at a small scale of entreprise. It also illustrates that SAITF is a 'Forum' aiming at gathering informal trading organisations rather than individual trader members. As such, it represents itself as a "mother body or an umbrella structure to its affiliates, much like other major union structures in the country" (Ndlovu 2014).

SAITF was established in 2006. According to Ndlovu (2014), SAITF Gauteng Deputy Chair,

> "The South African Informal Traders Forum was an outcome of a conference held in Booysens, Johannesburg, conducted by an organisation known as ESSET, in conjunction with various street traders and street trader organisations from different provinces".

ESSET or the Ecumenical Service for Socio-Economic Transformation is a faith based organisation aiming to aid marginalised communities and members of the informal economy through capacity building within issues related to economic justice[1]. The main aim of this conference was to help street traders and other informal traders form a united front in dealing with day to day challenges and issues faced by members of the informal economy in South Africa. SAITF was born from a union of elected members from various organisations operating within Gauteng, and in particular from the Johannesburg region, where street trader organisations appeared the strongest at the time.

[1] www.esset.org.za

SAITF was then mandated to move around the different provinces, with an explicit goal of uniting individuals and member organisations working within the informal economy to first create provincial structures and later to assimilate them into a national structure.

The founding members of the organisation were, among others, Sam Khasibe as chairman; Sifiso Twala as general secretary (who later formed GIDA); Mpho Mqhaba as co-ordinator, from SARHA (South African Railway Hawkers Association); Samuel Ndlovu as Treasurer, from the Bree-market committee; Rose Nkosi, from SARHA, and Juana Sibanyoni.

Thus ESSET played a key role in the formation of the South African Informal Traders Forum. The constructive relationship between ESSET and SAITF however ended a bit abruptly. According to SAITF, there were issues of trust and transparency:

> "ESSET took advantage of street traders. [Trader organizations] approached ESSET with their ideas, but ESSET chose to promote itself rather than assisting trader organisations to implement and register themselves. SAITF was launched in 2006 but was not active and registered before 2012, it had no programmes - ESSET ran its programmes using SAITF formation. After failing to use SAITF, they formed GIDA to make sure that they are involved with the trader's issues" (Phaaloh, 26 October 2014)

> "In December 2010, there was this environmental summit in Durban, where ESSET sent a delegation of street trader organizations. The organization of our stay was very chaotic. When we came back to Johannesburg, a few of us had questions for ESSET: we wanted to know how things are run – if ESSET has funding for its activities with the informal sector, what is it exactly they are being funded for, and who are the funders? We got the feeling that ESSET was getting money using us, informal traders, with no accountability" (Ndlovu, 28 October 2014)

SAITF departure from ESSET meant in fact a split in the organization, where some members of SAITF stayed in ESSET and formed GIDA. SAITF however started rebuilding itself outside of ESSET.

SAITF organisational structure

The South African Informal Traders Forum is registered as an NPO (Non- Profit Organisation) since 2012, with a formal constitution. It has a national executive committee, and one fully developed provincial branch, the Gauteng Branch.

SAITF leadership – some portraits

Figure 3.4 (a, b & c) - Portraits of SAITF leaders

Name: Sam Khasibe



Date of Birth: 1965

Place of Birth: Soweto, Johannesburg

Current Occupation: Director of a clothing company

Place of Trade: Park Station

Merchandise selling: clothing

History / Experience with street trading: Sam has been involved in South African politics since he was young, within the ANC. He has also been involved with the informal trade industry for some time, starting selling merchandise on the streets of Johannesburg during apartheid times. At the time he was a member of ACHIB.

Position in SAITF: Chair (National)

Member of SAITF since: One of the founding members of SAITF in 2006

Name: Brian Phaaloh



Date of Birth: 1980

Place of Birth: Cape Town, Gugulethu

Trade: Running an internet cafe

Place of Trade: Park Station

History: Brian attended Wits Technikon (UJ), did Electrical Engineering. After working for two engineering companies, he started trading.

Joining organisations: In 2009, Brian became a member of SARHA as he was (and still is) trading in Park Station (he is currently registered with PRASA). SARHA is a founding member of SAITF: in 2010 a march was organized to FNB stadium, and Brian decided to join SAITF, as it seemed a very dynamic organization with programmes for traders.

Brian defines himself as an 'entrepreneur with his ideas'.

Position in SAITF: General Secretary (National), elected in 2012.

Member of SAITF since: 2010

Name: Phumlani Ndlovu



Date of Birth: 1982

Place of Birth: East Rand

Occupation: Street Trader

Place of Trade: Noord Street between Klein Street and Twist Street

Goods sold: Fruits, snacks, cold-drinks

Time trading in this area: Around 2001 till 2006 he was selling inside the trains, 2006 till 2010 he was in the Germiston branch (of Iketsetse which is an organization that is affiliated to SAITF) and in 2010 he was elected to be part of the executive leadership of Iketsetse.

Reason for trading: His mother was a trader so he learnt from her

Licensing: PRASA has provided traders with cards that show that they are legally trading, whether along the train stations or inside the trains.

Rental: Currently does not pay any rent

Role in SAITF: as an affiliate to SAITF, he is part of the Gauteng Provincial committee and he holds the position of the Deputy Chairperson. His role with regards to OCS, he states "I was delegated, together with Brian, to engage with SERI and the traders." When asked about his duty towards achieving the vision of SAITF he stated that "they lead a team of 15 people mobilising regional structure with SAITF affiliation" this links with the mandate that was given the Provincial committee which is to establish different committees within the province.

Member of SAITF since: .Joined SAITF as a member of Iketsetse, 2010-2011

Reason for joining: Understood SAITFs vision and motives and wanted to fight for traders rights

National and Provincial Executive Committee Structures

Figure 3.5 - SAITF leadership – National 2014

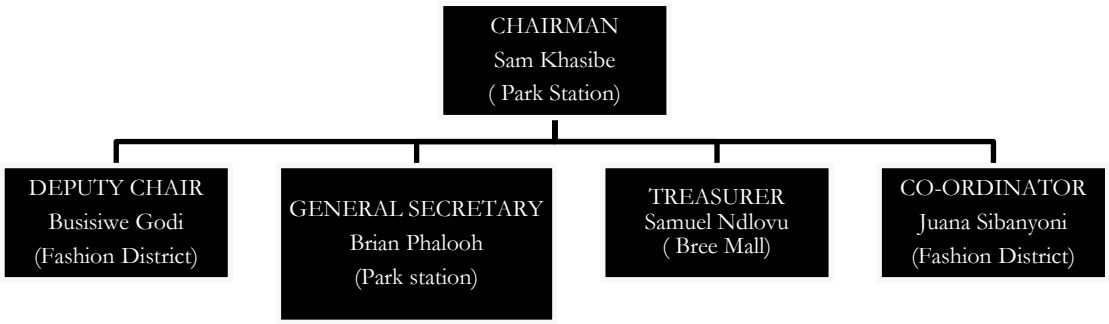
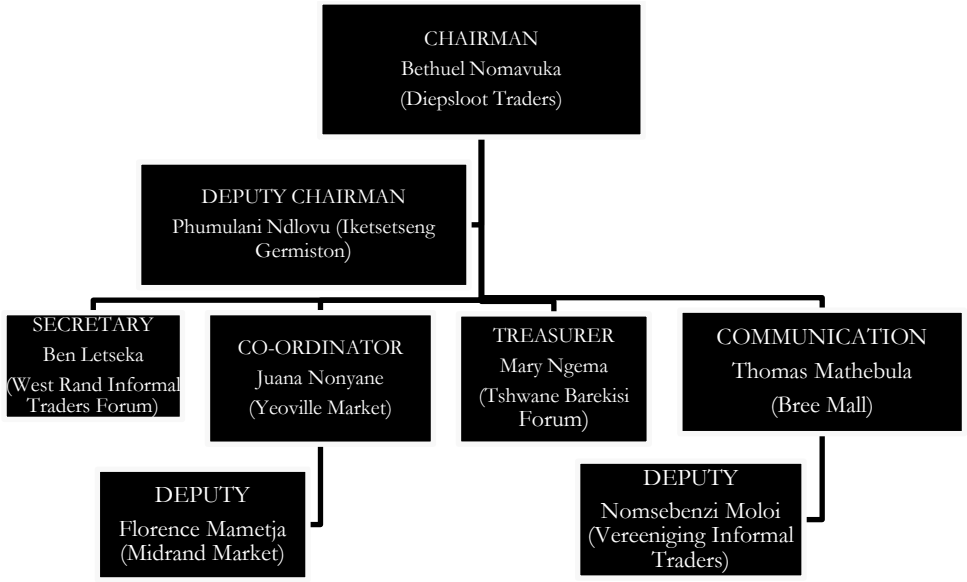


Figure 3.6 - SAITF leadership – Gauteng 2014



Besides this two-tiered organization (national and provincial: Gauteng), SAITF federates a number of affiliates – market trader organizations, street trader organizations, and block leaders (also considered as a collective of traders since they are elected at the block level by street traders).

In the national executive committee, Johannesburg is clearly dominant – possibly reflecting the history of the establishment of SAITF, starting with a national structure from a Johannesburg stronghold. In the Gauteng structure, a greater variety of geographic locations are represented – Johannesburg, Tshwane, Germiston, Vereeniging and West Rand.

In terms of gender, SAITF is still male dominated in its leadership. Women in the executives are not in key positions (they are coordinators, rather than secretaries for instance), and we have not been able to interact with them nor see them during general or executive meetings. Male leaders explain:

> "A majority of the traders are females, so several of the executive members that are female are not at the forefront. This is due to their background and also their social status as a mother first and thus they are sometimes unavailable."

> "In SAITF leadership we have two women as it is required from any structure by the country's constitution. Moreover, Busiswe Hodi and Johanna Sibanyoni are organizing a women's structure provincially and nationally. The provincial structure had Lulama Mali who is a woman as the secretary, but because of the divide and rule tactic that was, is implemented by government officials, we ended up losing her as our provincial secretary and losing her organization (JOWEDET) as one of our affiliates" (Phaaloh, feedback to draft report, emailed 26.10.2014)

Organising accountability: branches, affiliates, block leaders, general meetings

Besides the national and provincial executive committee structures, a key element to understand how the organisation works is to grasp how leadership connects to ordinary members. It can be argued SAITF uses several ways to make sure that communication occurs between leaders and members.

► The first is that SAITF, as stated, is a forum of organisations: it therefore has a number of affiliates, located and grounded all around Gauteng, which are also local posts through which information and claims can circulate (see below, for a presentation and analysis of these affiliates).

► Amongst these affiliates, with perhaps a different accent, are Johannesburg inner city block leaders – elected at the block level under the auspices of the City of Johannesburg, they used to have direct contact with municipal authorities to solve everyday issues – which led some organisations to consider them with suspicion (co-opted by the City and/or undermining organisations as the legitimate voice of the traders). Some of the block leaders, especially during Operation Clean Sweep, have joined organisations – more especially the two that have led and won the Constitutional Court case against the City- SAITF and SANTRA (see below for portraits of SAITF affiliated block

leaders). SAITF considers block leaders as affiliates, since they represent their block, having been elected directly by the traders.

► A third way of organising accountability has been an attempt to establish area branches throughout Gauteng. This attempt however has failed so far.

► The fourth, more classic but in fact quite unique amongst street trader organisations currently operating in Johannesburg, is through general meetings where leadership and members share views and information. Amongst all the organisations surveyed, SAITF was the only one to have had regular mass meetings, that the students were able to attend twice (see **Figure 3.1**)

Local branches and affiliates

SAITF has a number of affiliates, which may act as locally grounded branches for the organisation.

Figure 3.7 – List of SAITF affiliates, 2014

1. Bree Mall	14. King George Block
2. Yeoville Market	15. Noord 1 Block
3. Midrand Market	16. Noord 2 Block
4. Fashion District	17. Klein Street 1 Block
5. Iketsetse Traders Association	18. Klein Street 2 Block
6. Tshwane Barekisi Forum	19. Plein Street 1 Block
7. Diagonal Traders Structure	20. Plein Street 2 Block
8. Emfuleni Traders Association	21. Twist Block
9. Diepsloot Informal Traders	
10. West Rand Informal Traders Forum	
11. Vosloorus Micro Traders Association	
12. Bara Market	
13. Vereeniging Informal Traders Association	

From the list of affiliates as well as positions of executive committee members at both national and provincial level, it is clear that SAITF represents a variety of informal trader organisations – from street traders to market traders to traders on trains (such as Iketsetse), as well as a variety of regions within Gauteng.

Affiliates might be geographically focused, but they also may be quite scattered spatially, so do not coincide necessarily with branches from SAITF. For instance, Iketsetse, an affiliate to SAITF chaired by Ndlovu (SAITF Gauteng Deputy Chair) gathering traders operating in trains, is logically structured in 10 branches across Gauteng.

> "Iketsetse represents traders that are trading in trains and also platforms. It has 10 branches. Each branch holds a meeting where there is a disciplinary committee, in charge of solving conflicts at the lowest level. If they are unable to solve the conflict, Iketsetse executive committee sends a task team to

go investigate the matter. Once they are done with the investigation, a report is made and then Iketsetse executive committee decides. If the problem is somehow linked with other organisations that are also affiliated with SAITF, SAITF executive committee gets involved." (Ndlovu 2014)

Block leaders

A number of block leaders in inner city Johannesburg are also affiliates to SAITF – in the sense that they represent block committees (see **Figure 3.8**). As much as they are not visible as part of the executive in the organogramme above, they praise SAITF for 'involving them in decisions', and they were gathered as block leaders in a SAITF executive meeting that we attended (15 October 2014, Bree Taxi Rank).

The profile of two block leaders (below) shows how SAITF has developed its grounding and embededness in inner city streets of Johannesburg, in the context of Operation Clean Sweep.

Figure 3.8 – Block Leaders Portraits

Name: Takalani

Date of Birth: 04 January 1972

Place of Birth: Mabopane, South Africa

Occupation: Street Trader

Place of Trade: cnr Noord and King George Street

Merchandise selling: Music (Gospel)

Time trading in this area: Since 1993 (approx. 21 years)

Reason for trading: Mother passed away in 1992, He had to look after himself and take himself to school

Licensing: Yes and he is located within a demarcated site. He has been located there since around 2008 (for 6 years)

Rental: He pays a monthly R100 rent to MTC which is the company that has been placed by the City to manage street trading.

Role in SAITF: Block leader and worked as a field-worker for SAITF whereby he aided in collecting information from traders to strengthen SAITFs case against the city

Member of SAITF since: September 2013. Joined SAITF as a member of the Noord and King George Block committee

Reason for joining: He passionately stated that "It is a reliable organisation". Takalani is very happy being a part of SAITF mainly because they can see where the subscription fee (R120 per year and R10 per month) is going. He also stated, "We able to report matters to Brian if we are not able to solve them ourselves, and that is what I love about SAITF."

How did OPC affect you as a street trader? "I struggled so much for those 3 months because it was difficult for me to pay my rent, buy food and pay school fees. To me the achievement that SAITF has is winning the court case for us against the City. You need to understand that we are not where we are because we have a choice but we are there because we saw a chance to survive as well, if others are able to take their children to McDonalds, I should be able to do the same. I do not want my children to suffer like I did."

Name: Thoko[2]

Date of Birth: 13 April 1973

Place of Birth: Mataliele, Eastern Cape, South Africa

Occupation: Street Trader

Place of Trade: Noord Street

Merchandise selling: Safety shoes for construction and security workers

Time trading in this area: Since September 1998 (approx. 16 years)

Reason for trading: As a result of unemployment

Licensing: He does not have a smart card and there are no demarcations in the site. This was about to happen before Operation Clean Sweep struck.

History: In 2006 the traders were confronted by City officials who stated that the land had been leased to a private company who implemented stalls for the traders. The company charged the traders rent of R50 per day. The company took rent for three to four months before the traders began questioning why they had to pay. No one could explain to the traders and therefore the traders in the area stopped paying the rent. Later the stalls were suppressed by the City council and when the demarcation process started, the area on Noord St where they trade was not demarcated.

Rental: Currently does not pay any rent

Role in SAITF: Block leader and worked as a field-worker for SAITF whereby he aided in collecting information from traders to strengthen SAITFs case against the city

Member of SAITF since: September 2013, joined SAITF as a member of the Noord Block 4 committee

Reason for joining: Understood SAITFs vision and motives and wanted to fight for traders rights. He was a part of many organisations before but claimed that other organisation "just took their money and did nothing". Thoko is very happy being a part of SAITF. He stated that SAITF takes money as part of their subscription but allows the block leaders to be a part of every activity and decision-making process.

Attempted establishment of SAITF regional structures

An internet search brought about images of meetings of SAITF 'Tshwane branch', which triggered another set of questions – did SAITF have regional branches? It was never presented as part of the structure of the organisation, but after enquiring, we understood that SAITF had attempted to establish regional branches throughout the Gauteng Province, even before establishing the Provincial executive committee.

> "Around 2012, SAITF called a meeting with all affiliates and block leaders. A team of 15 people was nominated, with the task of going to different regions, recruit organisations to come and affiliate, with the purpose of setting up regional structures. This was even before we had a Provincial structure. We were to establish regional structures in Tshwane, Vaal, Joburg (it was already set up there), West Rand. The only region we were short of addressing was Ekurhuleni: we could not get them on board. There was a City official who chaired a forum of informal trader organizations, but he refused to give me access to that forum, claiming it was against the City's agreement with trader organisations."
>
> Early 2013, Streetnet[3] organized a meeting for informal traders in Port Elizabeth. Some of the people in my team attended, and the meeting decided on the formation of an alliance of informal traders,

[2] Not his real name.

called SAITA. They nominated people from different provinces to make up SAITA's provincial structures. Now, we were pursuing the same goal. We wrote to Pat Horn to raise the issue: 'you are building a structure that is similar to ours', we got no response. Some members of my team were elected in these structures, and they started going back to the same organisations we had approached as SAITF, but now under the banner of SAITA. It meant we were competing and creating confusion and division amongst traders. And they beat us in Ekurhuleni. That is why we stopped trying to establish regional branches, and instead set up our Provincial executive in 2013. The idea behind that was to free up time for Brian and Sam so that they can go and address other provinces (Durban and Cape Town regions, Eastern Cape). But because of resources, and because many Provincial chairs did not take their mandate seriously, we could not continue, and they decided to rather focus on the Gauteng Province – so we work together with the national structure, as a team."

General meetings

We did not get a full picture of all the meetings organised by SAITF – beyond general meetings, executive meetings and meetings with what has become SAITF lawyer and support, SERI. However, we were impressed by the regularity of general meetings and the fact they were well attended – obviously post Operation clean sweep where SAITF is seen as a protector against municipal abuse- in contrast with the other organisations depicted in this report.

Figure 3.9 – Student's observations on SAITF General Meeting, Beyers Naude Square, 21 August 2014

"The general meeting held at Beyers Naude square on the 21/8/2014, was aimed at informing existing, new or future members about the organisation itself: What SAITF is, When it was established, What SATIF does, What it plans to do in the future.It had been recognised by the leaders of the organisation that due perhaps to lack of time or other commitments, block leaders who are the ones attending SAITF board meeting knew quite well about the organisation but had failed to convey the message to ordinary members. The meeting was also an opportunity to further report back on the processes and status of the court case against the City of Johannesburg.

It was attended by about 700 individuals, some new potential members as well as registered affiliates with the block leaders. Participants were asked to fill in the attendance register, and block leaders in particular were requested to register their constituency.

The meeting could be said to be rather top-down, with the chairman and general secretary doing most of the talking - what the organisation was about, what its values and missions are and how to be a member. The meeting also included an invited guest, a lawyer form SERI, to further elaborate to the constituents about their rights as traders and about the cities by-laws and how individual traders are to react to infringements on their rights by the City in general. The meeting however ended with a session of questions and answers, so an opportunity was provided to the members to raise their issues.

The questions asked ranged from: how to join the organization; to: who do the organisation and the court interdict protect? Participants raised issues of continued harassment from the JMPD. Other mentioned how

[3] StreetNet International Alliance of Street Vendors, launched in Durban, South Africa, in November 2002, is federating "membership-based organizations (unions, co-operatives or associations) directly organizing [informal traders]. […] The aim of StreetNet is to promote the exchange of information and ideas on critical issues facing street vendors, market vendors and hawkers (i.e. mobile vendors) and on practical organizing and advocacy strategies". (streetnet.org.za)

they were given statements for lease agreements they did not know about, and were told that if they did not pay, they would be removed from their trading areas. The leadership pleaded with the present members not to sign any lease without legal representation, as it was a difficult document to understand, filled with legal jargon that could not be understood and could negatively impact the traders. They explained that the leadership was busy engaging JPC to discuss the issue of the lease. Leadership finally stated that by affiliating with SAITF, members would be protected from harassment.

Although the organisation was denied the use of the City Hall, the meeting took place quite orderly on the square. People remained focused, interested in what the leadership had to mention. Even though the meeting started later than planned, and on a slightly overcast day, more people continued to join and very few left the meeting.

The JMPD arrived on the scene about an hour into the meeting and insisted that the meeting be dispersed on the grounds that it was an unauthorised public gathering. The chairman tried to politely request from the JMPD that the meeting continues, as they were quite close to the end, but JMPD refused. The chairman and the lawyer from SERI returned to the JMPD but it seemed in vain, as the JMPD subsequently called for backup to forcefully disperse the crowd - which for some reason failed to happen before the end of the meeting, about 30 minutes after the police interruption. The meeting was concluded and the audience dispersed peacefully, back to their day-to-day business."

Source: Fieldwork notes, Mpho Mohloboli, August 2014.

Obviously, general meetings are not aimed at tackling strategic issues – to these meetings we did not have access, to we could not assess how affiliates were or were not able to be part of decision-making, and how local or affiliates' specific issues shaped SAITF overall positions.

Representation of affiliates in the executive committees

Beyond ad hoc or regular meetings with affiliates and block leaders, a way in which commucation circulates is by making sure that various affiliates are represented into the national or provincial executive committee. It is interesting to see how diverse the Gauteng committee is in terms of representing a variety of areas, and we asked the leadership how this was organized.

According to Ndlovu (2014), SAITF chooses its executive structures through a process of democratic election, with no specific requirement on representativeness. A minimum of three members from the different affiliate structures sit in on various board meetings of the organization: the communications expressed at the SAITF board meetings are thus further reiterated to various constituents by the different affiliate leaders. We have not had time to clarify however what these board meetings were

However, this might be more complex and messy in reality. One affiliate to SAITF, the African Trader Organisation (ATO), who had joined SAITF in the process of the Court case against Operation Clean Sweep, is believed to have disaffiliated from SAITF because of its lack of representation in the executive committees of the organisation. Ndlovu presents his side of the story:

> "We could not agree with ATO. When you come into SAITF as an affiliate, you cannot be at the top automatically and immediately. For instance, when I started in SAITF as chair of Iketsetse, I started as an ordinary member, and offered to assist. It is only gradually that I was given more responsibility, and

then became part of the executive. […] This is how it works when you affiliate. You join as an organization; SAITF tells you, 'this is how we are structured'. There is a Gauteng structure that is elected, you cannot change it overnight because you just joined – but you can campaign for the next election, or be nominated to tasks because of your hard work. In the meantime, as an organization, you can elect two to three members to be part of our general meetings.

ATO thought they would attend all executive meetings; attend the series of meetings with Gerald Dumas [the Chief Operating Officer nominated by the Mayor to drive the Trading Task Team, formed to find a way forward in the City after Operation Clean Sweep debacle]. SAITF leadership's reply was, 'no, it is Phumulani and Brian who are mandated to sit on that team'. ATO argued that we did not understand their issues as foreign traders. As SAITF we replied that a trader is a trader, regardless of where he is from. As there was no agreement, we said eventually, 'well, if you can't abide by our constitution, perhaps it is best if you are independent'. So they disaffiliated. But perhaps it is not the end of the story – ATO still take part in our general meetings". (Ndlovu, 28 October 2014)

SAITF Membership

Collective, not individual membership

As mentioned earlier, SAITF will not represent any individual member but a group of individuals having come together to form their own structure. The size or number of members in a particular group organisation is not a defining factor; groups can range from a minimum of three to a thousand and even more members,

"You cannot on your own approach the organisation and say you want to become a member, you must first be part of a collective or create a group with fellow traders in your area and together approach the organisation to apply for membership" (Khasibe, 2104)

"If you want to join SAITF you need to have a list of the people that are in your organisation with you so that we have proof that the group does exist" (Phaaloh, 2014).

"To join SAITF you cannot be an individual – you must be part of an organisation or block committee who will become an affiliate of SAITF" (Thoko, block leaders, 2014)

SAITF supports the formation of smaller collective bodies, it does not impose or require that affiliate bodies to formally register their group formations.

"SAITF represents both registered and unregistered structures alike as part of their affiliates" (Ndlovu 2014).

However, after Operation Clean Sweep and as SAITF was preparing for the court case, it is possible that individual members rather than organisation joined SAITF in order to join the court list and be defended and protected by the Court. For instance, several members of One Voice, a competing street trader organisation, are said to be on the SAITF court list.

A variety of informal traders – street and market, licensed and unlicensed, all nationalities

What is interesting and unique about SAITF, visible from the structure of its executive committees, is that SAITF represents different types of informal traders: street traders as well as market traders. Not explicitly represented in SAITF are spaza shop traders and mobile traders.

SAITF also claims to represent both "licensed and un-licensed traders", terms preferred to those of "legal" and "illegal" traders as used by the City to criminalise non licensed traders (Phaaloh, CUBES workshop, 13.08.2014). For Phaaloh, "all existing traders in the City are legitimate" (CUBES workshop, 13.08.2014), as stated in the joint submission made by all traders organisations to the City of Johannesburg (13.08.2014).

SAITF has also explicitly – differently from other trader organisations- adopted a policy of non-discrimination. SAITF has indeed developed a multi-cultural and multinational membership base. All individuals, regardless of race, ethnicity or gender are all welcome as long as they need protection from state victimisation and are willing to abide to constitution of the organisation and are supportive of the aims and objectives of the organisation. At a certain stage, for instance, ATO, the African Trader Organisation, representing mostly Nigerian traders in inner city Johannesburg, was an affiliate of SAITF (end 2013-mid 2014) – in the context of operation clean sweep and the court case that SAITF drove against the City. As stated by ATO leadership, "When Operation Clean Sweep struck, it did not make a difference between South African and non South African traders. It did not ask for your ID, it chased everybody without discrimination" (CUBES workshop, 01 August 2014).

SAITF discourse on xenophobia is quite clear and consistent in various public meetings and occurrences – trying to forge an identity as street traders beyond nationality and citizenship.

What is less clear however is the way in which SAITF builds solidarity or a sense of unity between street and market traders, who often have been opposed in local battles, sometimes triggered by City policy opposing the former to the latter. City policy has been aspiring to relocate all street traders into markets – banning street traders from Yeoville high street for instance to forcibly relocate them into Yeoville market, with the promise (that could not be kept, being unsustainable) that streets would remain empty of street traders so as not to compete unfairly with market traders. The result has been a deep divide between market and street traders in Yeoville, the former violently opposing any form of legalisation of street traders in Yeoville today, in spite of strong local pressures. SAITF does not seem to have been approached on this issue, or at least has taken no official stance on the matter. When asked on how SAITF bridge the divide between different parts of their constituency, under the label 'informal trader', in particular in the case of Yeoville where such a divide has proved detrimental to traders' ability to negotiate with the City, Ndlovu replies (28 October 2014):

> "My personal view is that some pavement is wide enough in [Rockey Raleigh street,] Yeoville to allow street trading to take place. The process would be of convincing our members trading in the market

> that we can work with the street traders. But this is a response in my personal capacity. These issues have never been discussed in our meetings. However, it is also true that Jane, a market leader in Yeoville, is new in the committee. [...]

Yet, the issue of competition between street and market traders came up more directly in Bree Mall, where SAITF led a number of collective actions with disgruntled market traders – focusing part of their complaints on the unfair competition that 'illegal' traders placed on their business. SAITF however chose to treat the issue differently – framing it not as an issue of street trading, but rather as an issue of rent level, and of management.

> "In Bree mall, the issue of street traders' competition was raised, it was around 2011 perhaps. Traders complained that they were told to move into the market and to pay rent, and now they were not protected against the competition of illegal street traders taking their customers and not paying rent. They mostly complained that they were not making as much business as expected. SAITF's position there was to ask MTC to lower the rent, as business was not good enough to afford the rent. As there was no response, SAITF embarked the market traders on a rent boycott. MTC started closing the stalls and threatening traders of eviction, but we engaged with Justice [MTC director] and the stalls were reopened. At one stage, we stopped the boycott and advised the traders to pay whatever they could afford, not R100, but perhaps R50.
>
> We engaged in a fact-finding mission as SAITF, together with JPC/MTC. We hired a bus: officials, SAITF leadership, block leaders, and went around all the markets, asking 'what are the challenges, why are market traders not paying the rent?' We went to Bree Mall, Yeoville Market, Midrand and Bara market – not Faraday market, officials are scared of Faraday because of taxi violence, and SAITF were chased out of the market, 'we run that place, not MTC'. Main issues were too high rental levels, unfair business competition, and unkempt promises by MTC .When building these markets, MTC made a lot of promises they never kept. MTC kept saying to the traders 'you owe us R40 millions', but they never asked the taxis to pay. However, the report on that fact-finding mission was never presented to us, the matter was closed before it was discussed and deliberated upon. Then Justice left MTC. And we never heard of the report again."

The possible contradictions between market and street traders might be one issue remaining to be solved – SAITF leadership has not been fully engaged with yet –perhaps because street traders around markets like Bree or Yeoville are not SAITF members (and SAITF street trader affiliates are not located around the market). However, many of these issues come to a key area that SAITF is busy engaging with – the question of informal trading management, be it in the street or in the market (see below, section on what ACHIB does).

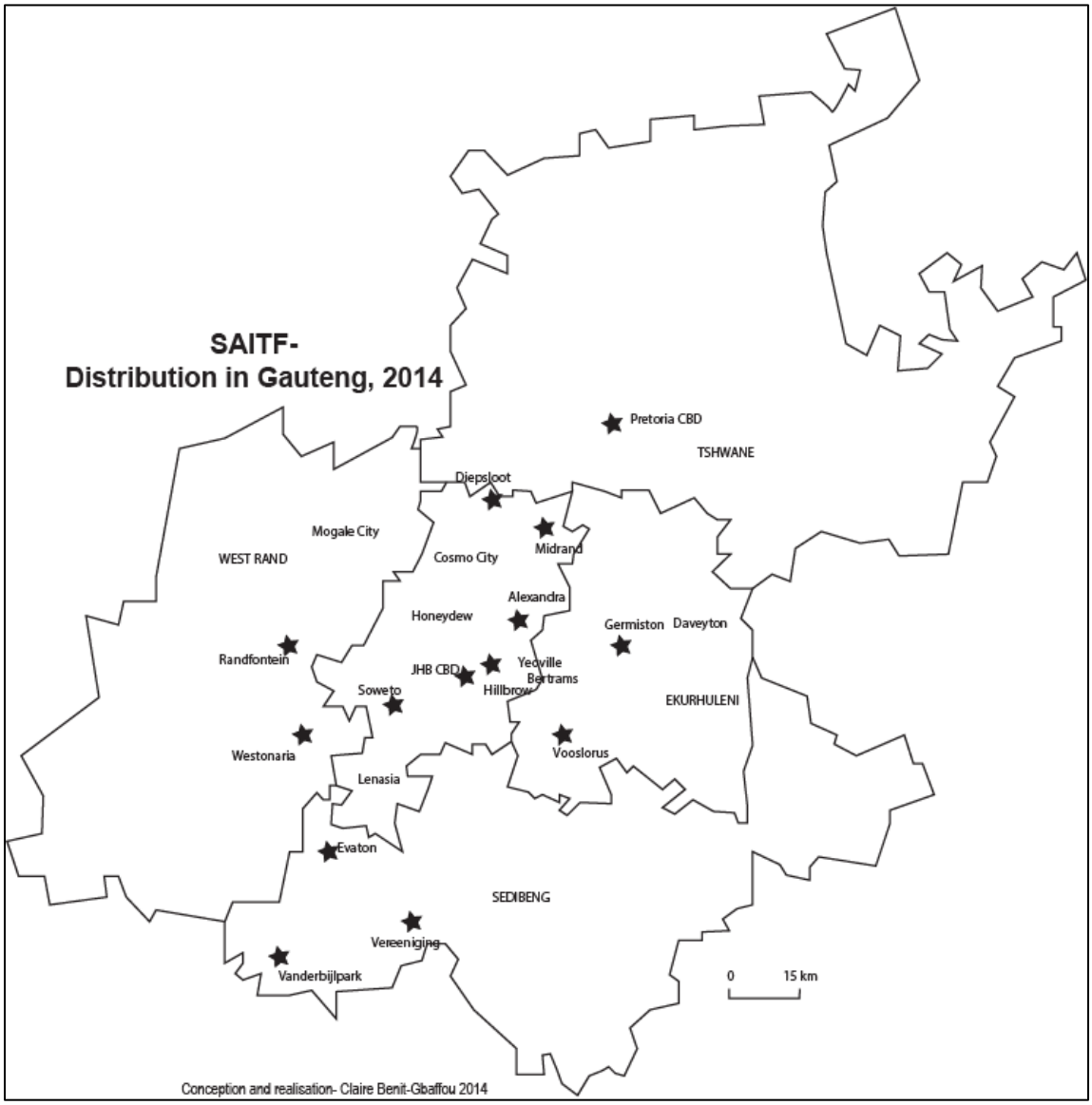
Geographic distribution of membership

With regards to membership numbers SAITF claims to have approximately 9000 individual members affiliated to it nationally. Further probing on whether that number is led to the executive members providing us with the places where their members are located.

> "Within the confines of the Johannesburg CBD, SAITF has approximately 2000 member affiliates, not counting market traders" (Ndlovu 2014).

For instance, a SAITF affiliate organisation by the name of Iketsetse Co-operative (chaired by Ndlovu) and operating within the Metrorail/PRASA premises alone has about 600 members. Other affiliate groups such as Bree-market committee, Yeoville market, Midrand market, Bara market, Alexandra market and other affiliates operating under the PRASA/Metrorail premise are said to have from 500 to over 1000 members each all registered affiliates of SAITF. However, these figures have to be considered as very rough estimates – since for instance not all traders in the Yeoville market affiliate to SAITF, and Yeoville street traders themselves rather belong to other organisations such as SANTRA and SAITF.

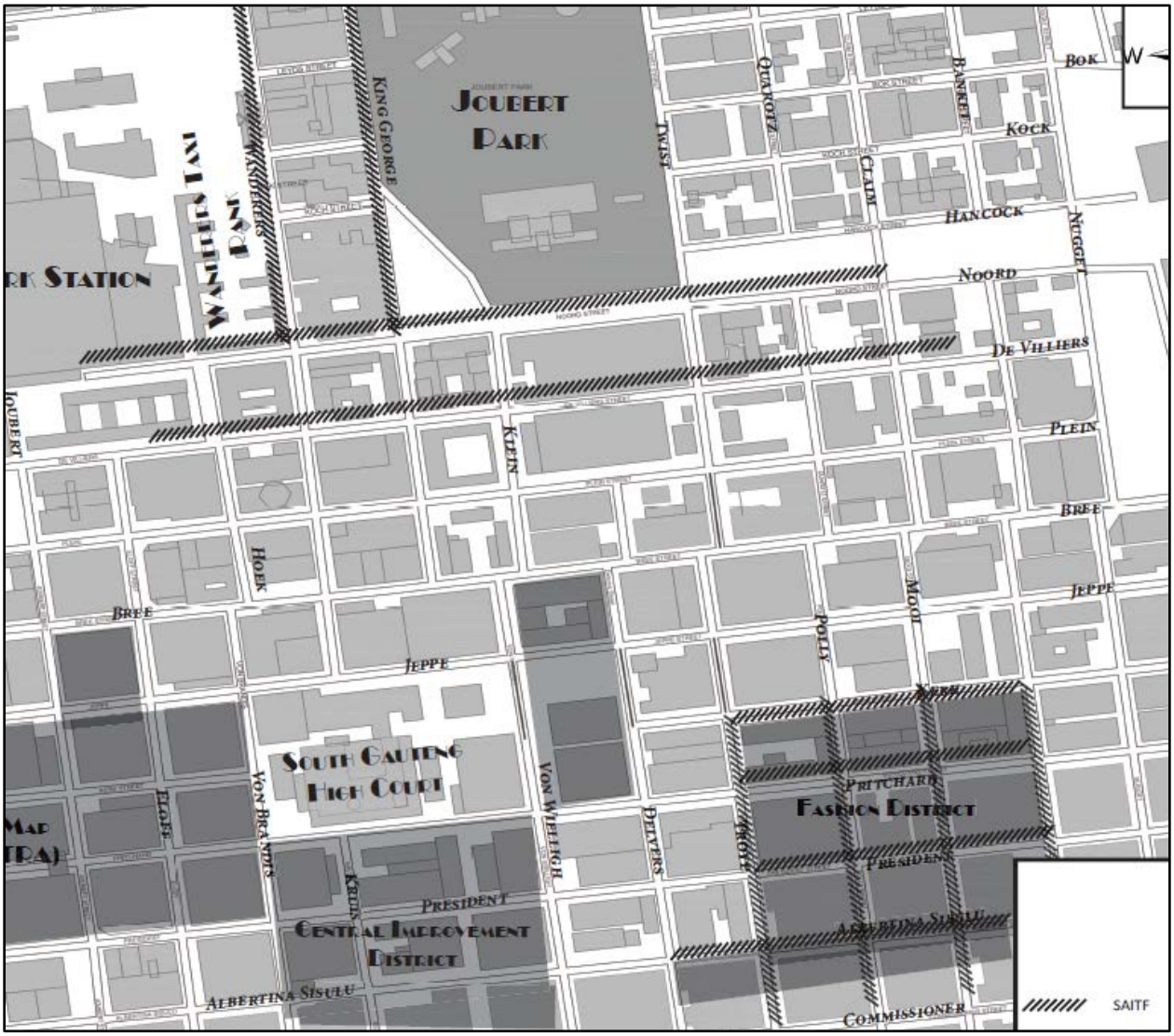
Map 3.1 – Regional distribution of SAITF affiliates, 2014



SAITF's aim is to be a national body, with national and provincial structures. However due to resource constraints, they only have a provincial branch for Gauteng. The General Secretary described SAITF membership in Gauteng:

> "In Tshwane, we have members from our affiliate organization (Tshwane Barekisi Forum): they have 1,200 members in that region. In Ekurhuleni we have Vosloorus Micro-traders Association, and Vosloorus Hawkers, with a number of about 700 members each. In Sedibeng, we have Vereeniging Hawkers Association with more than 1000 members, and Emfuleni Informal Traders, with branches in Vanderbijpark and Evaton, they have more than 1000 members. Westrand has 5 organizations that launched under West Rand Informal Traders. In Johannesburg we have more than ten organizations affiliated, including Midrand, Diepsloot, Soweto and Alex." (Phaaloh, 26 October 2014)

Map 3.2 – SAITF membership in the inner city, 2014



Conception and realisation: Dladla & Ngantweni 2014.
NB – The map is based on SAITF leaders' verbal indications, not on any systematic survey. It is indicative only.

Within Johannesburg inner city, there are also areas of concentration of SAITF members, although leaders claim that "SAITF has members in most of the Johannesburg CBD". Ndlovu elaborates that members can be found in particular on the following streets and markets of the inner city:

- Along Noord street (Block 1 and 2)
- Wanderers street (on PRASA premises around Park Station)
- Around Joubert Park
- Along Plein Street (Block 1 and 2)
- End street – more generally the whole of the Fashion district
- Market street
- Wolmarans street
- Twist street
- Klein street
- King George street
- Von Wielligh street
- Diagonal Street
- Bree Mall

SAITF's location (see **map 3.2**) seem to be concentrated around different spots in the inner city, due to the nature of affiliates (Ikestsetse on PRASA premises around Park Station; block leaders in specific streets, and the Fashion District – the history of which we have not had time to investigate further), and perhaps specific moment and topics of mobilisation (such as the battle of market traders where SAITF played a role).

Membership fee

To become a member of the South African Informal Traders Forum, collective organisations each pay a group membership joining fee to the amount of R200 as a once off payment regardless of the organisations size. The organisation that is seeking to join SAITF also has to fill in a form (we were not able to get hold of the forms however). SAITF further calls individuals within the different affiliated bodies to donate R10 on a monthly, quarterly or yearly basis depending on the individuals' capacity, above the R200 group membership fee initially contributed. However, this is not working in reality:

> "Look at Iketsetse. Members are already contributing R30 monthly to the organization. You can't ask them to pay an extra R10 per month to SAITF. It is better if organizations themselves contribute to SAITF, from the money they are getting from their direct members. If we are collecting R30 from traders, we can agree that R5 goes to SAITF. We need to formalize this after a discussion between all the affiliates' treasurers" (Ndlovu 28 Oct 2014).

But SAITF also recognizes that the organization cannot grow and reach its full potential – notably of economically developing its members- based on sole membership fees. Ideas of setting up an investment company, following a model many trade unions have adopted, are being proposed by Iketsetse – which has already started its own investment company.

> "If you register an investment company on behalf of a non-profit organization, you can now make profit through it. It means you can go for tenders, make a profit and reinvest it. In Iketsese for instance, through the investment company we established, we won a tender organized by PRASA, to recycle all the litter material found at train stations. From the profit we make, we keep a small part for the organization, and we reinvest the rest in the business for it to grow. The difference between an investment company and a cooperative is that… most cooperatives have failed. There is not enough support, not enough training. The difference an investment company makes, is that you can elect or appoint the leadership and the management – the rest of the traders can continue with their jobs. The challenge with investment companies… well, look at the trade unions: most of them are fighting, they are fighting over money generated by these companies – and they have lost touch with the ground" (Ndlovu 28 Oct 2014)

What SAITF does

SAITF might have developed a variety of actions on the ground, but the difficulty in meeting leadership, the prominence of Operation Clean Sweep and its aftermath in all the traders' minds and priority, meant that it was difficult to move beyond it to unpack SAITF's activities and achievements – its current focus seems to be continuously protecting its members from police harassment, with the support of SERI which has become their constant adviser.

> "Our relationship to SERI has grown, to such an extent that we are now like family. SERI has now adopted us. Initially they were not taking new cases. They took our case, and after OCS, they took three cases from us. As when there was this shooting incident early 2014 in Tshwane, where trader leaders were arrested – we brought in SERI and got the leaders out of jail. Their support is even filtering down to our affiliates. The relationship with SERI has grown beyond litigation – recently they were advising us on our proposal to the City regarding market management" (Ndlovu 28 Oct 2014).

This tight relationship with SERI gives them access to legal advice and also education on their rights –SERI sometimes participate in their general meetings to distribute pamphlets and inform traders on their rights and what to do when they are infringed (as witnessed in SAITF general meeting 21 August 2014).

SAITF is also busy developing activities and proposals beyond contention – in terms of economic development of traders and ideas for informal trading management. SAITF intends to approach big companies and act as a distribution network – they can present their vast membership as an argument to convince Coca Cola or Proudly SA that using them as distributors of products will be profitable for them. Street traders indeed can be seen as a highly reticulated and flexible retail network - often able to follow customer footpaths shifting during the day, the month or the year. Another idea, inspired by what SADTU has done for its members, is to do an audit of members' skills, so as to use these skills to respond to tenders.

The organisation intends to engage more in traders' capacity building. "We want traders to take control over the markets, we have our own ways of doing things, let us manage ourselves so we can all benefit" stated Ndlovu (2014).

SAITF and Operation Clean Sweep

The court case saga following Operation Clean Sweep is relatively well documented[4] - SAITF and SANTRA lodging an urgent application against the City of Johannesburg in High Court, on 19th of November 2013; the High Court dismissing the urgent character to the application, leading to the applicants taking the case to the Constitutional Court which granted an urgent interdict to the City on the 5th of December 2013, allowing the traders to immediately return to their trading spaces. The legitimacy of this urgent interdict was confirmed in the Constitutional Court judgment, on the 4rth of April 2014, declaring the City's behavior unlawful and also degrading and bordering cynical. This victory in court, allowing traders to return to inner city trading spaces and theoretically protecting them from police harassment until the matter is resolved (there is a part B to the court case that has not yet been judged), granted SAITF recognition from traders and to some extent from the City.

> "[A City official] told me jokingly in a meeting, 'Because of OCS, the City has given SAITF too much power! Now as officials we are frightened of you. The City cannot do anything without consulting you!" (Ndlovu 28 October 2014)

What is less known is what preceded the court case, and how street trader organizations failed to unite against what could have been a strong uniting factor – the eviction of all traders – authorized and unauthorized, foreigners and South Africans – alike. Ndlovu's narrative helps understand some of the fracture lines that divided the sector, first through his account of the City's meeting with block leaders on the 30th of September. The meeting was aimed at telling all block leaders about the 'clean sweep' that was going to happen; and that they would be expected to tell police officers the 'legal' from the 'illegal' traders. When asked how SAITF reacted to this announcement, Ndlovu argues

> "SAITF did not attend the block leader meeting [on the 30th of September]– the block leaders who belong to SAITF reported to us – sometime we accompany them to these meetings but it was not the case there. Illegal traders outnumber by far the legal traders. But the feeling on the street is that legal traders generally agree that they have a problem with illegal traders. Most of the illegal traders are not part of organizations, so they are not able to shape a different argument. And in Johannesburg inner city, SAITF members are mostly legal members, with smart cards, paying their rent to the City - unlike our members in Vosloorus or in Tshwane for instance, who are both legal and illegal. So, many of our members and block leaders actually agreed with OCS as it was presented at that meeting: 'our streets are dirty!'. One Voice argued 'there is an issue of corruption, OCS will address this!'. This is where we differ. OCS does not address corruption." (Ndlovu, 28 October 2014).

This division remains entrenched and not really tackled – it has been a long standing line of divide within the sector, manufactured by the City's restrictive approaches to street trading. Further divisions however emerged between street trader organizations, on the position to take to face the City.

[4] For instance through SERI's website, http://www.seri-sa.org/index.php/19-litigation/case-entries/206-south-african-informal-traders-forum-and-others-v-city-of-johannesburg-and-others-SAITF.

Figure 3.10 – Ndlovu's narrative of Operation Clean Sweep

"During Operation Clean Sweep, we got a meeting with the MMC Ross Greef. All organizations' leaders attended, and we decided we needed to caucus before the meeting. We got to a common position, which was, "We can't be negotiating while people are not trading. We can't verify legal traders without people being on the street". We then elected two people to speak on our behalf, as we could not all speak. Then, we get into the MMC meeting, and Zacharia [One Voice leader] seems to have forgotten everything! He is no longer with us, and ends up supporting the verification process. He is followed by Lulama from JOWEDET, which used to be our affiliate, but now starts departing from SAITF and speaking with its own voice. The deal was 'you are going to occupy the spaces that foreigners [sic] were occupying'. JOWEDET had its eye on Kerk street linear market. We did eventually found them allocating their people there, while we were busy in court. I remember, I organized people from the court – let us all go to Kerk street, and we found officials and block leaders busy allocating people in the vacated trading spaces. We stopped the whole process, officials ran away.

What had happened is that the City had organized a Joint Operation Committee (JOC), with DED and MTC officials, JMPD, One Voice and JOWEDET. The two organizations stated that they were agreeing with the City, and wanted to work with them. The JOC was busy verifying traders, calling Home Affairs in the process, confiscating papers, organizing reallocation of trading spaces, making new smart cards.

Even in SAITF traders were divided. Some wanted to be part of JOC. SAITF' line was 'we were all stopped, we will all go back'. It also meant, 'if we are not going back no one is going back'. Some traders still wanted to go to JOC, we messed up their stock to stop them from trading, police even tried to protect them. JOC was really stopped when we won in Court. They were based in Bree Mall. We went there too and caused chaos… MTC officials did not know what was happening. There were lots of traders there, queuing to be verified: we shouted, 'Go and trade NOW! We have WON! This is what the Court said!'. That is how we stopped JOC."

Source: Nlovu 28 October 2014

SAITF's victory in Court has had important consequences for the organisation – in terms of membership, visibility and recognition in particular. The recourse to the Court was, according to Ndlovu, partly 'by chance' – SAITF's intention was to continue its marches and protests as its main repertoire of contention, and it is in fact through the encounter with the Worker and Socialist Party (WASP) that they were put in touch with SERI.

> "We did not know SERI, it was this guy from WASP who introduced us, because he know Nomzamo from school in KZN. For us, it was, 'let us continue with the marches, we're going to close down the streets, we will cause chaos'. But then this guy phones Nomzamo, 'can SERI take their case?' and then it started" (Ndlovu, 28 Oct 2104)

The encounter with WASP was itself a consequence of SAITF applying for authorisation for a march from JMPD, on a day whereby City authorisation had already been granted to ATO. The solution was to do a joint march, and this is how ATO and SAITF met, at WASP offices, and decided to join forces (Ndlovu 2014).

But beyond 'chance', there are also strong principles and strategic decisions made by SAITF leadership that one needs to fully acknowledge: the decision to fight for all traders, not allow a few to benefit from the victimisation of others; the anti xenophobic stance; and even the (perhaps not yet very explicit) defence of unauthorised traders as legitimate in the City – in need of legalisation and management, but not of eviction.

The involvement of street trading organisations in informal trading management – a way forward?

SAITF believes that the main area of contestation between informal traders and the City of Johannesburg is that of the mismanagement or the lack of management of informal traders, in streets and in markets. While the City according to its database recognises not more than 3700 (legal) traders within the city confines, there may be between 7000 and 10000 informal traders in the inner city.

> "Because not all areas of trade are demarcated, it has become difficult to distinguish on the streets between an illegal trader and an authorised trader. Now, because of this challenge of managing us, they want to remove all of us. They have decided on removing all informal traders from their current location and to later re-allocate recognised traders into markets and linear markets in designated spaces" (Ndlovu 2014).

SAITF does not agree with the attempts of the City to remove all traders due to the reasons of their own incapacity to manage them. "The City must find other means to deal with illegal trade", states Ndlovu (2014). He adds that many traders having been trading for a long time are still without authorisation to trade, or without an authorised trading space, and yet they are legitimate.

Because the City had decided to take control of the informal economy and subsequently created structures of management without involving the traders themselves, they have failed to create a viable management. Due to their constant interaction with customers, SAITF feels that they have a greater understanding of local street trade dynamics than the City has. In SAITF's view, the City should allow for the free mobility of traders within the city, for traders to be able to choose their own areas of trade according to their particular trade.

> "The City is failing because it is doing things for traders without the traders, and they should understand that a trader is a survivalist, he or she lives on a hand to mouth basis and it functions as a day to day system. The City needs to understand traders and the people who buy from traders. We have been able to study what the customers need and that is why we are located where we are located." (Ndlovu 2014)

SAITF thus proposes that the City allow the traders to manage themselves. In this respect, SAITF is currently seeking ways to empower traders in finding ways to grow and manage themselves. SAITF has recently submitted a proposal to Johannesburg Property Company, towards a trader organization led management of markets. The proposal argues that JPC is struggling to collect market rents from traders. It is an issue of affordability but also an issue of discontent. Market traders are stating that they are the ones that are cleaning and maintaining the markets, as JPC fails to do so – so, why should they pay rent to JPC? "In Bara Mall, stock gets stolen at night. Traders complained to JPC: 'you put the security to tenders, but it is not efficient, our stuff gets stolen, and you expect us to pay for this service?' Nothing for us without us: if you offer security, we are part of this security", illustrates Ndlovu (2014). SAITF's idea is to formalize and regularize this situation:

> "We will do the cleaning and security of the market – MTC will give us the money they are paying to security and cleaners. Let us be in charge of rental collection – we will get a percentage for our organization that we can reinvest for the benefit of the traders" (Ndlovu, 28 Oct 2014).

SAITF claims it already has some experience and expertise about how to organize this. The organization is well aware of issues of accountability and transparency. They have already tested some of their ideas in different markets, made or seen mistakes and learnt from them.

> "In Bree mall, the committee of trader leaders set up an account. They pay people cleaning the toilets, make sure that the traders in charge of maintaining the toilets rotate, with a schedule, and they collect money from people using the toilets (R1). MTC did not agree in the first place, 'it is a public space, you can't charge people'. But toilets kept being vandalized and dirtied. So MTC finally agreed, it has continued in Bree and spread to other markets. In Midrand they have done it on their own, and made mistakes – for instance they opened a 32 day notice account to increase transparency and limit abuse of the funds by trader leaders, but now they can't pay the people. We found out later, and we are busy helping them to restructure, into a cooperative" (Ndlovu 28 Oct 2014).

Based on this experience, SAITF has sent a proposal to JPC, end of October 2014, an offer to manage Johannesburg markets – discussions are ongoing. The main issue is – of course – that market traders do not all belong to SAITF. In Bree Mall for instance, there are also SANTRA and GIDA members. Ndlovu retorts that management can be shared between organizations, depending on their membership in the market. But another complexity is that most of the market traders do not belong to organizations. Ndlovu blames the City for that:

> "When the City builds markets for traders, they say 'we don't negotiate with organizations, we talk to traders and block leaders. Elect a committee and we will engage with that committee. We can't talk to you as SAITF'. But we as SAITF are the one raising issues here, and as a result the City ends up talking to us" (Ndlovu 28 Oct 2014).

What SAITF's proposal raises here is a key question – that finds echoes in other organisations' claims for self-management and discontent with the city 'undermining them' by organizing area based elections. There is balance to be found between

- local accountability and freedom of association, which requires locally elected committees (as currently organised by the City through elected block leaders and market trader committees); and
- political efficiency and strategy, which requires empowered organizations, more able than locally elected leadership to raise issues, understand stakes, put pressure and strike deals ultimately benefiting the sector as a whole

SAITF's proposal is helpful in identifying both the potential benefits of traders' participation in their own local management, and the strategic and practical importance of organisations' expertise therein, and the complexity of structuring local management in a democratic way. Should we perhaps look at similar debates within trade unions, which seem to have opted for political efficiency of organizational bargaining, at the expense of workers' freedom to chose the union he affiliates to

(in an industry or a company the trader joins the local union)? Or, in other terms, how important is the principle that each trader is free to choose which organization he wants to join, wherever he trades, a key principle? Other balance between these two principles (democracy and political efficiency) might be found and further investigated, such as the principle proposed in Ekurhuleni, that each person wanting to register as a street trader needs to do so through an organization, whatever it is?

Conclusion

Operation Clean Sweep, without being the only defining feature for SAITF, has definitely been a turning point in the life of the organisation. SAITF victory in court has definitely led to more visibility of the organisation, both on the ground amongst traders – where there is a sensitive growth in membership, at least in inner city Johannesburg; and in the eye of the City of Johannesburg itself – with a degree of fear that the growing relationship between SAITF and SERI probably increases even further. It is not clear yet how much the organisation is influenced by this 'legal turn' – but it certainly causes a shift in the way SAITF operates: in its repertoire of actions (three court cases have been engaged by SAITF affiliates since OCS), in the education and training of its members about rights and legislation (through pamphlets and workshops organised by SERI), in the screening of proposals sent to the city, perhaps in its own internal modes of accountability and communication. The challenge of any legal turn for civil society organisations – documented in other cases (Benjamin 2004, Chatterjee 2004)- is that it defines the terrain of engagement with authorities as predominantly and essentially antagonistic: as it needs to be in certain phases, but can be detrimental to constructive engagement in others. Can SAITF go beyond the reactive protection of its members (a key achievement in itself obviously), to constructively influence policies and their implementation?

SAITF's proposal to the City for the delegation of market management to street trader organisation could be such a positive proposal, and certainly is one direction to increase traders' participation in the governance of their spaces, and an interesting alternative to the management proposed by the City so far. It however raises at least two issues that SAITF, and other organisations, might have to resolve more explicitly in the future. The first is the (politically constructed but nevertheless existing) divide between two parts of its constituency – (legal) market traders and (illegal) street traders, or even more broadly between authorised and non authorised traders. Statements by several leaders seem to indicate that SAITF tends to deconstruct the divide and claim legalisation for all traders as the solution: but these statements are not (yet?) strongly articulated. The second relates to issues of democracy versus political efficiency in any proposal relating to traders self management – what balance to find between locally elected trader representatives, and more strategic, but competing, street trader organisations, in managing local trading spaces?

References

Interviews

Sam Khasibe (SAITF Chair), Briaan Phaaloh (SAITF General Secretary): group interview, SERI offices, Braamfontein, 02.09.2014; and Bree Taxi Rank, 15.10.2014

Phumulani Ndlovu (SAIF Gauteng Deputy Chair), individual interview, PRASA: Park station, 19.09.2014.

Meetings attended

SAITF general meeting, Beyers Naude square, 21.08.2014.

SAITF block leaders meeting, Bree Taxi Rank, 15.10.2014.

Feedback sessions on draft report

Feedback session on draft report (conducted by Mpho Mohloboli) with Phumulani Ndlovu, Wits University, 24.10.2014.

Feedback session on draft report (conducted by the students' team) with Brian Phaaloh, via email, 26.10.2014.

Feedback session on draft report – follow up (conducted by Prof Claire Benit-Gbaffou, with Nokwanda Kgomo), with Phumulani Ndlovu, Wits University, 28.10.2014.

CHAPTER 4 -

ONE VOICE OF ALL HAWKERS ASSOCIATION

Abraham Ajibade, Nomathemba Dladlla, Michelle Makwakwa & Bianca Van Niekerk



Figure 4.1 - One Voice March to Braamfontein City Offices
Source: Gallan 2011

Figure 4.2 - One Voice of All Hawkers Association – A 2014 Profile

Date of creation: 2007
Nature of Organisation: Non Profit Organisation
Registration: 2008
Chair: Zacharia Ramutula ('President')
Spokesperson: Frans Seema
Structure of the organisation: 20 area representatives
Office: No – use of NACTU offices (Eloff and Kerk) for meetings.
Regular meetings? No, but moments of mass mobilisation.
Number of members: About 2.500
Location of members: Inner city, Alexandra, Soweto, Lenasia, Orange Farm, West Rand.
Membership fee: R30 registration, R10 a month
Membership form: Yes
Members: Street traders - licensed and unlicensed
Objectives: Protect One Voice's members trading spaces, Root out corruption in the City (allocation processes, JMPD harassment), Promote autonomous management by trader organisations themselves

Acknowledgements

This research is based on a number of interviews from One Voice of All Hawkers Association's leaders and street traders themselves. We would like to express our thanks to all the people who have made it possible.

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The efforts of our fellow students in ARPL3007, Politics, Governance and the City were appreciated as the seminars, workshops and presentations not only provided valuable insight into their respective trader associations, but also allowed us to broaden our view towards a holistic understanding of the dynamics of street trading organizations in Johannesburg

We also acknowledge the Wits CUBES Informal Trade Research and Governance, Politics and Informality Groups for supporting the street traders of Johannesburg and providing an exciting platform for us to engage with one another.

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Introduction

The main focus of this research is street trader organisations, specifically in Johannesburg, specifically in the inner city of Johannesburg. The street trader organisation that will be looked at in this report is One Voice of All Hawkers Association.

"Every state official knows One Voice to be truly the organisation that advocates for street traders rights" as Frans Seema, the spokesperson for One Voice asserts. Whilst other organizations may claim a similar function in the political landscape of inner city Johannesburg, One Voice of All hawkers is definitely the one associated to street traders' marches and protests in the street of the inner city (see **Figure 4.1**). This repertoire of action, which constitutes one of One Voice identity feature, has been one of the threads guiding our research, questioning the meanings, the role and the outcomes of mass protests in the battle for street trading in inner city Johannesburg.

This chapter attempts to understand what it is that One Voice does for and with its members, why is it that members chose to join One Voice rather than other street trader organisations, how One Voice formulates its aims and which resources and networks it uses to achieve these aims. The chapter will start with a brief history on the organisation The second part will present the vision and objectives of the organisation. Thirdly, the structure of One Voice as an organization will be presented, illustrated by portraits of some of its leaders, followed by an analysis of its membership, including an attempt to understand its spatial distribution in the City. Lastly, we will focus on One Voice's actions and achievements in the inner city of Johannesburg.

A Note on Methodology

Our methodology for this research was primarily through interviews with leaders of the organization, to understand the way they work, what inspires them, their perspectives on their strategies, successes and challenges. We also analysed the few documents and organisation materials (pamphlets, membership forms, etc.) we could find – from the organization itself or in the media. We also used observation, in particular through walks around some of the organisation's strongholds – on our own as well as facilitated by One voice leadership.

The challenges that we faced mainly revolved around the different paradigms that we as students and they as traders utilized. This was made most apparent in our drive to secure concrete answers and figures which the traders simply did not have or want to produce. For example, there was a delay with regard to getting information on the number of street traders and the location of these street traders. Towards the end of our research is when we received the number of traders and their location; however these figures could only be estimates.

Another challenge that we faced was that we solely depended on the street trader organisation members for information, because there is a lack of written sources about One Voice. This led to a lack of sources that we could have used as a basis to have a more distanced view. The manner in

which we managed to partly overcome this challenge was through class presentations, where we received information on other street trader organisations that our colleagues were doing research on – at least a degree of comparison was possible and shed a light on the specificity of each organisation as well as its commonalities with others.

A point of interest within our research process was that we received different information from different interviewees. This resulted in our research being more in depth, but it also led to a few contradictions which we tried to clarify by asking the question in a different way. Having been rendered illegal by authorities, traders had developed a wariness of documentation and accountability, understandably so, because it meant that been documented and public about things could lead to punitive action been taken against themselves or their organization. Our experience with the traders during the course of our interviews has revealed the complexity of street trader organisations as well as the difficulty one experiences, when trying to unpack the nuances underpinning the system.

An oft recounted saying comes to mind at this juncture which says "No one likes to talk about the bad aspects of their own character". This is appropriate in the case of this organisation because the version of events that were told to us may have been embellished. As such we had to be careful and guard against naivety by not accepting everything as the gospel truth. This was not always an easy process to undertake, but the undertaking hereof led us to a new found respect for the traders who on a daily basis navigate the treacherous terrain of street trading politics. Our respondents were courageous enough to be open to our questions and contribute to our research, and for that we are abundantly grateful.

History of the One Voice

The One Voice for All Hawkers Association was started in 2007, as the founding members recognised that the traders desperately had a need for representatives who would speak on their behalf to procure safe trading spaces. This was not the "President" (as he calls himself)'s first time in an organisation: Zachariah Ramutula had joined the Gauteng Hawkers Association when he was a street trader in Joubert Park, and then he started the Gauteng Braiders and Hairdressers Organisation around 2000. The reason for the expansion of the constituency from braiders to all traders was because he felt that the plight the braiders experienced was one that was shared by all other traders and it seemed more appropriate to broaden the mandate of the organization beyond the hairdressers.

The ideal of achieving safe trading spaces for their constituent would not be as easy as they had envisioned however, with the City contesting the spaces at every turn. In the late 2000s, local municipalities within South Africa were embracing street traders and formulating informal/ street trading policy frameworks (Small Enterprise Development Agency, 2008). However, it is disclosed that the pace in which the local municipalities were involving the street traders was not to the satisfaction of the traders themselves (Small Enterprise Development Agency, 2008). The arm of the

City that the traders interact with the most is the implementation arm, the JMPD whose mandate is to police the inner city, differentiated into trading and non-trading areas, and maintain order and control. The traders of the time however were unable to form amicable relations with the police force because they felt that the police was brutal in its duty as well as not entirely transparent in all of its dealings.

This led to a shift in the focus of the organisation from one who had simply supplicated to the state to provide them with safe trading spaces, to one which, after repeated denial and suppression, protested the City's policies in handling the traders within it. "The City and political parties know One Voice because they have seen this organisation on the streets and blocking the streets", said one of the executive members of One Voice. This led the City to recognise that there were associations willing to speak out for the traders, as well as to gain representation in the City's meetings over matters that involved the traders. This was an especially poignant point because at the time, the MTC (Municipal Trading Committee) was setting up linear trading malls to reallocate the traders from the streets to these markets. This was a move that would have drastically reduced the income of the traders because they would lose their established customers as well as experience less traffic by way of new customers coming their way. One Voice claims that it would have been able to make this clear to the City that the linear markets would not have been a viable solution if they had been consulted on the matter. As one of the executive members stated that, "the city belongs to everyone", therefore as street traders they had to be consulted about the proposal on the linear market. Additionally, the member also said that "the City should consult in a good manner."

This absence of genuine dialogue between traders and the City led One Voice to resort to mass protests to express its ideas and attempt to be heard, through the delivery of memorandums to the relevant City officials or departments. To this day marches still remain one of the major repertoires of action used by the One Voice for all Hawkers Association (**Figure 4.1**). The Association continues to protect the interests of its constituents through regularly challenging of the City and its policies regarding how traders in the city are to be organised, a prerequisite to constructive engagement and negotiation with the City.

Vision and Objectives

One Voice's ideal, as expressed by One Voice's chair and spokesperson, would be to create an environment in which there will no longer be any need for the policing of illegal trading because the trader organization would be able to "regulate and control ourselves", as stated by the President. This would mean that the traders would no longer be able to behave in a manner that is detrimental to society under the guise of anonymity and temporality: every trader in every space would be accounted for in one organisation or another and the coalition of organisations will be able to effectively manage trading spaces so as not to hamper pedestrian traffic or leave trading spaces in a deplorable state. The city would thus be cleaner and as such the City would no longer be in opposition with the traders but actually work in tandem with them, recognising the organisations as

a pivotal cornerstone in managing this emerging markets as well recognising that the market itself can be managed in a way that does not require heavy policing, brutality and harassment yet still yield satisfactory results.

This vision translates into two different objectives, as stated by One Voice's President:

> "We created One Voice for two reasons: to regulate ourselves, using our own rules, and to protect the informal traders against anybody harassing them, in particular the City which is always victimising the traders" (Ramutula 2014)

Defending traders against harassments takes a variety of forms. One Voice first attempts at protecting their members' trading spaces – in a context where legal trading spaces are scarce but also fluid, redefined or reallocated through shifts in policy, public works and urban regeneration, or corrupt deals by individual officials. One Voice also tries to develop new trading spaces, and lobbies for these trading spaces to be allocated to its own members.

> "One Voice fought the City so that they can legalise traders and give them space to trade. No other organization is fighting for traders who do not have legal trading spaces. One Voice is special as an organization." (Ramutula 2014).

Through this constant pressure to protect existing members' trading spaces and open new legal spaces for new members, One Voice attracts a wide array of members, and can claim that

> "Nearly the whole town is our places. The other organizations are just not present. Everywhere you find One Voice. We are always busy on the ground, shaking the ground. Every trader is there because of One Voice. Perhaps other organizations are busy at higher levels" (Seema 2014)

One Voice's second objective is connected to the first – developing autonomous local management of trading spaces, be it streets or buildings: "We want to control the streets. Like the taxi associations, they control the ranks, even if the ranks have been built by the City", says the President. This desire for self-management is partly in reaction to the inefficiency of the City in managing street trading, contrasted with One Voice's own ability to regulate its members behaviours and promote a sense of order and cleanliness (see **Figure 4.7 a & b**):

> "MTC are just managing but they don't really care. They don't make sure the place is clean for instance. The City is dirty because of municipal entities. We as trader organizations would be more concerned and more efficient in making sure the place is clean. For instance, in Berea, we have got a code of conduct. If you don't clean your space we fine you, sometimes we'll even take away your trading space. And every month we make a clean sweep [sic] with the councilor." (Ramutula 2014)

> "Another example is on Noord Street. There are illegal traders trading there. We told them to be straight in line and not to cause disorder. We were the one to align them. But then the City chased them away. Now they come back and they no longer are in line. Now the place is dirty, not orderly". (Seema 2014)

But this lobby for self-management also responds to a need to consolidate the organisation's membership, as well as resources. One Voice leadership's concern is that traders will join One Voice when they need a fight, but stop supporting it as soon as "the battle is won". This lack of loyalty and shifting membership is not specific to One Voice:

> "Informal traders will join which ever organization will fight for them. In Hoek Street Linear market phase three, if it is SANTRA this week that comes and raises issues with management, they will be SANTRA members. If it is One Voice the following week, they will say they are One Voice" (Seema 2014).

However, Ramutula accuses the City of constantly undermining street trader organizations, by deliberately encouraging traders to represent themselves on their own, rather than continue supporting existing organizations – even those that have successfully fought for them.

> "The City tells our members 'don't join the organizations: this is the City's street, not One Voice's. They will ask the block to elect their block leader, call all block leaders to meetings without calling organizations. So, our members tend to stop supporting us, even if it is because of us that they are now trading legally". (Ramutula 2014)

Ramutula goes on in illustrating how, in his view, the City purposefully undermines street trader organizations, even in the initiatives that in his view are legitimate and important for them:

> "We successfully negotiated a building with City Prop, at the corner of Hoek and Plein, to relocate the hairdressers operating in the street. We reached an agreement with them, that One Voice would collect the rent for City Prop from hairdressers in the building, and even keep a portion of the rent for the organization. We had an agreement. We were even to have an office for One Voice in the building. But the City interfered, they told City Prop not to deal with One Voice, they blocked us. But the building was earmarked for hairdressing because of us! Hairdressers who were trading illegally in the streets are now legal in the building because of us! Now it is City Prop collecting the rental, I don't know if they are managing." (Ramutula 2014)

One Voice's Leadership

One Voice is a registered organization and has such as a classic executive committee, composed of one Chair (position occupied by Zacharia Ramutula), and an 8 people executive committee, whereby Frans Seema and Jerry Thlopane are two directors, and 6 other traders are members of the executive committee. However, "these members are nowhere to be seen, I don't even know their whereabouts" (Seema 2014). The real structure of One Voice is represented below, in an organogramme we constructed based on the indication provided by the leaders we interviewed. It explains the roles and responsibilities for each leader representing One Voice traders.

It had been indicated by the President of One Voice that the structure of organisation is not well defined and that the focus of many of One Voice executives is actually about mobilisation.

> "You see, it is difficult to unite and organise the traders. When they have a problem, they come to organizations like us. We solve the problem, and then they forget about us. And the City is undermining organizations. For instance, we would work hard towards legalizing all the traders in a street. And then, when they are legalized, DED encourages them to elect block leaders, and tell them they don't have to join any organization, because the street is public" (Seema 2014)

Figure 4.3 – Operational structure of One Voice, 2014



Zacharia Ramutula, who insists in being called 'President' especially by City officials ("it is a matter of respect", he says) is a charismatic leader.

Vocal in public meetings, not hesitating to raise his voice and to talk confrontationally, keeping to his agenda and not letting others interrupt or derail him, he is the face of the organisation, and often portrayed in the media at the forefront of marches, loudhailer in hand (see **Figure 4.1**). The term 'President' is also an evocation of a claim that several of our interviewees have made: the unique democratic nature of One Voice, as opposed to other organizations. According to one block leader, Dan Siebert:

> "We are the only ones who had elections to elect our President… It was more than 1000 members that were present when electing the President"

There has in fact been no other election since the registration of One Voice in 2008. Whilst Ramutula asserts that "we are still going to go to elections, and we will even call the IEC", Frans justifies that One Voice has other priorities:

> "When you are satisfied with what you have, when you are very busy, you need to go forward and not create obstacles for your own organization. The President is working hard with me and Jerry for the organization to exist. That is not like those other 6 members of the executive, who are no longer active".

Other elements might contribute to characterize One Voice as "more democratic" than its counterparts - One Voice is the only organisation that regularly organises mass action such as marches and protests. Other organizations do organise petition campaigns as mass action, but protests and marches have the benefit of mobilising the organisation's members in a visible way towards a united goal – sharing a moment, becoming aware of their own physical mass and the power that this gives them. The active distribution of One Voice T-shirts and regalia to marchers (see **Figure 4.1**) adds to the feeling of a members' unity. Protests contribute to giving to One Voice the identity of a genuinely popular and mass organisation, whilst many street trader organisations

Figures 4.4 (a-d) - Profiles of One Voice leaders

Name: Zacharia Ramutula

Place of birth: Limpopo (1964)

A member of OVOAH since: 2007, founder of the organisation

Position in OVOAH: President



Trader: Since he was young, in rural Limpopo. He built a stall that his mother used until she passed away. He came to Johannesburg in 1988, starting selling music cassettes and videos in Joubert Park. Then he shifted to selling ice creams, and established boxes to sell them, employing several people. But he had to close the boxes, started hair salons, opened shops but also had to close them down. Then he started street photography in Joubert Park.

Goods sold currently: street photographs (he has a number of street photographers working for him).

Current location of trading: Joubert Park

Operation Clean Sweep: "It did not affect me personally, as it did not concern Joubert Park. But it affected our members.

Why One Voice: In the 1990s he joined Gauteng Hawkers Association. In 2000 he founded the Gauteng Braiding and Hairdressing Association, as he was seeing how hairdressers were suffering. In 2007 he founded One Voice of All Hawkers and believe the organization is the strongest and biggest of all in Johannesburg.

Name: Frans Seema

Place of birth: Soweto, Johannesburg

A member of OVOAH since: Its foundation in 2007.

Position in OVOAH: Spokesperson / Secretary

Trader since: 1983 (33 years trading in Hoek street, first illegally then in the market

Location: Hoek Street Market, section 2

Goods sold: Initially matches, perfumes, bags. Currently, school textbooks.



Street trading: His children have been educated using the money he earned through trading. "If the City is failing to recognise traders, then the how are street traders going to make a living and support their families?"

Operation Clean Sweep: it deprived him of his business for a while. His family had to rely on the spaza shop that his wife runs in Soweto.

Why One Voice: Seema was part of ACHIB when he started trading in 1983, "at the time business was good, we were few traders. When Freedom came, money became little, there was more competition, all

people started selling on the streets". Seema met Ramutula in the late 1990s when looking for ways of supporting street hairdressers who were being harassed. They have been working together since.

Name: Dan Kakae



Place of birth: Limpopo

Position in OVOAH: Top 20 executive
Trader

Location: Noord Street (Park station before)

Goods sold: general items i.e. spectacles

Trading in the Street: "Street trading is not easy. We have to pay for the use of toilet, for the storage of our goods. Competition is tough because there are so many traders out there."

Operation Clean Sweep: It was difficult for him and his family of 4 dependents, especially in the Christmas period, and they had to rely on his wife's income.

Why One Voice: "Because it fights corruption in the City", and also "because it is a democratic organisation."

Name: Siebert Sikhwela



Place of birth: Limpopo

A member of OVOAH since: 2010

Position in OVOAH: Block Leader

Location: De Villiers Street

Goods sold: Sweets and cigarettes

Trading in the street: "Street trading is OK, but the City should provide us with sanitation equipment to keep the streets where they trade clean."

Operation Clean Sweep: "It was meant to to relocate traders, which would have been a problem because we might have lost customers who are used to find us in our trading space."

Why One Voice: "I got a smart card through One Voice."

Block leader: By virtue of being a block leader, he can help traders in the block he is responsible for, to register as legal traders on the City database: "The number of people on the street that I was assigned to is close to 100. I am allowed to register them with the City, because they are under me."

have given up on mass meetings and seldom are able to give feedback or showcase their actions to their members.

Frans Seema, (nicknamed "Braza", Brother, by other traders), acts as the Secretary and the right arm of Ramutula. A co-founder of One Voice, he is on the ground, solving issues, mediating conflicts, reporting crises to the president. "The President does the show, in meetings, in protests; I work behind the scene, I solve issues quietly", he describes to explain their complementary roles in the

organization. His mandate is also theoretically to develop trading networks in SADC (and Frans is also in the executive committee of GIDA, whose aims are to develop cross border trading), but this was not visible in our research, as this dimension of the organization was not really described in its aims and activities.

The role and composition of the 'Top 20' were interesting. They were described as area representatives, replacing the absent executive committee in grounding One Voice in several parts of the City. Them being in charge of a specific area is an important way of keeping a link between the traders and the President, so can also be understood as fostering a form of accountability within the organization. Frans Seema explains:

> "As an organisation we have community leaders who are responsible for a specific area that we assign to them. […] We go to a place and area representatives are elected, and they report to us."

Each of the top 20 is then responsible for his or her area: they are the people on the ground noting the problems of the traders, and reporting to Frans or Zacharia the issues that the traders are facing in the streets. Area representatives are tasked to protect existing members, but also to recruit new members.

Some of these area representatives are also block leaders. Block leaders are elected by traders at the block level or nominated by the City of Johannesburg, and are invited to present to City officials the issues that are rising on the ground. This has led One Voice chair to express general suspicion towards block leaders:

> "It is another scheme by the City to divide the traders. We fight and work hard to legalise street traders, and then the City undermines our membership by organizing these elections of block leaders […] Then they call block leaders to meeting and they don't invite us. […] We are fighting against that name 'block leaders', because the City gave it to us, we prefer to call our representatives 'area representatives', they also work at bigger scales" (Ramutula 2014).

However, some of the city-appointed block leaders decide to join organizations, and are recognized by them as their area representatives as well. Siebert Sikhwela, who joined One Voice and is grateful to them, as "I got a smart card through One Voice".

One Voice's Membership

We asked two executive members if all the traders within their membership were legal traders, and they both answers by the negative – One Voice also represents illegal traders. Anybody can join One Voice, provided they fill in the membership form and pay their fee.

This form indicates that the traders will need to be committed to the organisation's mandates. It shows a surprising typology of traders (braider, dreadlock maker, photographer and informal trader), probably a legacy of the President's former association of informal hairdressers.



INFORMAL REGISTRATION FORM OF

ONE VOICE OF ALL HAWKERS ASSOCIATION

Reg. No. 2009/007035/08

AFFIX COLOUR PASSPORT PHOTO

REGULATORY BODY (AUTHORITY) OF INFORMAL TRADERS & HAWKERS

ONE VOICE OF ALL HAWKERS ASSOCIATION: SHORTENED NAME: OVOAHA

OVOAHA

TITLE: MR. OR MISS. OR MRS USE - X - TO MARK

OCCUPATION

1. BRAIDER 2. PHOTOGRAPHER

3. DREADLOCKS MAKER 4. INFORMAL TRADER

SURNAME: FIRST NAMES:

ID NO. OR PASSPORT NO: MALE OR FEMALE

PROVINCE: BRANCH:

ADDRESS: OR POSTAL

WORK STREET CNR

YOUR TELEPHONE NUMBER (TEL NO)

DECLARATION

(Our contact No. (011) 721 9475/1 or 082 817 6477)

(YOUR NAME) (YOUR SURNAME) WILL SOLEMNLY ABIDE BY THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF OVOAHA SET OUT IN THE CONSTITUTION. I AM JOINING THE ORGANIZATION VOLUNTARYILY AND I WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE LIFE OF THE ORGANZATION AS A LOYAL, ACTIVE AND DISCIPLINED MEMBER UNTIL I DON'T RUN INFORMAL BUSINESS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA.

I HEREBY WILL ABIDE BY RULES AND CONDITIONS AS REQUIRED BY THE BODY AND WILL PAY ALL FEES STIPULATED IN THE CONSTITUTION.

MY SIGNATURE DATE:

OFFICE USE ONLY

PERMANENT MEMBER REF NO.

OFFICIAL SIGNATURE:

DATE:

OFFICIAL STAMP

Recruited by: Name Surname: Tel No.

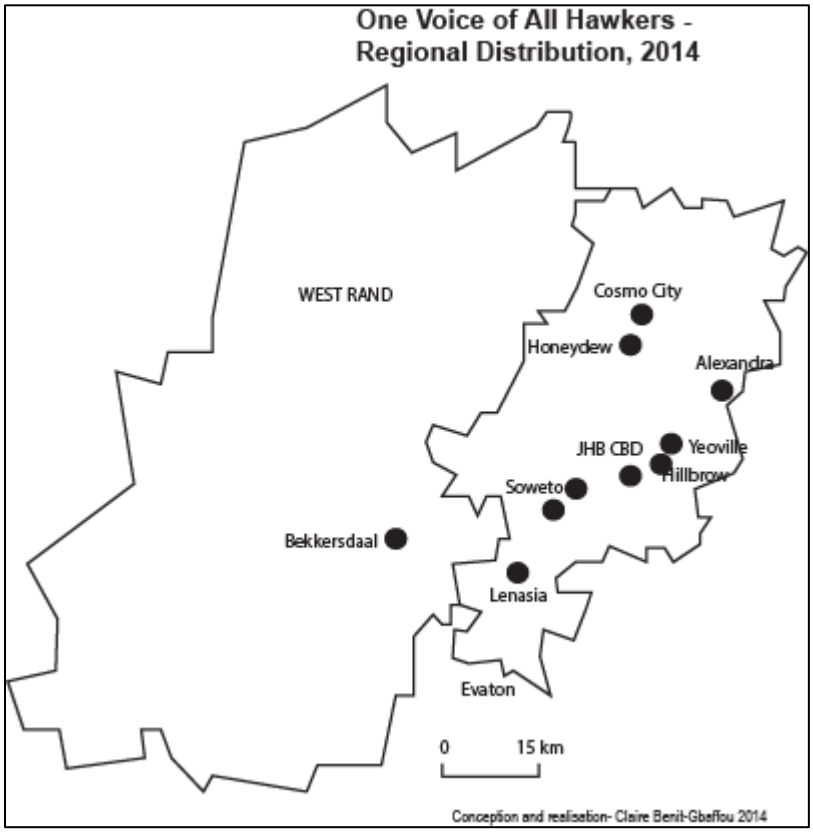
Figure 4.5. One Voice Registration form

Source: communicated by One Voice leadership, 2014

The fee that One Voice members pay is R30.00 to join and R10.00 as a monthly fee. The money is mostly used to print out pamphlets to let people know when they will have marches in the city, said the spokesperson. The President added that "the membership fee is to pay rent for the office, to pay telephone bills, to pay stationery, to buy furniture"; but he also states that "not all members are paying." The spokesperson also disclosed that "the traders pay the membership fee once and once you get them a place they stop paying." However, it also seems that protest action is a moment where traders contribute their fee; or JMPD raids where One Voice's protection is needed.

The 'President mentioned that members of One Voice are "plus minus 10.000." When asked more specifically about where the members are located ("we are all over Johannesburg, you can find our members in every street"), the number seemed closer to 2500 members:

> "We have more than 1000 in the inner city, more than 300 in Orlando, more than 200 in Baragwanath, about 170 in Lenasia, 100 in Diepmeadow, 100 in Honeydew, 100 in Alex, few in Cosmo City – I would say 50, and 100 in the West rand" (Ramutula 2014).

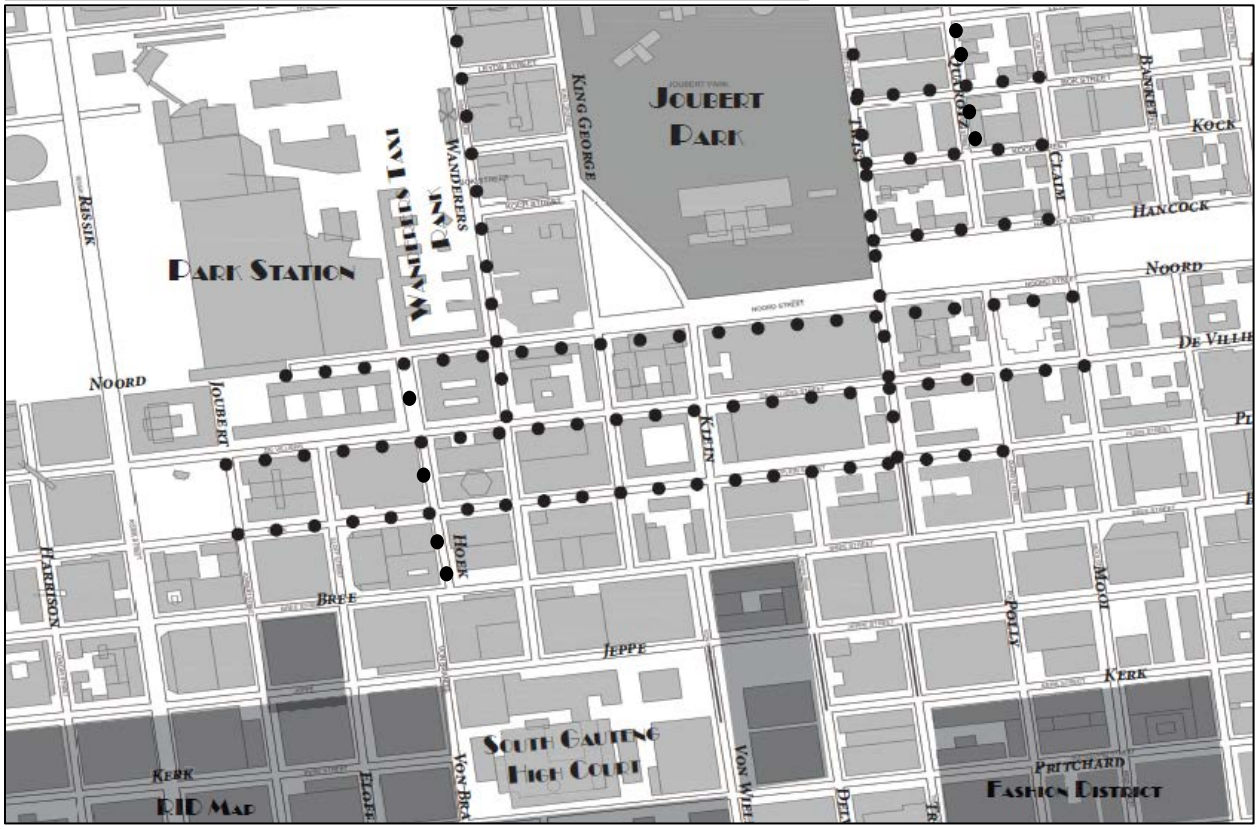


Map 4.1 – Regional distribution of One Voice membership, 2014

NB: The map is based on verbal indications of SAITF leaders, not a comprehensive survey. It is indicative only.

Map 4.2 – Spatial distribution of One Voice members in the inner City

Conception and realization: Dladla, Hlela and Ngantweni, 2014. NB: The map is based on verbal indications of SAITF leaders, not a comprehensive survey. It is indicative only.



One Voice's inner city constituencies are possibly scattered, but one remarks two strong points of concentration – one along Joubert Park where the President is based, going into Hillbrow (beyond its main street); one around Park Station, Wanderers and Noord, where the Secretary is based. This spatial distribution can indicate, like SANTRA, the personal and charismatic nature of networks holding the organization together – rather than based on structures and institutions. However, One Voice's broader metropolitan footprint, and its integration of area representatives within its structure, might indicate a stronger institutionalization and ability to liaise beyond spatial proximity. Whether this metropolitan membership is based on long-lasting relationship, or linked to specific moments of mobilization, is a question that leadership itself is grappling with.

One Voice's Achievements

One Voice manages to use a mix of repertoires in its relation to municipal authorities: mass protests on the one hand, and everyday cooperation on the other (through the joint process of legalisation of illegal traders, and opening of new trading spaces). This double repertoire is well captured by the Secretary:

> "We work with the City. We achieve some kind of understanding. You cannot fight somebody without trying to find a way through. We embark on marches to exert pressure. Every time we did marches they gave us something" (Seema 2014).

Mass Protests to gain recognition and be heard

In 2007, One Voice advocated for the creation of trading stalls as well as for the autonomy for One Voice to develop these trading spaces. The City acquiesced to the development of the trading spaces however designated the Metropolitan Trading Company (MTC) to preside over the stalls allocation. This led to a situation whereby the City of Johannesburg (CoJ) did not acknowledge the trader organisation's ability to run the spaces themselves.

One Voice thus felt it was necessary to voice their objections in order to demand change and the organisation started organising marches from 2008-2011 "to force the City to acknowledge us, and to work with us as an organisation". Protests are seen as key to the identity of the organization.

One such protest was on the 10th of November 2010. One Voice began their protest march at Mary Fitzgerald Square in Newtown at 10am wearing One Voice For All Hawkers' Association T-shirts and Pan Africanist Congress T-shirts in bright colors (City Press, 2010). It culminated in a memorandum with a list of 29 requests, read out by One Voice for All Hawkers' Association president Zacharia Ramutula in front of a crowd of informal traders and two representatives of the Johannesburg municipality. It detailed the requests by informal traders who claim that police abuse them, and that the MTC was inefficient in its allocation of trading spaces (City Press, 2010). These complaints were initiated meant to communicate with the MTC but after a period of frustration, they had to settle with complaining to the City about the MTC.

A number of other marches were further documented by Mamokete Matjomane, The two he attended were on the on the 15 and 21 November 2012 (Matjomane, 2013). The march on the 15 November was directed at the JMPD, SAPS and the Johannesburg Property Company (JPC) a company that had become responsible for the management of the street traders after the MTC had been disbanded in 2013. The main grievances that were lodged in the memorandum were about the harassment of the traders and impoundment of their stock.



Figure 4.6 - One Voice Pamphlet calling for a march in the inner city, 24 October 2012
Source: personal archive, Zacharia Ramutula

The pamphlet calls for a march to protest against a number of issues – harassment of traders by the Metro police and SAPS (corruption, brutality, xenophobic statements); the need for more trading spaces (and not in markets). It is surprising that there is no mention of One Voice on the pamphlet – perhaps to attract a wider number of traders, even those not (yet) members of One Voice? At the same time, the pamphlet puts pressure of traders who do not participate in the march ('amagundwane'). , the 'rats' – free riders or betrayers), mostly, according to Seema, those who are legal traders: "it is the illegal traders who march mostly".

Another march on the 21st of November 2012 was directed at Region F councilors. The march took place at corner of Miriam Makeba and Bree Streets. The memorandum for this march complained that the councillors do not recognise organisation leaders of street traders at the neighborhood level as well as the organisations representing the street traders. Another issue that was brought up was the competition of trading spaces brought about by the immigrants. These protests resulted in a meeting with the executive committee for the association in which they are able to make demands for trading spaces for their traders.

One of the salient points of their grievances was the contestation of the space allocated to the foreigners, because according to them the foreigners acquire these spaces illegally by paying bribes. An example of this was in the Baragwanath area where the (foreign) traders who were occupying the area were evicted by the JMPD and forced to trade without demarcation, a trader who was present at the time claimed

> "The JMPD have turned the allocation of trading spaces into a money making scheme, they go for the traders who are immigrants because they know they will pay them". (Seema)

It was at this point that One Voice stepped in and fought for its members to have demarcated trading areas.

Other organisations sprung up around this time and began to "hijack their marches" - the president felt that the other organisations used them (One Voice) as a crucible for their creation by "filling in the forms as if they were joining One Voice". He felt that they were also being dishonest because "They [were] moving with any organisation [that] suits their needs." The higher echelons of One Voice believed this to have been a political move by the City to stir up competing voices that would serve to divide the traders and deflect them towards petty squabbles, because as the president put it "The City would not be able to handle us all at once".

Fighting corruption, contesting allocation and claiming trading spaces

One Voice advocated on behalf of their traders for demarcated spaces to trade within, as one of their services rendered. According to One Voice, demarcated trading spaces were allocated unjustly, with corruption and bribery rampant throughout the allocation process:

> "The City consistently gives our spaces to outsiders and foreigners without consulting us […]. MTC was corrupt, they allocated trading plots to foreign nationalities, because they give them money to get that place. A trading space can sell for R3000, R4000. […] My problem is that there were people there before, and the new people are not the previous traders that were located there. […] They would even demarcate at night, so that the following day it is the foreign traders that have taken over the trading spaces" (Ramutula 2014).

One Voice for all Hawkers Association campaigned actively and worked to expose the officials responsible of these deals. The process culminated in the original traders in the area around the Chris Hani Baragwanath hospital being reinstated within properly demarcated spaces towards the end of 2011. Following One Voice's actions and processes implemented in order to reclaim the "unfairly" allocated spaces, their members were able to trade within acknowledged and designated spaces.

A similar case occurred in Wanderers street in the inner city: One Voice members came one day to complain that they had been chased from their trading spaces overnight, with new traders claiming that they had now been allocated to their spaces. "Some even had the same number on their smart card!". Eventually, in parallel to One Voice making the case against City officials' corruption, the trading spaces on Wanderers were allocated back to the One Voice members who had been chased.

One Voice succeeded in exposing the corruption in Westonaria of two high ranking officials in the Johannesburg Metro Police Department, who were subsequently fired. This is what led, according to Seema, to the City to give back the spaces demarcated in Wanderers to previous One Voice traders:

"they gave us 80 to 90 stalls on Wanderers, to appease us" (Seema 2014). One Voice however was not satisfied with such a minor concession, they continued to demand for the corruption to be weeded out. The Mayor at the time, Amos Masondo appointed investigators from the law firm Ernst and Young, to investigate the allegations of corruption. The president of One Voice stated with pride that

> "We were the ones who made that (the investigation) happen, we pushed [former Mayor] Amos [Masondo] to get to the bottom of it, because we knew we had nothing to hide, they were the ones who would be exposed." (Ramutula, 2014)

> "Through One Voice we managed to sweep out the corruption that is on the streets" (Top 20 Executive 2014)

The investigators from Ernst and Young found that the City's dealings were indeed corrupt and recommended reparations in the form of reallocation. However to this day there has been no further reallocation.

Cooperating with the City

One Voice is known for having organised mass protests and marches in order to make themselves known to the City and the traders. However, the organisation also claims that they do not share the anti-state, antagonistic position many other organisations adopt:

> "One Voice does not want to go against the City. One Voice is also interested in the objectives of the City, and One Voice's objectives are important to the City as well. [If we were recognised by the City] we'd make sure there is no illegal trading taking place in the city and we would also help make the city clean". (Ramutula 2014)

The organisation both uses a contentious repertoire of engagement through protest and vocal criticism of the City, and engages in cooperation with City officials in various processes of street trading spaces identification and allocation as well as in problem solving. Some might have argued that One Voice is not really challenging the City in its protests as it has a strong underlying alliance with the City, provoking some members to state that "One Voice is not a sweet heart organisation" (Top 20 executive). One Voice leaders explain the paradox by the similarity of objectives they share with the City and the need to be recognised as a partner: the mix of pressure through protest and cooperation with the City through joint demarcation and problem solving is an efficient mix to protect and offer benefits to their members.

> "We have a relationship with the City, but we have our own identity: One Voice is always advocating for street traders" (Seema, 2014)

> "As a street trader organisation we have a connection to the City, for instance through the Informal Traders Forum. The Deputy Director of Economic development is always available to us". (Top 20 executive, 2014)

In a way, the marches organized from 2009-2012 resulted in numerous situational advantages for One Voice members, securing trading spaces for its members. Keeping an eye on trading space allocation by the City, and identifying further trading spaces for their members, has become a key area of intervention for the organization:

> "In the year 2011 the executive committee of One Voice set a goal, which is to work with the City and identify places suitable for trading; and to make sure that that particular allocation is legitimate. As an association we managed to achieve this in Alexandra and Lenasia: we made sure that our members had first preference to these demarcated spaces." (Kakae 2014)

This quotes clarifies how One Voice is able to recruit new members – through the immediate benefit of allocating legal trading spaces, and the medium term benefit of defending these legal trading spaces (against other traders, against the JMPD and sometimes other City officials). One Voice is working towards opening new trading spaces to legalise more traders:

> "In our submission to the City this year [2014], we made the proposal that Quartz Street in Joubert Park to be closed [pedestrianised], and that the traders are legalized. The whole of Quartz street could be an extension of Hillbrow market" (Ramutula 20114)

This is what One Voice claims to have been doing all over Johannesburg – identifying a street with traders selling illegally, and pushing for legalization of street trading. Areas that underwent the process included the Fashion District, Delvers, Commissioner Street, Kerk Street, De Villiers Street, Twist Street, Area around the Diplomat Hotel, MTN Taxi Rank, Wanderers area between Noord and De Villiers, Pretoria Street between Catherine and Twist, Caroline Street, Bruce Street, Abel Street, Jules Street, area around the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital, Lenasia and Westonaria. "There, we forced the City to legalise the traders" (Ramutula 2014).

Another example of such cooperation can be found in the solution found around Hoek Street linear market (phase 1, north of De Villiers). In the tour of a fraction of the inner city that Frans Seema organised for us (**Figure 4.8**), he showed us new trading spaces that the City had demarcated and allocated to One Voice traders.

> "This MTC constructed a market next door [on Hoek street, north of De Villiers, next to Park station]. They constructed it in a bad way: they made a market that is like a stable for horses: you have to climb to go to the stalls. Nobody can climb the stairs to buy a tomato! It took us three months, in was in 2012, we had spaces demarcated in the street around the market. I negotiated for them to be on the ground. Now on top it is cooked food, restaurants. It is One Voice that made traders to be able to trade where people are walking." (Seema 2014).

Conclusion

All street trader organisations argue for autonomous or self regulation of micro-local trading space, be it in the streets, in markets, in linear markets or in buildings. One Voice is perhaps the most vocal about this issue, stating this ambition as part of its core objectives. This ambition has some



Figure 4.7 (a &b)- Orderly street trading for One Voice hawkers
© Makwakwa 2014. a: Hoek demarcated spaces, b: Hoek linear market)



Figure 4.8a & b – Negotiating functional trading spaces around Park Station.

(© Bénit-Gbaffou, 2014)





legitimacy, especially in a context where street trading management by public authorities is neither democratic or participatory, nor efficient. A recourse to forms of traders self-management has therefore some grounding, on both issues of efficiency and local democracy.

While we felt that the City's efforts to manage the spaces have left a lot to be desired, and that traders organisations' claims to participate in their own management was legitimate, the prospect of having One Voice or any other organization in charge of the allocations and management of trading spaces is raising other challenges. Such a solution would only lead to a new dimension of difficulty, as it would inevitably trigger huge, and possibly violent, competition between street trader organizations; and systems of patronage where traders of a specific space would be obliged to join a specific organization, without being able to exert his democratic choice. If the City were to give One Voice or any other specific organization the power to allocate spaces, it would be unfair, place other organizations at a disadvantage, and put huge pressure on traders to join a specific organization rather than the one of his own choice. There are also in practice few spaces where one single organization prevails, even if there are such claims – most organizations claim membership in the vicinity of Park Station, for instance, which is not surprising given the centrality and relevance of this transport hub and pedestrian traffic node in the inner city.

However, if the City were to more fully acknowledge the trader organizations, and factor them into the allocation process by for instance giving priority to the traders that are part of an organization (whatever the organization is), this could lead to a situation whereby the unlicensed and independent traders would be more inclined to join an organization and the organization would then take responsibility for them. The City would then first need to be transparent about these processes, so as to avoid fuelling the divisions already existing and possibly exacerbated by current City practices. It would also need, as this is at the core of the issue, to demarcate more trading spaces in the inner city, so as to diminish the need to resort to trading illegally, which of course undermines any attempt at street trading management. Part of that responsibility would then be to ensure that areas allocated to traders (under the organizations) would be kept neat and tidy, block leaders as organisation representatives keeping control and managing street space in close relation with a variety of City officials and departments, with hopefully less need to focus on tracking 'illegals' but more attention to the infrastructural and developmental needs of the traders.

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Zacharia Ramutula – One Voice: President, 19 September 2014, Hoek Street.

Feedback session (conducted by Claire Bénit-Gbaffou): with Frans Seema and Zacharia Ramutula, 7 November 2014, Hoek street linear market (Frans' stall).

CHAPTER 5 - GAUTENG INFORMAL DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE (GIDA)

Wetu Memela, Alexandra Willis
& Claire Bénit-Gbaffou



Figure 5.1– Hoek Street Linear Market, inner city Johannesburg
© Bénit-Gbaffou, 2014

Figure 5.2 - Gauteng Informal Development Alliance (GIDA) – A 2014 Profile

Figure 5.2 – Gauteng Informal Development Alliance – A 2014 Profile

Date of creation: 2011

Nature of Organisation: Informal Traders Cooperative (secondary cooperative)

Registration: In process since 2012

Chair: Sam Taraka

Secretary: Julekha Lathib

Structure of the organisation: One executive committee, a number of locally based affiliates

Office: Not yet.

Regular meetings: Only executive committee meetings.

Number of members: 675.

Membership location: Mostly in Soweto (Kliptown, Jabulani), partly inner city, partly Lenasia

Membership fee: None for the moment. Executive Committee members contribute R50 a month to form the first primary cooperative

Membership form: Not any more (computer stolen, unavailable)

Members: Market traders, street and spaza shops traders; registered traders mostly.

Objectives: Develop their members so that they can upgrade from the street; foster the development of cooperatives of traders; develop cross-border trading.

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our deep gratitude to the GIDA executive committee members for the time they took out of their business to expose us to their world, their working conditions, their struggles, their organisation. They opened our eyes to a reality we hardly suspected, they taught us to listen and to reflect, and they inspired us to look beyond the obvious, and to be curious and inquisitive about our surroundings.

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Introduction

"Our aim is to open up new markets, rather than sit on the pavement forever" (Mtshali, 2014)

This chapter presents a profile of Gauteng Informal Development Alliance (GIDA), a street trader's organisation based in Johannesburg. GIDA represents mostly market traders, predominantly based in Soweto, but also spaza traders and street traders, some of which are in the inner city. For the purpose of this report, and although we have tried to understand GIDA as a whole, in its visions and its actions, we will focus on the inner city.

Through interviews and observations, we tried to develop an understanding of GIDA's motivations, mandate, activities and resources – in the context of the micro politics of the street trading world and the macro politics of the informal sector.

We started from the assumptions that GIDA was a relatively small organization, not very visible in the political realm of inner city Johannesburg (they are not as vocal as 'the big three', One Voice, SANTRA and SAITF), and we had the perception, based on GIDA's participation in CUBES workshops, that GIDA was defending and empowering women traders in particular. Our hypotheses were the following:

► GIDA has a different mandate than the larger more well-known organisations in order to allow them to stay relevant: they have a niche membership and specific mandate

► They are less confrontational than the 'Big Three', and use their own niche to their advantage in the fight for the legitimation of street trading

► With their smaller size they should display more unity than other organisations.

The report will, after a preamble describing the research process and the internal and external challenges we encountered, focus on understanding the history of GIDA, its vision, its structure and membership, its actions and challenges.

A Note on Methodology

The methodology that is used to conduct this research is heavily reliant on fieldwork in the form of interviews with trader leaders on their trading site; attending GIDA meetings; following the traders; asking them to show us the blocks in which their members trade, and informally discussing with their members. Conversations were done navigating through interchangeable language usage of English, isiZulu and at times basic French (to foreign African traders).

There have been many challenges to this methodology, which have led to much improvisation, fluidity and changing of plans: it has been a learning curve for us, a challenge, at times frustrating, at times enjoyable and exciting.

Researching an informal organisation

The first major hurdle is dealing with the fact that we are dealing with an informal organization, and we got to understand that the informality aspect is not present only in their trading. This was also matched by our naivety as researchers: though we knew that we were dealing with informal organisations there was still some expectation of order and a certain conduct that we thought we would meet with the organisation. Documentation and other forms of written information were not easily available, neither in hard copy or online. In fact, it appears that the computer of GIDA's Deputy Chairperson (where minutes of meetings, GIDA's constitution and formal submissions to various parts of society, even the membership form) had been stolen, depriving the organization of much of its formal documents (Mandla, 2014). This talks to the fragility of an organization which does not have an office and backup of its documents, and depends on a single individual carrying the whole organisation's papers and archives. While learning to deal with the bewildering inner-workings of the informal sector, we found that though there was room for understanding that their dealings are informal and consequently there are going to be times when what we ask for as researchers cannot be immediately done. We had a deadline to meet and so compromises could only stretch so far without jeopardising our research project.

Getting verbal information from traders was not easy either. Not only because, due to business requirements, our interviewees sometimes had to cancel their meeting with us at the last minute, which was understandable but frustrating: but also, and mostly, because of a certain reluctance to speak to us as researchers. Due to the recent ill treatment of street traders from the local authorities, there is a lot of hesitation from the traders themselves to speak out: any form of outsider is not to be trusted because of the fragile relationship that informality has with the outside world. Possibly a context of division and rivalry between street trader organisations made it also difficult for each of them to talk directly of their challenges as well as their opportunities. This makes finding the amount of information that we need difficult as there are topics that are completely off limits and some topics that are diplomatically danced around in order to not put themselves, as traders, in difficult positions.

Sometimes we were simply unable to organize crucial interviews. In particular, one we felt was important but that we never managed to organize, was with the programme's director at ESSET. This was going to be a very important interview because GIDA – like some other trader organisations – have a history with ESSET. We tried formal forms of communication with ESSET. However, we felt there was serious reluctance to speak to us in person as they were not even that open to discuss trader organisations with us over the phone. We even thought we should try and just show up in the director's office to meet with him: but he seemed to be always tied up in meetings or out of the office when we called to enquire on his availability. This then led us to abandon the entire surprise visit. In retrospect it may have been worth giving it a try because this lack of communication with ESSET left us with a bit of a gap in understanding the history of GIDA. In the end, we sourced information about ESSET from the internet. This is obviously limited, as their

website was only able to tell us about their own mandate – not their involvement with GIDA or the informal sector.

From hearing GIDA's vision of itself to understanding its reality

The second biggest challenge we experienced in our fieldwork was in distinguishing between the organisations' vision and their actual reality. Our respondents often presented their vision going forward as if it was the way the organization is standing at present: a cross border trade organisation with strong international networks; a dynamic cooperative empowering its members to buy at cheaper rates, partnering with big private companies. It is not surprising, and not specific to GIDA, as all leaders are proud of their organisation and would always want to paint the best picture of it, and not to discuss or even mention its challenges. Part of this issue was due to our own inexperience as researchers, sometimes taking statements at face value, and learning only incrementally to follow on a general statement by more precise questions on concrete actions and people. The challenge then came out in wading and weeding through the statements and restructuring our questions to ensure that we were able to cross reference the different responses and formulate our own analysis of the answers that we got.

Understanding GIDA was challenging for us, for two reasons. The first reason is linked to the above confusion between ambitions, self-representation of an organization and its everyday and practical realities: we were not always equipped, and certainly not at the beginning, to unpack our interviewees' contradictory or sometimes vague o general statements in this respect. Secondly, we perhaps were stuck in an understanding of an organization as a representative body: an organization that speaks in the name of its members in various public platforms, and gives accounts to the members on a regular basis. We did not pay real attention to the status of GIDA, a cooperative, as focused on economic benefits for members – even though it can be expected, even in a cooperative, that there are forms of representation and accountability between all members. These two dimensions of street traders politics (representation and accountability) are not GIDA's main priority at this stage of its development, but it focuses on other endeavors that this report will unpack. Our own obsession with themes of representativeness and accountability blinded us to the nature of GIDA, as we did not understand until late why there were no general meetings, no membership fees paid, no sense of formal communication between the leadership and GIDA's members.

It was only after listening to voice recordings of interviews several times over were we able to string together disparate information. Some of it still remains disparate, but for the most part, demystifying the grey areas was a process of learning to *listen*, not just to *hear*. Information that we did not understand or that (in our minds at least) did not fit, we simply initially swept under the carpet in the interest of wanting to produce a coherent report of consistent findings. Later, we learnt through critical analysis and self-reflection that we had been trying to understand GIDA from our own understanding of organisations, which meant we were looking for specific answers and not always

listening to what leaders were telling us. This was largely shaped by misunderstandings – specifically about what GIDA's mandate is and subsequently the nature of membership.

There was a lot of physical exertion that was poured into this research, from travelling all the way to Soweto to interview the chairperson Sam Taraka to the countless times that we travelled into town to meet with the members of the executive for interviews. Though we were lucky enough to have a vehicle at our disposal, it was a laborious task to still walk up and down the inner streets of Johannesburg and then having to synthesize the information that we gathered after that. As a result there was a lot of information that did not register in our analysis over the first few reads, it was only much later once we were rested or filled our minds with other work for a while that allowed us to come back to the work with a fresh approach did a breakthrough really occur. This physical effort made us understand the plight of street traders and their everyday working conditions. It also generated a growing attachment to the project that resulted in a lot of pride and protectiveness of the work that we were generating. At the same time this attachment led to many fits of frustration and panic when progress was slow or not going in the direction we had predicted. The acceptance that research cannot be predicted is a lesson that was particularly hard to swallow but once it was understood we were able to roll with all of the punches that came with research work.

What is GIDA?

Gauteng Informal Development Alliance (GIDA) was formed in 2011. It was created in the context of the ESSET-supported organizational capacity building program for all informal trader organisations.

The creation of GIDA

ESSET, the Ecumenical Service for Social Transformation, is a Christian organisation committed to mobilizing the church in addressing issues of socio-economic justice through economic development programs (www.esset.org.za). ESSET partners with several churches and a wide range of civil society organisations such as informal trader associations and ministers' fraternal and provincial councils of the South African Council of Churches (SACC). In 2010 ESSET formally started a programme of 'Accompaniment of Informal traders', inviting a number of informal trader organisations, including SANTRA and SAITF, to capacity building workshops. Mandla Ndebele has been coordinating ESSET program around informal trade since 2011, both in South Africa and the SADC region (http://www.esset.org.za/people.html). Unfortunately, as mentioned earlier, it has not been possible to interview any member of ESSET. From GIDA's perspective:

> "ESSET's involvement with informal traders started around 2006. ESSET accompanied traders to the United Nations climate change conference -COP 17- in Durban in 2011, as well as to the SADC Heads of States Summit in Maputo in 2012 where a position paper, highlighting the plight of the informal sector, was submitted. It was during these engagements and capacity building exercises at Khotso House that the idea of a provincial structure was first mooted. Then in early 2011 GIDA was formed. Before the 2010 Sandton world Summit on Sustainable Development, ESSET suggested that

> the informal sector say something in the World Summit on Sustainable Development. So it called all informal trader organisations and started doing capacity building, helping organisations draft their constitution. Then in 2011 we saw the need for a new organization and this is how GIDA was formed." (Mtshali 2014)

GIDA's inauguration was brought about by two fundamental reasons. The first, according to executive member Sipho Twala, is that the much hyped about FIFA Soccer World Cup in 2010 upheld "big promises that [it] was going to help every South African… but after the World Cup we found that as traders in Gauteng we never benefitted" (Twala, 2014). This realisation instigated a recognition of the need for traders "to be self-reliant" (Mophulane, 2014) through developing a collegiality of traders in the economic interest of purchasing goods at a better rate. This definitive characteristic is what GIDA members bring forward when they distinguish themselves from other traders' organisations, which mobilise in the interest of representation , being the traders 'voice' in confronting the state. GIDA, by contrast is an explicitly non-confrontational organisation which "rejects stones" (Mophulane).

This was consolidated in 2012 when GIDA decided to change its status from a Non Profit Organisation to a Cooperative. After one year of operation indeed, there was a change of executive leadership in GIDA, and also a change in orientation. "We as newly elected leaders asked ourselves, 'how do we make an impact in onto the lives of our members?' We leave our stalls go to meetings, we pay membership fees to organization, but there is no change in our lives", recalls Mtshali , the current Deputy Chairperson of GIDA. It is then that GIDA decided to become a cooperative rather than a non-profit organization, and to focus on the economic development and support to members, rather than identifying itself as "a protest and advocacy organization as that space was already occupied" (Mtshali 2014), as many other existing informal trading organisations in Johannesburg already are.

A cooperative in the making

GIDA is currently registering as a cooperative – i.e. an organisation committed to the notion of a multi-stake holder communal interest in the buying of stock in bulk in the interest of acquiring goods at a cheaper cost price than what is available at commercial stores. According to the deputy secretary, Veronica Mophulane, "We as GIDA supply bulk fruit and vegetables to traders". As a cooperative, they seek to "promote financial solidarity amongst traders", so as to become "serious business people" (Taraka 2014). GIDA is committed to promoting free and ethical trade as well as to "professionalise street trading" (Mophulane 2014).

Based on these quotes it was difficult to understand what GIDA does, as when we enquired about actual practices of buying in bulk, our respondents only gave vague answers. It was only through a follow up interview (Mtshali 2014) that this was clarified. GIDA is still awaiting its registration as a cooperative. In 2012, the executive committee submitted the required form for registration, but it was rejected, on the grounds that GIDA is attempting to register as a "secondary cooperative" –

whereas according to The Co-operatives Act 14 of 2005 two primary co-ops need to be registered first before the secondary co-op can be registered.

> "The idea is similar to a *stokvel,* it is about regular contribution of members in order to fund solidarity finance. But for a cooperative you need to choose a specific trade. We envisage for GIDA that our members will form groups of 5 traders, form their small coop and decide on what they want to trade." (Mtshali 2014)

Currently GIDA executive members are busy registering the first primary cooperative.

> "We are now busy registering the first primary cooperative, it will be a fruit and veg cooperative. In fact since late 2013, the 8 GIDA executive members have been contributing an amount R50 every month, as per the Act stating that cooperatives require monthly contributions from their members,. With this money we can buy in bulk and bolster our stock. We as the leadership must start, and lead by example. The word will then spread around." (Mtshali 2014)

GIDA's vision for informal traders

GIDA has chosen to focus on the economic development of informal traders, through training and capacitation (that it used to access through ESSET workshops), but also mostly through finding and developing new market niches for its members.

GIDA traders see themselves as "business people", and do not romanticize their "informal" character.

> "The fact we operate in the so-called 'informal sector' does not mean we are informal. There is nothing informal about us. We see ourselves as small business people. Just because some of us are not registered with Company Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC) does not render us informal." (Presentation by GIDA to the Tripartite Free Trade Area Meeting Hosted by Economic Justice Network (EJN), March 2013, Johannesburg)

GIDA's ambition is to 'acquire our own land so as to move out of the pavements', into formal shops, and possibly to move from distribution of goods to their manufacturing:

> "Our aim is to open up new markets, rather than sit on the pavement" (Mtshali, 2014)

There lies the ambiguity of their August 2104 submission to the City of Johannesburg (see annexure 2), where GIDA states, very much in line with the City's discourse since 2000, that

> "We do not believe sustainable livelihoods can be achieved by pavement trading; hence we strive to expose our members to alternative means to support themselves and their families. Therefore, we do not support pavement trading as it has inherent problems and very difficult to manage. We support product-categorised and general trade in linear markets, designated buildings and taxi facilities."

Yet, GIDA leaders also recognise (in other documents) the importance of street traders as micro-retailers able to reach a pedestrian market more quickly and efficiently, for certain types of goods, than formal shop retailers:

> "We trade in most Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) – manufactured by big business –by bringing them to your doorstep or car window. We, therefore, fulfill an important role in the economy." (Presentation by GIDA to the Tripartite Free Trade Area Meeting Hosted by Economic Justice Network (EJN), March 2013, Johannesburg)

Possibly there is a degree of confusion in GIDA's discourse, between the legitimate individual ambition of each street trader to grow, formalize and move out of the street; and a more structural need to protect street trading (against municipal attempts to destroy it) as a legitimate feature of the inner city – both a point of entry into the labour market for a large portion of South African society excluded from formal employment, and as a form of rapid and micro distribution of products to a mass of passing consumers with low income levels.

Structure of the Organisation

It was relatively easy to understand the structure of the executive committee, based on the profile sent by the organisation (see annexure), and attendance to a GIDA executive meeting (14 October 2014, see below). It was more difficult to make sense of GIDA's relationship with its members, and we realised that this difficulty was in fact reflecting some of the challenges the organisation is facing currently.

Structure of the executive committee

The structure of GIDA's executive committee seems quite similar to what is found in most civil society organisations.

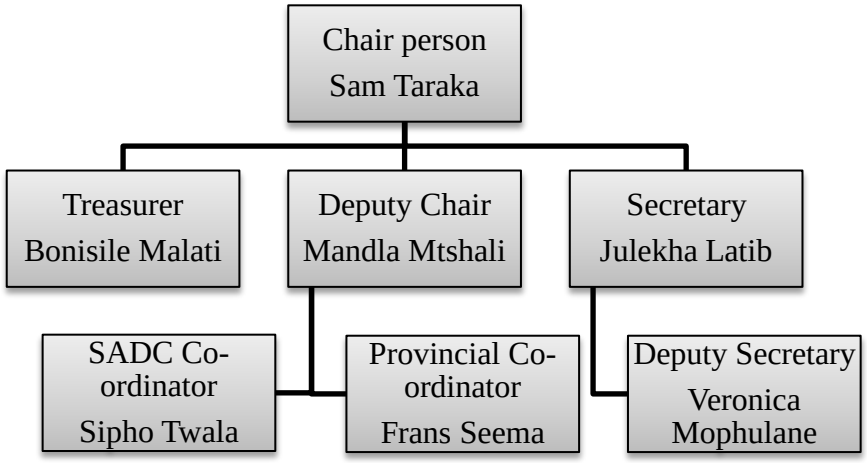


Figure 5.3 - Structure of GIDA executive committee, 2014
Source: GIDA profile 2013 (see annexure)

There is the chairperson, Sam Taraka who has a wealth of experience as he has been "been part of trading organisation representation since the 1970s and began with the Greater Kliptown trader's association" (Taraka, 2014). The chairperson is the one who does a majority of the outside networking that GIDA interacts as he is "always present at council meetings and other alliances that GIDA has" (Taraka, 2014), however it is usually Veronica and Julekha who are seen at the CUBES workshop like the one that was held on the 25th of September 2014. **See Figure 5.4.a** below for his personal profile and trajectory.

Under the chairperson resides the second tier of management in the GIDA organization: the treasurer, deputy chairperson and the secretary are located. From our observations, it seems obvious that the Deputy Chairperson Mandla Mtshali is a key executive member. He handles many issues, as he is located in the inner city rather than in Soweto, closer to City's activities offices. For instance, he is at the forefront of seeking temporary alternative trading areas for Eloff Street traders who have been displaced by the JDA construction of an African Food Hub. Mtshali's key role was also obvious in the executive meeting we attended, where he was the driver of the debates and resolutions, and would be the main person to respond to issues brought up. Mtshali also handles most of the major administrative issues on the executive, with all of our respondents referring us to him when it came to information about the members. His computer and writing skills and his ability to be very articulate about GIDA's vision make him an asset for the organization. He is the only person with the database of all GIDA members. He used to have on his computer all the documents relevant for the organization, including membership forms, minutes of meetings, etc. The absence of an office for GIDA means this administrative record is however fragile, as testified by the fact GIDA lost some of its documents when Mtshali's computer was stolen (Mtshali 2014). GIDA uses the premises of St Mary Cathedral to have its executive meetings thanks to executive member Michael Mokulubete who has a good relationship with the church (thanks to the specific link between St Mary Cathedral and GIDA-One Voice traders), but only occasionally and after booking – this does not replace a dedicated office space.

We retraced the profile and trajectories of two executive members and one block leader (see figures 5.3 below). This made us understand partly the importance of block leaders in the organization, as a link between the executive and the street traders at the street level, as well as a link between the City and the organization. It also made us understand that some executive members had been elected, whilst others "were selected based on our skills" (Mophulane 2014), and possibly their position as representatives of specific areas of type of traders (such as spaza shop owners, in the case of Mophulane).

Profile of GIDA leaders

Figure 5.4 – Profiles of GIDA leaders

Name: Samson Taraka



Place of Birth: Soweto, Gauteng

Position in GIDA: Chairperson

Place of Trade: Walter Sisulu Square, Kliptown Soweto

Length of Trade: Since the early 1970s

Products Traded: Fruit and vegetables.

History with Trading Organisations:
Samson became a street trader in the early 1970s while he was still in school. With a keen business mind from the onset he would see gaps in the market and sell an array of items from ice cream, to shoe shining services to even hot food to the office workers in his later years. Rising political unrest in Soweto proved to be a rough time for the informal trade sector as Samson was experiencing problems with the Black Jacks and their unlawful treatment of the traders and that is when his involvement with trading organisations began.

GIDA:
Sam was a member of SAITF up until the creation of GIDA in 2011, when he became its chairperson.

Name: Veronica Mophulane



Current place of residence : Soweto, Gauteng

Position in GIDA: Deputy Secretary

Place of Trade: Wander's Taxi Rank and Metro Mall Taxi Rank

Length of Trade: Over 20 years

Products Traded: She sells her own assortments of cakes, biscuits and breads. She bakes these at home and is a mobile trader in the inner city.

History with Trading Organisations:
She started trading when she was in primary school selling Chappies and sweets. She spent some time during her 20 years of trading traveling from Johannesburg to Pietermaritzburg & Durban buying and selling stock – mostly clothes and perishables. In the 1980's she attended an Italian fashion design school. She worked as a self-employed fashion designer for 15 years. Fashion design was not working out financially, so she then sought training in baking. She was trained by Bakels Bakers. In 2006 she was working for an NGO called

South African Drug Abuse and Aids Council (SADAAC) as a care-giver and councillor. She attended Bible college at Rock of Salvation Community Church and is a bible study group leader now. In the same year, she became a member of SASTA (South African Spaza and Tuck Shop Association) and later was appointed their PA and General Secretary.

Veronica's History with GIDA:
As she was attending the SADC conference in 2012 as a member of South African Spaza and Traders Association (SASTA), she met the executive member of GIDA. They then nominated her to be deputy secretary of GIDA.

Name: Michael Mokulubete



Place of Birth: Alexandra, Johannesburg

Position in GIDA: City Block Leader

Place of Trade: Hoek Market, Johannesburg, since 2004

Products Traded: Fruit and vegetables

History with Trading Organisations
Having traded for a very long time, GIDA is the very first trader organisation that Michael has belonged to. He says that this lack of representation is not uncommon amongst block leaders. "It's very hard for block leaders to fit into a lot of trader organisations as they are seen as a threat by the executive of these organisations" because of their recognition by the City. The amount of influence that block leaders had, due to their constant interaction with the traders on the ground, was not seen as a favourable thing and most executive committees were not ready to welcome them into the organisation in fears of them interfering with existing hierarchies.

Why GIDA
"GIDA was different; GIDA was willing to accept me as a block leader" (Mokulubete, 2014). Michael met the members of GIDA in 2012 at a large convention for small businesses that the rest of the executive was attending. Being a prominent member of his local Methodist Church and sharing ideas and visions with a number of the members of the executive, he was then invited to join as the representative of the block leaders for the new executive committee.

Who are GIDA members?

It was not easy for us to understand the nature of GIDA's membership. Interviewees' responses were initially vague, or contradictory, so we thought we would compensate this through observations. However, the absence of membership form did not help; we waited for general meetings, the first was cancelled, and when attending the second we understood that the meeting was an executive committee rather than a general meeting. When asking our interviewees how many members GIDA has, the response we got was "ask Mandla because he is the only person at liberty

to give that number because he has the database" (Mophulane 2014). Once Mandla was reached the actual database could not be seen or emailed, but we were given the figure of 685 traders, made up of mostly women with 473 women and 212 men. This is a defining feature of GIDA as having more women than men and having women in their membership:

> "GIDA is open to the plight of women in the modern Johannesburg and a majority of our membership is single mothers and widowers who are trying to make ends meet" (Mophulane 2014).

When asked about the bulk of the membership in terms of nature of trading, we were told that "the bulk of GIDA members are in Soweto, market traders". There are many street traders (especially in the inner city); some *spaza* traders too. It is interesting to note that "GIDA is one of the few organisations that truly welcomes and encourages mobile traders" (Moluphane 2014). However it seems mobile traders actually make up a small percentage of their membership, and that most of the members have stands. This came to light when in a follow up interview with the block leader representative Michael Mokulubete: when asked about the attendance of their general meetings he stated that there is an issue with members coming to the meetings because "most of our members have stands and they cannot leave their stands to come to a meeting if there is nobody to watch their stock" (Mokulubete 2104).

Individual members or affiliated organizations?

When trying to understand better the nature of this membership, and asking why one would rather choose to be a member of GIDA rather than the other trader organisations that are present in the inner city, GIDA chairperson Sam Taraka responded by emphasising that fact that GIDA is an organisation that is "focused on representing the traders at a local level" (Takara 2014) and rather than getting wrapped up in politics and battles with the state. However, much like their counterparts – GIDA is about "helping and developing its members" (Takara 2014). One of our respondents articulated the nature of membership using borrowed political discourse of democracy articulating that "GIDA is for the traders, by the traders" – a rendition of popular discourse of democracy as "for the people and by the people".

Another respondent however stated that "we are ready to accept other cooperatives under us", aligning itself with the vision that GIDA has for itself to be an umbrella organisation – or an organisation of organisations (and of cooperatives in particular), rather than an organization for individuals. The several hundred members which GIDA executives spoke about were sometimes referred to as 'members' by the executive committee, and at other times they were referred to as 'affiliates'. This confusion might be due to the shift in GIDA's aspirations since 2012 (from an NPO to a cooperative), and to the ongoing process of its registration as cooperative. When asking members of the executive committee about who exactly their membership consists of and how they attract their members, the response was:

> "We at GIDA are open to anybody who is involved within trading; be it that they are street traders themselves or even if a group of traders want to affiliate under GIDA as a unit they are most certainly welcome".

Link between executive committee and general members

The unity of the membership or cohesiveness, and its linkages with executive committee members (with a number of 685 members scattered throughout Johannesburg) was one of the puzzles we had to make sense of.

The absence of general meeting was initially perplexing, also because we were initially told that GIDA has "monthly meetings, so as to stay professional and up to date with what is happening", and even that "all of the dates are set at the beginning of the year so the members are aware well in advance" (Mophulane 2014). But it was not immediately clear who goes to these meetings. We were invited to sit in on the September meeting due to take place on the 9th of September 2014, however when we called on the day to enquire details we were informed that the meeting was indeed cancelled due to members having other obligations. It became clear when we attended the following meeting in October that the monthly meetings are only for the eight executive members (including also block leaders such as Mike Mokulubete) and do not involve the general members of GIDA.

The lack of availability of a membership form did not help, but also revealed that currently the organization is probably not focusing on recruiting new members. When we asked how one becomes a member of GIDA, we were told it is as simple as "signing up" and paying the registration fee of R 250.00. This is a once off fee and the only fee that has to be paid by GIDA members: there is no payment after that: the leadership has decided not to request any a subscription fee from any trader until the co-op is up and running and trading It is only the 8 members of the executive committee who pay a monthly R50.00 to GIDA's account. It became clearer in the final interview, when Mtshali explained:

> "Since ESSET has cut material support such the use of venue, telephones, tele-conferencing and stationary to organize meetings, a light meal, a stipend for taxi fare, etc., it has become more difficult to organize general meetings. The bulk of our membership is in Soweto, it is costly for members to come to the inner city. Our meetings became poorly attended. We were also using our own cell phones to call for meetings, this was costing. So, we took the conscious decision to suspend general meetings for now, and rather focus on preparing the ground for our first cooperative to be registered and launched. It has been what we have been doing since 2012. And we started contributing the monthly R50 for the cooperative since late 2013." (Mtshali 2014)

But, how then does GIDA ensure communication with its members? This was illuminated by a better understanding of the leadership location and positions, which also shed light on the nature of GIDA's affiliates:

> "In a way we have area representatives. In our executive, we have two block leaders, for Eloff- this is me, and for Hoek street – this is Mike. Our chairperson is the chair of Greater Kliptown Traders

> Association, one of our affiliates. Sipho is the general secretary of Qedindlala Hawkers Association, based in Jabulani, also one of GIDA's affiliates. Julekha is in the executive in Lenasia Hawkers association, another GIDA affiliate. Veronica is from SASTA, and even though SASTA is not formerly our affiliate, at least we have good communication. Frans and Julekha are also from One Voice. That is how we keep in touch with our members" (Mtshali 2014).

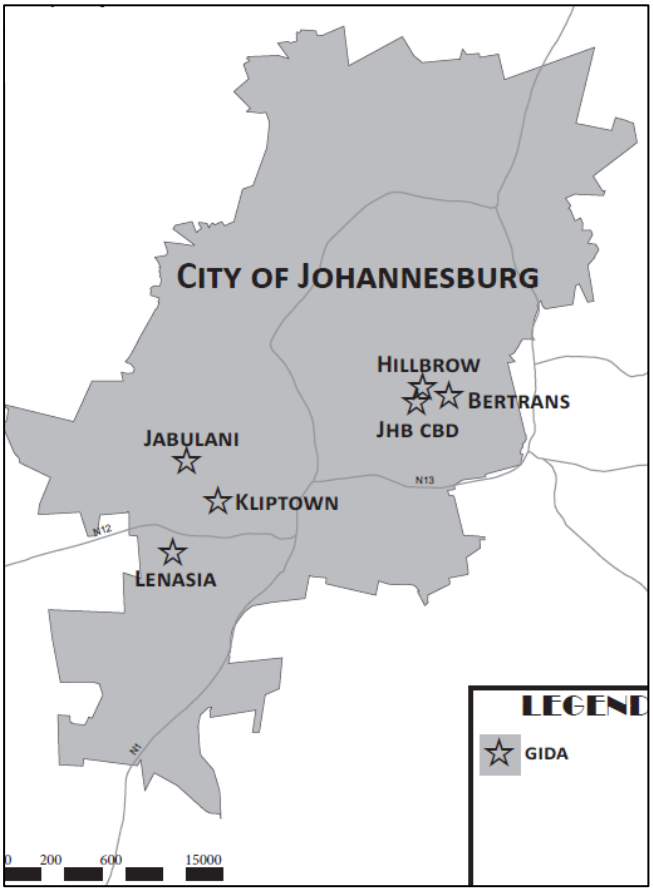
Another affiliate mentioned by Mtshali is Bertrams Hawkers Association.

Where are GIDA members located?

By understanding the location of affiliates it became easier to understand where GIDA members are located. As stated by Mtshali, "the bulk of our membership is in Soweto, in markets" – affiliates indicate two areas of concentration in Jabulani and in Kliptown. Lenasia is another area where GIDA members are to be found (See **map 5.1**)

As far as the inner city is concerned, GIDA members are mostly licensed street traders, sometimes trading in linear market (such as in Hoek street linear market). Other areas where GIDA mentioned members are Bertrams, Hillbrow ("Bruce and Caroline Streets to be exact" – Mtshali 2104), and Jeppe, Joubert and Eloff Street not far from Park Station, an key hub of local, regional and continental movement.

We were able to have a more accurate perspective on the concentration of GIDA members around Park Station, through a walk about kindly organized for us by Mtshali and Mokubete, after GIDA executive meeting on the 14th of October. The highest concentration of the members within the inner city can be mostly found along the Eloff and Jeppe Streets Precinct. These long streets are where the majority of GIDA members with stalls are found, some of them are just scattered throughout the streets while the rest of them are found in the major markets such as the Hoek Street Linear Market. There is another concentration on Eloff leading from Plein street up to De Villiers. This is also where block leaders affiliated to GIDA are found in the inner city with the block leader representative Michael Mokulubete trading in the Hoek Linear Market.

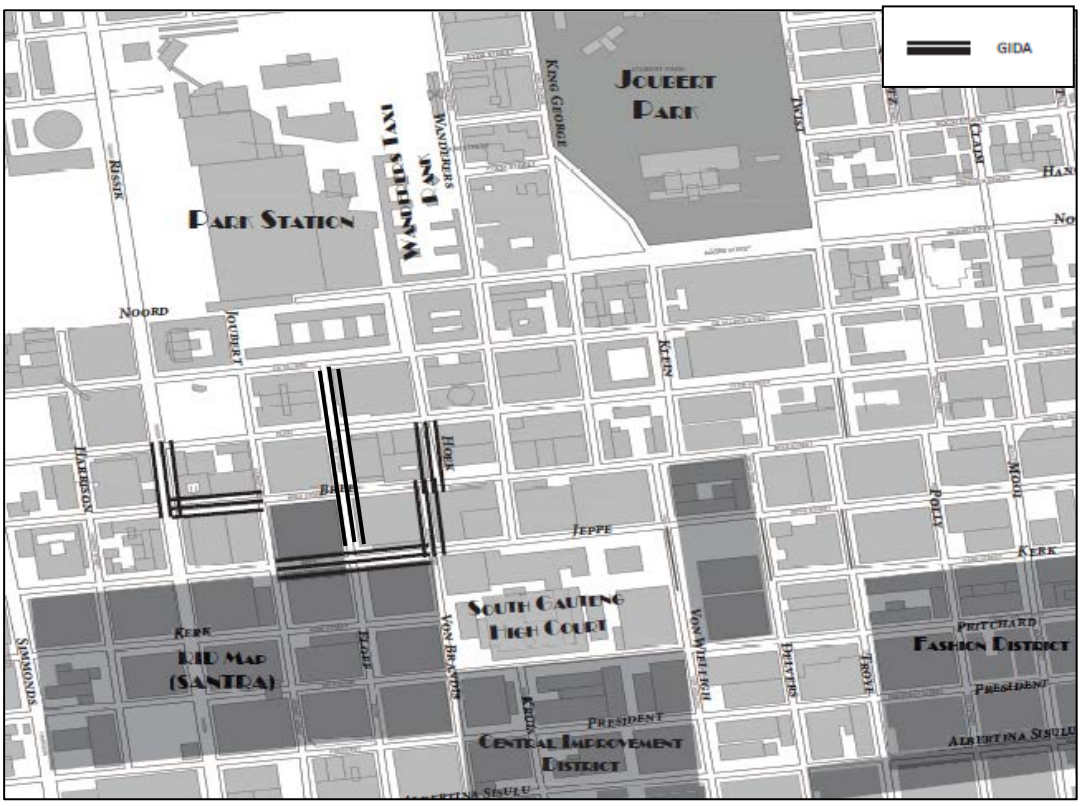


Map 5.1 – Location of GIDA members in greater Johannesburg, 2014

Conception and Realisation Uzuzakhe Ngantweni, 2014

Map 5.2 – Location of GIDA members in inner city Johannesburg

Conception and Realisation Dladla, Hlela & Ngantweni, 2014.
NB. This map is based on verbal indications of GIDA leaders, not on a comprehensive survey of members. It is indicative only.



Powerful Partnerships

GIDA executive committee has focused since 2012 on building powerful partnerships with international NGOs and research initiatives, that provide the organisation with a variety of resources: mostly, through invitations to workshops, training and organisational skills, international trading networks that help GIDA developing experience on cross-border trading (one of the market niche identified b GIDA, hence its aspiration to develop in this niche), and access to high level South African officials and possibly policy influence.

ESSET's ongoing support to GIDA – from empowering the organisation to opening a Southern African trading network

All respondents spoke about GIDA's partnership with Ecumenical Service for Socio-Economic Transformation (ESSET), though each respondent provided a different statement on the nature of this relationship. One member said that "We are a cooperative that partner with ESSET", and went on to explain the various ways in which it had played a key role in holding their organisation together, through small-business training, workshops and fieldtrips, provision of an office. Two of the interviewees testified however that this was not fully the case anymore and this had had detrimental consequences for GIDA as an organisation. When asked about the cause of this change, one respondent sheepishly answered "I'm not at liberty to say", while the other didn't answer the question at all, redirecting the conversation. It seems that the change weakened the organisation to some extent, insofar that meetings are no longer successful or well-attended and no action seems to be taken to meet their imperative to "promote free and fair trade". This was not explicit, for the obvious reason that nobody would want to speak badly of their organisation, but was made apparent through unanswered questions about meetings, members, fees and action. In a follow-up interview, one of the respondents made apparent that ESSET had also assisted SAITF, going on to say that it was SAITF's "bad behaviour" that led to ESSET pulling out of GIDA. This is obviously a personal view and cannot be verified, outside of the knowledge that indeed SAITF were also supported by ESSET and no longer is.

Mtshali, in a follow-up interview, clarifies what happened and sheds a light on ESSET's broader involvement in the informal trading sector. He explains that ESSET was organizing workshops for the whole sector, where SANTRA and SAITF participated. However, some SAITF and SANTRA leaders started asking questions on ESSET funding, accusing ESSET of "using" street trader organizations to get funding that was ultimately not fully benefiting the traders, and demanding financial accountability and transparency.

> "For GIDA it was not such a big issue. We are going to ESSET for capacity building; we are not interested in ESSET money" (Mthsali 2014)

So SAITF and SANTRA stopped attending ESSET workshop, and the idea of a platform for the whole informal sector failed because of this argument. But GIDA continued attending ESSET workshops, and a MoU with ESSET was even drafted in 2012. However, it was never signed:

> "At the end of 2012, the executive director we knew left ESSET and joined OXFAM. A new director came in, and when we met, early 2013, ESSET stated that it had financial constraints and needed to reduce its material support to GIDA. So, the support that was previously available, was ended - in terms of venue for meetings in Khotso House, use of a telephone, of food and stipend for GIDA members to attend workshops and meetings. As the bulk of our members are in Soweto, the loss of stipends for members to attend meetings meant that we as GIDA could no longer organize well attended general meetings" (Mtshali 2014).

But ESSET continues to fund capacity building workshops in which GIDA participates, as well as regional fieldtrips and informal trading summits, that have inspired GIDA's ambition to develop capacity and resources in cross-border trading. GIDA presents itself as an organisation specialising in cross-border trading, and of the respondents had something to say about cross-border trading in the SADC. We received disparate information about the nature of such relations, and our research suggests that there are strong aspirations in establishing collegial cross-border trading that are yet to take off. After interviewing the executive member Sipho Twala – who holds the position as 'SADC co-ordinator', the nature of these cross-border relations became clearer. According to Twala (2014), GIDA's partner ESSET coordinated in August 2012 a regional summit in Zambia with representatives of informal traders from South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, Zimbabwe – for them to share their grievances and positive experiences of trading. The summit opened up GIDA's networks with informal traders of the whole Southern African region. The networks GIDA established are currently in the process of discussion about the logistics of cross-border trading, in the economic interest of attaining goods at a better rate when buying and selling in bulk through different monetary currencies, and using international partnerships rather than relying on individual traders' mobility.

> "South Africa has the biggest economy. Traders are coming from all over to buy South African goods, for instance Swati traders in our network come to buy continental pillows. Our idea is to legally register a SADC traders' network, so that you won't need to leave Swaziland anymore, you'll place an order, we'll put the goods together for you, organize the transfer of goods, and you'll pay us electronically." (Mtshali 2104)

ESSET regular regional workshops allowed informal traders from SADC countries to experience regional economic and urban realities, share ideas and build trust and personal networks, upon which the idea of a cross border trading network emerged.

> "It cristallised in the 2012 summit in Zambia. I remember it, South Africa was on the spot because of Marikana. ESSET was busy with its capacity building workshop, but we as traders said to ourselves, let us create this Southern African Traders Network for ourselves. Let us work on a MoU between all trader organizations, create a legal entity that is binding, and start developing cross-border trading." (Mtshali 2014)

This trading network is not directly and explicitly supported nor driven by ESSET, but through the regular regional summits it organizes, ESSET has contributed to the development of this emerging partnership. Further partnerships involving GIDA are bringing more resources and consistency to

this idea, opening GIDA to a broader reflection on the economic, political and legal context of cross border trading in Southern Africa.

International Research Networks, New Ideas, and Policy Influence

Currently, GIDA is part of three international networks, which have different mandates, and provide different resources to the organization.

The Economic Justice Network (EJN) is an NGO linked to FOCCISA, the Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa. FOCISSA is an ecumenical organisation working with national Councils of Churches in Southern Africa, aimed at strengthening the commitment of the church in its advocacy work on economic justice, and to act as a catalyst for engaging people in the promotion of just economic and social structures. GIDA as well as other civil society organisations were invited by EJN to debate the current developments around the creation of a Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) which will culminate in the merger of Southern Economic Development Community (SADC), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and East African Community (EAC) with a total of 26 member states.

> "EJN called us, and said, 'governments are forming this super regional economic block: how is it going to affect you as traders? What is the perspective from the ground? When we open the borders how are you going to be impacted?" (Mtshali 2014)

EJN then held regional dialogues in Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa to look at the impact of the proposed TFTA in individual countries. GIDA presented a paper on the possible impact on the informal economy in South Africa. A summit in Maputo in April 2013 produced a final declaration to be submitted to the Heads of States of SADC.

Following on this, GIDA was part of a series of workshops organized by OXFAM and EJN entitled 'Empowering CSOs Networks in an unequal multi polar world: Inequality and the role of CSOs in public policy making'. These workshops saw the formation of South African Network on Inequality, SANI, focusing on Economic Policy and Governance, Land and Agrarian Reform and Social Protection. The network has EJN and Oxfam on board; it includes research centers such as PLAAS (Poverty Land And Agrarian Studies, based in the University of the Western Cape) and Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute (SPII). GIDA sits in SANI's steering committee.

> "As GIDA, we benefit from this network, first because we get a lot of information that we can communicate to our members; also more broadly because, through working with research organizations, we develop our ideas, our know-how, and ultimately our policy framework influence" (Mtshali 2014).

A second international network that GIDA is part of, is the Southern African Trust (SAT). The Southern Africa Trust (SAT) is a non-profit agency that supports processes to deepen participation in policy dialogue with the aim of fighting poverty at a regional level. Its programs bring together chambers of commerce, trading organizations and researchers

SAT approached GIDA for participation in its regional network. This network meets annually in different countries within the SADC – it met in Zambia in 2011, in Zimbabwe in 2012, in Mozambique in 2013.

> "The Mozambican workshop in 2013 helped GIDA consolidate its position on cross border trading. It capacitated us to give content to our submissions to the State, and put us in contact with officials from the Department of Trade and Industry in South Africa to give recommendations on legislation on cross border trading." (Mtshali 2014).

According to Mtshali, GIDA met with the DTI in 2013 to discuss how to make cross border trading more flexible and adapted to micro businesses.

> "Our members are encountering serious problems at borders, especially when it comes to VAT refunds. They often are stuck in long queues being trucks, for the very few products they want to trade across borders. In COMESA they have devised a Simplified Trade Regime (STR), here small traders exporting goods are not levied income duties. For instance between Zambia and Congo, border processes for micro traders are simplified. But in South Africa we don't have the Simplified Trade Regime. Another issue is our struggle to get certificate to import or export food products. It is not clear to our members who delivers the certificates – department of Agriculture or of Health? There is a lot of confusion creating inefficiencies. A third issue is about planning for cross border traders at the borders. Often traders need to sleep at the border because they did not go through during the day – where do they put their goods? In Zambia they have built warehouses where traders can store their products for the night" (Mtshali 2104)

When asked whether the presentation to the DTI was successful in influencing the DTI's view or policy, Mtshali is cautiously optimistic:

> "We invited the DTI officials to two regional meetings organized by ESSET, but twice he did not come. However, GIDA got invited to the next DTI progress report, where we will state our case again, with the support of EJN" (Mtshali 2014).

Another benefit for GIDA participating in this network is SAT's program on youth training:

> "The one programme that really excites us is the 5-month annual Southern Africa Youth Exchange (SayXchange) programme which encourages the youth to do volunteer work in South Africa and Mozambique. We always encourage parents to let their children apply as it attempts to foster integration. So far we have sent a few candidates but they have not yet been selected, we will see if our candidates are selected this year" (Mtshali 2014).

A third international network is the Alternative Information Development Center (AIDC), based in Cape Town. GIDA participates in their program on Climate Change, as AIDC organizes workshop to educate informal traders on health and environmental issues.

> "We took this information to our traders who are cooking, with limited access to cooking facilities. We were able to explain that if you leave the waste in the drain, it feeds the rats and affects our environment. We were advised not to expose fruit and veg to the street pollution, but rather to start

> packaging our food, keep it fresh. And this gave us ideas, such as a way of refurbishing the street traders at midday with fresh products for instance. Another training was about organic farming, and then came the idea that as GIDA we should perhaps develop our own cooperative farming to partly supply our fruit and veg cooperative." (Mtshali 2014)

Based on these ideas, and also exposure to other experiences in Southern African countries, such as Zambia for instance (where infrastructure and legislation seem to be quite advanced in supporting cross border traders, and where "we realized that 80% of the fresh produce in Lusaka markets actually comes from City Deep Fresh Produce Market in Johannesburg!", said Mtshali), inspire ideas for new markets and trade. Discussions are ongoing with both the Provincial Legislature and the City of Johannesburg to use peri-urban farming land and inner city empty buildings to develop trade opportunities along these ideas.

GIDA challenges

When asked about GIDA challenges, Mophulane expressed three concerns. The first is that GIDA is "not yet financially stable". This cripples the most basic organisational efforts of GIDA (such as organizing general meetings), but also limits GIDA's ability to innovate and engage in its multiple new business ideas. It means GIDA members don't have the means to get "start-up" assistance from the banks, as they are not interesting in borrowing money in the informal sector.

Secondly, she says, are the struggles that traders face regarding the shifting boundaries between "permissible and impermissible" trading spaces as stipulated by The City's by-law policy. These uncertainties weaken traders considerably, as it is more difficult to invest, develop and take business risks when such fundamental uncertainties exist, on whether or not you will be allowed to trade in a specific space today and tomorrow. These uncertainties are epitomized in Operation Clean Sweep, whose arbitrary character challenged the 'legality' that at least a minority of traders thought they had secured for themselves through smart cards.

Thirdly, Maphulane continues, traders do not have space to keep their trading stock nor refrigeration to preserve perishable goods. This is particularly true for traders in the inner city, where space is scarce and few infrastructures have been provided for traders. Veronica Mophulane expressed that GIDA's vision in solving this problem is to 'professionalise street-trading', which, in her view, entails "getting traders off the streets" by having government allowing them to utilise unoccupied state-buildings. The possible challenges entailed in this vision (some traders need passing traffic to keep their business afloat, only specific street traders have a customer basis that would go into buildings to purchase their goods), the failure of municipal attempts to get rid of pavement trading in favour of buildings and markets, are however not considered.

Operation Clean Sweep

Operation Clean Sweep has been a turning point for a number of organisations. It did affect GIDA traders, but GIDA was not at the forefront of negotiations or conflicts with the City of Johannesburg.

> "On the 27th of September 2014, the City sent block leaders an SMS to join a meeting at MTC boardroom organized by MTC, for the 30th of September. The JMPD announced at that meeting that on the 1st of October, the City would conduct a Clean Sweep, as the Mayor complained that the City was unclean, congested, unsafe. They wanted to work with us block leaders, to identify those who have smart cards, and clean sweep illegal traders. Then we were surprised when they started on De Villiers and King George Streets, and chased everyone, and it then snowballed, street by street, block by block, destroying kiosks and stalls and chasing all traders without notice. Metro police officers only said 'Mandate of the Mayor!' " (Mtshali 2014)

GIDA was not directly involved in confrontations with the state regarding Operation Clean Sweep, but they availed their presence at inner city protest demonstrations which other street trader organizations organized, and were broadly grateful that the court case led by SAITF allowed street traders to come back to business in inner city Johannesburg. Accounts on Operation Clean Sweep and the role of diverse organizations slightly differ, depending on the interviewee. "We came together as one because at the end of the day we are all traders, no matter what different names we have. An injury to one is an injury to all. When SAITF won the court case against Operation Clean Sweep, it was for all of us", said Mophulane when being asked about GIDA's involvement with Operation Clean Sweep. This perspective was different from other interviewee respondents, who voluntarily offered descriptions of GIDA as an organisation that "throws stones", does not engage in "politics" as it is seen as detrimental to informal traders' economic interests and agenda. Some resented SAITF becoming such a visible organization and taking the lead whilst they "before Operation Clean Sweep nobody knew about them". Mtshali gives more details, and explain GIDA's failed attempts to federate all trader organizations in a joint way forward:

> "On the 22nd of October, all organizations called each for a meeting. One Voice called for a meeting, so did SANTRA, so did SAITF. We in GIDA had our meeting with ESSET on the 22nd. ESSET proposed to hook us with the South African Human Rights Commission, but not us as GIDA – we needed to come to them with all trader organizations. Thereafter we split up: Mike went to SAITF meeting at Bree taxi rank, I went to SANTRA meeting at the Anglican Church – One Voice was there too. Reverend Mcophela from ESSET went with me. So, I reported that we needed to create a united front and then we could approach the SAHRC. At that meeting it was resolved that Sipho Twala would call an urgent meeting of the Chairpersons of all traders' organizations for that afternoon or tomorrow morning in order to discuss a united front.
>
> What happened however was that on the 24th, a march was planned by a socialist organization that contested the elections, supporting traders on de Villiers. SAITF joined their march. One Voice had their own march planned for the 25th. All separate marches. SANTRA also mentioned a sit-in at the Mayor's office. At that point it became clear each organization had its own plan of action. It became then very difficult for GIDA to bring all leaders together. We asked COSATU for help in calling all the

> leaders, but SAITF would not go to COSATU, and they were busy now contacting SERI. During that time our members were attending meetings with MMC Ross Greef and other city officials as a collective with other leaders almost every day, with no resolution. As GIDA, we then took a back seat. We stopped engaging; told our block leaders to submit lists of traders' names, so that some of our members joined SAITF and SANTRA court list as 'traders affected'." (Mtshali 2014)

Challenge or prospect? Eloff Street emerging African Food Hub

In the executive meeting that we were able to attend in October 2014, it came to light that an urgent matter to be discussed was the fact that GIDA members were under threat due to renovations that are taking place of Eloff Street. Though it was not discussed at length during the meeting when we were allowed to ask the executive questions we asked Mandla to go into detail with the entire case. He was able to provide background to the issue, action that the organisation is now taking as well as the flyer that was handed out to the traders as a 'notice' to the operation (**Figure 5.5**).

In August 2014, during the consultation workshops organized by the City of Johannesburg in the aftermath of the Constitutional Court decision to develop a new trading space demarcation process, GIDA leaders attended as observers the session focusing on the transport sector. During this session, the Johannesburg Development Agency mentioned the renovation projects that were to take place within the Eloff precinct.

> "I approached a JDA official to enquire about the project, I was told the plans were not finalized and that they would call us when plans are done. They did not say when construction was to start. [… However, when the construction works started on the 1st of October 2014], we were not given any actual warning of the construction and on the day we were simply told to move our goods and given a flyer to inform us" (Mtshali 2014).

GIDA Deputy Chair Mandla Mtshali set out to rectify the situation to the best of the organisation's capacity. Works already in progress was hindering GIDA members' business: blocking off the road and stopping the vital flow of pedestrian traffic that the traders need in order for their businesses to thrive, and generating dust damaging the products and creating a very uncomfortable working environment (see **Figures 5.1** and **5.5**):

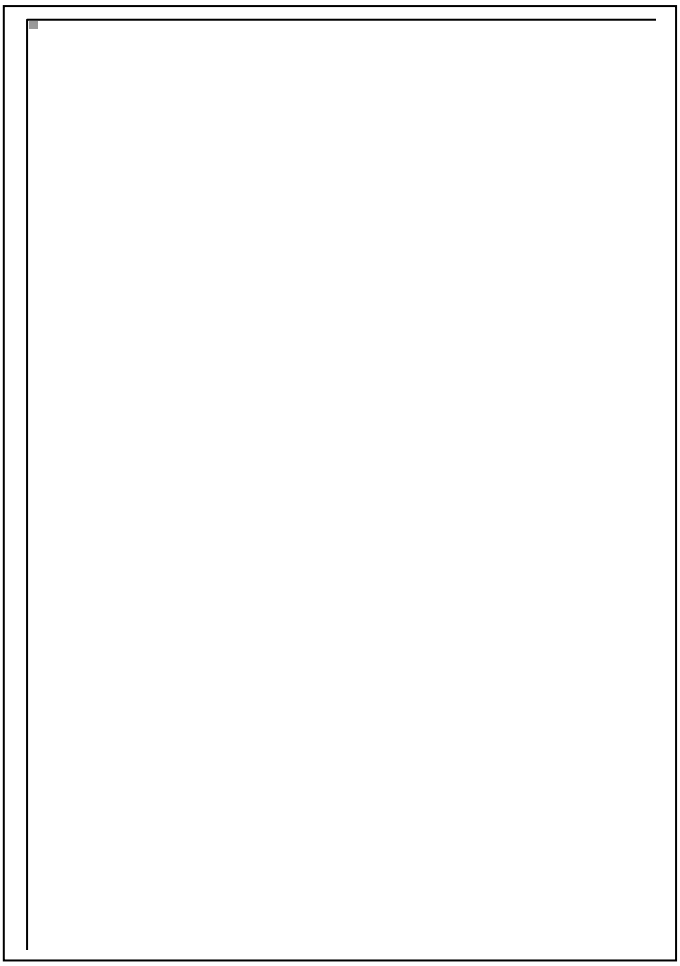
> "A lot of the traders here cook food and it is very bad when all of the dust is everywhere. The plan is to remove the road and replace it with paving but the noise and dust coming from the construction site is very bad." (Mtshali 2014).

With 23 traders on Eloff, mostly GIDA members (but also a few from other organisations: SAITF, SANTRA and One Voice), GIDA's most urgent task was therefore to find and to secure alternative trading spaces for the traders. GIDA deputy chair being also a block leader was able to negotiate with other block leaders nearby to relocate a few of the traders:

> "I am a GIDA leader but also a block leader. Actually we are three block leaders in Eloff, we were elected by the traders in 2012, and recognized by the City. Us as block leaders went to our colleagues in other streets, to find alternative trading spaces for Eloff street traders. We spoke to other block leaders,

they showed solidarity. We too accommodated other traders in our street when their linear markets were built. We found a solution ourselves to relocate the traders. JPC/MTC officials whom we phoned were not aware of the construction works done by JDA. Now we are asking JPC to seek permission from JMPD so that our relocated traders are not harassed by the police. DED has to phone me today in this respect" (Mtshali 2014).

Figure 5.5 – Flyer notifying the public of construction works for the African Food Hub
Source: Mtshali's archive, photographed by Memela 2014



In the longer run however, GIDA leadership also has requested the City that GIDA be informed and consulted about the development project. The African Food and Cultural Hub, explains Mandla, consists of a multi-story glass structure that will market indigenous food from all over Africa, as a tourist attraction. The idea is to have and to train cooks from all over Africa to showcase African cuisine. The street will be pedestrianized and w linear market will be built that will be a 'multi-event' market, allowing for cultural events to take place, a flea market to be organized on week-ends, with emphasis on the quality of public space. The rest of the time, "when it is quiet, the place is for us" (the 23 current traders): the City has committed to accommodate all the existing traders. Moreover, the structure will accommodate a development hub for informal traders, an incubator and a trade desk: business training, assistance in registration and formalization of micro-businesses, information on cooperatives, etc.

GIDA leadership is aware that this development concerns all traders, in all organisations in the whole city: "it is not a trade desk that GIDA can hijack for its members, we should not be selfish in our thinking". But GIDA might be well placed to benefit from the development, with a number of its members being cooks and already selling hot food, from a diversity of African countries: "In Eloff, we have one South African, one Tanzanian, and one Mozambican trader who are selling cooked food currently" (Mtshali 2014). As for participating in the project itself, Mandla is confident that consultation will take place:



Figure 5.6 - GIDA executive meeting, St Mary Cathedral's boardroom, 14 October 2014.
© Memela 2014.

Figure 5.7a. GIDA traders on Eloff Street, during public work to construct the African Food Hub.
© Memela, October 2014





Figure 5.7b & c – GIDA traders on Eloff Street, during public work to construct the African Food Hub.

© Memela, October 2014



"We have now agreed with JDA that we will be part of the technical site visits, and that we will be able to comment and influence the design of trading stalls and shelters." (Mtshali 2014).



Figure 5.8. The Food and Cultural Hub project in Park Station, inner city Johannesburg.
Key: 01 - Eloff Street (two intersecting streets: Plein and De Villiers). 02 - the African Pavillion. Source: UrbanWorks, http://www.designingsouthafrica.com/pavilion/, accessed November 2014.

Conclusion

At the end of our research, GIDA appears far more complex and sophisticated than we imagined initially, especially for what is a relatively small and local, Johannesburg based, organisation. Part of this perceived complexity comes from our own mistake, our inexperience in researching informality that led to expectations disconnected from reality and a certain blindedness to what could perhaps seem obvious to more experienced researchers.

This complexity is also linked to different levels of understanding and appropriation of GIDA's objectives and positions, by different executive committee members – that led to some contradicting

or vague statements that were hard for us to make sense of, initially – this was partly resolved by multiplying interviews and the final feedback session on our draft document.

This complexity can thirdly be attributed to GIDA's shifting nature from its creation as an NPO in 2011, to a secondary cooperative that still needs to be registered and made functional. Finally, this complexity is shared by all trader organisations, which often have to make strategic choices in their context of limited human and financial organisational resources: focusing on defending membership against abuses, and constantly responding to crises which keep repeating themselves? Or seeking longer term perspectives to develop the sector, influence policy, create and maintain new networks?

GIDA certainly chose the second way, thinking outside of the box to develop traders and explore new markets. This is certainly done at the expense of mobilising its membership - that currently seems a bit dormant, organisational activities being restricted to the executive committee and a small circle of traders around them. As a leader mentions honestly when asked how members benefit from GIDA, "it is hard to state exactly what the members are getting since GIDA is in the process of getting their registration papers, so there is no way to actually register our members to our organisation and allow them to receive full benefits". It is a choice that other organisations – like ACHIB- have made too, and they are confronted to similar membership challenges. But, unlike ACHIB which has focused its efforts on access to finance, to insurance, and to tenders, GIDA seems to be focusing on exploring new markets with a true entrepreneurial spirit – be it on the terrain on organic farming or on the terrain of cross border trading.

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Meeting attended

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Tour of GIDA membership in Johannesburg inner city

With Mandla Mtshali, 14 October 2014, Hoek and Eloff, Johannesburg

Interviews

Mophulane Veronica: GIDA Deputy Secretary, 29 August 2014, inner city Johannesburg

Mokulubete Mike: GIDA block leader, 18 September 2014, Hoek Market, Johannesburg.

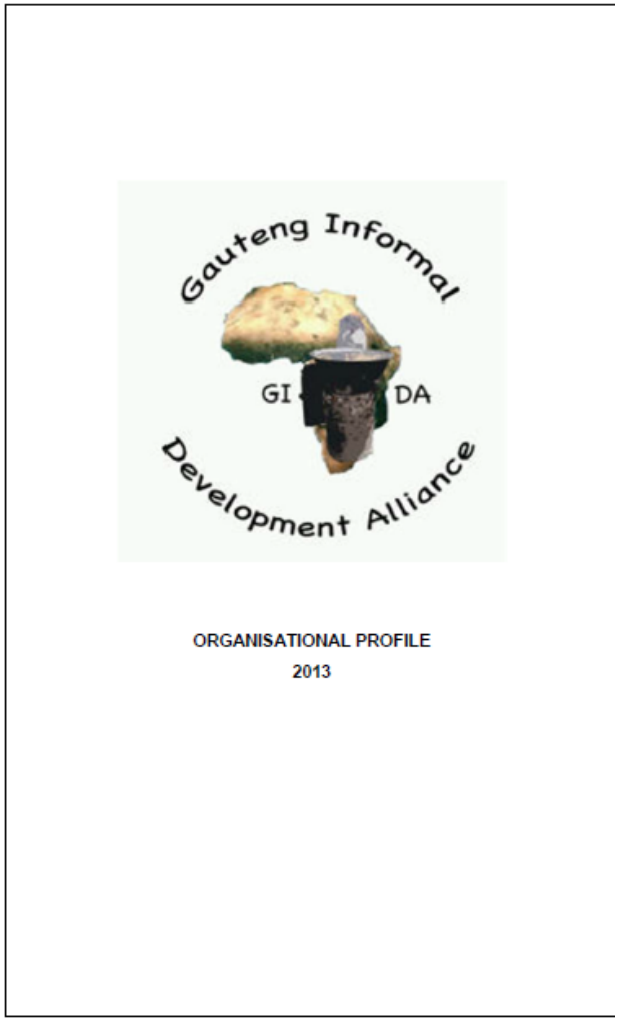
Takara Sam: GIDA Chair, 20 September 2014, Kliptown market

Feedback session (conducted by Claire Benit-Gbaffou)

Mthshali Mandla: GIDA Deputy Secretary, 24 October 2014, Eloff Street (feedback session on draft document, with Mike Mokulebete).

Annexure

Figure 5.9 – GIDA's profile 2013



Gauteng Informal Development Alliance

GI DA

ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE

2013

Introduction

Gauteng Informal Development Alliance (GIDA) is a broad-based trade organization registered as a secondary co-operative that was established in 2011 operating in the 'informal sector' of the economy based in Gauteng. It consists of 8 associations with a collective membership of approximately 600 across the province. Its primary objective is to play a developmental role by promoting fair and ethical trade between and among traders in our province, countrywide and eventually cross-border trade in the SADC and COMESA regions. It seeks to achieve this objective through the formation of trade co-operatives in linear and street markets that will be broad-based to allow for mass participation and capitalize on the strength and creative energies of member traders.

GIDA also seeks to promote self-reliance through solidarity finance and economy by encouraging its member traders to procure goods and services from among each other.

It is lead by a dynamic and passionate steering committee that has a collective experience of 20 years as traders who have been in the forefront of diagnosing problems of the sector and providing solutions thereof. Each member has been carefully selected for their respective skill and knowledge of the sector, and we believe this combined pool allows us to offer sustainable solutions to the current problems of the sector.

Executive members

1. Sam Taraka – Chairperson
2. Mandla Mtshali – Deputy Chairperson
3. Julekha Latib – Secretary
4. Veronica Mophulane – Deputy Secretary
5. Bonisile Malati – Treasure
6. Frans Seema – Provincial Co-ordinator
7. Sipho Twala – SADC Co-ordinator

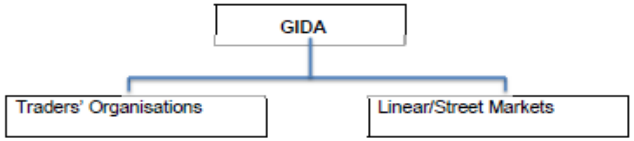
GIDA is part of a SADC Network that consists of Lesotho, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The Network – in collaboration with its accompaniment partner ESSET- meets from time to time at consultative conferences where experiences and problems of the 'informal sector' are shared and solutions proposed. The Network also conducts study tours as well as Participative Active Research (PAR), a research document of which has been produced.

Background

The 'informal economy' in our country is a valuable contributor to employment creation, trade in goods and services and gross domestic product (GDP), but it is characterized by a lack of recognition, large inflows, confrontational engagement between traders and authorities, lack of proper control and regulation, and so on. This is partly due to our history and the current reality of massive job losses, poverty and high-income inequality.

GIDA, therefore, believes its developmental agenda of fair, ethical and inclusive trade promotion among member traders is long overdue in this sector. We seek to promote self-reliance through viable trade co-operatives that will turn our survivalist businesses into sustainable businesses.

Structure



Vision

To be the preferred partner in the advancement of a developmental agenda and creating sustainable livelihoods in our sector. We seek to achieve this while upholding values of inclusiveness, gender and racial equity, environmental sustainability, accountability and democracy.

Source: GIDA's archive, communicated to author via email, August 2014.

Figure 5.10 – GIDA's submission to the City of Johannesburg, 'Promulgation & Demarcation of New Trading Spaces in the Inner City', August 2014

The Gauteng Informal Development Alliance (GIDA) Submission to The City Of Joburg Stakeholder Consultation

Introduction

Gauteng Informal Development Alliance (GIDA) would like to thank the City of Joburg (COJ) for this stakeholder consultation process aimed at improving trade in the inner city. GIDA is primarily a trade organisation that seeks to lobby for and facilitate trade on behalf of its members and encourage trade among its members as well as open new markets both locally and in the SADC region (see attached profile). We do not believe sustainable livelihoods can be achieved by pavement trading; hence we strive to expose our members to alternative means to support themselves and their families. Therefore, we do not support pavement trading as it has inherent problems and very difficult to manage. We support product-categorised and general trade in linear markets, designated buildings and taxi facilities. For instance Hoek One for cooking, Hoek Two for fruit & veg,, Hoek Three general products other than edible food stuff. Sustained economic growth of the City depends on a safe and well-regulated environment as well as partnership between the City and Block Leaders and traders' organisations.

Attainment of our aims and objectives

We seek to achieve our aims and objectives through the following:

- Access to land
- Co-operatives
- Trade among traders, locally and in SADC
- Cross-border trade
- New markets:
  - Trade missions/promotions
  - Exhibitions
  - Trade Expos
  - Rand Easter Show, etc
- Solidarity finance
- Skills development
- Access to unused buildings

Details of the above to be provided at follow-up meetings.

Partnership with COJ

We would like to partner with the City on the following:

- Off-take agreements
- Entrepreneur development
- Registration & development of Co-ops
- Organisational development
- Networking sessions & business linkages
- Study tours
- Co-ordination of government activities
- Storage facilities at border posts

Details of the above to be provided at follow-up meetings.

Conclusion

GIDA thinks that street trade activities need not be viewed as mere day-to-day sustenance hussling but as small businesses that have the potential, with proper support, to grow to big businesses. We are ready to partner with the COJ and anyone who shares our vision.

Contact:
Sam Taraka: 073 489 9945
073 633 4024
Mandla Mtshali: 083 379 2726

Source: GIDA's archive, emailed to authors November 2014

CHAPTER 6 - NIGERIAN UNION OF TRADERS (NUT)

Kyla Elsey, Sphamandla Hhlela & Mbulaheni Khwashaba



Figure 6.1. A typical NUT stand – legal, neat and tidy, on wide pavements
© Hlela, 2014, Delvers Street

Figure 6.2 – Nigerian Union of Traders: A 2014 Profile

Name: Nigerian Union of Traders (NUT)

Date of creation: 2005

Nature of organization: Non Profit Organisation, registered since 2012

Chairperson: Hygins Chukwu (acting)

Secretary/ Spokesperson: Hygins Chukwu

Structure of the Organisation: Besides normal executive functions, task team, screening committee, welfare committee, 4 block leaders.

Office: No office. Meeting place in a bar (on Bree street) booked for the meetings. Nut administration (office book and archives) kept by the Secretary.

Membership Number: 174

Members' location: Von Weilligh, Troye, Twist and Delvers Street.

Membership fee: R20 per month per trader

Registration form: No but interview by screening committee, record on office book.

Members' identity: Predominantly Nigerian male street traders. Open to other nationalities.

Members trading status: Authorised street traders (smart card and demarcated stalls)

Dominant trade: Clothes.

Aims of organisation: Securing trading space for members from the City of Johannesburg; Make sure trading in the streets is orderly and respecting by-laws; Organising security and welfare for members.

Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our gratitude and heartfelt appreciation to the following people and institutions:

Our Facilitator, Claire Benit-Gbaffou, who has made it possible for this research to take place, who also guided us towards the right direction. The support she gave us was highly appreciated.

We would also like to thank the Nigerian Union of Traders members and their leaders for their participation, their patience, their willingness to try and overcome the fear and suspicion associated with research.

A special thanks to Hygins Chukwu for wanting to share information about his organisation and his co-operation during the course of the research.

Also to those (block leaders and street traders) who wanted to remain anonymous for varying reasons, but allowed us to interview them and gain access to their thoughts and opinions about NUT.

We would finally like to thank Wits CUBES Informal Trade Research and Governance, Politics and Informality Groups that made it possible for us to engage with the traders by breaking the ice and establishing a relationship with them.

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Introduction

This chapter focuses on the Nigerian Union of Traders (NUT), a small street trading organisation gathering of about 200 traders and operating in the inner city of Johannesburg.

The organization is very concentrated geographically, its members being located in four streets of the inner city: Von Weilligh, Troye, Twist and Delvers Street. The members are situated on both sides of the street on Von Weilligh and Delvers. On Troye and Twist the traders are located on the west side of the street. (see **Map 6.1**)

The organization was indeed created by its members with the main vocation of securing their trading spaces through collective negotiation with the City of Johannesburg:

> "Our main aim when creating the Nigerian Union of Traders was to unite the Nigerian traders and other traders in the area, in order to negotiate with the City as a united body, for legal trading spaces." (Chukwu, 28 October 2014)

Unlike other organizations who are working on growing their membership and attempting to change policy, NUT's exclusive, modest but steady, role is to protect its existing members from the uncertainties and shifts characterizing the sector, uncertainties probably emphasized by the foreign nationality of most of its members, in a broader context of xenophobia.

Foreigners trading in SA streets experience many negative occurrences. These range from xenophobia, including from other foreign traders, to violence, extortion of bribes and stealing of their stock, amongst other forms of police harassment. One way of mitigating these incidences is through the formation of street trading organisations, which can act as a form of protection for these people. In this context, our question we had when starting this research was how foreigners mobilise to find ways to not be excluded from the city and the economy; what is the role and what are the strategies and tactics of the organization, and to what extent is it able to protect its members?

Methodology

Our methodology was principally based on interviews (with organization leadership and with simple members) and observation. Because of the context – post operation clean sweep, and a broader context of xenophobia- as well as our lack of research experience, it was not very easy for us to secure and conduct meaningful interviews at first, but eventually, as the relationship was built, we believe we have now a reasonable understanding of NUT. This section retraces the challenges we encountered and the steps we took to respond to them.

► We first went on a tour with the third year planning class – on the 7th of August 2014. We were being guided by the NUT secretary general, Hygins Chukwu. It was introductory and it opened a door into how traders' organisations worked. We were a bit puzzled to see a very male dominated activity, and that they were all selling the same products – jeans, clothing, sometimes with some variety like shoes and belts.

► We then interviewed the secretary general more specifically–Hygins Chukwu,on the 20th of August 2014. We were attempting to gauge the organisation's inner workings from its leader's perspective – its history, objectives, functions and structure.

► We experienced difficulties when it came to securing interview times with other leadership members of NUT. We, therefore, took walks on our own around the NUT jurisdiction, to have a look for ourselves how the traders trade, to take note of what the space looks like physically, and the mood and atmosphere around the trading areas. We took this walk-around tour on the 18th of September. We wanted to verify and fill holes in the information, from our first tour. We also wanted to look at the stands and the size of the demarcated areas. During our first self-organised tour, we interviewed three of the NUT street traders, who are not part of the leadership, but with limited success (responses were brief and limited), as their leadership was not present to introduce us. We were trying to get a view from the average member of NUT, on their own experience and perceptions of the organisation. The tour however was used to take pictures of the traders, the streets and the stands to illustrate and document our report.

► We had intended on attending a general meeting, executive meeting and a cleaning day. We asked the secretary general to call us if a meeting takes place and a cleaning day. However, a cleaning day did not happen in the timeframe we had to study the organisation. They did have an executive meeting, which we were not called for – we only heard about it on the day it was happening and we were unable to make it. We assume the secretary general did not call us because he thought we meant a general meeting, or these executive meetings are private. There was a second opportunity with a general meeting on the 22nd of October, that we were informed through Claire the day before it was to occur, but were told by Hygins that, as we had not been formally invited and announced, he would rather not have us attending.

► Hygins kindly agreed to meet us for a second interview, on the 7th of October 2014, to fill in some of the gaps that we were struggling with after the first interview with him and our own site visit. This was key in getting a deeper understanding of the organization.

► Finally, two of us accompanied Claire Bénit-Gbaffou, our lecturer, for a feedback session on our draft report. The feedback from Hygins, in a period of a new crisis for the organization (JPC had just redemarcated the legal trading stalls and deprived about 30 NUT traders with smart cards from their trading spaces), was illuminating – by both Hygins comments and complements, but also by the arbitrary and vexing nature of municipal intervention in the street trading sector, justifying the constant need for organizations such as NUT to defend and protect their traders.

We did face some challenges in the research process. When interviewing traders on the side of the street, in the middle of Johannesburg, space is not abundant. In certain areas we had to keep ducking pedestrians because they needed to keep moving and we were taking in the sights, taking a picture or talking to a trader. The setting is not quite ideal for taking panoramic shots, we were only able to get a couple of useful ones – the area is cramped, everything seems to be moving and there

are mostly narrow paths and pavements to take pictures of. Getting decent perspective pictures was also a problem.

From time to time, language would also be a barrier. Some traders spoke basic English and it was a struggle to communicate. It was helpful to repeat questions, and to record answers – then we would be able to replay them later.

It is important to remember as a researcher at all times that one needs to tell all the traders what it is you are doing, when you are taking a picture, (often unconsciously) pointing at their stock and talking about what they are selling – so that they do not feel threatened. We came across this problem quite a bit, some traders will just smile and ask you "What are you doing, why are you taking pictures?" Other traders almost get ready to fight you and just want to stop you from taking pictures – some used physical intimidation. The traders were initially fearful to cooperate with us. It was later discovered, as we talked to some of them, that they were fearful because of being unsure of our intentions with the information that we were trying to acquire. The uncertainty stems from Operation Clean Sweep and the fact that most of them are foreign traders. The fear was partly overcome by us walking with Hygins Chukwu, which made traders feel comfortable and, on our part, by constantly explaining our intentions as to why we are trying to accumulate this information. It was also helpful, on occasions, to show them our Wits student cards, to prove that we were just students.

NUT creation and objectives

The Nigerian Union of traders was formed in February 2005, before MTC formalised trading spaces in the Inner City. It was formed because there was a need for a trader's organisation as the street traders were not legally trading and were constantly being harassed by the JMPD. According to Hygins, the traders were tired of being harassed and not being legal so they decided to form a trader's organisation called Nigerian Union of Traders as they were all Nigerian.

> "We were 4 people who started the organization, and we then became block leaders where we were trading. We decided on calling our organisation Nigerian Union of Traders as we were all Nigerians". (Chukwu, August 2014)

The main aim of the organisation is to ensure that their traders are well catered for and they have the space, capacity and resources to grow so they can leave the street and make space for other street traders. For this, security to trade and protection from harassment, both from the police but possibly also from other traders, are key. One way of fulfilling this objective is for NUT to make sure all members are complying with by laws and rules governing street trading in the inner city. For this purpose, NUT is working towards is to educate its members on by–laws, orderliness and neatness of its trader members, in each of the four streets occupied.

> "I think the agenda of NUT is good, they teach us the by-laws of the streets and guidelines of how to trade on the streets". (Odjeni 2014)

By teaching its members to comply with by-laws, and keeping their streets clean, fitting into trading spaces, and displaying goods in order. NUT is making sure not to give the City or JMPD any reason to harass them or cause problems for them. In other words they try not to cause problems for the City so the City does not cause problems for them. This is a way of survival and could be called the politics of invisibility.

Compliance to by-laws, orderliness and duly payment of rents to MTC can be said to be one of the strategies the organisation uses to protect its members from the City and influence its decision making on what happens to this specific street space that NUT wants to secure for its members. This is quite a different strategy to the strategies adopted by other organisations such as SANTRA that challenge the City more frontally and attempts at influencing policy at large. It is a form of cooperation in the fear that confrontation with the City will make life difficult for NUT member as they are not South African and therefore are more precarious than South African traders.

Structure of Organization

The structure of the organisation appears quite complex for such a small organization, with both a financial secretary and a treasurer; and a number of task teams – some of which are not that classic in non-profit organizations: a screening committee (in charge of the new members, see below NUT member section), a welfare committee and a Task Team of 15 members.

Structure and functions of the executive committee

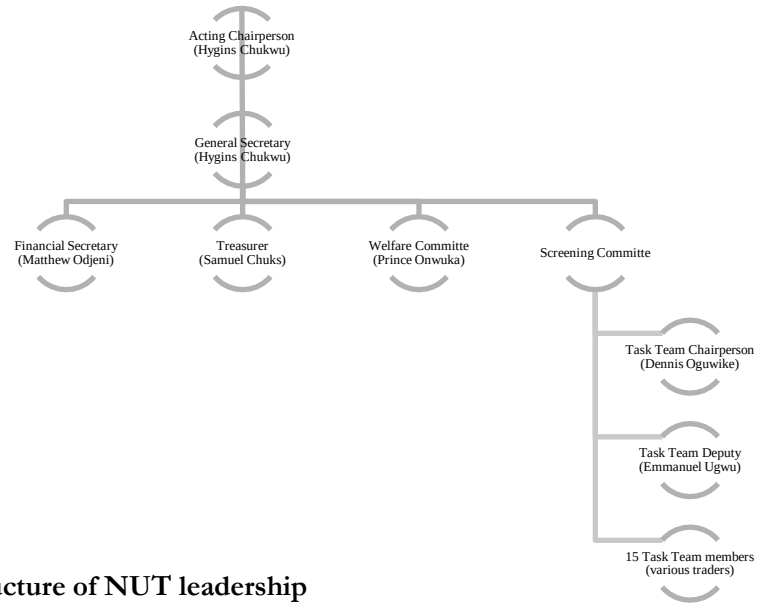


Figure 6.3 – Structure of NUT leadership

Firstly, there is an executive committee which consists of a Chair and a General Secretary who overlook and the Financial Secretary (Matthew Odjeni) and the Treasurer, as well as the Screening Committee (made up of various NUT members) and the Welfare Committee. Of importance, and

under the Screening committee, is the Task Team, which has itself a Chair and a Deputy Chair. The role of this Task Team, also chaired by Hygins Chukwu, is to ensures that the organisation is well functioning and works towards projected visions and goals with regards to each specific sphere

In spite of its complex structure, the small size and centalisation of the organization is reflected in the central role of Hygins Chukwu. He is the General Secretary and the Acting Chair of the organization. He also heads the Screening committee as well as the Task Team, so that he can delegate appropriate tasks to those who have been put in specific positions. Hygins oversees that all matters which involve NUT and its members are presided over with regards legal requirements made by the City.

The financial executive (Mathew Odjeni) and the treasurer (Samuel Chuks) both oversee the distribution of finances in NUT- for example paying government taxes (R300 per year as the NPO tax for instance), paying for the meeting place (R400 per meeting – in a bar on Bree Street that they can book for their monthly meetings), and accumulating funds for the purpose of the welfare committee. When asked if leaders like himself get a contribution for their expenses as leaders, or compensation for their time, Hygins replies that "since 2005 being the Secretary, I have never been paid. I pay from my own pocket, transport to meetings, airtime… I am doing it for God. I have never been paid a dime" (Chukwu, 28 October 2014). The finances in NUT are closely regulated:

> "Having both a financial secretary and a treasurer makes certain that money is used wisely and for the important things first. We have to have enough money to pay tax to the government and we need to make sure that we don't get into debt or any other problems that can go wrong with money." (Chukwu, 7 October 2014).

Another important structure in NUT is the welfare committee. Those that are a part of this team are responsible for collecting capital (from all NUT members) for the purpose of helping members during emergency situations. If someone is ill, all traders are expected to contribute R10 and they are then "taken to the hospital or sent home if necessary, to fully recover and get better to return to trading." (Chukwu, 7 October 2014). Also, if one of the members has passed away while in South Africa, funds are also raised, "so that we can send the corpse back home for a proper funeral." (Chukwu, 7 October 2014).

The welfare committee also takes pride in contributing to welfare in the South African society, by organizing charity work (**see Figure 6.6**). NUT would collect clothes, food, or cash, for instance at the occasion of Mandela Day, and donate it themselves to an orphanage in Soweto. NUT was for instance directed to an orphanage home, in Zola (Soweto), by the MTC programme officer in charge with Delvers street. NUT also adopted 150 kids in a Sowetan school, and will sponsor their school uniforms. This charity effort shows a strong desire to demonstrate integration in the South African society, to challenge existing xenophobic prejudices about Nigerians and foreigners more broadly - often accused of exploiting and not contributing to their host country.

The screening committee plays an important role in checking the members of the organization. They play a role when a trader approaches NUT to become one of its members (see below, section on membership). They also oversee the task team. The task team consists of 15 members, including the four block leaders. The task team carries out the role of ensuring peace exists amongst fellow traders- if there are disagreements and feuds between members and other individuals from other organisations, the task team aims to resolve these issues in an amicable manner. The Task team also controls that each trader member behaves appropriately, displays their goods in an orderly ways in the demarcated space allocated to them, keeps his trading site clean on an everyday basis, and participates in the monthly clean up of the streets.

NUT indeed organizes a general clean-up of the streets where its members trade, on a monthly basis.

> "We have a cleaning day once a month where all our members are not allowed to trade until the cleaning is complete. The task team ensures that everyone is cleaning and not trading or drinking alcohol during the cleaning day". (Chukwu, 7 October 2014).

As a result of the cleaning process, the streets where the member's trade are always clean and the goods that they sell are folded and placed in a neat matter (see **Figure 6.1**).

We have never witnessed a cleaning day nor have we heard of it happening. Hygins said he would call us for the cleaning day as it happens once a month, but throughout our research we never came across such an event taking place in the whole month of September or October for that matter. He later explained that "there were too many problems to organize the clean up these months, we just had other things to prioritise unfortunately" (Chukwu 28 October 2014). However, the clean-up is an important feature of the organization, that it prides itself of organizing in alliance with local government. The picture displayed on **Figure 6.7** for instance shows several officials from MTC participating in the clean up.

> "Many MTC officials used to come to our clean up campaigns, you can see them in the picture: the programme officers in charge with our streets – Sifiso, Thulani, Nombusa, Thuli; the former manager who is now suspended – Ngogone, Mkhize, Mthuli. The programme officers came every time we did a clean up, to take photographs!" (Chukwu, 28 October 2014).

The Metro police too supports NUT clean-up effort:

> "Sometimes the JMPD alerts us, seeing rubbish through the CCTV and telling us, 'there is something there, you forgot to clean it" (Chukwu 28 Oct 2014).

Formalising the organisation

The organisation is governed by a constitution which lays out the structure, rules and regulations of an organisation and also the procedures of registering a new member and other committees. The organisation is a registered NPO.

The registration process of the organisation, according to Hygins was fairly simple.

> "Registering the organisation was simple. We went to CIPRO and they told us that we had to meet the minimum requirements. They told us what the minimum requirements were and the documents we had to bring along. They told us that we had to have a name, and a constitution that will govern the organisation". (Chukwu, August 2014)

Not all the requirements they had to meet were mentioned in the quote as he could not remember what others were. Probably the issue of legality of members' presence in South Africa was another condition for registering the non-profit organisation.

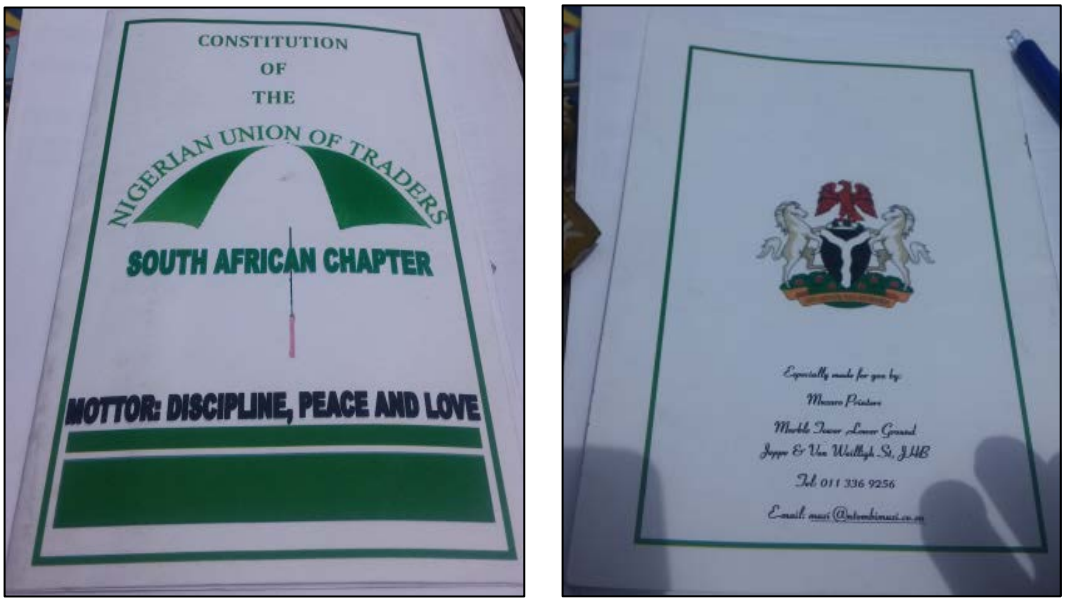


Figure 6.4 – NUT Constitution
© Hlela 2014, from Hygins' archive

There has not been an election for a new executive as from 2005. When asked about this Hygins states that the members do not want to call for an election as they are happy with the work that he is doing in the organisation and do not want him to step down.

> "We are supposed to have elections after every 2 years but members do not want to call for elections because they don't want me to step down." (Chukwu, August 2014"

When we probed further about why there was no Chairperson in NUT, the General Secretary explained how challenging internal politics could be in a small and informal organization, and how these internal politics could endanger the fate of traders, in a time of municipal oppression.

> "The last Chairperson [we elected] passed away. We appointed an interim Chairperson, but he went to Nigeria without informing the executive, and stayed for six month before he came back; meaning he never cared for the Union. We replaced him by a second interim Chairperson. We appointed him the Acting Chair with the support of all members of the Union. But then, this person started to create division in the organization, he wanted to split it. He was supported by a small group of traders who just wanted the money, and control. For instance, when we call traders to do the monthly clean up, where nobody trades, this group said that we are disturbing their business. They don't join the cleanup; they put their stalls up instead. Some of them are so selfish – you send them to solve an issue traders have, they demand money from the traders. […] So eventually we removed him, with the support of a majority of traders: people are happy now, they say everything is fine" (Chukwu, October 2014).

Hygins then explains the difficulty of holding regular elections in informal organizations:

> "It is difficult for NUT to hold elections. There are just too many problems. Some people always want to hijack the organization to put their hand on the money– we don't want to put it into wrong hands." (Chukwu, October 2014)

Also, just after Operation Clean Sweep, it is probably not a good time to organize elections and risk divisions and conflict within the organization. Because NUT always has to confront "crises" of different scopes, it is seldom a quiet time to try and have internal debates – there are always issues with the City to be solved urgently, where a strong union and leadership are needed.

Faces of NUT Leaders

The following profiles (**Figure 6.5**) are of NUT leaders who hold different functions in the organization. They are all Nigerian males, they are all traders selling clorhing, shoes and belts (with the exception of Prince Onwuka who manufactures sandals). They moved to South Africa with the idea of creating a better future for themselves and their families. Although this has not been the case for many, as they did not want to be street traders, they have been able to make an income and survive off of the money they do make. Most of the individuals in the profiles have been trading for many years, and have been trading with NUT since its conception.

Nigerian Union of Traders Membership

There were more than 150 traders at the time of NUT creation: today there are 174 members in the organisation. They started having meetings and going to City departments as a way of mobilising and be at a better position to negotiate with the city as a group.

Although the organisation was formed by Nigerians and members are still predominantly from Nigeria, it now comprises also members from other African countries:

> "Our organisation is not just for Nigerians, even though it is called Nigerian Union of Traders. We have members from all over Africa like people from the DRC, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Zambia to name a few. South Africans who are part of our organisation are mostly women". (Chukwu, August 2014)

All members are street traders, trading in demarcated spaces, paying their rents to Johannesburg Property Company and having a smart card.



Hygins Chukwu, General Secretary and Acting Chair



Samuel Uzorchuks, Treasurer



Matthew Odjeni, Financial Secretary



Dennis Oguwike, Task Team Chairperson



Emmanuel Ugwu, Task Team Deputy Chairperson



Prince Onwuka , Welfare Committee Chairperson

Figure 6.5 – NUT leaders
© Hlela 2014



Figure 6.6 – NUT collects food that they will deliver to an orphanage in Soweto

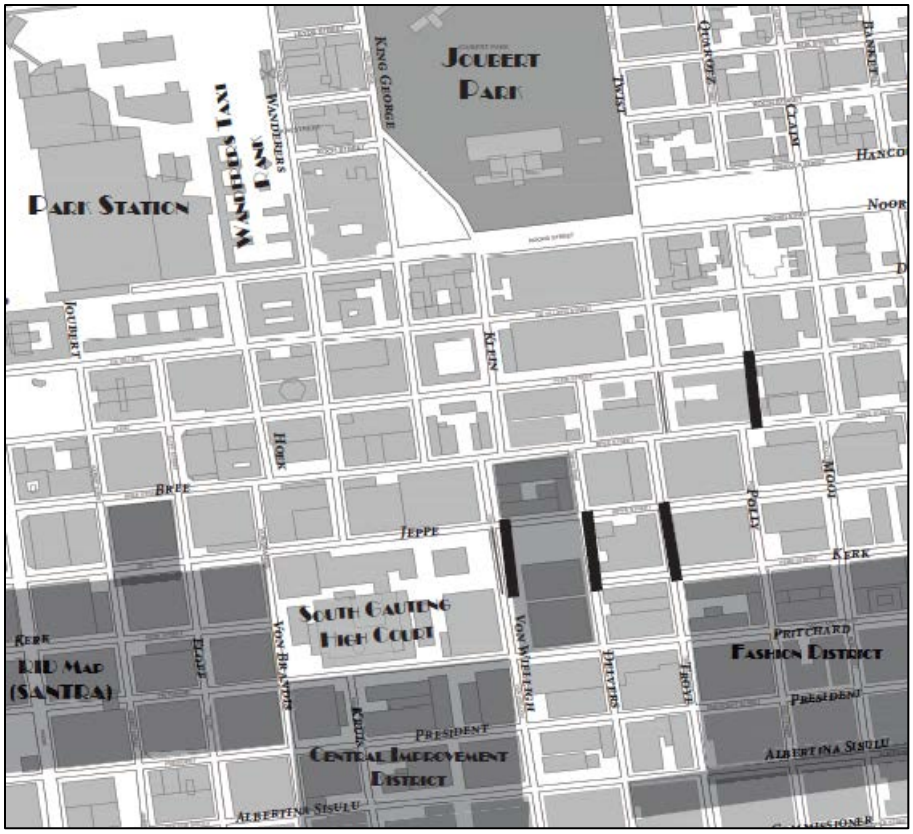
Figure 6.7 – NUT clean up day - Group photograph with MTC officials



Source (both documents): Hygins Chukwu, personal archive (undated, before OCS)

Spatial Distribution of Street Traders

NUT traders are exclusively located in four blocks in the inner city, along four streets: Delvers, Troye, Von Wielligh and Twist. NUT has a block leader in each of these streets.



Map 6.1. Location of NUT members in inner city Johannesburg
Conception and Realisation Ndladla, Hlela and Ngantweni 2014.

Registration of members

Becoming a member of NUT happens through a screening committee. There are no forms that one has to fill in but the screening team gives the person an interview that is recorded in a certain book wherein they asked specific questions.

The screening committee allows/disallows individuals to become a member of NUT based on certain requirements that are stated in NUT's constitution. The organisation requires specific documentation (ID/passport, legal documents and so forth) to ensure that the person is in South Africa legally, in order to not jeopardize the entire organisation as a whole. The candidate also needs to tell what he will be selling as a product. Under these platforms, new members are constantly being watched over by "people that are put into place which the new members don't know about" (Chukwu, August 2014):

> "We ensure that they are telling the truth by having them monitored without their knowledge. We have spies that will check if what you said in the interview is true especially about the goods you sell. You can never know who it is; it might be your next door neighbour or the person you're trading next to". (Chukwu, August 2014).

This is to make sure that they are not selling any counterfeit material, drugs, are not consuming alcohol whilst working and are not engaging in any other activities which have been disclosed in NUT's constitution.

Upon the screening committee monitoring their new members closely, NUT is able to accumulate enough information about the new member, to ensure that the information they shared during the screening process does correlate and is not deceitful. If a new member is found to be dishonest during the screening process and that their information does not add up,

> "The member is dismissed from the organisation immediately, because we are frightened that everyone in NUT will be in trouble with the City or the police just because of one person and then we are all kicked off the street and not allowed to trade." (Chukwu, 7 October 2014).

Ultimately the investigation process ensures the legitimacy of information that a new member shares with NUT. This quite strict process of verification is a way of responding and challenging the prejudices that are held against Nigerian migrants, often assimilated to traders of illegal products, if not criminals.

Finally, before NUT registers a new member, the screening committee makes sure that the trader is registered as a legal trader in the City database.

> "We assist the trader to be registered. We go to the office there, so that he registers on the waiting list. He does not have a smart card immediately, but he comes back to the screening committee, and we as NUT can register him – say, on Delvers Street waiting list. When there is a space in Delvers Street, we now recommend to MTC that this person is allocated this space. MTC used to accept, the programme officer [in charge with Delvers Street] would know about Delvers waiting list". (Chukwu, 28 Oct 2014)

Figure 6.8 MTC and street trading waiting lists

"MTC needs to explain that some streets have their own waiting list.

In fact, almost all the streets have their waiting list, kept by the block leader. Programme officers from MTC, each allocated to a street, check the list and confirm with block leaders. There are MTC programme officers for each street, perhaps for each block: for instance, 3 programme officers are responsible for Delvers Street.

A block leader might recommend that one person is the next person on the list to be allocated a space in that block. All block leaders in the street endorse the allocation, the programme officer signs, and it goes to the programme manager in MTC, who is the last person to sign. That is why people don't fight for trading spaces.

However this is no longer working today. Organisations do that now. My organization, NUT, does not allocate – it is block leaders who used to allocate, following the rules" (Chukwu 28 October 2014).

What NUT Does – Overcoming Challenges

In spite of NUT strategy of strict compliance to the rules regulating street trading in the City of Johannesburg, NUT has been confronted to a number of challenges, that they have tried to overcome through different strategies.

Relocation of street traders on Troye Street due to the BRT station

During the construction of the BRT station on Troye street, NUT traders on the street were chased away with no warning and no compensation. About 40 legal traders lost their trading space:

> "The City did not consult with NUT leadership or the traders that were on that street, neither did they want to take responsibility of what happened to the street traders. Yet they were legally trading in the street". (Chukwu, August 2014"

NUT leadership went to various departments in the city, such as the JMPD and Department of Economic Development (DED), to find out exactly what happened and why it happened. City officials denied having knowledge of the situation, and NUT until didn't know how to take the matter further - so they decided to drop it. NUT managed to find a solution for a few of the traders, by having the traders sharing the large demarcated spaces some NUT members trade on, where large pavements prevail (such as in Delvers street). This was less than 5 traders however, Hygins elaborated.

Until today, traders are only allowed on one side of Troye street, whilst the other is emptied of street traders (see **Figure 6.11**). NUT is continuing to argue for the re-opening of Troye street to street traders, in a submission made to the City of Johannesburg in August 2014, as part of the participatory process opened by the City after OCS (see also annexure):

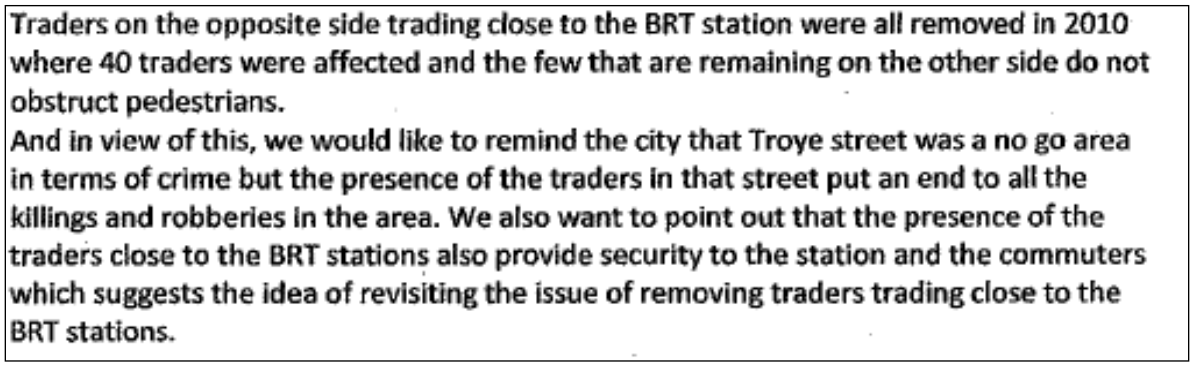

Traders on the opposite side trading close to the BRT station were all removed in 2010 where 40 traders were affected and the few that are remaining on the other side do not obstruct pedestrians.
And in view of this, we would like to remind the city that Troye street was a no go area in terms of crime but the presence of the traders in that street put an end to all the killings and robberies in the area. We also want to point out that the presence of the traders close to the BRT stations also provide security to the station and the commuters which suggests the idea of revisiting the issue of removing traders trading close to the BRT stations.

Figure 6.9 – Securing trading spaces next to BRT stations – a plea to the City, 2014

Conflict with a Building Owner

There was a conflict with a building owner having traders trade in front of their buildings, on Delvers. Ironically only the building owner had this problem with street traders, as the tenants, formal shopkeepers who happen to also be Ethiopians- did not share the same concern as him.

Formal shop keepers, according to Hygins, enjoy the safety that the street traders provide on the street that benefits their customers and their businesses as well. But the building owner (himself an Ethiopian and a former street trader, paradoxically) saw the traders as untidy and disrupting his businesses. To get rid of the traders,

> "The building owner extended his building in the front so as to narrow the pavement. […] We invited Xolani to see: he was mad! There was a big battle. He tried to contest the extension and protect the traders, but there was a kind of interference from the top apparently, the battle was dropped. Till today I cannot say how the owner got planning permission." (Chukwu 7&28 October 2014)

By narrowing the pavement, the building owner fist created commercial space for himself, which is now occupied by shop traders (see **Figure 6.12** below). Moreover, he could then argue that the street was now too narrow to trade on, based on the municipal by-laws. Unfortunately for the building owner but fortunately for the street traders through their organisation this strategy did not work. The organisation involved the City (DED) and fought for designated sites on the street, and won. The traders are still on the street in front of the building, even if they now have less space, and are often contested by other street users, in particular the taxi owners:

> "Out of the 18 traders who used to trade on that pavement, 4 no longer have a stall, as taxi owners never allowed them to go back. They say, 'we are using this pavement for our passengers to stand'. These 4 traders, we took them to share trading spaces with other traders." (Chukwu, 28 Oct 2014)

In a way, Operation Clean Sweep reduced the conflict with the building's owner. He had an issue with the traders stalls themselves. During the Operation, police officers, whilst chasing the traders away, also demolished all the stalls. When traders came back, they just used the space where the stalls used to be – that were demarcated with yellow paint instead. On the demarcated sites others used portable stalls where they were able to hang their stock while others displayed their stock on the ground. Apparently this was more amenable to the building owner:

> "The building owners have fewer issues since the stalls have disappeared" (Chukwu, class tour, 2014)

Working with the South African Police to combat crime

Since 1995, it is compulsory for every police station to set up a Community Policing Forum (CPF), where citizens and the police communicate. SAPS also established sector crime forums, to be able to focus on sub-areas within police stations, together with civilians in order to fight crime. NUT traders used this platform to mobilise against crime, as the area was not safe for traders nor customers; get involved together with traders from other organizations; and establish constructive relationships with the South African Police Service.

Hygins was one of the four trader leaders (of a variety of nationalities: Nigerian, Ethiopian, DRC and South African) who formed a Traders' Forum, where they could inform the SAPS if they had had incidences of crime. The Forum later became part of the Sector Crime Forum 2 established by SAPS, Hygins was elected General Secretary of Sector 2.

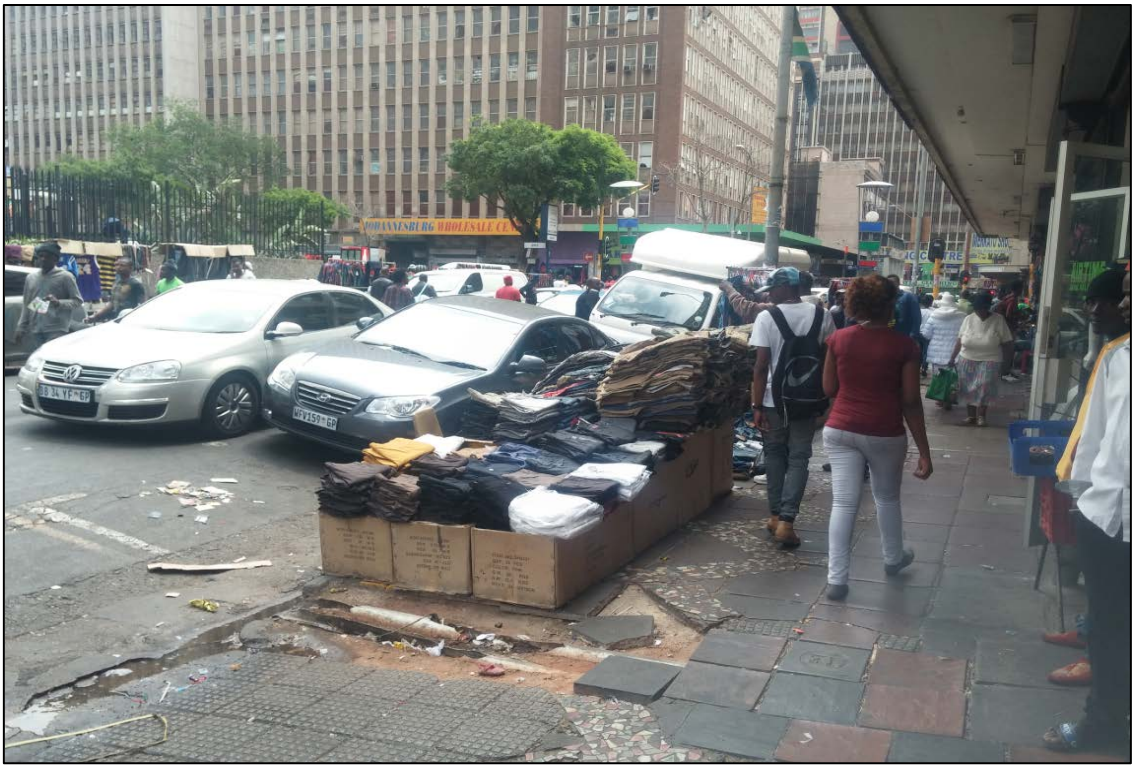


Figure 6.10 a & b – Street traders on the narrow side of Delvers Street. © Hlela 2014

Figure 6.11 – Troye street, narrow pavement trading and the BRT station. © Hlela 2014



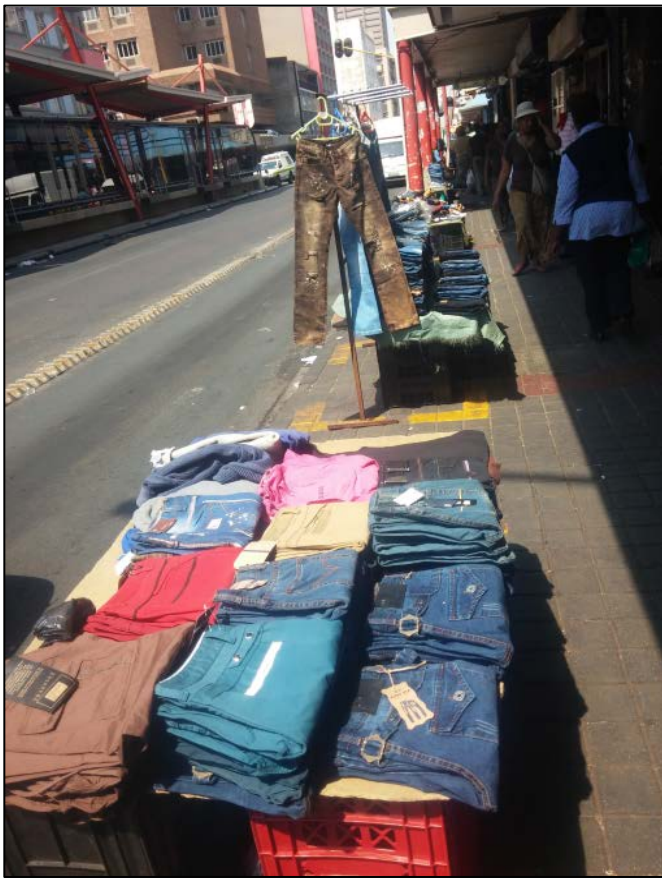




Figure 6.12 – Building's extension on the pavement, newly demarcated stalls for NUT
© Hlela 2014, Delvers Street.

Figure 6.13 – JPC new demarcated trading sites (in white), narrowing down the previous ones –in yellow), October 2014.
© Hlela 2014, Delvers Street.



> "It was a big election. The Station commander and his deputy, all CPF officials, representatives of the Deparment of Community Safety, were there at the Johannesburg Central police station" (Chukwu 28 Oct 2014)

As General Secretary of Sector 2 Crime Forum, Hygins was in charge of profiling all shops and businesses falling under sector 2.

> "We used to enter the shop, ask who is the owner. The Station had provided us the questionnaire for the shop owner. We were to document who is the owner, who is the manager, their contact number, what products they sold, all those things. We even surveyed churches in the area." (Chukwu, 28 October 2014)

Another task was to recruit and train street patrollers, to help the police secure the inner city streets in a legal and orderly way. It also helped making sure that patrollers and police officers did not display xenophobic attitude and target foreigners unduly – as 60% of the patrollers were in fact foreigners, working with the South African police.

> "If a person wanted to be part of the forum as a patroller or as a leader they had to go to the police station to have their fingerprints checked for a criminal record. This was done because you will find that there are criminals that want to hide under the community policing forum and use it as a form of protection for their crimes. […] Our recruitment of patrollers was a success: we managed to recruit and train more than 100 street patrol officers" (Chukwu, August 2014).

It is in the sector crime forum that Hygins started developing a relationship with the police. Unfortunately the Gauteng CPF's constitution was later amended, and foreigners were not allowed any longer to hold leadership or executive positions in the organisation. That marked the end of this involvement. However a good relationship with SAPS persists, and is useful to solve crime issues in the area.

Operation Clean Sweep (OPC)

One of the officials who took part in writing Joburg 2040 strategy stated that the Mayor went to the inner city and saw that it was 'dirty and chaotic' and called for officials to come up with a solution on how to 'clean' the inner city. JMPD came up with a strategy called Operation Clean Sweep, in October 2013. This affected street traders badly as they were chased away from the inner city, even the legal traders, and were unable to trade and provide for their livelihoods. One executive member recalls:

> "It was devastating because a grown man like me takes a bath in the morning, kisses my child goodbye and says "I'm coming back with food and surprises for you", and then… When you can no longer supply for your family, it becomes very, very difficult" (Odjeni 2014)

Operation Clean Sweep hit NUT frontally – having worked so hard to ensure legal compliance to the rules, all traders having smart cards and demarcated trading spaces, NUT leadership was particularly shocked by the blast.

> "In the meeting on the 30th of September 2013, the City called all block leaders as well as organization leaders. They announced their intention to clean the street of the illegal traders – making sure they would no longer be illegal traders in the street. We did agree. Block leaders would be asked to identify the illegal traders, we thought. When the metro police come to a block, the block leader would go there, 'yes, this person is the right person'. (Chukwu, August 2014)

When asked why he agreed to this, Hygins explained:

> "Some streets were not designated for trading. That is where many other organizations have their members. The traders organizations are supposed to assist, they are the ones who are supposed to push to have traders legalized there. The City has been demarcating new trading areas" (Chukwu, 28 Oct 2014)

However, events unfolded differently. On the same day after having the meeting, Operation Clean Sweep started in De Villiers, then it was Plein, then Twist. Legal street traders were chased away and told to stop trading by JMPD. Immigration officers, JMPD and the police were used to intimidate NUT traders.

NUT as an organisation that had its members displaced had to take action against such an injustice, after all their main aim is protecting their members. As an organisation that is suspected and constantly attacked because of their identity of being Nigerian the way in which they react or handle the issue has to be strategic and carefully thought of. What the organisation did was take the negotiation route rather than head on confrontation.

> "During Operation Clean Sweep, we did not want to take the City to court because we believed it could have been resolved amicably. We believe in dialogue and our first option was calling the officers, but they did not respond. We also went to officials of the City and the Speaker of the City, to write a petition and tried to see the Chief of Metro Police, but he was also not interested". (Chukwu 2014)

With constantly trying to negotiate and not be confrontational to the City NUT finally gave up on that route and decided to go another route. They then supported SANTRA and SAITF in the court order to get street traders on the streets again.

> "We were supporting organisations taking the City to court, but we did not want to be the one's taking the City to court". (Chukwu, August 2014)

SANTRA and SAITF won the court case and all street traders were back on the streets. Although traders are back on the streets there is still a level of uncertainty, insecurity and fear amongst traders. For NUT members the fear is worse as they also fear being deported, discriminated against resulting in losing their livelihoods.

Resizing trading stalls – JPC new leadership

At the time of the completion of this report, in a last meeting with Hygins to get his feedback on the draft report (28 October 2014), we were surprised to find him in the middle of yet another crisis.

The week before, JPD had come to the inner city streets and started to redemarcate all the trading stalls, leading to a significant loss of trading spaces for legal street traders. As a result, NUT on its own has lost 30 trading spaces, and 30 of its legal traders are now unable to trade.

In Delvers street for instance, demarcated trading sites were made smaller, on the exact same location (see **Figure 6.13**), with no explanation nor obvious reason provided (it was not to create more – and smaller- trading stalls; it was not to clear an area of trading). The result was less trading space for street traders: smaller tables and less exposure of goods; and/or limiting their ability to share a trading space and accommodate for instance other legal traders, with smart cards but no allocated demarcated site.

The second drive of JPC was to scrutinise all demarcated spaces (painted with yellow lines), and check whether there were drills in the pavement as testimony of former trading 'cages' (cf on **Figure 6.7**). Those sites without drills were deemed illegal and fraudulent, even if street traders are adamant these sites were the result of an agreement[1], acknowledged by DED and they have a history – having been there since 2005. But JPC new leadership would take none of it.

> "We tried to interact with Brenda [the newly appointed Acting Head of Johannesburg Property Company]. She came herself on site to re-demarcate. She did not want to hear. She did not want to talk to us. She did not want to listen to JPC programme officers either - they were coming to help us and tell her the story of the place. She told us, 'Put your concerns in black and white, and contact our legal department if you have any issue.' (Chukwu 28 Oct 2014).

At the time of writing this report, Hygins Chuwkeu was on his way to mobilise block leaders from the area, and write their queries and concerns – requesting for a solution to be found for the 30 legal traders now deprived of trading sites. His intention at the time of writing was to try and find a reasonable solution – through DED and JPC- before attempting court action that NUT believes should be the last resort.

This episode talks to many issues. It talks to the precariousness of street trading, even legal, complying to the rules, paying rent regularly. Arbitrary changes, that happen suddenly, unannounced, unnegociated, unjustified, and work at the expense of street traders depriving them of their livelihoods, occur all the time. Just a few months after operation clean sweep, this resizing of the stalls for no visible nor explicit reason can be read as an arbitrary measure to further discourage street traders, as part of an ongoing battle (a revenge after the court case?) rather than a constructive engagement.

JPC leadership's attitude can be analysed along two lines. First, the new head of JPC takes over after previous management has been fired for corruption, and rumours that the entire MTC was corrupt abound, yet the whole MTC staff (but a few managers) have now been incorporated into JPC. JPC

[1] One building on the street legally expanded its foothold on the pavement, leading to the disappearance of 4 trading stalls occupied by NUT traders. There was an agreement acknowledged by DED that these 4 trading stalls would be replaced, and were demarcated on another part of the street, where pavements are wider.

Head (Brenda Dos Passos)'s position to not engage with traders nor street level officials (programme officers) talks to that defiance and the new boss' resolution to do things 'the legal way', deliberately ignore previous 'arrangements' that are seen as being necessarily 'corrupt'. However, this generalised suspicion against trader leaders and city officials lead to another shortcoming – possibly the same as Operation Clean Sweep: the illusion than in a complex setting as Johannesburg inner city is, one can act on its own, create a 'blank slate' from which one might start again, afresh (Benit-Gbaffou 2014), as it pushing the 'reset' on a computer. Ignoring histories, past agreements and ways of doing, urban practices and local contexts, is perhaps not the best way of uprooting corruption.

The second trend that this top-down attitude illustrates is the structural communication gap between traders and the City. Since Operation Clean Sweep, both the Informal Trader Forum (however debatable this platform was) and the block leaders' regular meetings with City officials have been suspended. It means there is currently no way for traders to communicate with the City to solve every day, small issues:

> "We used to solve these issues easily during our monthly meetings as block leaders. But they stopped, before even Operation Clean Sweep, because of MTC's internal problems. So now it is difficult to solve issues […] Last month, we as block leaders tried to meet with JPC managing Director, Helen Botes. We went as a group, block leaders from Delvers, Jeppe, Bree, Plein, Edith Cavell… We went twice to her office to try and set up a meeting, send her the agenda of the meeting – the list of issues that needed resolution. But she never replied, and we could not meet her. For instance, we requested that the cash office be reopened, for traders to be able to pay their rent to JPC quickly, rather than spend time queuing in a bank to pay just R50 or R100. Traders are losing money because of the closure of this cash office. We also have an issue with illegal traders invading demarcated spaces and chasing legal traders, or painting fake demarcated spaces. These traders are not paying rent – they need to be chased or legalised so that they pay, like us. A third issue was that before OCS we submitted changes of traders' names on demarcated spaces: this has not been followed up, putting legal traders at risk of harassment by the JMPD." (Chukwu 2014)

Conclusion

Finding out about the inner-workings, of the Nigerian Union of Traders, has been a very intriguing experience. The organisation has its challenges, however it is effective in doing the things it was founded to do, in part. Many things, unfortunately, are out of their hands – they do not have as much power or voice, as they would like, even for a traders' organisation. The organisation has an approach to functioning that is bottom-up, all leaders are traders as well – so they have their "finger on the pulse".

It is very unfortunate that much of their time and energy has to be spent on convincing officials to just listen to them, or trying to stop the ill-treatment of its members by officials. They have ambitions of attaining some social upliftment for their members, not just defending their rights all the time. Unfortunately again, the rules keep on being changed on them – Operation Clean Sweep negatively affected even legal traders; the current redemarcation of trading sites deprives a number

of legal traders of their livelihoods. They have not quite achieved the ultimate goal of being fully accepted, by City officials or by fellow street traders, in a context where the scarcity of legal trading sites makes competition between traders very harsh, and often taking xenophobic tones. They also need this to have surety that they will be able to trade far into the future. However, there is hope; NUT is far from disconnected from the system, and by making sure they are complying with street trading legal rules, they have demonstrated reliability and respectability to a number of City officials.

Nevertheless, with the little they can do, in terms of walking within the lines and following all the rules, they are very effective – street trading here does the graphic and vived demonstration it can be managed, clean, neat, ordered. They do not necessarily want to grow: their focus is really on the protection of their members' rights to trade – in an orderly and managed way. Xenophobia is something that they have suffered from – in terms of complaints about too many trading spaces and important positions (in CPF for example) being given to foreigners – by other traders but also by some city officials. It is good to see, however, that they are not complacent as an organization: they know that they need to increase their influence and voice, and to do this, they are both mobilizing the broader community of inner city block leaders, and liaising with other street trader organisations to join forces.

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Documents

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Interviews

Hygins Chukwu NUT: General Secretary and Acting chairperson. Interviews 20th of August (Von Wielligh Street), and 7th of October 2014, Delvers Street.

Prince Conwuka (Block Leader, NUT), 20th of August, Von Wielligh Street

Matthew Odjeni (Street Trader, NUT), 18th on September, Delvers Street

Anonymous 1 (Street Trader, NUT), 18th on September, Twist Street

Anonymous 2 (Street Trader, NUT), 18th on September, Troye Street

Tour of NUT membership: organised by Hygins Chukwu for the class, 7th August 2014.

Feedback interview (conducted by Claire Bénit-Gbaffou, with Spamandla Hlela and Mbulaheni Kwashaba) with Hygins Chukwu, 18 October 2014, Delvers Street.

Annexure►

Figure 6.14 - NUT Submission to the City of Johannesburg: Promulgation and Demarcation of Inner City Trading Spaces

Source: CUBES archives

18TH AUGUST 2014

NIGERIAN UNION OF TRADERS (NUT)
INNER CITY OF JOHANNESBURG

RE: SUBMISSION ON THE ONGOING CONSULTATIONS ON STREET TRADING.

As an independent organization of migrants and as stakeholders (traders) to the City's economic growth.

The Nigerian Union of Traders, a registered organization in the RSA in conjunction with other African traders including the South African citizens trading in the hearth of the Central Business District (CBD)Namely, Delvers street between Jeppe and Pritchard, Von Weilegh Street between Jeppe and Pritchard, Troye Street and Kerk Street between Delvers and Troye, having met as traders concerned and examined critically the city's plan towards a well managed street trading hereby make the following submissions.

1. Delvers street: between Jeppe and Pritchard (i.e. Sanlam building block and its opposite side) should be considered as one of the streets were trading should take place hence,
   i) The pavement is the widest pavement among all the pavements that trading is taking place in the city.
   ii) The traders are well organized and are being monitored by the leadership of the organization and the 15 man task team that the traders appointed themselves to administer punishment to offenders in terms of cleanliness, overlapping, sale of counterfeit merchandise etc.
   iii) The block has got low traffic volume and there is no obstruction to pedestrians whatsoever.
   iv) There are public ablution facilities that the traders use in Sanlam building i.e. in delvers and corner Pritchard Street.
2. Von weilegh street: between Jeppe and Pritchard (i.e. Sanlam building block and its opposite side, the Blue glass house) should also be considered as trading area hence the two blocks have got all that is contained in no.1 above (Delvers)
3. In Troye Street: there are few demarcations and few traders in the entire street which makes it less congested.
   Traders on the opposite side trading close to the BRT station were all removed in 2010 where 40 traders were affected and the few that are remaining on the other side do not obstruct pedestrians.
   And in view of this, we would like to remind the city that Troye street was a no go area in terms of crime but the presence of the traders in that street put an end to all the killings and robberies in the area. We also want to point out that the presence of the traders close to the BRT stations also provide security to the station and the commuters which suggests the idea of revisiting the issue of removing traders trading close to the BRT stations.

4. In Kerk street: between delvers street and Polly street, the organization is proposing that a linear market should be sited in those blocks as a continuation and extension of the existing linear market that stopped at Von brandis street so as to accommodate some other traders that might be removed from other streets in the area.
5. The NUT is also proposing that the city should acquire buildings in the area which can be converted to shopping malls in order to allocate traders that might also be taken out in some blocks in the area.
   Such buildings if acquired and developed should be given as a bond to traders co-operative in the area to manage for proper and efficient rental collections etc.

   The linear markets and some blocks that will be left as designated trading area should be given to the co-operative and or the organization monitoring the area for proper management.
6. Above all the points (i.e. from point no.1 to 5) and for a long term plan and permanent solution to street trading.

   The organization is proposing that a big **Central market** in the city should be sited to accommodate all street traders including the traders in the linear markets and many more to come.
   Such market if sited can be named "AFRICAN TRADE CENTER" or "JO'BURG INTERNATIONAL MODERN MARKET" etc. Where each product lines or blocks can be named any African country's capital- as a world class African city.

   This market if built will not only assist the city to reclaim the city's glory and beauty but will also promote the spirit of UBUNTU as Africans, learn from one another as traders from different nations and above all create more than 5,000 permanent jobs for the citizens.

   In conclusion, the NUT supports all Godly and humane approach to street traders in dealing with the issue of finding a permanent solution to street trading problems.

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2

CHAPTER 7 - AFRICAN TRADERS ORGANISATION (ATO)

Ntombi Khambule, Dineo Lekgothoane & Uzuzakhe Ngantweni



Figure 7.1 – 'De Villiers used to be desert, ATO has rendered it vibrant'
Source: http://www.scoutnetworkblog.com/2011/08/10785/vintage-fashion/

Source:

Figure 7.2 - African Trader Organisation – A 2014 Profile

Name: African Traders Organization (ATO)
Date of creation: 2010
Nature of organization: Registered Profitable Organisation (Pty) since 2014
Chairperson: Franklin Eneh
Secretary/ Spokesperson: Matron Mhlanga
Structure of the organisation: Executive, Advisory Body, Task Team and Block leaders
Office: Darrah House, 13 Wanderers Street
Membership Number: 280 street traders
Members' location: De Villiers - between Hoek Street and Klein Street
Membership fee: R100 per month (on top of R120 rental to JPC)
Registration form: N/A
Members' identity: Predominantly Nigerian citizens
Members trading status: Both authorized and unauthorized street traders
Dominant trade: Second-hand clothes
Aims of organisation:
- Gain positive recognition by the City and the right to trade in the City
- Create a safe and clean environment for traders and customers
- Grow as business people

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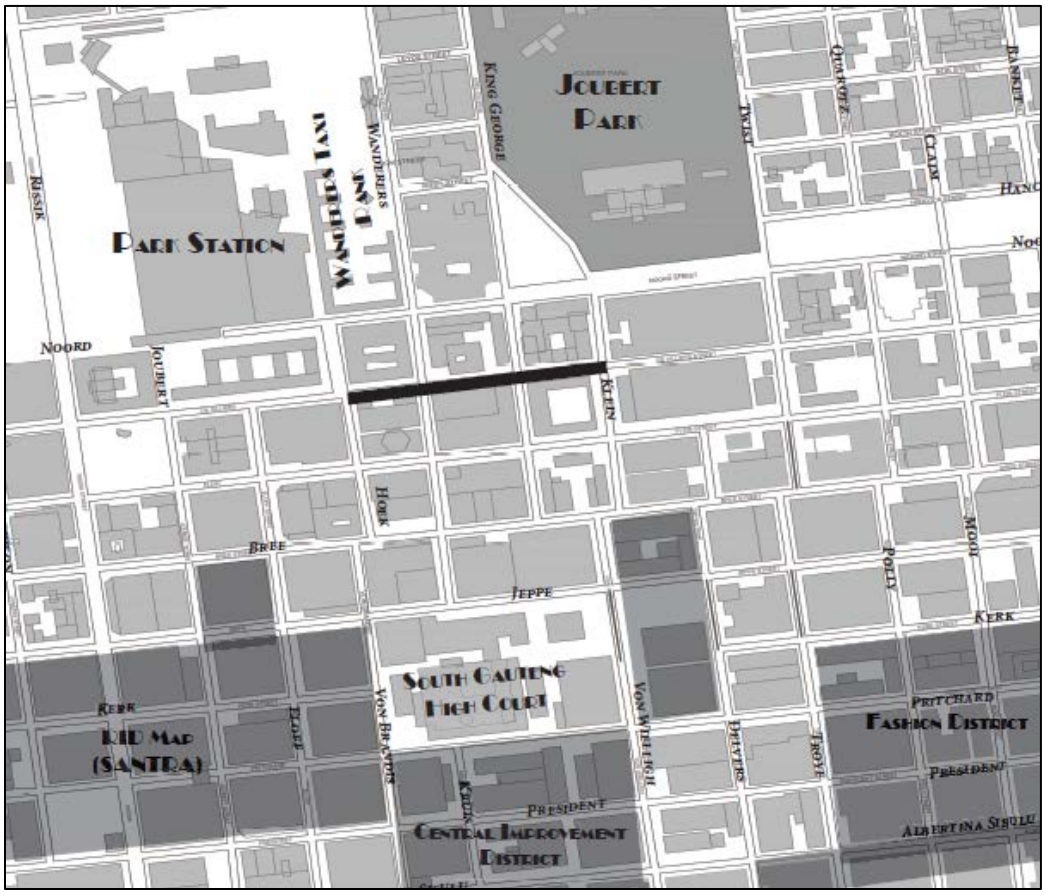
Introduction

This chapter aims at understanding ATO, the African Traders Organisation, as representing mostly foreign street traders in the inner city of Johannesburg. The chapter will attempt to retrace its history, investigate its organization and membership, understand its activities and strategies in the context of competition for trading spaces and rising xenophobia, in the immediate aftermath of Operation Clean Sweep.

Context of the research

ATO represents about 300 street traders, located in De Villiers Street, between Klein and Hoek in the inner city. The majority of ATO traders are of Nigerian nationality, and they predominantly sell second hand clothing - with a minority being South African "gogos"[1] who sell food or fruits.

Map 7.1 – Location of ATO members : tree blocks in De Villiers Street, Johannesburg CBD



Conception & realization: Ngantweni 2014

[1] Affectionate term for 'old ladies'



Map 7.2 – ATO clothing and food trade location, 2014
Source: Authors' observations, September 2014 (NB dots do not indicate traders).

De Villiers Street is located between Johannesburg Park Station and the MTN Taxi rank, connecting to the greater Johannesburg region. It is therefore a prime trading space to catch passing flows of pedestrians. However, ATO state that it would not mind to be relocated (ATO 2014), as their customers know them and come on purpose to buy from them. Their customer basis seems to have shifted from passing & impulsive to premeditated shopping. Indeed, it seems ATO customers are not just from the inner city or even from Johannesburg, but they are also, according to the traders, from different parts of South African and even the broader continental region. "Traders from Lesotho come and buy our clothes; they know where to find us" (ATO leader, informal conversation, September 2014). This gives an indication of their economic importance within the inner city.

Research Question and Hypotheses

Governance can be understood as organised control over a community or a space, and it is closely related to politics, as it involves power and conflicting interest by various groups – the conflicts being regulated by a variety of means (negotiation, alliance, confrontation, juxtaposition). It is hypothesized that ATO, even being a group of informal traders, has elaborated a form of micro governance - organised control- over its traders and area. The formal sector, "encompasses all jobs with normal hours and regular wages, and is recognised as income sources on which income taxes must be paid, as opposed to the informal sector" (Business Dictionary, 2014). This understanding of the formal sector highlights how an integral part of being in the formal sector is the paying of income taxes, and we could extend this to other forms of taxes that businesses pay. ATO traders do not pay income taxes, but they pay other forms of tax, in the form of rents paid to the City for demarcated trading spaces, and fees for the organisation to manage the street.

The chapter will argue that ATO has, to some extent, formalised its role to manage street trading in De Villiers Street. ATO has an office; ATO pays dedicated cleaners, security, and has formed a voluntary task force in order to govern trading in De Villiers. Less directly visible, and less directly documented by this chapter but also part of this street level governance system, they have an organised way of purchasing their goods (in bulk) and of trading (complementing one another). ATO indeed seems to have a specific business model which is seen through its branding, location, professionalism, loyal customers and sales methods and this is especially interesting to find within the informal sector. ATO through its style of doing business has managed to establish and maintain its own identity despite facing a number of challenges. The chapter argues that ATO functions like a business - its traders insist on being seen as entrepreneurs even though they are seen as informal. It evaluate the tools and methods used by the organization to govern the street, the challenges attached to these attempts, and how ATO learnt from and responded to these challenges.

Methodology

The method we used when conducting the fieldwork were interviews mostly, (very few) documents, and observations to some extent.

To start the interview process, we needed an introduction. We were provided by our lecturer with a letter from CUBES, that already had been distributed to ATO leadership in a CUBES workshop, and that we could present to the organisation as evidence that we were really students from Wits University conducting research on street trader organisations. The letter however was not as effective as we thought it would be, mostly because of our mistake: wen conducting an interview with Matron Mhlanga, ATO secretary, we only gave her the letter towards the end of the interview. There, we under-estimated the issue of trust building and did not fully understand the importance thereof; or perhaps we believed the terrain had already been prepared by CUBES's ongoing interaction with ATO. But in her responses to our questions, Matron was often evasive and we found it difficult at times to find the right tone for a conversation.

Part of it might also have been linked to our lack of experience initially in asking questions, such as "What kind of relationship does ATO have with the City?", and the trader leader would respond "Good", even in the aftermath of Operation Clean Sweep (OCS). This question was clearly not well formulated, and it became clear that organisations did not want any critical comments towards the City to be recorded. Our greater challenge was then that we were unable to organise a second interview with her, despite many attempts. When we finally got a hold of her, and asked her if she could possibly give us a tour of the area where ATO members traded, she said she would let us know when we could have a follow up interview with her, as well as other traders and block leaders. She explained that traders were not trading because there was no stock. However, she never got back to us. So we took it upon ourselves to go on our own tour, when we went to the site we discovered that the traders were there trading and that there was stock. We understood that as either lack of interest in our research, or fear and distrust in the research process, or leadership being too busy for what was not their core business- but, nevertheless it was challenging and frustrating from

our side. Later, we understood that it was true that there was no stock – traders present were selling their old stock, and Matron explained that "the stand owners will never go and trade if there is not new stock, they will only send their assistant" (Mhlanga, November 2014). So, there was perhaps distrust on her side, but probably also on ours – often we did not dare (or did not have the opportunity) to ask the questions that could explain apparent contradictions we were seeing.

Frustrated by our inability to secure a second interview with Matron and organize a tour of the area with her; curious to see if really de Villiers street was out of business and empty, we took it uoon ourselves to go on an uninvited, self-organised tour. During this tour, we took note of how the traders trade, observed the number of traders at each stand, the behavior of the customers towards the traders and the behavior of the traders towards customers. We also looked for evidence of what Matron had told us was organized by ATO – as we were required by our lecturer to provide graphic evidence of your key points. So, we started looking for the security agents and cleaners that ATO had claimed were elements of self governance of street traders.

> "The security have uniform and you'll see them walking around in De Villiers". (ATO leader, September 2014)

We looked for them but did not see them when we walked around. This was later clarified by ATO leadership (October 2014) when they explained first that "our own security was suspended early 2104, because JMPD and SAPS argued that they were doing their jobs". Similarly, we remarked litter on the pavement, in spite of quotes from ATO leaders attesting to their dedicated cleaning team, and could not spot the cleaners (**Figure 7.5**). We were starting to build serious distrust towards what we had been told by ATO leadership – but later were explained that "our cleaners work at night, from 6pm when everybody has gone. It is just too busy during the day…" (Mhlanga October 2014).

We were also able to gather during our self-organised tour that the traders don't work alone and are aware of their leadership, because when we asked to interview one of the guys working he said "I can't answer any of your questions but you can speak to my boss". Here, the lack of introduction from ATO leadership was leading to traders' fear and mistrust, that we understood particularly as linked to both context (aftermath of OCS) and identity of the traders (as foreign traders they have to be extra cautious and are perhaps even more fearful and distrustful as South African ones). However, we got a second contact from ATO leadership from Claire, and managed to build more of a dialogue with our second interviewee, who accepted to meet us twice, even taking the time to give us a tour of De Villiers Street. But still we felt that there was reluctance from him to let us speak to the other ATO traders, and when we asked "Can we please ask a trader and a block leader a few questions regarding ATO?", his response was:

> "They will not speak to you in the right way. The right people to speak to you are not here and the rest will not give you answers". (ATO leader, September 2014)

This second tour we undertook, this time with members of ATO executive, revealed that we had missed a lot of important details when we took our own tour which can be attributed to ignorance

and the fact that this was our first experience as researchers. ATO's executive members showed us where the gogos were situated, the demarcated spaces that traders have as well as the traders selling fruit. They also pointed out the 'helpers' of the traders as well as the frameworks of the gazebos that were setup for the majority of the stalls in the event of rain.

What is ATO?

De Villiers street is notorious in the inner city of Johannesburg. It is even the object of a blog post - that qualifies its own position to be 'at the frontline of popular culture', and qualifies the businss as "Vintage Fashion at the end of the line" – without however romanticizing the trade, adapted to a (direct or indirect) clientele with low affordability levels (Jamal 2011):

> "'The Piles' as it is known by insiders, is the biggest and most chaotic secondhand market in downtown Johannesburg. Piles of clothes run along either side of De Villiers street, on the widest part of the street up to four vendors can be set-up next to each other. Vendors purchase and sell bales, which have already been sorted by the type of clothing; t-shirts, shirts, jackets, dresses, furs, skirts, bags, hats, etc. Prices for clothing range between three and sixty Rands". (Jamal 2011)

City officials and business people, even street traders located in the nearby more orderly Retail Improvement District, will complain how congested and messy 'the Piles' look; how inappropriate it is in their view to put clothing "on the pavement" and sell in constantly overflowing heaps of clothes. Others will on the contrary argue that the street has gained a vibrancy it never had, note that traders have created notoriety for the street market, and elaborate on Nigerian traders' business acumen:

> "Before they came, the street was a desert; it was actually dangerous to walk there. They have created the vibe; they have created the congestion by attracting customers" (informal discussion with trader leaders from other organizations, August 2014, reported by Claire Bénit-Gbaffou).

De Villiers is not only the street where ATO members trade: arguably, even in a favorable location between various transportation nodes, ATO "made De Villiers street". This is what was as the core of a discussion within a CUBES workshop – on what congestion is, what it means; on the fact traders need a degree of congestion so that pedestrian slow down and gather in a few friction points, but not too much otherwise it creates discontent, impatience, and renders difficult for pedestrian to stop and buy.

> The City keeps repeating the term overcrowding. In De Villiers street, it is not traders that overcrowd the street, it is customers! So what does it mean? Should we be chasing away customers? What is overcrowding the city? What creates the city? Before we came, De Villiers was a ghost area. Now that we are there, people are there (ATO leader, CUBES workshop, Wits 28.05.2014)

Congestion in De Villiers is high according to South African norms, as illustrated by the pictures below (Figure 7.XX). As Jamal notes, the street presents a mix of apparent disorder and messiness ('chaos'), and of somehow efficient organization and local orders fitting the logics of business. In de

Villiers, pavements are often so crowded that pedestrians have to use the road to walk. Officials response would be to blame the traders for 'creating congestion' – other would say that the cars are the one occupying most space, on both sides of the street, in unproductive ways. The pictures also show how traders use both the built environment and added up gazebos to protect themselves from the rain or sun when needed.

Formalising the organisation

It was not easy to know when exactly the organisation started. To this question, we were first answered:

> "ATO has been in existence since the street has been existing" (ATO leader, first interview, September 2014).

This answer could have come from the fact that she could not remember exactly when the organisation was established, as it can be the case in informal organisations. However, another ATO leader stated that ATO began in 2010. It registered just after the 2013 Operation Clean Sweep, as a profitable organization. ATO's need to get the organisation formally registered may have been due to a variety of factors.

First, when it was time to go to Court, ATO needed an organisation with a registered name to take a letter to court. As ATO was not registered, they could not go to court in their name, and this was possibly what triggered their affiliation to another, formally registered organisation, SAITF.

Secondly, as a predominantly foreign based organisation, formal registration can be an important legitimising tool in the eyes of the City, demonstrating that ATO does not partake in any illegal activities such as drug dealing and is compliant to regulations and legislation such as street trading by-laws.

A third plausible reason for registering the organization was to make the City aware that ATO traders are aware of their rights and responsibilities as informal traders.

What surprised us however was that ATO registered as an organization for profit – not as a non-profit organization, as most street trader organizations do.

> "We registered ATO as a company. It if is registered as an NPO, there are always issues especially when dealing with money, restrictions on how we can use it and account for it. Also, we are having many ideas for ATO, we want to branch from being informal traders to be a formal business – being a private company already means we won't have to change our registration" (Mhlanga November 2014).

When asked if ATO is making profit or intending to make profit in the next future – given the fact its mandate is primarily to protect traders from harassment and crime and favour a good environment for business, Mhlanga answers:

Figure 7.3 (a, b, c & d) - Hussle and Bussle on de Villiers Street

Sources: © Khambule 2014 (a) and (d); Meintjes 2013 (b); Jamal 2011 (c).







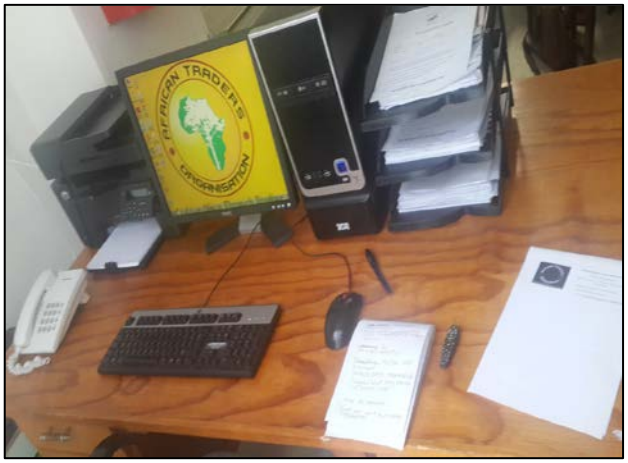




Figure 7.4 - In quest of ATO cleaners, on a rainy day
© Khambule 2014

Figure 7.5 (a & b) - ATO office, a cultivated business environment
© Khambule 2014





> "We are not making profit exactly. For the moment, we spend all the members' contributions we collect - on cleaning, on the office, etc. Eventually we want to invest in a bigger business, so that we don't need so much contribution from members but we can rely on our investments. So, early 2015 we want to raise more money to start saving for investment" (Mhlanga November 2014).

ATO has been able to rent an office space in the inner city (on Wanderers street), which only few organisations manage to do, as ir requires regular resources to be able to pay the rent, as well as administrative staff that makes use of the office. The office constitutes a cultivated business environment – with computer equipement, big table for meetings, papers with official letterhead and logo (see **Figure 7.6**).

ATO dreams and objectives

Based on our interviews, the goals that ATO is pursuing are threefold.

First and foremost, gain positive recognition by the City, in order to legalise and secure all existing traders of the organisation. The main objective of the organisation is indeed to protect its members from eviction, harassment and violence, in particular from the JMPD

Create a safe and clear environment for customers and traders is seen as important to gain this recognition. Since its establishment in 2010, ATO has five cleaners that clean every night; it also had its own security but this was suspended in November 2012. ATO claims "experience in organisation and management" of street trading, knowledge on what works for their business, and therefore demand to be part of trading space management (ATO submission, July 2014, see annexure).

Beyond securing trading spaces, ATO membership aspires to be treated as respectable business people. "We want to see trading given recognition because people don't take it as a formal business. […] People don't take street trading seriously" (ATO leader, 2014). What the group noticed through the various interactions with ATO members (interviews, observations and informal discussions), was indeed how the street traders saw themselves. The general perception from the public towards street traders is that they are people in dire situations with no alternative courses that they can take in their lives, and so in this way they have to somewhat bow to us, the customers, and beg for our money through the sale of clothing. The perception that we got from the traders towards themselves is quite different from this idea. The street traders within De Villiers see themselves as self-sustaining businesses, some of which are forms of transition instruments to help get to another place. They see themselves as being part of a larger network of interactions whereby they provide for a need, for not only the immediate community of Johannesburg, but that of the Southern African region to some extent. Corresponding much further to Johannesburg being the economic heartland of the Southern African region, traders of ATO are from a diverse range of backgrounds and therefore attain or produce resources from and for their respective regions.

> "We create jobs for many, many people in South Africa. People from the locations [townships] come and buy in bulk from us, to resell in the location. Our trade is contributing to many South African families' income. You shut us down, you shut down all those families" (Mhlanga Nov 2014).

ATO members are in the business of selling second hand clothing. It was not possible for us to collect information about the dynamics and networks they use to get access to their stock – any question touching on their 'business secret' was in fact shutting the interview down. But the reality of ATO's integration into a broad regional economy where formal and informal business networks are intertwined, and the level of cooperation and business association between the traders in De Villiers, became prominent to us through this research.

LEADERSHIP OF ATO

Through our interviews, we were explained the way ATO works and constructed an organogram based on what we understood. We then complemented this understanding through attempting to consolidate leaders' individual profiles; although this exercise proved sometimes challenging (we could not approach most of the trader leaders).

Organization of ATO

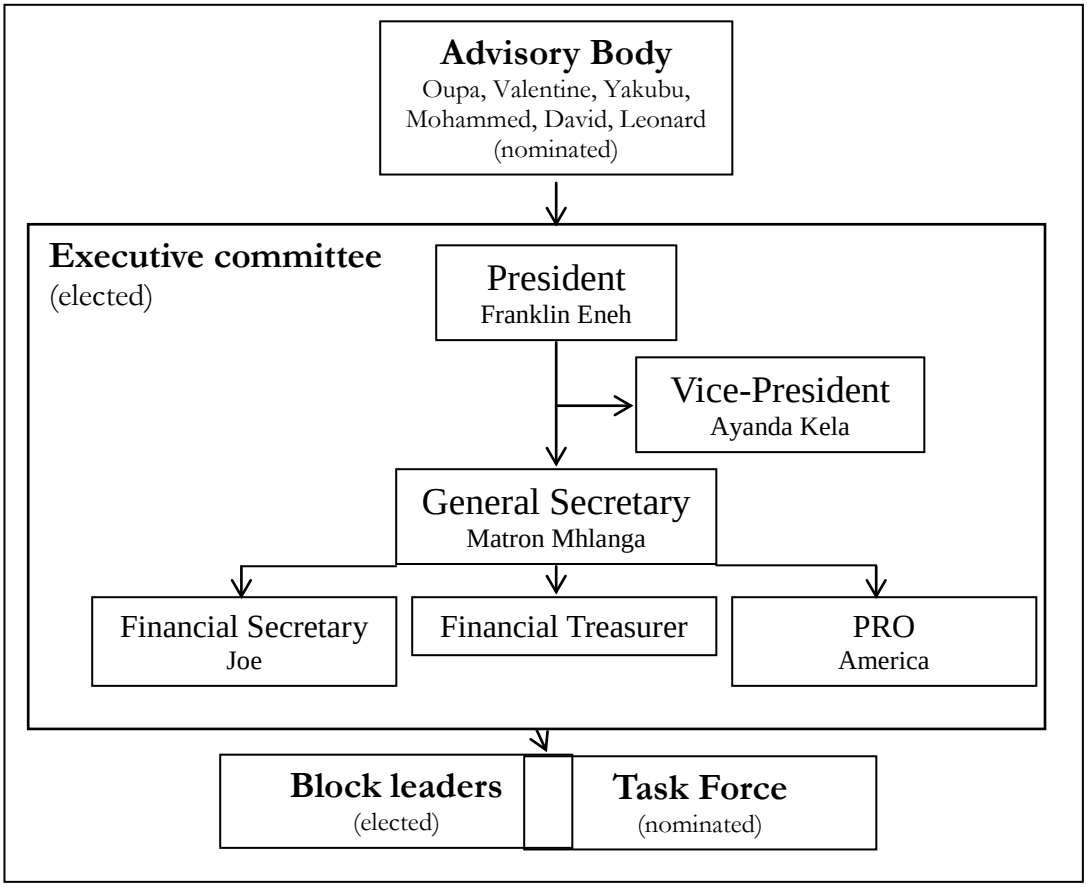


Figure 7.6. Organogram of ATO

The organization has the classic form of all registered organisations, with a Chair, Deputy Chair, Secretary and Treasurer forming the executive committee. The General Secretary seems to be the

one who makes the organisation work – perhaps this is emphasized even more in ATO because of the strong personality and political experience of Matron Mahlangu (also a political activist in WASP).

More original to ATO perhaps, are additional structures that are not required by the registration process: the advisory body, the task force, blocks leaders.

The advisory body consists of ATO traders – it was difficuult to determine the function of this body, as different from the executive. Often advisory bodies consist of people external to the organisations with the belief that their distance will help provide additional advice. Here, advisory members are also ATO traders, for instance, Leonard Mokone, whom we were able to interview. Mhlanga clarified that Advisory body members are the former members of the executive committee:

> "When your time is done in the executive committee we don't take you out completely. You have a lot of experience that is useful to the new committee. That is how it normally works." (Mhlanga Nov 2014)

The Advisory body is consulted when the executive committee needs to make a decision:

> "We don't call general meetings, we call the advisory committee when we have a decision to make. We call general meetings only if there are really emergencies to deal with. For instance, the issue of the Eloff street construction work[2], that is going to affect our traders, we called a general meeting to report on the information we had and how we were trying to get more information" (Mhlanga November 2014).

The taskforce functions as mediator and a problem solving team on the ground. They move around the street, resolve conflict as well as tackle any issues that may arise in the trading spaces. An example of this is when an advisory member of ATO stated that:

> "Customers often say hurtful things about foreign traders in their own languages with the assumption that they don't understand when in fact they do. In a situation like this the foreign national would obviously retaliate by swearing and the taskforce would come in to tell the customer that they need to be respectful to traders and to remove the trader from the situation" (ATO leader, October 2014).

But the taskforce is also checking that all traders abide to house rules – for instance, no trader is allowed to put clothes down, on the pavement: it needs to be in the baskets. Or, the taskforce checks that all members have paid their contribution, the R100 per month for the organization. "They normally seize goods if you are not making any contribution", explains Mhlanga (2014).

[2] Where an African Food Hub is being constructed currently, see GIDA chapter in this report for more details.

Trader leaders profiles

We interviewed in fact a number of ATO traders – ordinary members- to trace their profile. We were hoping that learning about leaders' background could help us make sense of the manner in which they influence or run the organisation. Some of their contextual background such as education, skills and past collective experiences could have an impact in the functioning of ATO. Prior to the interviews, we sought to interview the leaders and traders as the building blocks of the organisation. However, due to lack of trust or introduction, difficult access to traders, and sometimes evasiveness of answers, this proved difficult and not really informative. (see **Figure 7.7** below).

The feedback interview conducted by Claire Bénit-Gbaffou, with Matron Mhlanga, allowed to complement the profiles however. A very vocal and politically educated leader, the personality of Matron, an activist since her young age, not shy to engage, curious about politics and pragmatic in her approach of conflicts, certainly explains a lot of ATO's trajectory, including its link with WASP, its attachment to voice and its courage to confront the state, even from a foreign traders organisation's perspective.

Who are ATO members?

ATO is predominantly gathering Nigerian street traders, most of which are male and relatively young, sometimes educated (one member of the executive for instance states that he was an engineer in Nigeria). These traders specialise in second hand clothing, that they sell in a few blocks in De Villiers street. ATO also counts amongst its members a few South African older ladies, who specialise in cooked food, and other South African traders selling fruit. Mhlanga added that there were also other African nationalities amongst the traders: traders Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, and Malawi, working as well as traders' assistants or helpers (Mhlanga November 2014).

Who are the members?

Whilst ATO members' business identity is clearly shaped around the second hand clothing trade, and is dominated by Nigerian traders, their political identity as an organisation is attentive to their multi-national nature. The organisation is very careful for instance to mention and give consideration to the South African gogos in their self-presentation to the City of Johannesburg (ATO 2014):

> "Please note that ATO represents mostly traders of second hand clothes (for whom relocation might work), but also cooking mamas (30) and fruit and vegetable sellers (22) (de Villiers and Klein), for which specific solutions will need to be discussed." (ATO submission to CoJ, 18 August 2014).

When asked why ATO was including the food selling gogos, the reply was:

> "… because we know them, we buy from them, and nobody else was taking care of them' (informal discussion, ATO leader, August 2014, cited by Claire Bénit-Gbaffou).

Figure 7.7 – Portraits of ATO leaders

Full name: Ayanda Kela
Place and date of birth: Eastern Cape
Position in organisation: Vice President since 2013
Started trading when: 1998
Trading in: Second-hand clothing
Other political or community activities: Member of the ANC



Full name: Leonard Mokone
Position held in ATO: Member of ATO Advisory Body



Leonard Mokone describes himself as a man who, throughout his life, had engaged in various activities in and around South Africa with business partner and friend Ayanda Kela. Trading has taught him a lot about not only business, but people also. He explains how important block leaders and the taskforce were to mitigate conflict and prevent violence, particularly around xenophobic or derogatory comments often emitted by customers (thinking wrongfully that Nigerian traders do not understand South African vernacular languages).

Full name: Matron Mhlanga
Place of birth: Bushbuckridge, Mpumalanga
Position in ATO: General Secretary since 2013
Started trading when: 10 years ago
Trading what: Second-hand clothing
Where: On a stall on De Villiers street, and also house to house in a part of Soweto where she has regular customers.



Started trading: "I started selling as a mobile trader, going house to house in Soweto. Initially I would go all over, now I selected on place that I go to. I have a lady selling for me there now, but I still do it myself , I enjoy it, you meet new people, you have time to talk, people tell you about their issues. Selling from the stall is more profitable though, and it is less tiring than moving around – when you are tired you can sit down."

Why an activist: "I enjoy talking. At home there were these protests [about provincial demarcation] I used to attend, when I was 12. Once, the schools were shut down, I went all the way to Bushbuckridge, it was quite a distance to travel. I really enjoyed being part of action, being the one to report to my friends what happened, 'there was tear gas, we heard shooting, etc. I am not scared, especially when I am standing for what I know is true. […] I am good at giving ideas to people, and explaining politics. People often come to me with their issues."

Political awareness: "I would go through books. My mother was working in a bookshop, so I went through a lot of books and newspapers. History books in particular I enjoyed. I liked to gain knowledge on what is happening in this country, and the history of those people who were in the struggle. The issue of 1976, it is something that inspired me. When there is youth there is movement."

"But I was never a part of the ANC. I could see that people in power were benefitting while the poor were struggling, especially in the rural areas, like Mpumalanga. There were students in my school who were brilliant

thy could never study, never get a bursary. That was a waste: I did not like to see this. I also saw how connected people get tenders, but most of the poor are not connected to those in high position."

WASP: "I joined WASP through a friend. She is an activist for the Workers and Socialist Party (WASP) in Soweto. I used to go to Soweto to sell clothing, house to house, and we would sit down and discuss. We would dream of a better world, where the poor would be uplifted, salaries would be equal, all those things."

It can also be noted that part of the leadership of ATO, and the leadership that is the most vocal and at the forefront of interacting with South African officials, is South African and not Nigerian (see Ayanda and Matron's profiles, for instance). It is not surprising given the high level of xenophobia often expressed in public platform – and Matron is always the first to contest xenophobic statements and claim that Operation Clean Sweep had a lot to do with chasing foreign traders away from the inner city (see also below):

> "Operation clean sweep [was] inspired by xenophobia – the council just want[ed] to chase foreign street traders from the street" (CUBES workshop, 28.05.2014)

ATO does not only represent traders with smart cards, but also has those who do not have them as yet. They make it clear in their submission to the City of Johannesburg, where they recognise that they represent traders who have been trading in De Villiers for a long time, but do not all necessarily have smart cards:

> "ATO will come with a list of all concerned traders. Some of them have smart cards, some of them have demarcated sites but no smart cards, some of them are on the SAITF court list, some of them have old trading permits: but all of them have been trading in de Villiers for many, many years and we would argue that they are all legitimate and deserve to be accommodated in the new plan." (ATO 2014)

They consider all their members as legitimate traders in inner city Johannesburg, on the basis of the longevity of their trade in the street, the confusion around the many and contradictory ways in which legality is conferred to a trader by the City, and the contribution they feel they are making to the South African economy.

What does ATO do?

ATO primarily focuses on obtaining recognition for its members – recognition of the right to trade, recognition of their business acumen and contribution to the economy. To achieve this aim, ATO attempts at managing the street and its traders – putting most of its funding (the contribution of its members) and its own human resources (the taskforce permanently on the ground) to do so. ATO also shows reasonableness and the ability to sit with public authorities to find practical solutions (such as in the case of relocation and policing, see below). But ATO, unlike its counterpart NUT (also gathering foreign traders, in another part of the inner city – see previous chapter), is also able

to confront the City, and uses contention when needed, as was the case during Operation Clean Sweep.

Managing the street and the traders

The first achievement of the ATO is the fact that they are to some extent managing informal trading in the street. This assists in bringing in and maintaining order in the street precinct, although this form of order may not necessarily be seen as 'order' per say by the City. While the City may view the heaps of clothes as 'disorderly', traders and customers see them as a way of showcase that the clothes are cheap and are provided in bulk unlike in a formal store. This is for instance what is claimed in ATO's submission to the City of Johannesburg:

> "We can be in a structure (linear market for instance, or market great hall) but we don't want to be in a building and separate shops, as our trade relies on a market vibe, shouts attracting customers, competition and complementarity, visibility. That is why we would need to be part of any building and design processes to relocate and accommodate us." (ATO submission to CoJ, August 2014).

The maintenance of the street is arranged such that traders are organised in a form of identifiable linear market for second hand clothing. This is part of the defining aspects of the organisation. This enables them to be visible to their target market. Moreover, it seems that all traders buy their clothes collectively, as derived from Matron's claim that there was no stock on site at some point. Thus, it only implied that the traders are most likely to be getting supplied by the same source.

Managing the street for ATO entails spending both financial and human resources to control the street. We have seen through the structure of ATO that there was a dedicated 'taskforce' constantly on the ground, to check traders well-being, mitigate conflict (between traders themselves, between traders and customers, traders and authorities), but also monitor traders: make sure they don't drop items and clothes on the pavement, make sure they pay their monthly fees (with the possibility of confiscating their goods if they don't). Moreover, the bulk of ATO traders' monthly fees goes into paying night cleaning services (five cleaners), and used to pay for security agents, who used to monitor crime against traders and customers, but also 'illegal' traders.

The security and cleaners' task is to ensure that the site is kept safe and neat. In this respect, ATO's submission to the City of Johannesburg claims that:

> "We are having our own cleaners and security to fight crime (we have 6 cleaners and 4 securities), paid by traders own contributions, and managed by ATO. The cleaners come every night, Monday to Sunday; security do day shifts and solve conflicts, check thieves and protect traders and customers from crime, and prevent new traders to trade in the street." (ATO submission to City of Johannesburg, 18 September 2014, see annexure).

However, our observation was that there were no cleaners, nor security guards that we could see on either one of the site tours taken by the group. Moreover, on both days of our visit, the street was obviously littered, which made us question further the reality of these services. Initially we thought

these services had been discontinued at the time of our research – as can be the case within informal organisations with irregular cash flows and organisational capacity. Through a follow up interview with an ATO executive member, we were able to *hear* that ATO in fact has five cleaners who work at night.

> "Cleaners come around 18h00 when everyone has left. During the day it is too busy, there are just too many customers." (Mhlanga November 2014).

When we enquired why the street was still so dirty during the day, and if the cleaners were really efficient, ATO leadership blamed Pikitup:

> "Pikitup is nowhere to be seen during the day. The rubbish that we collect remains for three to four days on the pavement. Recyclers tear down the plastic to look for items, and this creates more litter. We have been going to some meetings with the City, we wanted to approach the supervisor of our area, to find ways to work together. This has not happened yet" (Mhlanga November 2014).

As for security, ATO leaders explained that it had been disbanded early 2014 because of "a challenge" with JMPD and SAPS:

> "SAPS or JMPD would pass and tell our security not to interfere with illegal traders. Yet, the main reason we hired the security is to make sure that nobody would come and create other stands. SAPS and JMPD would tell them, 'who are you to harass the people? You mustn't do that" (Mhlanga 2014)

Funnily enough, what was (in initial interviews with ATO leaders) presented as possible evidence of JMPD corruption (them protecting illegal traders because it is a direct way of collecting bribes, not wanting ATO security to deprive them of their rent), was analysed differently in our final interview with leadership:

> "We met sector one manager three months back. I have been elected as an executive member of Block Leaders Fighting Crime in the inner city. It is the police which started this forum, we registered it three weeks ago, we went for induction, all the block leaders were registered in CPF. They said it straight, they don't want us to harass or chase illegal traders. So, we decided that we needed to rectify everything. We might hire those security [agnts] back, but first make sure they are known by SAPS and JMPD, that they work hand in hand, that ATO reports to the sector manager." (Mhlanga November 2014).

The gap between pragmatic house rules (private security, or even elected block leaders chasing illegal traders) and public legislation (criminalizing illegal traders but mandating JMPD to check the legality of traders) is narrowing, as police and traders get to work together and learn each other's practices, needs or requirements. ATO's understanding of the tension between its private security and SAPS and JMPD has shifted, to become more nuanced, and open to ways forward. The process is officially about legalizing private security and block leaders' practices, and perhaps streamlining a process for traders to control their streets and prevent illegal traders to settle. In practice however, it might mean mostly the establishment of personal networks to find practical solutions to traders'

everyday issues – with however limited perspectives on where to accommodate new traders, how legal traders are defined, how to produce more trading spaces.

Negotiating with the City

ATO leadership importantly serves as a negotiating body between the traders in De Villiers and the City, as manifested in particular in their formal submission to the City, when they discussed the modality of their possible relocation, as an ongoing discussion with the City of Johannesburg:

> "We are open to debate the options that the city might bring to us and that were informally presented to us (new long distance taxi rank next Loveday street next to Home Affairs; Shell House; MTN rank). But we have experience and knowledge on what would work for our trade, and we need to be part of the location decision, the design of a proper structure, for our possible new trading space. Provided this is acknowledged, we are happy to be relocated to locations that work for us."

Their stance is to try and protect the whole of their membership, authorized, non-authorized (and other status in between) alike:

> "We are writing to you [the City] in good faith, and in trust. All our members have been trading in de Villiers for years, and we are forming a structured community. We wish that the process we are embarking on with you will be devoid of discrimination, violence and the need to recourse to lawyers. We are looking forward genuine and constructive engagement with you."

Confronting the City when necessary – the Operation Clean Sweep saga

ATO – like many trader organisations – would dream of recognition and being able to find practical solutions to the issues of street trading (some of which they experience themselves). But ATO traders also have shown their ability to contest City practices through demonstrations and litigation. ATO was in fact the first organization to organize a march against Operation Clean Sweep (it was joined by SAITF on the way); it was thanks to ATO's connection (through WASP) that SERI got involved and that litigation was used by street traders to (successfully) oppose Operation Clean Sweep.

Figure 7.8 – Matron Mhlanga's account of Operation Clean Sweep

"Two weeks after the start of Operation Clean Sweep, things were not stopping: the City officials were doing a different street every day. There were trader leaders deployed to go to the City to find a solution, but it failed. We were on our own on De Villiers; we never got a response from anyone. That is when we decided to approach WASP [the Workers And Socialist Party], as we understood Operation Clean Sweep as a political game played by the City. It was nearing election times, so we understood all this as the way for the ANC to say 'we can do this, we can clean up Johannesburg, the city can be liked what it used to look like before.'

We do understand Operation Clean Sweep as driven by xenophobia. The whole issue was supposed to be about verification of traders' papers, smart cards and the rest, but during this process, the City brought in immigration officers. Some of the papers of foreign nationals, even those who were legal, were seized and never returned; some foreign traders were arrested; many foreign traders' smart cards were also confiscated.

So we approached WASP, and they were willing to come to our aid. We had several meetings, and we decided to embark on a protest, as this is the only language that our government understands. That was the first protest that traders organized in the City. We applied for permission to march, we were given a date, and that is when SAITF approached us at WASP offices. And we agreed to march together: we were fighting for the same thing, we should join forces.

The protest was successful. One Voice organized another march on the following day, and on that same day the City offered to negotiate. In the meantime WASP was looking for a lawyer for us and approached SERI, as Nomzamo used to be a member of WASP. She replied that SERI would represent us if we were a united front for traders. WASP committed to help organize us as traders: that is when we met with the leadership of One Voice, SAITF, and even JOWEDET. That is how some of the members of these organisations are on the court list. But it did not go much further.

After the meeting with City officials, there was another march, because the City was not responding. And then we went to Court."

Source: Interview, 04.11.2014

Was Operation Clean Sweep principally motivated by xenophobia, as argued by some? Some activists report how the Mayor looked surprised when South African trader leaders entered the negotiation boardroom, and how many officials had assumed that most traders in the inner city of Johannesburg were foreigners (Aline Mushigo, African Diaspora Forum executive committee, informal discussion June 2014). This could also explain why the City had underestimated the political cost of the Operation. Other rather argue that calling Home Affairs in the verification process was an easy way for the City to reclaim street trading stalls and reallocate them (see SAITF chapter in this report) – but there definitely were discussions on the place of foreign traders in the inner city, and talks about limiting their number or proportions, in the context of a municipal approach attempting to drastically restrict the number of legal pavement trading sites[3].

Conclusion

ATO has demonstrated through their brief alliance with SAITF during the Court case that they are connected to legal NGOs and other trader organisations, and ready to adopt antagonistic actions if needed to protect their members. Their leadership, both out of personal skills and profile, and through political connections in particular with WASP, is vocal and able to talk the truth to power – including consistently and strongly denouncing xenophobia and standing as foreign traders representatives (perhaps sometimes at the expense of political efficacy, but this is to be seen).

[3] See the document circulated by the City to trader leader organisations in the negotiation process before the court case (November 2013): proposing a total of no more than 1500 legal trading spaces, in "short streets" and linear markets in Johannesburg inner city (CoJ 2013). Later in 2014, City officials will recognise publically the existence of 3700 legal traders (as registered in traders databases). The total number of traders has never been disclosed.

But they prefer to sit and negotiate with the City, as an autonomous organisation with specific trading skills and aims, and debate in reasonable ways- recognizing congestion in the street and the need to manage it, accepting relocation as long as they have a say in the process, design and management of the new trading space, learning how to work with the police to legally secure their streets without falling into vigilantism. Their vulnerability as foreign traders, and perhaps the specificity of their mandate (to protect their own members in De Villiers street), perhaps lead them to avoid engaging on broad principled solution ('legalise all traders!'), and somehow narrowly focus on their business, even if it means chasing new coming (illegal) traders from what they consider "their" street – not only because they currently occupy it, but because they have "made" it become the street it is.

Their model of street trading management and control is relatively efficient, coupling the private provision of (what is supposed to be supplementary) cleaning and security services, to a grounded administration (the task force) that, because it consists of traders themselves, understands both business logics and traders' challenges.

To open up this conclusion, doing this research gave sense to a text we read in class, that seemed puzzling at first notice: Simone's reading of the inner city street politics through the invented concept of "People as infrastructure":

> "People as infrastructure indicates residents' needs to generate concrete acts and contexts of social collaboration inscribed with multiple identities rather than in overseeing and enforcing modulated transactions among discrete population groups. For example, no matter how much Nigerians and South Africans express their mutual hatred, this does not really stop them from doing business with each other, sharing residences, or engaging in other interpersonal relations" (Simone, 2004: 419).

ATO leaders do just that - when simultaneously denouncing xenophobia of other traders, of officials or even customers (and finding diverse mechanisms to tackle this, from confrontation to mediation); and boasting that ATO's trade creates livelihoods for South African - as their customers buy in bulk to resell in Soweto, also further pushing the reticulation of their goods into the townships. Both claims reflect truths, both claims are made in different context for different political objectives. Navigating these contradictions is the very essence of informal traders' everyday politics.

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Interviews

Matron Mhlanga, ATO General secretary – De Villiers Street, 26th September 2014; Wanderers Street, 16 October 2014

Ayanda Kela, ATO Vice President - Wits University, 29th September 2014; De Villiers Street, 23 October 2014; Wanderers Street 16 October 2014

Leonard Mokone, ATO Advisory Committee Member – De Villiers Street, 23rd October 2014

Feedback session (conducted by Claire Benit-Gbaffou), with Matron Mhlanga - Wits university, 04 November 2014.

Tour dates: 29th September 2014 and 16th October 2014 (with Ayanda Kela)

Annexures

Figure 7.9 - ATO submission to the City of JHB
Source: CUBES archives communicated to authors, 2014

Johannesburg, 18 August 2014

African Traders Organisation (ATO) Submission to City of Johannesburg, re: 'Informal Trading: Inner City Promulgation and Designation of Trading Areas", after the consultation meeting held at the Metro Center, 29 July 2014.

We, the African traders Organisation (ATO), based in de Villiers Street (between Klein and Hoek) and representing 280 traders, are making the following submission to the CoJ as part of the consultation process started 29 July 2014:

1) In addition to the general points raised jointly with other street trader organisations (SAITF, SANTRA, one Voice, ACHIB, NUT, GIDA), we would like to make the following points affecting our members and de Villiers street more specifically.
2) We are able to contribute to street trading and street management, as we have done in the past few years. We are having our own cleaners and security to fight crime (we have 6 cleaners and 4 securities), paid by traders own contributions, and managed by ATO. The cleaners come every night, Monday to Sunday; security do day shifts and solve conflicts, check thieves and protect traders and customers from crime, and prevent new traders to trade in the street.
3) De Villiers street appears to be a very suitable street to trade in: large pavements, lots of pedestrian flows, close to the taxi rank, a short street. However ATO understands that it is very congested, in particular by the flow of customers, and it needs some responses and some management. We would like to be part of building this response, management and solution.
4) We are open to debate the options that the city might bring to us and that were informally presented to us (new long distance taxi rank next Loveday street next to Home Affairs; Shell House; MTN rank). But we have experience and knowledge on what would work for our trade, and we need to be part of the location decision, the design of a proper structure, for our possible new trading space. Provided this is acknowledged, we are happy to be relocated to locations that work for us.
5) Please note that ATO represents mostly traders of second hand clothes (for whom relocation might work), but also cooking mamas (30) and fruit and vegetable sellers (22) (de Villiers and Klein), for which specific solutions will need to be discussed.
6) We can be in a structure (linear market for instance, or market great hall) but we don't want to be in a building and separate shops, as our trade relies on a market vibe, shouts attracting customers, competition and complementarity, visibility. That is why we would need to be part of any building and design processes to relocate and accommodate us.

7) The solution needs to accommodate us all. We are doing the same kind of business, the fact we are together works for business, it is easier to market in this way. So we wish to all be accommodated together in the same place.
8) Based on our experience in organisation and management, we would wish to continue having a say in the management of the new trading space. It has worked for us very well to provide our own cleaners and security and we would like to continue working in that way, in partnership with the City.
9) For the process to start, if the City is happy with these suggestions, ATO will come with a list of all concerned traders. Some of them have smart cards, some of them have demarcated sites but no smart cards, some of them are on the SAITF court list, some of them have old trading permits: but all of them have been trading in de Villiers for many many years and we would argue that they are all legitimate and deserve to be accommodated in the new plan.
10) We want to be involved in all decisions that concerns us, and in particular in the design of the new trading facilities. We know what works for us, we know how to accommodate one another and we are keen in this being part of the process.
11) We are writing to you in good faith, and in trust. All our members have been trading in de Villiers for years, and we are forming a structured community. We wish that the process we are embarking on with you will be devoid of discrimination, violence and the need to recourse to lawyers. We are looking forward genuine and constructive engagement with you.

Contact: Matron Mhlanga, mhlangamatron@gmail.com, 0795568170.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Claire Bénit-Gbaffou

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This brief conclusion will give a few directions for debate, based on some of the cross-cutting issues emerging out of this collection of interconnected street trader organisations' profiles.

Little progress has been made since the early 2000s

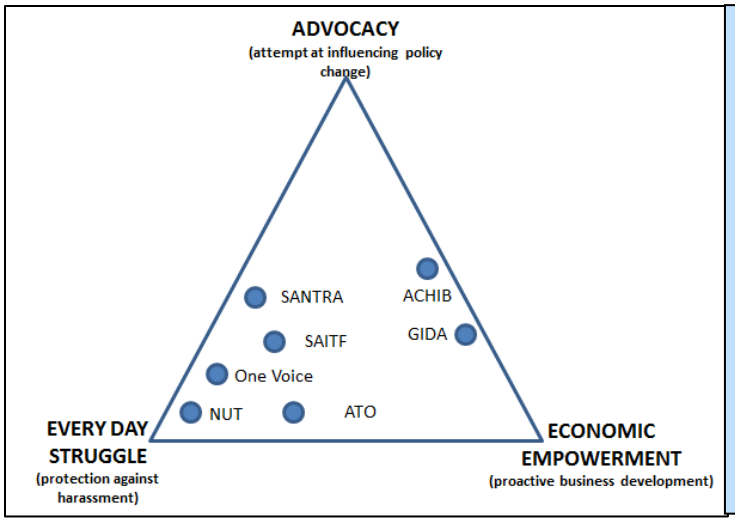
City continues to harass traders, organisations continue to spend their time fighting against individual abuses.

The most poignant illustration of this is to read Livingston Mantanga in 2004 – he was then a trader leader in ACHIB, accusing the City of having abusively confiscated the goods of legal traders in Wanderers Street, and threatening lawsuit; and then, to read him in 2014, making exactly the same statements, about legal traders abused in President Street. This comes as an evidence, lost in the micro and not that micro victories won by the sector – the situation of street traders has not improved since the early 2000s. Street trading organisations have been able to block the City each time it was blatantly abusing traders, but not make substantial differences in the way street traders are treated. This was capture by one of the students (Figure I.1). This was articulated by ACHIB, explaining its shift in focus since 2006 – focusing its efforts on lobbying the policy makers rather than fighting the implementers – the police. But it does not mean that organisations on the ground are not needed: they are the ones which make a difference in the lives of thousands of traders, trying their best to protect them on a daily basis, in an endless and always repeated battle, in a Sisyphus' task.

Positioning the organisation between advocacy, everyday struggles and economic empowerment

Trader organisations' strategic choices could be understood not in an continuum between 'advocacy' and 'economic empowerment, **but in a triangle – between every day struggles** (protecting traders against harassments), **economic empowerment** (proactively supporting traders' individual businesses) **and advocacy work** (attempt to influence policy, be it on the right to trade and status of street traders, or on their access to business opportunities).

Figure 8.1 – Strategically positioning the organisation



SANTRA and ACHIB are the two organizations engaging the most on advocacy work, attempting to change policy frameworks at national level – ACHIB does it on the economic empowerment side, whereas SANTRA focuses on traders' rights. GIDA and ACHIB are more working on policies than on grounded work – which is at the core of the other organisations' work. Some of them are more interested in developing traders business skills and opportunities (GIDA, ATO, ACHIB), others are focusing on access to trading spaces (SAITF, SANTRA, One Vice, NUT).

Conception and realisation Claire Bénit-Gbaffou 2014

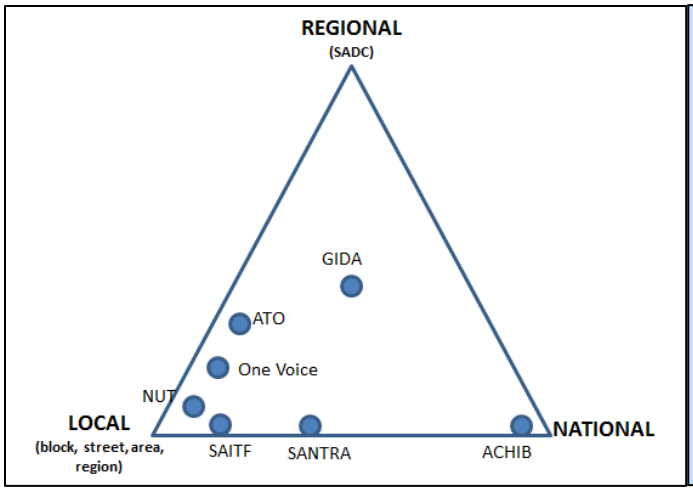
It is very difficult for street trader organisation to hold both their membership and grounding (which requires the ability and resource to protect members against abuse, to respond to crises) and act strategically at the national level (which requires forging and maintaining national networks, having the time and capacity to think strategically, without being constantly distracted from that task by the everyday emergencies of the struggle. In a way, working for the economic empowerment of traders (though business training programmes, securing access to credit, …) might be less taxing and another way for an organisation to keep a foot on the ground. But it can be argued that economic empowerment without the basic right to trade free from harassment is also of limited relevance. Tenure uncertainties and lack of management mean that few traders are able to focus on bettering their skills, taking business risks and exploring new market niches.

In this perspective, ACHIB has developed national policy networks but has lost a bit of grounding. ATO and NUT, as foreign organisations, are purely focused on protecting their members, with perhaps an ambition to grow what has become a notorious and lucrative second hand clothing market. One Voice and SAITF are focused on protecting their members, and also engaging in politics, but at a more local and practical level. SANTRA has developed an articulated and complex policy discourse whilst keeping a grounded membership – but perhaps lacks the time availability to push its policy vision beyond occasional workshops.

Straddling scales of action - local, national, continental

Traders organisations' choices are also a **choice of scale of action**. Whilst the main difference remains between those acting mostly locally and those acting mostly nationally, a third scale of action is emerging – a continental or regional one.

Figure 8.2 – Scaling street trader organisations



Only ACHIB is clearly focusing at the national scale – and has lost some of its grounding in the process. GIDA, ATO and One Voice are developing business networks at the SADC and continental scale (these trading linkages are a reality for ATO, more of an aspiration for GIDA and One Voice). SAITF is focusing on the region, SANTRA has more national ambitions, but both remain grounded in Johannesburg and Gauteng. GIDA is *attempting* to play on the three scales – developing regional trading networks, lobbying the state at national level for a more adapted cross border trade legislation, and working locally to create cooperatives in that context.

Building the link between leadership and spatially scattered constituencies

One key organisational choice organisations have to make is to construct the link between leadership and a spatially scattered, or fragmented constituency.

Unlike factory workers or residents associations, they cannot exclusively mobilise on the ground of spatial proximity – if they do it hampers their growth. Different organisations have found different solutions:

- Having decentralised structures: area representatives, locally defined affiliates, block leaders, local branches. The way these decentralised structure keep in touch with the executive are many fold: through regular meetings (e.g. block leaders meetings in SAITF), through nomination of a representative of each area in the executive committee (GIDA, SAITF, ACHIB, SANTRA)
- Investing in regular general meetings is the exception rather than the rule. It is easier for smaller organisations like NUT or ATO, but even then, traders complain about being taken away from their business, and this is kept for emergency situations. GIDA, when ESSET subsidy for meetings was severed (transport, food), stopped general meetings all together – too costly for traders. It is only SAITF which has adapted general meetings as a normal way of working, at least in 2014.
- Organising moments of mass mobilisation, in the form of protests, is certainly a way in which members shape their identity as members and see the organisation as a movement they belong to. One Voice extensively relies on protests (with full regalia of Tshirt and banners) to create a link between the President and its basis. SAITF and ATO also use protests as important repertoires – of contention but also identification of members.

- Appointing a task team that regularly checks the different sub-areas, affiliates or group of members. This is the case for NUT and ATO (more for issues of control of the street), but is also to some extent the case for SANTRA and One Voice, where the Chairs, who are not trading, spends their time connecting with organisations various constituencies – this makes of course for more personalised leadership.

In these choices, of course the size and scale of the organisation, its geographic spread, does matter. Amongst the 7 organisations profiled, only ACHIB is a truly national organisation. SAITF is a widely provincial organisation, with affiliates in Johannesburg but also the other Gauteng municipalities. Other organisations are based in Johannesburg, and two of them are exclusively based in a few blocks in the city (ATO and NUT).

Map 8.1 – Spatial distribution of street trader organisations in Gauteng, 2014



Xenophobia – the new frontier

The closer to the ground level of leadership (block leader level), the more openly xenophobic – but there were also cases of executive committee leaders and even organisation chairpersons embarking on xenophobic discourses. In some cases, xenophobia is the way through which legal traders complain about the unfair competition of "illegal traders", who by definition do not pay rent, do not partake in the management and cleanliness of the place, are not managed (neither by the municipality nor by an organisation), and often are mobile and able to take the best trading spots. In other, xenophobia is the way through which organisations complain about corruption, unfair allocation of trading spaces, in the context of competition for legal trading spaces. Through narratives of Operation Clean Sweep, it has also become clear that one way for City officials to reward their clients was to clear spaces where foreign traders were legally trading, by calling Home Affairs and confiscating smart cards, and to reallocate their demarcated spaces, thus freed, to South African traders. The issue of quotas for foreign traders in the inner city was also discussed (before the court case) between City officials and trader leaders – entrenching competition over a few spaces rather than fundamentally challenging the artificially low number of legal trading spaces in the inner city.

It is easy for an outsider to see that xenophobia is being constructed by what could be called the public creation of scarcity of trading spaces (Bénit-Gbaffou 2014b). By choosing, arbitrarily, to create only 1500 or 3000 legal trading spaces for an estimated 7000 to 8000 existing traders in the inner city, the City is creating competition amongst traders – that takes the form of xenophobia in particular. It is also criminalising a majority of the traders, who ipso facto become "illegal" and therefore impossible to manage – not paying rent, not engaging, fearful and constantly on the run- other than through repression or corruption. **For organisations to deconstruct xenophobia, and shift their members perceptions and claims, from "outsiders and illegals out!" to "all existing traders should be legalised", is a daring and daunting but necessary movement to make**. It could be argued without this strategic move, street traders will continue to suffer and fight one another for a few legal trading spaces.

Balancing the place of organisations in the management of trading spaces

Many organisations have expressed, experimented or aspire to some form or degree of **trader self-management of trading areas – meaning organisations managing specific trading spaces.**

This aspiration is to be understood in the context of inefficient or unsufficient public management of street trading; and in the context of limited dialogue between the municipality and the traders, leading to aspiration of autonomy. Options for self-management expressed by trader organisations are often innovative but also raise issues of democracy and accountability.

NUT and ATO have formed task team and a mini administrative apparatus (office book, screening of members, accounts), to control and manage the streets, at the scale of a few blocks, or between 150 and 200 traders. They have organised cleaning, either by hiring paid cleaners (ATO), or by organising compulsory traders' clean up (individual and collective). This comes at some cost for their membership – membership fee is high and adds up to the rental paid to the City, and there are forms of revolt (against suspending business on cleaning day in ATO; against payment of the fee in NUT), requiring the organisation to use sanctions (confiscation of goods in ATO's case).

One Voice has made a big case for being granted the management of the trading spaces it opened for traders – streets and buildings, through lobbying the municipality or partnering with the private sector. SAITF has sent a proposal to the City proposing that SAITF manages the markets, collects the rents, solves conflicts, deals with the everyday basic maintenance of the market. SANTRA (although this has not been forthcoming in this report) has made a proposal to the City, to set up a trader management committee around Park Station, in partnership with the Central Johannesburg Partnership. All organizations complain that the City undermines their organizational efforts, by insisting on organizing elections at the block and market level, and only talking to the elected representatives – indeed, elections ensure that the leaders are chosen by the traders. Yet, it is also true that often block leaders do not have the strategic and organizational capacity to make demands to the City, and it has been through SAITF, SANTRA or One Voice strategic and networking capacity, that local demands (of lower rents, of legalization, etc.) have been met.

What does it mean for traders self-management? It means a **balance needs to be found between political efficiency (the strategic and networking capacity that only organisations have), and democratic accountability (where traders can choose which organization they want to affiliate to,** and should be able to elect their representatives.

The trade union model seems to have made such a choice in South Africa – for factory workers, the freedom to choose one's trade union has generally been sacrificed, in favour of the political efficiency of the locally-based union, who has a monopoly on membership at factory or even sector level. The union one joins depends on the place one works; it is the unique organization that is entitled to negotiate with the employer. How these debates have been held in the trade union realm; is this the model across the world; how does it work in practice (it seems when workers are dissatisfied with their union, they split, they revolt, and create alternative unions!); would it be applicable to informal workers working in public spaces… are still areas to be further researched.

A supplementary challenge in the street trading realm, is linked to the fact that it is the exception rather than the norm, that one single organization dominates a specific space. The inner city map that we attempted to put together – on the spatial distribution of organization membership in the inner city- was unsuccessful: it ended up being too inaccurate to be published, and would need a workshop with all organizations representatives. We were trying to understand if there were truly different organisations' territories, what were their overlap and their clear demarcation. In fact, in most cases, and in particular around the most lucrative spaces (such as south of Park Station, along

Bree and Jeppe, Noord and Eloff streets), there is huge diversity and overlap – all organisations claim to have members in these spaces. Membership of course is fluid, and these spaces also accommodate an important number of unauthorized and unaffiliated traders. There are, however, some areas where one organisation prevails: NUT on its four streets, ATO on De Villiers, SAITF in the Fashion District, SANTRA in the Retail Improvement District, One Voice around Joubert Park. But it is a minority of cases, generally linked to the immediate proximity of an organization leader, often at the same time a block leader in the area. What it means for traders self-management… is another layer of complexity. If one agrees that the management of street trading in a micro-space could be done through an organization, which organization should it be?

The Ekurhuleni model is interesting in this respect, where the municipal by-laws state that each trader needs to be a member of a street trader organization to be able to register as a legal trader in the City[1]. Freedom of choice is guaranteed but the organisations' role is protected and enhanced. Here, the municipality seems to have made the choice to rather support the consolidation of the sector and the capacitation of street trader organisations. Whether this is working in practice is a matter for further research.

[1] Informal discussion with Victor Mabaso, ACHIB Gauteng Deputy Chair, representing Ekuhuleni, Wits, October 2014.



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Front: Nokwanda (Nokxie) Kgomo, Zintathu (Zee) Mazamane, Samukelisiwe Makwakwa, Mmbulaheni Khwashaba, Patience Bosaka, Wetu Memela, Alexandra (Alex) Willis. Second row: Dineo Lekgothoane. Bianca van Niekerk, Ashlyn Jackson, Nomathemba Dladla, Abraham Ajibade, Kyla Elsey. Third row: Musawenkosi Mhlongo, Mpho Mohloboli, Sphamandla Hlela, Ntombikayise Khambule. Back: Siyabonga Manzini, Uzuzakhe (Uzi) Ngantweni, Prof Claire Bénit-Gbaffou.





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