

“We Are Working Hand to Mouth”: Zimbabwean Teachers’ Experiences of Vulnerability in South Africa

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SUMMARY

South Africa’s (SA) magnetism in attracting skilled and unskilled migrants, particularly in a post-apartheid context, has been highlighted in various studies. However, there appears to be limited studies that examine the experiences of skilled immigrants in SA in this context. Furthermore, there are none that focus specifically on immigrant teachers despite immigrants fulfilling SA’s need for teachers in specialist subjects like Maths and Science. This paper explores the experiences of Zimbabwean immigrant teachers in SA, who are the largest cohort of foreign teachers in that country. The article draws its empirical evidence from an ethnographic study in 2011 which sought to understand the nature of Zimbabwean teachers’ immigration to SA. The data is generated from thirteen semi structured interviews with Zimbabwean immigrant teachers located in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, an east coast province of SA. Their experiences in SA included a complex and frustrating process of acquiring documentation to legally enter SA’s labour market, difficulty in acquiring job security, xenophobic attitudes by locals and workplace exploitation. Their experiences expose their vulnerability, in particular their attempts to meet their family responsibilities as they were occupying a critical role in the household and living transnational lives. A shared thread amongst Zimbabwean immigrant teachers was that their qualifications married to their specialist teaching expertise did not provide them with easy access into the professional education domain in SA; they had to settle for a reduction professionally and some for naught by virtue of being highly skilled non-citizens.

KEY WORDS: Zimbabwean immigrant teachers, South Africa, remuneration, job security, workplace exploitation

INTRODUCTION

Recent teacher statistics report that globally, there is an estimated shortfall of 18 million qualified (primary and secondary qualified) teachers (Ochs,

2009; Degazon-Johnson, 2010) and some countries in Sub Saharan Africa will experience the greatest challenges in needing to quadruple (e.g. Chad) or double (e.g. Ethiopia) their output of primary school teachers to meet the demand (*Teachers and Educational Quality*, 2006) which if not met, will negatively impact on these countries' ability to achieve universal primary education by 2015. Collectively, an aging teacher population and an inability to attract locals into teaching as a long term career were deemed to be responsible for teacher shortages in developed countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States of America (Ochs, 2007; Spreen and Edwards, 2011). However, developed countries have since the 1950s endorsed the recruitment of skills from developing countries to meet their labour needs and protect their economies (Vigilance, 2012). It has been argued that emigration is an old phenomenon; however, its accelerating rate since the independence of many countries in the 1960s has come at a cost to Africa with skilled workers consisting of only 4% of the workforce, yet an alarming 40% of workers exiting to go abroad (Nguyen, 2006). SA, similar to the Caribbean and India, historically occupied the Commonwealth limelight for its claims of a brain drain of its teachers in the early 2000s to developed countries (Miller, 2007; Manik, 2009b; Keevy and Jansen, 2010) which prompted multiple efforts, the most vital of which the author perceives to be the Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol in 2004 and a pan-Commonwealth teacher qualifications comparability table in 2010. The Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol was a document crafted to protect all host nations and recruited teachers engaging in teacher migration. In respect of the comparability table, the Commonwealth Steering Group on Teacher Qualifications tasked the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) to develop a pan-Commonwealth teacher qualifications comparability table. This follows a previous study by SAQA and the Commonwealth Secretariat in 2006 on the recognition of teacher qualifications given concerns about the migration of teachers and "challenges related to the recognition and transferability of teacher qualifications across Commonwealth countries" (Keevy and Jansen, 2010: 11). This comparability table was developed after research on primary and secondary teacher qualifications across 35 Commonwealth countries.

From the late 1990s there has been a growing increase in migration of the highly skilled including teachers within and out of Africa (Adepoju, 2006; Nguyen, 2006). There is also a new trend adjunct to the historical trend, emerging in the context of SA, despite it being a developing country. It has become popular as a receiving country for immigrant teachers in southern

Africa (Brown, 2008). A major contribution to this trend in recent years has come from one of SA's neighbours, Zimbabwe (Chibaya, 2008; Mawadza, 2008), which is in keeping with the contention that teacher migration within Africa occurs among neighbouring countries (Adepoju, 2006). Interestingly, SA is not responsible for recruiting teachers from Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe has been experiencing socio-economic and political turmoil in the mid 2000s and this has led to an exodus of Zimbabwean citizens (Rutherford, 2010; Worby, 2010). Sisulu, Moyo and Tshuma (2007: 533) report that Zimbabweans "have the unenviable distinction of having the fastest shrinking economy, the highest rate of inflation and the lowest life expectancy in the world." Scholars explain that because of the difficult conditions, Zimbabweans have been leaving particularly for SA (Kriger, 2010; Worby, 2010). Sisulu, Moyo and Tshuma (2007) note that many qualified professionals such as nurses, teachers, pharmacists and doctors go to the UK and SA but SA attracts both skilled and unskilled migrants. They are of the opinion that different groups of migrants leave for different reasons. They believe that the push factors, prior to 2005 for doctors, nurses and pharmacists were economic reasons whilst for teachers, journalists and the youth, there were political reasons. The emigration of teachers from Zimbabwe has been recognized as an area of national and regional unease (Kassiem, 2007).

It is understandable that SA has become the favoured destination for Zimbabweans as there are multiple pull factors in addition to the push factors, such as its close proximity as alluded to above and it is relatively stable economically and politically. In addition, it is understood that the delivery of quality education in SA is being compromised by SA's need for qualified competent teachers which has been growing. Recent studies have declared the necessity for an increased output of qualified teachers to address the shortage of teachers in several key subject areas in SA. A study by the Centre for Development and Enterprise (McCarthy and Bernstein, 2011) noted that whilst SA is graduating an average of 6000 teachers per annum, 15,000 teachers were required to meet the needs of the country. There is a level of deep concern which is evident in the country's desire to meet its targets as can be seen in the first pillar of the four pillar *Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa 2011–2025* which reads "efforts to attract and recruit more teachers into the profession should be redoubled, including targeting foreign educators and retraining unemployed teachers or teachers employed elsewhere" (*Integrated Strategic Planning Framework...: Technical Report*, 2011: 13). Thus SA joins the ranks of many developed countries like the United States of America, Canada and

the United Kingdom which have expressed the need to attract teachers to address their labour deficits. But SA is not engaging in acts of teacher recruitment outside of its national borders although it expressed some consideration of this idea and there is no indication of ways to retain teachers within the profession.

The extent of the Zimbabwean diaspora in South Africa

Some descriptions of the extent of immigration to SA have led to perceptions of a tidal wave of Zimbabweans engulfing SA (Brown, 2008; Hammar, McGregor and Landau, 2010). Kriger (2010: 81) notes that “there are more Zimbabweans in SA than there were Mozambican refugees during its civil war in the 1980’s and 1990’s”. Bourne (2011) has estimated that there could be as many as 700,000 Zimbabweans in SA. It is natural therefore that there has been a plethora of studies undertaken in South Africa, highlighting the plight of Zimbabweans, eager to earn a living (Mawadza, 2008; Rutherford, 2010; Kriger, 2010) as there have been large numbers of Zimbabweans identified in Gauteng, Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape (Sisulu, Moyo and Tshuma, 2007) provinces of SA. However, the majority of these studies have been limited to unskilled immigrants such as farm workers or skilled immigrants such as doctors/nurses. With regard to Zimbabwean teachers, the interim chairperson of The Progressive Teachers’ Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ) in SA stated in 2006, that an average of 4 000 teachers left Zimbabwe per annum since 2000 and that majority are in SA. A calculation using the PTUZ estimate (Sisulu, Moyo and Tshuma, 2007) would then reveal that there could possibly be more than 50 000 Zimbabwean teachers in SA in 2014. But statistical estimates differ and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA, 2008, in Manik, 2009a) previously reported that there were 10 000 qualified Zimbabwean teachers in SA, a far smaller number than the PTUZ estimate, but possibly counting for the largest cohort of foreign teachers. Initially, there didn’t seem to be any SA government interest in gathering data on migrant teachers prior to 2011, but this appears to be a common international finding of governments in destination countries (Miller, 2007; Spreen and Edwards, 2011). Ochs and Jackson (2009) reported in their Commonwealth Study on the Implementation of the Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol that no quantitative data was provided on teacher supply or teacher turnover by SA for the period 2005 – 2007 as requested. Some statistics on immigrant teachers including Zimbabwean teachers are in the process of being released in 2014.

Below is a table from a recent collaborative study undertaken by SAQA, The Department of Higher Education and the author (Keevy, Green and Manik, 2014) which shows a slice of data from the year 2010 on immigrant teachers who applied to have their qualifications recognized, as a step towards entering the SA teaching profession. It is evident that Zimbabwean immigrant teachers do occupy a substantial number and can be confirmed to being the largest cohort of teachers who have applied for qualification recognition in 2010, more than 60% (n=1694 – 64% of the sample).

Table 1. Countries supplying migrant teachers to South Africa in 2010

Countries	Number of qualification sets evaluated
Canada, China, France, Italy, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan Portugal, Poland, Romania, Sierra Leone, Turkey	1 each
Botswana, Bulgaria, Netherlands, New Zealand, Rwanda	2 each
Germany, Mozambique	3 each
Australia, Egypt, Malawi, Namibia	4 each
Zaire	5
DRC	13
Ethiopia	9
Zambia	17
UK	21
USA	21
Swaziland	35
Cuba	38
Uganda	39
Lesotho	40
Cameroon	57
India	69
Nigeria	171
Ghana	185
Kenya	206
Zimbabwe	1694
Total	2662

Source: Daniels and Green, 2014

Given these statistics are the only quantitative data that is presently available, it is fair to state that there is a dearth of overall research unpacking SA

as a receiving country for immigrant teachers, particularly Zimbabwean teachers. At best, there is some anecdotal information on Zimbabwean immigrant teachers' experiences in SA (Sisulu, Moyo and Tshuma, 2007; Betts, 2010). Sisulu, Moyo and Tshuma (2007: 533) note that "life is not as good as expected in SA, citing xenophobia, discrimination, police harassment, unemployment and a lack of basic services". Sisulu, Moyo and Tshuma (2007: 556) suggest that immigrant teachers in SA are in extremely exploitative circumstances in private schools and colleges either by not being paid or receiving low salaries with little recourse for legal action as they lack legal status. Kriger (2010: 82) confirms this view in her comment that "the vast majority of Zimbabweans enter SA as 'illegal foreigners' – either crossing the border illegally or bribing immigration officials". They are "either occupying menial jobs, unemployed and destitute" (Sisulu, Moyo and Tshuma, 2007: 556) and should not be construed as only applying to unskilled workers, it also applies to professional and skilled Zimbabweans who resort to low skilled jobs (Kriger, 2010). The implication is that Zimbabweans are struggling to survive in SA. Betts (2010: 29) also noted that "there was an absence of formal opportunities for teachers in destination countries [...] with little thought about how they could be brought into the labour market and informal teaching taking place without support from the state and international organisations." He cited amongst other examples that of Zimbabwean teachers in the Central Methodist church in Johannesburg, teaching Zimbabwean immigrants in unhygienic conditions. A study by Manik (2013a) also asserts that Zimbabwean immigrant teachers experience xenophobic attitudes¹ and behaviour in SA in schools and greater society. These scholars berate the SA government for not acknowledging the enormity of the crisis in Zimbabwe and responding to it.

Locating Zimbabwean immigrant teachers within a crisis framework

A valuable perspective and analytical tool on refugee migration in the developing world has come from work undertaken by Betts (2010). He is frank in his declaration that he should not be considered as an authority on teacher migration nor has he embarked on specific research based on teacher migration but rather on international migration and its impact on the developing world. Nevertheless, one of the outcomes of his work has been

¹ Xenophobia as experienced by Zimbabwean immigrant teachers in SA is not discussed in this particular article. Zimbabwean immigrant teachers' experiences of xenophobia can be accessed in a special edition of the journal *Alternation* on Xenophobia in the context of SA (Manik, 2013b).

some critical insights into the phenomenon that he terms "survival migration." He (Betts, 2010: 26) explained that survival migration can be defined as "the situation of people who are outside their country of origin because of an existential threat to which they have no access to a domestic remedy – but who fall outside of the dominant interpretation of a 'refugee' under international law." This definition encompasses people who have traversed national borders intent on escaping the following: disaster of an environmental nature, a collapse in terms of their livelihood and the frailty of a nation state. Betts (2010) provides clarity for the terms survival migration, refugees and international migration. He (2010: 27) explains that refugees are survival migrants but not all survival migrants are refugees; survival migrants are international migrants but not all international migrants are survival migrants. Betts (2010) reveals that in his project, there were some issues that surfaced relating to teacher mobility that require development. For example, there were qualified teachers in survival migrant populations, namely Zimbabweans and Somalis in SA, Botswana and Kenya. He understands the flight and plight of Zimbabweans to SA as survival migration. He (2010: 27) is adamant that state and international institutions' dependence on the "economic migrant/refugee dichotomy is irrelevant". Sisulu, Moyo and Tshuma (2007) also struggle to define Zimbabweans' migration to SA by revealing that after 2005, Zimbabwean politics has affected the economics which can result in a debate on whether Zimbabweans in SA are economic migrants or political refugees. Similarly, scholars at a conference in SA on the Zimbabwean diaspora deliberated these categories in addition to arguing from various perspectives for the use of selected terminology, such as displacement and dislodgement (Hammar, McGregor and Landau, 2010). While Betts (2010) claimed that his work doesn't constitute indepth research, he did provide some interesting recommendations to the Commonwealth Advisory Council on Mobility and Migration of teachers. These included: "the recognition of survival migration in teacher mobility, moving beyond the dichotomy of forced/voluntary migration and the identification of labour market opportunities for refugee teachers" (Betts, 2010: 29).

Many teacher migration articles have focused on the determinants of teacher migration in numerous country contexts: SA, Philippines and India respectively (Manik, 2009b; Lederer, 2011; Sharma, 2011) but this article differs. It addresses the current gap in literature on Zimbabwean immigrant teachers by examining their experiences in SA. It draws from a study undertaken to understand the nature of Zimbabwean teachers' migration to SA

and their experiences in the host country. The study thus contributes to the current body of knowledge on Zimbabwean immigrants in SA. The article, consisting of four major sections, has the following structure: the first section embarks on an examination of teacher migration in the SA context and the limited literature on Zimbabwe – SA teacher migration trend. There is an attempt at conceptual clarity to understand Zimbabwean teachers in SA. The second section outlines the methodology used in the study whilst the next section embarks on a discussion of the key experiences and challenges as articulated by the immigrant teachers in terms of their personal and professional lives in KwaZulu-Natal province, SA. The article concludes with some suggestions in addressing Zimbabwean immigrant teachers' experiences in SA.

METHODOLOGY

This article utilizes data from a qualitative study which was undertaken in 2011 on Zimbabwean immigrant teachers in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province, who migrated to SA after 2000. The choice of approach was the result of the nature of the study which was to explore migrant teachers' thinking in terms of exiting Zimbabwe and their experiences in their host country. The unit of analysis was Zimbabwean immigrant teachers who were based at schools and higher education institutions. The study sought to unpack a demographic and professional profile of the teachers (because there is no database on migrant teachers in KZN province), the reasons for them leaving Zimbabwe and migrating to SA, their personal and professional experiences in the host country and the duration of their stay. This article addresses the critical question: What are the experiences (personal and professional) of Zimbabwean immigrant teachers in SA? In researching immigrant teachers' experiences, this study is aligned to what Polzer (2007) describes as research "from below", that is an understanding of the experiences from the perspective of the participants.

All immigrants were tapped whilst they were in SA post their migration. The absence of a data base of foreign teachers coupled with a lack of knowledge on where they live or work made it impossible to locate a representative sample at the time of the study. The expenses and difficulty of locating immigrant teachers within the entire KZN province meant that the study was limited to three areas: Durban, Pietermaritzburg and Jozini. The first two are cities in KZN and Sisulu, Moyo and Tshuma (2007) have noted that Zimbabwean professionals are located in urban hubs. Two sampling strate-

gies were used: Firstly, a form of purposive sampling, snowball sampling was used with initial participants being sourced from and through their contacts with a multi-site university in KZN. Secondly, to prevent a skewed sample, a field worker was sent to visit schools in Jozini, which is in a rural part of KZN to elicit the contact details of willing participants as anecdotal evidence indicated that many foreign teachers were holding teaching positions in rural areas of KZN. All participants were given pseudonyms and interviewed either face-to-face or through telephonic semi-structured interviews (n=13) by the researcher. The average duration per interview was an hour. The data gathered from the interviews was triangulated with data from a semi-structured interview and iterative dialogue with the co-ordinator of the Refugee Council in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal.

A profile of the participants

The biographic profile of the participants interviewed (n=13) is as follows. In total there were eight males and five females. Eleven of the participants were married, one was widowed and one was divorced. The mean age of the participants was 35 years. The majority of participants (n=8) indicated that migrating to SA was their first emigration experience and that they had not previously emigrated from Zimbabwe. In respect of the minority of participants (n=5) who indicated that they had previously emigrated, their destination had been other African countries in close proximity to Zimbabwe, which is in keeping with the findings of several studies undertaken in the African context. In terms of the professional profile of the participants, it is as follows. One participant had a PhD, six had Master's degrees, two had honours degrees, two had Diplomas in Education, one had a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) degree and one was studying towards a B.Ed degree. Clearly, within the sample, the majority of teachers were highly qualified with nine in receipt of post graduate qualifications. The participants within the sample were teaching in schools and in higher education institutions. It is important to note that these were not mutually exclusive categories (being school based and higher education based) since some participants had migrated to SA to teach in schools, but after a period of time they accepted academic positions as tutors or lecturers in higher education institutions. At the time of the interviews, five of the participants were school based teachers and eight were lecturers. Four of the five school based teachers were Maths and Physical science specialists, while six of the eight lecturers were education specialists.

FINDINGS

Zimbabwean immigrant teachers were asked to share some of their personal and professional experiences and challenges. There is a blurring where the professional at times intertwines with the personal challenges that immigrant teachers' experienced. A common experience was the difficulty in acquiring the necessary legal documentation and the lengthy bureaucracy involved, particularly with the Department of Home Affairs in SA, vetting their migration applications.

Professional experiences

There were numerous experiences that fell within the realm of immigrant teachers professional experiences, but this section will concentrate on three areas of common experiences shared by immigrant teachers.

Documentation frustrations

The SA Home Affairs appeared to be a constant thorn to immigrant teachers' in their pursuit of acquiring the requisite legal documentation to enter the SA labour market. For example, Scot saw an advert in a newspaper for a scarce skills teaching post in a private school, while he was in SA on a visitor's permit. He applied for this post and corresponded via the internet and telephone with school management upon his return to Zimbabwe. It took him "[...] a year and a half from the time of my application to actually taking up the job." It is thus apparent that migration to teach in SA is a long process which also appears to be exacerbated by the need for specific detailed evidence. For example, the entire publication and not only the page containing the job advertisement must accompany the application for a permit to be granted when the application is made to Home Affairs and this detail is not spelt out to applicants.

Scott said that dealing with them is "[...] frustrating. Home Affairs is incompetent. My general work permit is from Msunduzi [one geographic area] and in Johannesburg [another geographic area] they say something else, so I had to change from a general work permit to a quota work permit [for scarce skills areas as he is a specialist in Maths and Chemistry]. The school has been very supportive from paying for my application to permanent residency. They would like to give me a permanent position but because of Home Affairs, their hands are tied." Scott's articulations reveal that the process is delayed because of inefficiencies within the Department of Home Affairs in SA, as the incorrect category of work permit was issued to him. Through-out this lengthy ordeal, the school appears to provide the

much needed support for his application. However, despite these endeavours by the school, he is unable to achieve job security through permanent employment.

Reedi also reveals that acquiring documentation is a challenge despite her being what Smits (2001) refers to as a "tied-mover" (she is accompanying her husband who has decided to migrate to SA). Police clearance is needed from both Zimbabwe and SA. She said: "I was given a permit on the grounds that I was accompanying my spouse. This permit is expiring in June and I have to seek police clearance again and it can't be done from SA. In terms of my application for permanent residency, I need to be interviewed and I'm concerned about the dates, if they give me a date past expiry of the permit, it will be a problem." The above concerns that it has been suggested to Reedi that numerous documents have to be renewed and it is not an easy task as it requires travelling back to Zimbabwe and there may be numerous complications in SA especially since the dates are not synchronised for the various documents.

Apart from lengthy interactions with SA Home Affairs, even once the work permit is granted, there are other transactions which are difficult for immigrant teachers to access. For example, Reedi said: "Even when it comes to any other transaction, they want a SA identity document and I don't have it, so I can't get access. The systems are set, they don't accept passport numbers e.g. Your bank account – you can't get a balance on the phone [...] even applying online for jobs." Reedi stated that there are indeed numerous problems which hinder efforts to acquire a teaching job in SA "[...] although there are teachers who come to SA, the majority who come here are not in the teaching fraternity. They are doing jobs other than teaching because it is difficult to access the public sector. I know this because I know about 20 people [who are Zimbabwean teachers]. You hear someone is in Jo'burg, Pretoria, Cape Town but to locate them is a problem." The reason is that they are constantly on the move, looking for a job. One of the problems is identified as the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) accreditation process, which according to Morgan is not easily obtained. He explained that he waited for three months from the time of his electronic mail to them and they didn't respond despite telling him that they would do so in a week. He then made a trip from Zimbabwe to Pretoria in SA and within two days at a cost of approximately R300 (\$30) for the documentation, he obtained it. Strangely, he revealed that a SA university didn't ask him for the SAQA documentation when he later applied for a contract job, which he presently occupies.

Remuneration and job security at school

Zimbabwean immigrant teachers are not paid the same salary as SA teachers who are citizens because the former occupy temporary and not permanent positions at schools. Frequently, school governing bodies pay the salaries of teachers in these temporary posts as they are deemed additional to the government allocated teaching posts in a public school. Unfortunately, there isn't a minimum wage attached to the job and many temporary teachers fulfil the same duties as permanent staff, however, at a reduced salary. For example, Theresa quit after teaching for less than six months because her salary was inadequate. She explained that R800 (\$80) a month was only sufficient for covering her transport costs. At the time of this interview, she was unemployed but accepting temporary work as a domestic worker. John explained the problem he experienced as: "The issue of salary – when you're a foreigner and teaching at school, because of your status, they can't recommend that you be paid by the government [...] then the SGB [School Governing Body] will pay your salary." He admits that there is an element of fear involved in raising a discussion on salary with the school. He explained that it is dangerous to contest the SGB salary as your services can be terminated on a whim by the governing body without advance notification whilst if you occupy a government post it offers a better salary, more job security and numerous benefits (leave, housing allowance and medical aid).

A lack of job security is not particular to migrant teachers in public schools and Oden, who is employed in a private school, stated that: "Being a teacher and a professional foreigner, there's no job security 'cos we are always regarded as temporary teachers. I work for a private school. Opportunities are not open to foreigners. They would rather take a South African because of unemployment challenges." Oden is articulating a "stop-gap" measure that appears to be used in SA schools when they employ Zimbabwean teachers. SA schools are in need of qualified teachers to fill selected teaching positions, particularly in scarce skills subjects, but in the absence of locally qualified teachers, schools opt to hire immigrant teachers but this is an interim measure until home bred teachers can be sourced. Scott feels differently because of his interactions with the principal and staff: "I don't feel I've been exploited" because the school had been assisting him by paying for all his applications to SA Home Affairs which he feels will eventually secure his position at the school.

It was apparent that even when immigrant teachers were employed in a public school, the remuneration process was problematic with teachers not

being paid on time which had negative repercussions for their well-being in terms of their daily requirements. Rodney first taught in a private school, thereafter he was successful in getting a post at a public school, teaching scarce skills subjects that he is qualified in: Chemistry and Biology. He said: "I've not been paid even though I signed a new contract three months ago. South African teachers got their monies but not us [foreigners]." This is a widespread practice (of delayed salary payments) amongst contract staff working in public schools. Rodney explained that his friends, mostly other Zimbabweans, are sympathetic and assist him in meeting his daily needs, especially food, because they have also experienced similar occurrences. The fragile nature of the positions that immigrant teachers occupy at school is of concern to them as they are unable to plan for the future and are forced to live on a day to day basis. Sadly, it appears that whilst they yearn for stability and security in the workplace which will provide for an improved future, they will be unable to access this. Immigrant teachers expressed the view that foreign teachers with their qualifications and competence are deemed to be located lower on the employability scale than a SA citizen with lesser qualifications. Rodney explained that: "There is a preference for South Africans despite you being employed for a long period at the same school. You can get displaced easily even if the South African teacher is poorly qualified." Scott also alluded to this view when he said that despite it taking him 1.5 years from the time that he lodged his application to taking up the post in a private school: "They are giving a term contract [3 months] and if they get a South African, they will terminate you and employ the South African, irrespective of qualification. It's difficult to plan your life, I can't really do much about that." It is evident that he feels helpless in this situation. Oden is equally despondent and it is evident when he says: "As a foreigner, I'm working here, but my work is only meant to sustain my family, there's no investment in the future. I don't have access to opportunities for my family. We are working hand to mouth." His use of "we" signifies that he and other Zimbabwean immigrant teachers are at odds with "living for the day" and that he would rather be working towards building a future with opportunities for himself and his family in SA.

Management culture at school

The management culture at some schools where immigrant teachers were discontent had a distinctively biased ethnic culture which was evident in the interactions between staff and immigrants. For example, Rodney alluded to ethnic preferences in the employment of teachers at schools: "The

kind of principal – he can be racist, he wants the school to only be staffed with Zulu teachers. In the previous school they [teachers who were Zulu] were unqualified teachers but he wanted them.”

Theresa similarly shared that she taught in a school where the staff was multi-cultural but predominantly African. The principal, regardless of this diversity, would use the medium of isiZulu when he spoke to staff. She said: “He speaks Zulu in the meetings, all the time Zulu” even though there are two Indians, one Coloured and one White teacher in addition to the African teachers. isiZulu is the language and culture of the majority of Africans in the province of KZN. It appears that these migrant teachers preferred the use of English, which is deemed to be the global language of communication, particularly when the staff was diverse.

Personal experiences

Those professionals who had migrated to SA without their families felt that they were living transnational lives. This is a similar finding to a previous study the author had undertaken of SA teachers who had migrated without their immediate family to teach in the UK (Manik, 2005). This led to what the author termed being a “phantom spouse and/or parent” (physically absent spouse and/or parent by virtue of the long distance relationships). This lifestyle according to immigrant teachers is difficult and has negative repercussions. Oden reveals that he was “[...] living a dual life because his wife and two children joined him later when he began working in SA. Also, his extended family and business interests are still in Zimbabwe.” It is apparent that Oden is straddling life in two countries. Cody, similarly, attempted to live in two countries when he initially immigrated to SA. Cody recalled that he left his wife and child in Zimbabwe whilst he tried to making a living, but eventually the outcome was that his wife divorced him as he feels he was living two lives. He used to travel to Zimbabwe twice a year to see his family but this was inadequate to sustain his close family bonds and he remarked: “You end up losing your family when you’re away from your family.” Apart from the social repercussions, living transnational lives also has financial implications for immigrant teachers in terms of the money they spend on travelling and phone calls to Zimbabwe, remittances for their families and maintaining their business interests in their home country.

DISCUSSION

Whilst Zimbabwean immigrant teachers were seeking greener pastures in SA, it was clear that they are vulnerable from the moment they enter SA. This vulnerability is not overt and easy to discern. They are vulnerable personally and professionally in numerous ways. Their vulnerability on a personal level is sometimes veiled, it isn't overt for them to recognise because in their pursuit of a viable livelihood across the border, they are unaware that their absence from their loved ones at home predisposes them to alienation from their families as social networks are difficult to sustain when migrants lead transnational lives. This may lead to a breakdown in social relations such as marriage and the dissolution of the existing family structure through divorce. Thus whilst migration to SA may have been a "household portfolio diversification strategy" in the hope that "remittances [will] provide lifelines" (Adepoju, 2006: 43), it has come at the expense of the family unit.

Zimbabwean immigrant teachers are also vulnerable on various structural levels professionally, what Betts (2010: 26) calls "institutional architecture". Firstly, to the incompetence of the South African Home Affairs Department and the processes at Home Affairs that are dismissive of the value that these teachers add to SA education by filling the labour gaps in critical subjects (especially Maths and Science) within the South African teaching fraternity. Professionally, they are also vulnerable at the institutional level of the school. This stems from their employment status as many occupy the position of governing body employee/temporary staff and they do not hold permanent positions. This has wage implications since the salary is lower and there are minimum benefits and a lack of job security attached to these posts. Their remuneration was poor despite these immigrant teachers' qualifications being high, affirming Kriger's (2010) finding. Due to a lack of job security there is fear of not wanting to question the *status quo* at the schools as it can lead to the loss of a job and unemployment in a foreign country. They were also vulnerable to ethnic imperialism (see Manik, 2013b) due to the language barrier in particular school environments, where the local language of people of the Zulu culture (isiZulu) takes preference over English despite English being the medium of instruction at the schools. Here immigrant teachers are made to understand through professional relations that they are "needed but not wanted" and this manifests in the language of communication used during staff meetings, a way to detach them from the discussions taking place.

A shared thread that seems to run through is that the high qualifications² and expertise of Zimbabwean immigrant teachers did not provide them with easy access into the professional domain in SA; they had to settle for less professionally and some for naught by virtue of being non-citizens. Similar to the experience of SA teachers in the UK (Manik, 2005), Zimbabwean immigrant teachers in SA found that their qualifications are not immediately recognized and transferable with ease and that there is a tiresome, costly process to have their qualifications accredited by SAQA³ and then by the Department of Higher Education (DHET). SAQA (2010) had also reported that it was concerned with the status of foreign teachers in terms of qualifications comparability which can lead to the recognition of foreign qualifications (Chanda, 2010). In addition, immigrant teachers' status in SA is also problematic with them having to undergo long waiting periods for the Department of Home Affairs in SA to recognize them as either refugees/asylum seekers or economic migrants and to grant them the necessary documentation to engage in formal employment in SA. This crisis in attempting to define their entry to SA adds to their vulnerability leading to abuse and exploitation in their employment at schools (as evidenced by Mukaronda, 2005, in Sisulu, Moyo and Tshuma, 2007) and in tertiary institutions. The case of a teacher opting for menial jobs in favour of teaching on the basis that being a domestic pays a higher salary than that offered by some school governing bodies for the services of a highly skilled professional, heightens concern about immigrant teachers experiencing brain waste in host countries. For those who have managed to secure some form of desirable employment, their pursuit of livelihood success is frequently thwarted by either poor remuneration or numerous delays in salary payments leading to struggles for daily survival. Zimbabwean immigrant teachers' experiences by large convey them as "working hand to mouth": an existence wherein many straddle two countries (SA and Zimbabwe) as transnationals trying to juggle earning a salary in SA to take care of their daily needs and providing for their families and interests locally and/or in Zimbabwe. This confirms Betts' (2010) finding that in SA and other countries, there are highly skilled professionals such as teachers in survival migrant populations.

² This is in keeping with the contention by Kriger (2010).

³ SAQA recently introduced an online system which sometimes experiences hiccups.

CONCLUSION

This paper has argued that despite the declarations on teacher supply and demand that SA is facing a critical shortage of teachers, the nature of Zimbabwean immigrant teachers' experiences in SA indicate that there is a disregard of their value in addressing local school needs and exploitation of the highly skilled leading to their continued vulnerability in SA. This appears to stem from an uncoordinated process across government departments to address the arrival of large numbers of Zimbabwean immigrant teachers in SA.

A few years ago, at a meeting of the Commonwealth Advisory Council on Teacher Mobility, Recruitment and Migration (Chanda, 2010), the Council noted in respect of SA, that there was "a general neglect of the supply of people with skills and qualifications and there should be ways to involve them into the labour market such as in economics, education, health and so on [...] because vacancies were available". Recently, the *Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa 2011–2025: Full Version* (2011) has also recognised the need to utilize foreign skills that are available in SA to fill teaching posts. Hence, whilst there currently appears to be an understanding at the structural level of teacher supply and demand of the need to fill vacancies by using foreign skills, immigrant teachers' experiences indicate that whilst they may be needed, they don't feel wanted. There is a lack of commitment at various other levels (from their entry into the host country to the level of the host school) to place value on immigrant teachers and expedite their entry into the SA teaching fraternity and provide them with benefits parallel to "home-grown" (SA) teachers. This is evident in their survivalist experiences and that of brain waste in SA. In fact, brain waste could be taking place on a greater scale, if the PTUZ (2006) statistics are brought into dialogue with the collaborative study statistics (Daniels and Green, 2014): if an average of 4 000 teachers are leaving Zimbabwe per annum to teach in SA and only less than 2 000 are applying for qualification recognition – where are the rest of the teachers located, in terms of the labour market in SA? Interestingly, at the 2010 meeting of the Commonwealth Advisory Council, the representative of the largest teacher union in SA (South African Democratic Teachers Union), stated that the Union was working to reduce brain waste among Zimbabwean immigrant teachers, but clearly this needs to unfold to a greater extent with greater commitment being required by all teacher migration role players. Elsewhere in Africa, the role of immigrant teachers is highly valued; for

example, Kenyan teachers fulfilling Rwanda's need for teachers, receive a higher salary than the local Rwandan teachers. Thus, SA must soon realize at grass roots level, the wealth of skills that Zimbabwean immigrant teachers bring, in filling the critical skills gap and affirm their value before they are lured to the greener pastures of other African countries.

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»Teško preživljavamo od svoga rada«: iskustva zimbabveanskih učitelja kao ranjive skupine u Južnoafričkoj Republici

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SAŽETAK

U raznim se studijama ističe, posebno u postaparthejdskom kontekstu, da Južnoafrička Republika (JAR) privlači kvalificirane i nekvalificirane migrante. No čini se da tek manji broj istraživanja ispituje iskustva kvalificiranih imigranata u JAR-u u tom kontekstu. Osim toga nijedno se istraživanje ne usredotočuje isključivo na učitelje imigrante iako oni zadovoljavaju potrebe JAR-a za učiteljima stručnih predmeta kao što su matematika i prirodoslovlje. U ovom se radu ispituju iskustva zimbabveanskih učitelja imigranata u JAR-u, koji su najbrojnija skupina stranih učitelja u toj zemlji. Autorica se koristi empirijskim nalazima iz etnografskog istraživanja provedenog 2011. kojim se nastojalo protumačiti prirodu imigracije zimbabveanskih učitelja u JAR-u. Podaci se crpe iz trinaest polustrukturiranih intervjua sa zimbabveanskim učiteljima imigrantima nastanjenima u provinciji KwaZulu-Natal na istočnoj obali JAR-a. Njihova iskustva u toj zemlji uključuju složeni i frustrirajući proces dobivanja dokumenata za legalni ulazak na tržište rada JAR-a, teškoće u pronalaženju sigurnog posla, ksenofobne stavove mještanâ i iskorištavanje na radnome mjestu. Ona otkrivaju njihovu ranjivost, a osobito njihova nastojanja da ispune svoje obiteljske obveze jer imaju ključnu ulogu u svome kućanstvu i žive transnacionalnim životom. Zimbabveanske učitelje imigrante povezuje činjenica da im kvalifikacije i stručno učiteljsko znanje ne osiguravaju lagan pristup u profesionalnu obrazovnu domenu u JAR-u. Zbog toga što nisu južnoafrički državljani, iako visokokvalificirani, morali su se zadovoljiti nižim ili nikakvim profesionalnim statusom.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI: zimbabveanski učitelji imigranti, Južnoafrička Republika, naplata, sigurnost posla, radno iskorištavanje