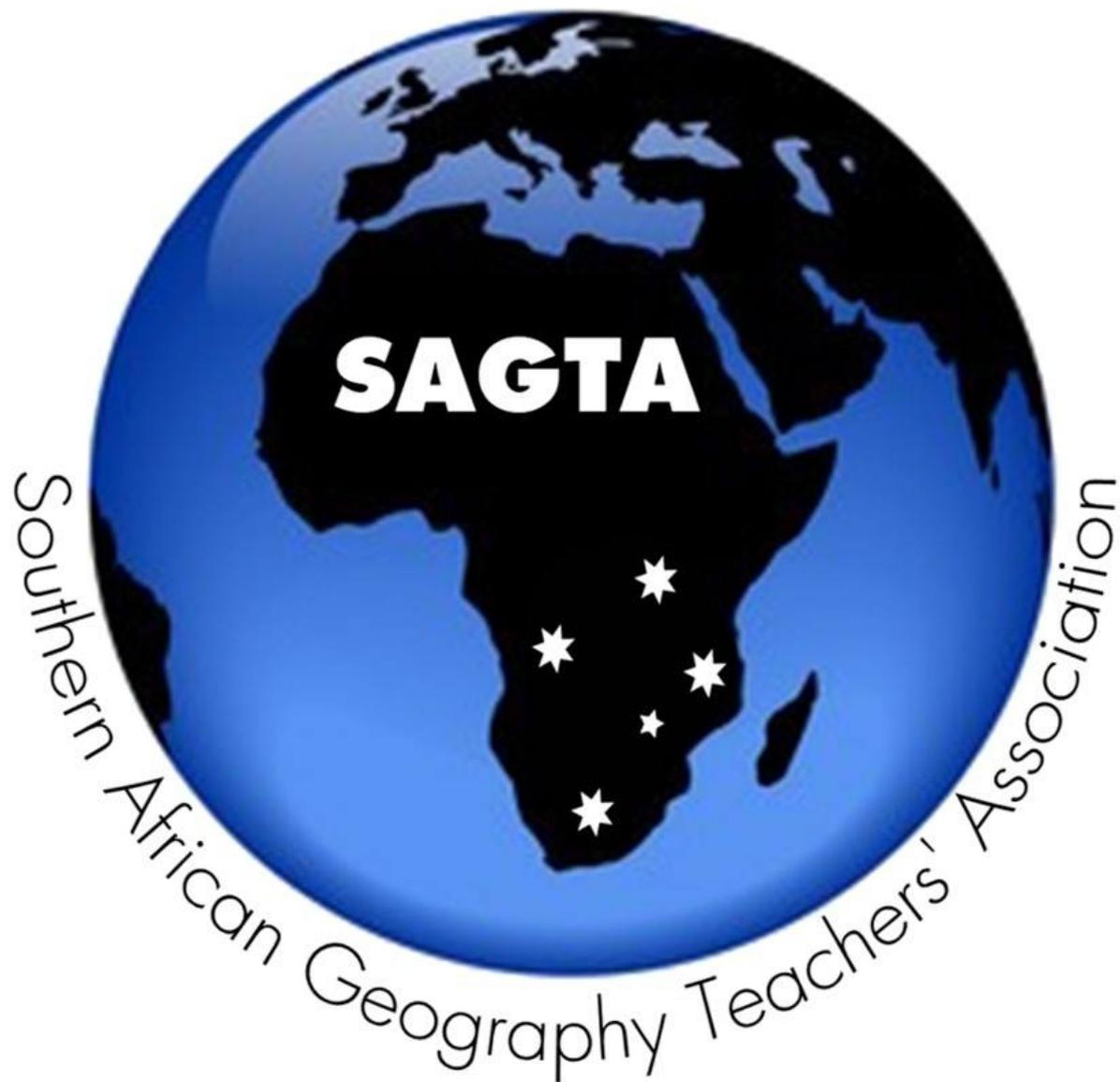


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'My coming to South Africa made everything possible':

The socio-economic and political reasons for migrant teachers being in Johannesburg

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Abstract

Teacher migration is a phenomenon which gained international momentum more than eighteen years ago. South Africa was one of the developing countries within the Commonwealth which was greatly affected by the loss of home grown skills in respect of teacher emigration to the United Kingdom. South Africa has also begun to attract teachers from neighbouring countries in the past ten years. Whilst there have been some studies on migrant teachers in South Africa, migrant teachers in primary schools have been a neglected area of research. This paper reports on some of the findings from a qualitative teacher immigration study undertaken in Johannesburg which focussed on primary school teachers. The paper in particular explores the economic, political and social reasons for migrant teachers teaching in Johannesburg. Seminal scholar, Lee's push and pull theory (1966) Bett's (2010) insights into survival migration and chain migration provide the theoretical dimensions for the paper. Primary school teachers who were located in both public and private schools were the participants. Data was generated through interviews and focus group discussions. Migrant teachers were selecting Johannesburg, South Africa as their strategy for survival due to a range of economic, political and social reasons. Clearly, primary schools in Johannesburg were overcoming their teacher shortages with the influx of migrant teachers to this particular location and they were benefitting from this brain gain.

Keywords: teacher migration, push and pull factors, primary schools.

Introduction

This paper reports on the data generated from a teacher immigration study undertaken in Johannesburg, South Africa. Economic, social and political imperatives that underpin a sample of migrant teachers being located specifically in Johannesburg, South Africa is presented. The

findings have significance for teachers of Geography in the Further Education and Training phase who will be able to utilize the context specific data to enrich their lessons theoretically on the reasons for migration. We begin with a discussion on the South-South migration of teachers and the need for teachers in South Africa detailing that the greatest number of migrant teachers can be found in the province of Gauteng. The theoretical influences and methodology is explained for its relevance to this paper. Key findings on the reasons for migrant teachers being in Johannesburg and a discussion thereof follows. The paper culminates in some salient conclusions.

Immigration in the context of SA is a newly emerging phenomenon since South Africa has opened its borders upon becoming a democracy. There have been few studies on teacher immigration in the context of SA. For example, Manik (2011b) engaged in a study on Zimbabwean teachers in Kwa-Zulu Natal province and Singh (2013) undertook a study on Zimbabwean teachers in Limpopo province and Keevy, Green and Manik (2014) undertook a national quantitative study on foreign teachers in public schools in SA. However, there was no research interest directed to migrant teachers specifically at primary schools. The recent study by Keevy et al (2014) revealed that in the context of public schooling, “migrant teachers employed by the State represent a very small percentage (less than 0.5%) of the total number of teachers employed in public schools in 2010. Of these, the greatest numbers of migrant teachers were employed in Gauteng (459 or 28%)” as shown below in table 1. Thus, it is evident that the location of this study is in a province which plays host to the highest number of immigrant teachers in public schools.

The Need for teachers in South Africa

The shortage of educators is a global challenge and the challenges specific to South Africa are un/under qualified educators; a shortage of Mathematics and science educators, a shortage of newly qualified primary school teachers and a general lack of interest in teaching as a profession. Currently, although the department of Education has invested in producing more teachers, such as in the introduction of the Funza LuShaka bursary there still appears to be teacher shortages in particular specialisation fields and in certain geographic areas (e.g. rural areas struggle to attract and retain qualified teachers).

The May 2011, figures taken from the government employee database (known as the Persal system) revealed that 5400 foreign teachers work in public schools consisting of 3796 teachers originally from Zimbabwe which comfortably makes up the majority. These figures are notably 501 teachers from India, 500 from Ghana and 90 from Namibia (Grobbelaar, 2011, p. 1). Grobbelaar made reference to the May figures in the government employee database, persal, indicating that although South Africa is in dire need of teachers who teach Mathematics and Physical Science and most of the foreign teachers are appointed to teach these subjects to pupils from grades 7 to grade 12 and they can be found working in schools in Gauteng (1286 teachers), Eastern Cape (975 teachers) and Limpopo (934 teachers).

Theoretically, push and pull theory (Lee, 1966) explains migration and it has been extensively used to understand teacher migration. In this study as teacher immigration to Johannesburg was the focus, the pull factors that have drawn immigrant teachers, particularly to Johannesburg in South Africa were of significance.

Lee's (1966) Push-Pull Theory

Lee's push-pull theory shows that negative characteristics push the migrants out of the origin area while the positive aspects of the destination area pull the migrants towards a specific direction. The movements occur between two places; however, there can be intervening obstacles to these spatial movements. Muñiz et al (2010, p. 6) explains that “although these obstacles are represented by ‘mountain’ shapes, keep in mind that the obstacles need not be limited to physical barriers”. They also stated that “detering migration regulations, for instance, can present a challenging obstacle to potential migrants”. They further articulated that it should be noted that both the origin and destination have push and pull factors, indicating the certainty that any migrant will have to consider both the positives of residing in the host country and the negatives of moving, as well as their opposites. This theory is clearly centred on migrant rationality- that migrants make logical decisions. The rationality of the push-pull theory is that “if the pulls at the destination outweigh ...staying at the origin, then migration is likely to occur” (Muñiz et al 2010, p. 6).

Pull factors

Ekiss (2011) describes pull factors as those factors “that draw you to live in a place”. Ochs’ (2007, p. 8) explains that pull factors include an array of possibilities which can include “a new experience or challenge” in a foreign destination; or following a partner/spouse; a better “future of their children”; in search of extra education; or being enticed to the host country in order to travel. Interestingly, she noted that one can be pulled to a destination for individual reasons, for a partner or for your family. The research findings by Ochs (2011) were reiterated by Ekiss (2011) who succinctly noted that pull factors can be divided into three categories which include economic factors; social factors and political factors. Similarly, Manik (2013, p. 6) contended that Zimbabwean teachers have reported that they are in SA due to socio-economic, educational and political reasons. De Villiers (2011, p. 54) has expanded on the number of pull factors and he points out that “pull factors as powerful motivators are classified as better working conditions, family ties, higher compensation and benefits, professional development interests, better living conditions, more political, economic and social stability, more job opportunities and a desire to see the world.” The more positive incentives in the host country, the more keen migrants are motivated to relocate, pulling them to a new destination.

Various authors above have defined what pull factors are. The pull factors for this study discussed in this paper are: economic, educational, and political.

Economic

There are various reasons that fall within economics which is now discussed.

Work Opportunities and a Higher Standard of Living

Gabriel (2013, p. 1) clearly states that “if an individual is unable to find employment in his home country, then the next alternative would be to look for another place that would be able to offer him or her employment.” He also explained that although a migrant may be employed, they may want to relocate to a place where they can have an improved standard of living and an extra trade and industry opportunities. Thus migration can be as a result of limited or no employment in the home country. De Villiers’ (2011) study on teacher migrants found that South Africa is

increasingly seen by Zimbabweans as a country to help them build a prosperous future, instead of a place of temporary relief and quick pay. He states that the literature indicates three migration waves. For Zimbabweans, the pull factors for migration into South Africa are employment, geographical accessibility and the state of the economy in SA (Ekiss, 2011). She also stated that the unemployment rate in South Africa is 24% compared to Zimbabwe's 94%. South Africa's minimum wage a month is approximately 1,041 Rands (141 USD) compared to not having a salary at all given that Zimbabwe has a high rate of unemployment.

Higher salaries

An authority on refugee teachers, Sesnan, (2011, p. 88) revealed that “teachers will naturally try to go to where the money is. In every situation that he has worked in, there would have been no shortage of qualified teachers if a good salary had been offered for the job”. Similarly, Ochs (2011) revealed that the appealing remuneration was one of the motivating factors pulling Caribbean teachers to the United States. Manik's (2005, p. 109) study also indicated that many South Africans were attracted to the value of the Pound in the UK, and stated that “a simple conversion of 100 pounds to rands is an attractive proposition for a SA teacher”. Hence, money and its other professional benefits discussed below are appealing motives for teacher migration.

Educational Reasons

Teachers also migrate due to educational reasons for themselves and or their children in the host country. Gabriel (2013) stated that a few places provide more learning prospects for professional development. Caravetti, Lederer, Lupico and Meter (2014) revealed that host countries presented educational opportunities for migrants' children. Migrant teachers found that excellent schooling, cultural acquaintances, and language involvement for their children were encouraging pull factors into a new country. A study by Manik (2011b) indicated that Zimbabwean immigrants felt that the provision of higher education would facilitate the opportunity of them obtaining a job more easily. She provided an example, where one of her participants stated that his wish was to enrol for a post graduate qualification in order to find a better job and another participant stated that her immigration decision was influenced by a need to study which was to complete a Cambridge

training course, which was only offered in SA. Hence, she was attracted to SA due its educational offerings.

Political Reasons

Political factors which propel migration include gaining protection under the law, a right to vote and freedom from persecution and safety (Ekiss, 2011). Politics has been linked to the stability of a country and SA is viewed as stable in comparison to Zimbabwe. A participant in Ranger's (2010) study indicated that although he was offered a position in the parliament in Harare, he had chosen to remain a scholar in SA because of the political stability in the country compared to Zimbabwe's political crisis. Hammar et al (2010, p. 282) state that the "strategies of regulation, sovereignty, state-making, and political violence have spurred both individual and mass physical displacement" in Zimbabwe. Thus, they explained that Zimbabwean migrants choose to migrate to SA because of SA's strong civil service and stable government stature.

Social Reasons

Ekiss (2011) added that social factors which lead to migration include assurance from family and friends, improved health care, enhanced educational chances and spiritual acceptance. Gabriel (2013, p. 2) also revealed that one of the most important attractions for people who migrate is "the prospect of freedom in various areas of life." He provided examples to explain why migrants may leave their home country. However, Muñiz et al (2010) describes the movement of individuals as also an outcome of the degree of social connectivity in a particular country. They also explained that "migration is more likely between two places that have existing social connections between them than between places that are disconnected" (Muñiz et al 2010, p. 8), for example: family or friends. In this regard, Zimbabwe's close geographic position as neighbour to SA with families located in both countries due to historical reasons could be a social link. Also, destinations with familiar images and migrants' positive observations and influences of family and friends have a greater likelihood of being chosen (Marino, 2008) .

Survival Migration

Betts (2010, p. 4) provides an interesting theoretical dimension to migration in the African context, namely that of survival migration. He explained that survival migrants are “persons who are outside their country of origin because of an existential threat to which they have no access to a domestic remedy or resolution”. It can thus be understood that survival migrants believe that they are in a “catch-22” situation and have no alternative but to migrate in order to survive.

Chain migration

An essential aspect related to migrant selectivity is that of chain migration. Muñiz et al, (2010) explain that this refers to the successive migration of families and relatives, following the initial move by the first migrants from a community. Here, “... family or friends migrate, a social network of data becomes mobile and moves back to the point of origin, which consequently decreases the obstacles to migration for any future migrants” (Muñiz et al, 2010, p. 8). Thus, when one person migrates to a destination, more people eventually leave their home country (origin) and join their friends or family in this new destination, a result of the flow of positive information back to family and friends (Moffet, 2014) who feel ‘relative deprivation’ - that they too can acquire what the migrants have achieved.

Context of the study

The study was undertaken in Johannesburg, South Africa amongst primary school teachers located in both public and private schools. Gauteng is one the 9 provinces that make up SA. There are 480 public primary schools and 180 independent primary schools in Johannesburg (DBE, 2012, p. 6). Johannesburg is the largest urban hub and most densely inhabited of all South Africa's cities and is located within the province of Gauteng. Johannesburg is also the provincial capital of Gauteng. This study draws on a convenience sample of migrant teachers from primary schools.

Methodology

The study aimed to explore the reasons for migrant teachers teaching in primary schools and for locating in Johannesburg as well as these migrant teachers' school experiences but this paper focuses only on why migrant teachers are in Johannesburg. We argue that they are attempting to survive by escaping an unbearable socio-economic and political climate in favour of a multitude of favourable socio-economic and political conditions in Johannesburg, South Africa which is a city just a stone throw away from the despair of Zimbabwe.

Research Design

The study was qualitative and it falls within the interpretive paradigm because it stresses the importance of understanding each individual's perception of their reality. There are many different types of qualitative research (Daymon and Holloway, 2011, p. 121) but the objectives of the study resonated with a case study methodology. Stake (in McMillan and Schumacher, 2014, p. 370) in his definition of a case study describes it as “an in-depth analysis of a single entity.” A case study may be especially suitable for learning more about a little known or poorly understood situation” as is that of migrant teachers in primary schools in Johannesburg. Two prime means of gathering data (face-to-face interviewing and a focus group discussion) were used to unpack the reasons that teachers decided to migrate to teach in Johannesburg. According to McNamara (as cited by Valenzuela and Shrivastava, 2002, p. 2), “interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind a participant’s experiences. The interviewer can pursue in-depth information around the topic”. Semi-structured interviews resonated with the study’s objectives being were chosen because detailed questions are formulated ahead of time, allowing for the interviewer to pursue a line of questioning and then it allows the interviewee to slowly be drawn in via probing.

Focus Group discussions are also significant in eliciting data in particular circumstances. Leedy and Ormrod (2010, p. 148) cite Creswell and Neuman who state that “focus groups are particularly valuable when time is inadequate; participants feel more at ease speaking in a group than alone...”. One focus group session was conducted in this study to gather richer more detailed information on the same common topics (which emerged from the interviews) to strengthen and enhance the data.

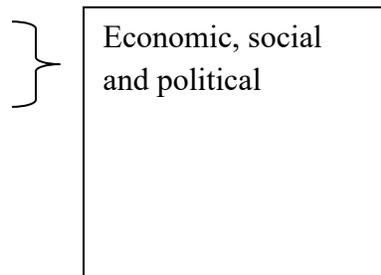
The focus group discussion, comprising five immigrant teachers, was held at a boardroom at a primary school in Johannesburg and the duration was one hour.

Non-probability sampling is the method of choice for most qualitative research. An appropriate sample size for a qualitative study “is one that adequately answers the research question” (Marshall, 1996, p. 523). In this study the sample size of 10 participants was adequate to achieve data saturation. There are different sampling techniques but purposive sampling led to snowball sampling. Purposive sampling, as defined by Punch (2005, p. 187), is sampling in a “deliberate way, with some purpose or focus in mind”. Qualitative content analysis was used to analyse the data generated. Initial broad categories were determined by the objectives of the research and the literature (a priori categories). Specific categories were then developed from a detailed examination of the data after transcription. The process that followed was then an identification of frequent or significant themes, words and phrases. Labels were assigned to categories to identify their content & meaning. The themes that were developed from the data included: Job opportunities, transport accessibility, migrants as tied movers and social networks.

Data Analysis

Why are migrant teachers in Johannesburg?

a. Migrant Teachers (interviews)



Findings

The biographical profile of the participants (n=10) revealed that the majority of teachers were from Zimbabwe (n=7) and they were married (n=8). The majority (n=6) were from the age group 40-49 years indicating that they were older teachers and the majority had more than 5 years of teaching experience marking them as seasoned teachers.

Migrant teachers' reasons for being in Johannesburg

Migrant teachers were all teaching in primary schools and they revealed multiple, sometimes intersecting reasons that led to their decision-making to be in Johannesburg. For this paper, only the economic, political and social reasons are discussed. The data for this discussion below is from ten migrant teachers' interviews (I) and a focus group discussion (FGD) with 5 migrant teachers.

Economic, political and Social reasons

The economic, political, and social reasons for choosing Johannesburg as a destination country are discussed below:

Economic reasons

In this study, the participants (n=6) were coming to South Africa for financial gain. For example: Michael (interview) and Cathy (focus group discussion) were attracted by the availability of jobs in Johannesburg, which they heard about from their family and friends. Michael (I, 3 – Zimbabwean national) is working in South Africa for economic reasons: remittances - to send money back home to Zimbabwe so that his wife and children can meet their basic needs. Some migrant teachers viewed South Africa's economy as being stable in comparison to the home country (in the case of Zimbabwe) and they had therefore decided to emigrate to the closest urban centre, in SA, Johannesburg where they would be able to secure employment.

Cathy (FGD, 1 – Zimbabwean national) was firm in her decision that despite her feeling lonely and homesick in Johannesburg, she would not return to Zimbabwe:

"I think all of us are here for economic reasons because we know that if we go back, we are not going to be able to sustain our families as much as we can here. So we are only here in this country for economic reasons. If we had a choice, if things were good back home, we will all want to go back!"

The 'we' in Cathy's statements, indicates her view that all Zimbabwean teachers share the same feeling as her and the view that Zimbabweans are only in SA seeking financial stability to provide sustenance for their families. Sikana (FGD, 2 – Zimbabwean national) referred to herself as an

economic refugee and the definition of the term ‘economic refugee’ was explained by Cathy (FGD, 1 – Zimbabwean national):

“...We want to be in our country but we can’t because of economic reasons. We’re not here because we don’t like our country, so we call ourselves economic refugees because the reasons that brought us here are economic.”

It is evident from the above extract that Cathy refers to Zimbabwe as “our country” implying that Zimbabwe is still recognised as their home and not SA. She states, on behalf of all Zimbabweans, that economics is the reason for their emigration. It is well known that the economic downturn in Zimbabwe is as a result of the politics in the country.

Political reasons

Political turmoil in Zimbabwe had led to some Zimbabwean teachers choosing to migrate to South Africa and Johannesburg is the closest and largest cosmopolitan environment where there would be opportunities for a better life.

Sikana (I, 1 – Zimbabwean national) stated:

“I had businesses and they flopped...and also, I had already a daughter in South Africa. She was at Western Cape University and I couldn’t afford to pay for her fees when the Zimbabwean dollar was tumbling down.”

Thus Sikana explained that the politics affected businesses in Zimbabwe to such an extent that the many businesses that she had floundered, and she became financially unstable. In addition she needed to support her daughter in SA. She thus chose to emigrate to SA, as she couldn’t see the politics improving soon and she found a job in Johannesburg.

Social Networks, Education and a positive climate

Another reason why migrant teachers have chosen to migrate to Johannesburg is due to their social networks in Gauteng. They have family and friends who have previously migrated and Johannesburg is the location where they have moved.

For example, Michael (I, 4 – Zimbabwean national) stated,

“I arrived here in this area because there was a relative of mine who was staying in this area. So you see, I then looked around and found employment here and that’s why I’m still here.”

Michael’s main reason for heading to Johannesburg was socially influenced by the fact that he had a relative in the same area. He felt comfortable being in a new environment only where there was a familiar element; namely that of a family member.

Similarly, Happy (FGD, 3), a primary school trained teacher with 6 years of teaching experience stated, *“It was family that brought me, so they were looking after me during that time, so it was not like things were hard for me.”* Her primary reason for coming to Johannesburg was similar to that of Michael’s (I, 4). She had an extensive family network in the Johannesburg area that was able to take care of her, that is meet her daily needs, whilst she searched for employment in primary schools. Happy (I, 5) further explained that economic hardships in Zimbabwe had led her to search for greener pastures in South Africa, mainly in the Johannesburg area. She elaborated on the socio-economic hardships which prompted her migration to SA: that the living conditions, medical provisions, food and the salary in Zimbabwe were inadequate to maintain a comfortable standard of living. She further explained, *“At times you would have the money but you can’t have anything to buy”* because the shops are inadequately stocked. This clearly reveals that her choice to relocate to South Africa was influenced by her social networks and also SA’s stable economy.

Sikana and her husband had to emigrate to South Africa to find employment to survive to meet their own needs (she as a teacher) and to afford to pay for their first-born’s university fees as she continued her studies in SA. Theirs was a family migration to address all their members’ needs. It is evident that educational enrolment in a higher education institution was also of relevance for migrants as well as their children. A South African education is highly regarded in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. Her daughter who was in SA studying eventually achieved educational success and Sikana was optimistic when she left Zimbabwe that she would be successful in SA because her daughter was climbing the educational ladder successfully in SA. She went on to say,

“My coming to South Africa made everything possible because in 2010, she graduated with her PhD. That’s why I’m so positive about South Africa...I’m very positive about South Africa because it has brought up my children. The other one went to UK and graduated...from here and she graduated at Oxford University in Finance: Accounting and Finance and it’s all coming from South Africa. That’s why I’m saying, I’m very positive about South Africa because it has educated my children.”

Sikana’s constant repetition of the word ‘positive’ indicates that she is clearly very thankful for the quality of education that her children have received from South Africa and she is indeed a proud mother of graduated children in critical skills areas.

Sheila’s (I, 8 – Indian nationality) daughter was enrolled at the university in Johannesburg, studying chemical engineering, which was in close proximity to her accommodation. Her daughter, is now qualified, resides and is employed in Canada. Michael (I, 4 – Zimbabwean national) is currently studying towards his PhD through the University of Johannesburg and is only able to pay for his studies because he is employed in South Africa.

A DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The migrant teachers were emigrating to Johannesburg, South Africa mainly for financial (economic), social and political reasons which will be explained in more detail below. 50% of migrant teachers emigrated to SA for the following reasons discussed below (the other 50% entered by virtue of being ‘tied movers’ and this is detailed in another paper).

Economic Stability

Cathy (FGD, 1 – Zimbabwean national) linked the push and pull factors of the economy when she stated that the unstable economy in Zimbabwe influenced her decision to migrate to South Africa which has a stable economy. Michael’s situation of earning to remit is in keeping with Kriger’s findings (2010, p. 77) as she stated that many Zimbabweans are “looking to find work to help their families at home to survive”. Similarly Manik (2011b, p. 83) stated that “in respect of the economic climate in Zimbabwe, participants revealed that inflation was high, salaries were too low for a family to survive on, some were working without being paid a salary, and even when there was

adequate money in terms of the salary, the shops did not stock essential merchandise for daily needs”. In her study (2011, p. 84), she explained that one of her participants mentioned that they were “earning US\$100 per month as a family person and they felt that the salary was too little”. Alexander (2012) also explains that the term ‘economic migrant’ refers to somebody who has emigrated from one country to another country for various reasons related to money such as better job opportunities or enhanced financial status. Thus, majority of the Zimbabwean participants saw themselves as economic refugees. In this study, economics is also a key factor attracting Zimbabwean migrant teachers, some of whom are desperate to support their families in their home country. Thus many of them were what Betts (2010) referred to as ‘survival migrants.’

Appleton, Morgan and Sives (2006, p. 778) stated in their study that “higher salary was the leading reason for working abroad as given by the migrant teachers”. Migration becomes a possibility when teachers think of the huge salary gaps between what they could be receiving out of their home country, and what they are presently receiving in the home country. Crush (2014) similar to Appleton et al (2006) stated that majority of the Zimbabwean migrants in the 1990’s perceived South Africa as a place to assist their families manage with poor financial circumstances and poor opportunities in Zimbabwe. He further explained that when Zimbabweans were asked to state which country they preferred between Zimbabwe and South Africa; Zimbabwe was regarded as the best except for the easy accessibility of employment and merchandise. This is in keeping with the findings from my study where Happy (I, 4 – Zimbabwean national) stated how difficult it was to find food because of the shortage of stock in shops and her low salary that pushed her to migrate to South Africa. Thus, the salary in SA together with the availability of food supplies that can be purchased are strong economic pull factors and with Johannesburg being the nearest urban hub to Zimbabwe, it is a magnet.

The participants from Zimbabwe are solely in South Africa to be able to support their families with the income they receive from being employed in Johannesburg. Sheila (I, 8) stated that she and her husband relocated to South Africa because of the attractive job offer and better living conditions in Johannesburg. Although they experience loneliness and feelings of isolation, their economic well-being, however, is prioritised and it takes precedence over their emotional well-

being as they are also desperate to earn money in South Africa so that they could improve not only their lives but also the lives of their loved ones.

The push and pull of Politics

Politics were also significant as a push (from Zimbabwe) and pull (to Johannesburg, South Africa) factor. Sikana (I, 1 – Zimbabwean national) stated that her reason for leaving Zimbabwe and relocating to Johannesburg was because her businesses had ‘flopped’ due to the political turmoil in the country and South Africa is viewed as politically stable. Sikana had to migrate to South Africa as her businesses liquidated and she could no longer sustain her family’s needs due to the fact that the Zimbabwean dollar started doing very badly. Her explanation of the political reason was different to the findings in other studies. With regards to the politics according to Manik’s (2011b:82) study, there were participants who revealed that being a teacher and involved with the opposition party (Movement for Democratic Change - MDC) was not tolerated, as education is controlled by the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) and such teachers were asked to resign. Those teachers contended that education is controlled by the government in Zimbabwe. Other studies have also indicated that in Zimbabwe, human rights violations are perpetrated by the government. They have violated several key human rights, including the right to life, property and freedom of movement. There are strict restrictions on freedom of speech, assembly, and the press. Although Zimbabwe still holds elections, they are not free, fair, and are frequently seen as fraudulent (Banerjee, 2018). In this present study, the participants did not mention the role of the political parties in their migration decisions. Nevertheless, political turmoil is said to have eroded the value of the Zimbabwe dollar (Zimbabwe Independent, 2019); it is the least valued of all currency units in the world and this is the impact for the present study in terms of Sikana’s articulations of her businesses failing in Zimbabwe.

Social network support and Educational provision

Social networks have an encouraging impact on cross-border migrants’ happiness, remarkably because belonging to a network intensifies “migrants’ resilience to social and economic shocks” (Mazars et al 2013, p. 7). Relationships (with friends and family) in South Africa, helped many

participants to feel comfortable in Johannesburg. In this study, the closeness of family and friends was one of the key reasons that led migrant teachers to relocate to Johannesburg.

Sikana (I, 1 – Zimbabwean national) brought her children to complete their secondary and tertiary studies at a university in South Africa. Before the Zimbabwean economy had started performing very poorly, Sikana had already registered her daughter as a student at the Western Cape University because she could afford the fees and it was highly regarded. However, when the Zimbabwean economy started a downward spiral and her business profit margin had decreased, she deliberated on the situation and found a solution. Sikana and her husband then migrated to South Africa to earn an income so that they could continue paying for their daughter's university fees which had then become an enormous burden. Thus the politics had affected education for Sikana's family. Indeed, politics has had a ripple effect on education in Zimbabwe as Manik (2011b, p. 84) had earlier noted but not in the same manner as described here in this study. Present literature on the state of education in Zimbabwe show that around 75 percent of state schools are not functioning properly in Zimbabwe because the majority of state teachers are not working due to inadequate pay which makes it impossible to provide for their basic needs, forcing them to look for or work for food. (Zimbabwe and South Africa, n.d).

Educational opportunities in South Africa seem affordable as the migrant teachers in this study were able to study (Michael) and others could afford to send their children to university, which otherwise would have been impossible in their home country. Sikana's (I, 2 – Zimbabwean national) eldest daughter is qualified in Medical Science and her second-born has a degree in Accounting and Finance, all from SA institutions. Hence, the quality of higher education seems high as Sheila and Sikana's daughters are both working overseas with qualifications obtained in South Africa.

Some insights and conclusions

In the cohort of migrant teachers who were teaching in primary schools in Johannesburg, Zimbabweans dominated, that is, they were the majority in Johannesburg. The majority of the participants also fell in the age-group of 40-49 years and they were qualified seasoned teachers. This is consistent with the finding by Keevy et al (2014) that the majority of migrant teachers

across SA are Zimbabweans. Johannesburg is presented as a city of hope for migrant teachers. We have argued that the majority who are Zimbabwean teachers are trying to survive by escaping unbearable socio-economic and political environment in favour of a multitude of favourable socio-economic and political conditions in Johannesburg, South Africa -a city of hope just a stone throw away from the hopelessness of Zimbabwe.

South Africa is benefitting from this brain gain. Teachers are a highly skilled group and should be welcomed for their knowledge and skills. Migrant teachers in this sample are seasoned teachers but the majority were on contract positions in Johannesburg. They were clearly filling teacher shortages in the primary school labour market. Given their commitment to contributing to the economy, addressing Zimbabwean teachers' needs, the majority cohort in SA, as part of the teaching force is important. Hence, the Department of Basic Education needs to consider maximising on the present 'brain gain'.

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