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## **Globalisation and Transnational Teachers: South African Teacher Migration to the UK**

### **SUMMARY**

The globalisation of the world markets has paved the way for the movement of people with scarce skills such as teachers across national boundaries with relative ease. This paper focuses on the migration of teachers from South Africa to the UK using a qualitative, ethnographic approach. It argues that there are socio-cultural complexities in the transnational migration of SA teachers. It begins by identifying the reasons for teachers exiting the SA teaching fraternity to work in schools in London in the UK. Teachers' experiences in the UK schools are then explored. The study revealed that teachers leaving SA had multiple reasons for going abroad. The migration of teachers from SA to the UK was influenced by the declining economic status of teaching as a profession in SA, and global labour market conditions. The majority of the migrant teachers who were interviewed had an existing social network in the UK, either friends or relatives. However, the gravity of teaching in a foreign country without next of kin took its toll and teachers spoke at length of the loneliness of being apart from immediate family. An overwhelming majority of migrant teachers experienced a culture shock in UK classrooms, especially discipline problems. Migrant teachers felt powerless, as UK policies tend to protect children, even if they misbehaved in the classroom. The paper concludes by highlighting the commodification of teachers; those who are able to trade their skills in a global market in return for socio-economic and career gains. The arrival of this breed of teacher is also facilitated by what D. Harvey terms the "time-space compression" of global society.

**KEY WORDS:** globalisation, transnationalism, migration, teachers, brain drain

### **Introduction**

The process of globalisation and the inevitable expansion of "markets, transportation, communication, capital and skills have challenged the geographic hegemony of national governments" and their borders (Centre for Development Enterprise, 1997: 17). Globalisation has been accompanied by the rapid migration of people across borders and has raised questions about identity, citizenship and nationality. Citizenship is not always automatic, and inevitably there is race, ethnic or religious discrimination (Castles and Davidson, 2000; Tapinos, 2000). The globalisation of the world markets has paved

the way for the movement of people with scarce skills across national boundaries with relative ease. Professionals have been extremely susceptible, given their particular knowledge and skills base. The trend is for such professionals from developing countries to fill the gaps in the labour market in developed countries. This has been perceived to be especially damaging to the growth of developing countries (Abedian, 2001; Asmal, 2001; Louw, 2001a, b).

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2004), since the 1990 there has been an increase in the international migration of highly skilled workers in three sectors: health, education and new technologies. The OECD identified three reasons for international migration: economic magnetism of the destination, an existing social network in the destination country, and a closeness (distance) between the country of origin and destination.

South Africa (SA) shares the same fate with other developing countries in terms of the loss of skilled professionals to developed countries. According to Vincent Williams, South African Migration Project (SAMP) Manager, the "Big Five" destination countries are the United States (US), United Kingdom (UK), Australia, New Zealand and Canada (*Sunday Times*, 08-12-2002). Emigration figures of Statistics South Africa estimate that an average of 1000 skilled people are leaving SA every month (Harichunder, 2001). A study of emigration to the UK, US, New Zealand, Canada and Australia by the University of Cape Town suggested that close to a quarter of a million South Africans have settled in these countries between 1989 and 1997 (Louw, 2001).

SA is presently losing workers in the following fields: health (nurses, doctors etc.), engineering, accounting and information technology, and teaching (*Sunday Times*, 08-12-2002). In many developed countries the teaching profession is ageing due to an inability to attract young people into the fraternity. Teacher shortages are evident in the UK, US, Canada, Australia and Netherlands (van Leeuwan, 2001). The dire need to replenish the profession results in many governments resorting to unconventional measures to overcome these shortages, including paying fees to private agencies for recruiting teachers (Naidu, 2001). The aggressive recruitment drives undertaken by teacher agencies, especially those acting on behalf of UK schools, offer lucrative packages for teachers, specifically those from developing countries where English is an official language.

South Africans are in the majority when compared to all foreign teachers in British classrooms (*Special Assignment*, SABC 3, 23-04-04, 21h30). Consequently, there is much concern about the impact of the migration of teachers on the future of education in South Africa. Each year about 17,500 educators are lost through natural attrition and only 2,500 people are being trained as teachers (Gilbey, 2001). Presently, there are no statistics available regarding the specific number of teachers migrating to the UK. However, the repercussions of a reduction in the number of teachers are serious for South Africa, especially in terms of the development of the economy.

This paper analyses the migration of teachers from South Africa (SA) to the United Kingdom (UK), with specific reference to the influence of globalisation. More specifically, reasons for teachers exiting the SA teaching fraternity to work in schools in London in the UK were examined. Furthermore, teacher experiences in the UK schools were explored.

The SA-UK flyaway<sup>1</sup> was appropriate for many reasons. Conservative estimates reveal that there is a national shortage of forty thousand teachers in the UK (Ochs, 2003). British education authorities have acknowledged that they are aggressively recruiting teachers from SA (*Special Assignment*, SABC3, 23-04-04, 21h30). A UK principal elaborated that if it were not for South African, Australian, New Zealand or Canadian teachers, some inner-city London schools would be forced to close (*BBC News*, 02-02-01).

Given the intricacies of teacher migration, a qualitative, ethnographic approach was adopted, which focused on “lived experiences embedded within socio-cultural contexts” (McHugh, 2000: 72). McHugh emphasised that “only ethnographic research can reveal the subtle details of the experience of migration” (2000: 73). It was imperative to understand “the actions of participants on the basis of their active experience of the world and the ways in which their actions arise from and reflect back on experience” (Burgess, 1984: 3). Therefore, it was also necessary to adopt methods that “recognise the variety of both spatial scales and experiential environments that maybe involved in any one act of migration” (Halfacree, 1994: 165). The main data collection methods for this study were semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, qualitative diaries and classroom observations with a total group of 120 teachers. About two-thirds of the sample was female,<sup>2</sup> and either of Indian descent (62.5%) or white (34%). There was a small percentage (3.3%) of coloured teachers who had migrated. African teachers did not feature in the sample because English was not their first language (a legacy of apartheid education), and they were therefore not viewed as ideal recruits to teach in the UK. The study was dependent to a large extent on data sources that were regional (the province of Kwa-Zulu-Natal in SA). The snowball sampling technique was adopted to identify respondents for the study, as there is no reliable data available regarding teachers who are migrating from South Africa. Interviews and focus groups discussions were held in South Africa and in the UK. This was supported with e-mail correspondence, and diary records.

This paper is divided into six sections. The first section provides a brief overview of the processes of globalisation, migration and transnationalism in order to provide a conceptual framework for the paper. The second section focuses on motivations for leaving SA. This is followed by an analysis of the gendered nature of teacher migration to the UK, and the role of networks and family obligations. Thereafter, the experiences of South African teachers in the UK are discussed. The influence of globalisation and the rise of transnational teachers is the theme of the fifth section. Finally, the consequences for SA, especially in terms of a brain drain, are assessed.

## **Globalisation, migration and transnationalism**

Globalisation involves interconnectedness between countries. According to Held et al. (1999: 16) globalisation is “a process (or set of processes) that embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction and the exercise

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<sup>1</sup> route

<sup>2</sup> In terms of the tentative statistics provided by the South African Democratic Union, females comprise 63% of all teachers in the country.

of power". Technological developments (microchip and computer) and globalisation are envisaged as "symbiotically feeding off each other" due to the "information age providing an infrastructure for globalisation" (Burbach, 2001: 21). The term globalisation, for the purpose of this paper, suggests that socio-economic linkages between places around the world are now more numerous and intense. The increasing interconnectedness between countries has intensified migration processes. As the economy has globalised, people from around the world find attractive opportunities that might influence them to cross international boundaries (Laws, 1997).

Stalker (2000) has argued that the globalisation of the world economy will intensify migration in the twenty first century. Tacoli and Okali (2001) have suggested that migration is one of the most important and tangible aspects of globalisation. In this regard, Cohen (1997) has identified two forms of migration that are linked to globalisation:

1) *Immigration Shopping* – Many western countries have linked their economic development, manpower and immigration departments so that selected migrants fill slots in the labour market. This occurs when countries vie for particular migrants. Depending on the needs of the country, immigration vacancies are created. Suitable migrants in this category have the following attributes: skills, youth, good health, education and a lack of dependants.

2) *Skilled Transients* – This refers to highly skilled professionals who work for either international companies on contract or are freelancing. The employer affords them privileges in terms of insurance, education for dependants and subsidized family visits. What is relevant to this category is that these migrants are not leaving their home country forever. This form of migration has strong links to what Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc (1994; cf. Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton, 1995) have termed transnationalism.

Transnationalism is an idea that emanated in American discourse on cross border population movement (Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton, 1992; Conway and Cohen, 1998; Massey et al., 1998). Transnational communities exist where people involved in such movement straddle two worlds. In the past numerous researchers from the US (e.g. Handlin, 1973; Takaki, 1993) perceived immigrants as people who were uprooted from both home and country, and had to endure a process of incorporation into a new socio-cultural scenario. Transnationalism departs from this perception in that migrants forge and sustain multiple connections across national borders at their free will. Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton (1992: 9) define transnationalism "as a social process whereby migrants operate in social fields that transgress geographic, political and cultural boundaries". Migrants thus move freely across international borders, between different cultures and social systems (Kearney, 1991; Glick Shiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton, 1992). Migrants are involved in nation-building in many countries, and thus have implications for national identity.

Various scholars have delineated transnational migrants into categories, depending on the intentions and paths traversed by them. Grant (1981) utilizes the terms "shuttle migrants" or "cultural commuters" to refer to migrants that travel to and fro with no intention of staying anywhere permanently. Margolis' (1995) concept of yo-yo migration

refers to migrants who return home with the intention of a permanent stay. However, they later return to the host country. Factors prompting this type of migration include the harsh reality that the money that was saved in the US may not last long, given increased inflation or the lack of appropriate jobs with a satisfying wage back home. Returnees are likely to face the same barriers that led them to migrate initially (Margolis, 1995).

While transnationalism is a useful concept for explaining population movements at a macro-level, “it is of little use when it comes to understanding the daily realities of transmigrant life” Conway (2000: 212). More specifically, it is unable to explain the lives of migrants, the circumstances within which they choose mobility and the consequences of their movement and behaviour in the sending and receiving areas (Conway, 2000). Not many studies have been successful in attempting to unearth the intricate socio-cultural and political dimensions of transnational migrants. This paper attempts to address some of these issues by focusing on teacher migration from South Africa to the UK.

### **Motivations for leaving SA**

Teachers leaving SA had multiple reasons for going abroad. They were leaving SA for economic, social and career reasons. According to Maketla (2004: 08) 67% of the public school teachers in SA did not receive “real increases in the form of pay progression”. This was aptly captured by one respondent:

*I don't feel that the teaching profession gets the recognition or pay it deserves, big mess at the moment. Salaries are shocking. Class sizes too big, there is not much incentive to stay regarding finance and job security. Jobs are difficult to obtain in private schools or other nice schools, I think there are several flaws in the profession, and that is why we are going to suffer a severe shortage of teachers in the country. Unless government can understand the needs of teachers and accommodate these needs the teacher situation will not improve. The salary teachers earn is crazy. Older teachers get frustrated because their salary hardly increases as they stay in the profession for longer (interview, 29-03-03).*

For most teachers from 1996 to 2003 salary increases did not accompany any type of pay progression (annual notch increase or promotion). This “caused frustration as teachers could not see progression in their careers” (Maketla, 2004: 8). Les (interview, 07-08-03) was adamant that there was no correlation between a teacher’s qualifications, years of experience and salary. He used himself as an example:

*Every educator has a diploma and degree. Many have more. Qualification plus experience doesn't equal remuneration e.g. In the Justice System: a worker with matric + 20 years and his earning is R140,000. I have REQV<sup>3</sup> (salary status) 16, two degrees, 3 diplomas plus a host of other courses and my salary is R92,000 after 21 years of experience. There's an imbalance there.*

Similarly, participants in the present study who were parents were of the opinion that on a teacher’s salary they had been unable to save to pay for their children’s uni-

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<sup>3</sup> Relative Education Qualification Value – The assigning REQV's is to qualifications that are recognized in education. The minimum requirement to be registered as a professionally recognized educator is REQV 13 (Policy Handbook for Educators, 2003).

versity fees. Their children were in secondary school and would be entering tertiary institutions within 5 years. These teachers declared that had they not taken advantage of offers in the UK, they would not have been able to provide for their families' future needs. Sonny and Lean were parents and both wanted to provide economic security for their children. Sonny (interview, 07-08-03) said: "My son is completing matric this year, I want him to go to university without having to worry about how much it costs." Lean (interview, 13-08-03) has two daughters, one in grade 11 and the other in grade 12. She said that her primary intention was "to secure my children's future financially. When my daughters finish school they will want to attend university, which is costly". In this regard the exchange rate of the pound to the rand is a powerful incentive to migrate. One pound is equivalent to approximately R12.00.<sup>4</sup> Improving livelihoods for children has been suggested as a motivation for migration (Morokvasic, Erel and Kyolco, 2003).

SA teachers were not simply saving pounds. They were using their salaries to acquire assets in the UK and in SA. Migrants Ben and Mersan took advantage of the low interest rates in the UK. Ben (interview, 07-04-03) took a loan in the UK to buy prime property in KZN while Mersan (interview, 06-12-02) paid off an existing bond on a house in SA. Both Ben and Mersan have retained or invested in assets in SA. It can thus be inferred that both have intentions of returning to SA. Rajen (interview, 16-01-03) was house hunting in an elite area of KZN for the home of his dreams. Thus prior to exit teachers viewed themselves as economically marginalized and subsequent to their transnational migration they were identifying themselves as financial achievers.

Migrants were of the opinion that on a UK teacher's basic salary there was more that one could accomplish. Rena drew a comparison between her standard of living in SA and the UK upon her move (interview, 08-04-03):

*Food is so reasonable, things are really cheap. On a teacher's salary here you can survive. I send money home plus I save plus I travel plus I eat well plus I shop and I still have money at the end of the month. You're not scrounging and begging, thinking at the end of the month "how am I going to make ends meet?" Okay I don't have a car but you can survive on a teacher's salary – back home you're waiting for pay day.*

Rena highlighted the relationship between inflation and a teacher's salary. The repetition of "plus" emphasized the variety of options she had in the UK on a teacher's disposable income, which was not possible on a South African salary. Rena perceived herself in SA as occupying the lowest salary rung in the social ladder. However, once in the UK her mind was at ease as she could accomplish numerous goals on a teacher's salary. As a married female she had taken the onus to empower herself to be economically secure and sent remittances to her husband in SA. She was also extending her personal growth and that of her husband by travelling to Europe. He joined her for a Christmas tour to Scotland and Europe in December 2002 (telephonic interview, 10-04-2003).

Career dissatisfaction was a major reason for experienced teachers leaving SA. Various strands of their discontentment lay in education policy decisions. These included

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<sup>4</sup> This was the average exchange rate in 2003.

the reduction of teachers' leave, the implementation of outcomes-based education (OBE), the application of the post-provisioning norm (PPN) or teacher-pupil ratio in schools to determine additional teachers, and the instability faced by unprotected temporary teachers (UTE's). Teachers also expressed their concern about the nature of the school environment: the impact of limited career mobility, poor management and increased workloads. One respondent was unhappy about the impact of OBE experimentation on teachers and pupils:

*It is a nightmare, how it is being dealt with at school. This morning I had an altercation with the deputy principal and I phoned the recruitment agency and asked them how soon can I leave. We are just guinea pigs for OBE. Being in education and seeing children destroyed in schools – I'm not prepared for my children to be damaged (interview, 27-03-03).*

Migrant teachers felt that they were ill-equipped to teach within the new education paradigm, OBE. This stemmed from three reasons: firstly, the change from teaching a subject (such as Geography) to a learning area (Human and Social Sciences which is History and Geography). Secondly, the need for retraining which they felt had not been fulfilled by the department; and thirdly, the lack of resources. Ravin, with 19 years of experience in teaching technical subjects, articulated his frustration and feelings of professional incompetence with regard to OBE (interview, 26-07-03):

*With the change in the system I'm no longer teaching technical subjects, which is practical in that you work on a project and produce an article but Technology, which is science-oriented. That is very different because it's about design, discovery, computers, catering, cooking, hydraulics etc. which we normally don't do. We need to go for training but the department (DoE) has assumed that we must take over (teach a learning area instead of a particular subject). Day by day it is very frustrating to be in the education field because even the higher authority that you consult, says that he's in the dark. Also, the facilities are being reduced each year. For example the materials in the workshop: the department (DoE) used to provide ... last year the school bought the materials, this year the school asked the boys to buy their own materials.*

Ravin was upset that the designing of the new curriculum did not lead to compulsory retraining. Furthermore, there was a lack of management assistance and a reduction in the provision of resources.

Malcolm (2001) has alluded to the curriculum shift to OBE as being sudden. The negative terms used by migrants in interviews to describe OBE (frustration, nightmare, damage, destroy, guinea pigs) reveal teachers' frustration and professional inadequacy at the implementation of this new system without the provision of adequate training. Carrim (2001) stated that teachers felt divorced from the process of curriculum change and were not prepared for the new system.

Teachers were concerned that the constant change in the post-provisioning norm (teacher-pupil ratio) had created an untenable climate for teaching and learning. Farida vented her feelings about the manipulation of the PPN and its disastrous effects on teachers (interview, 18-07-03):

*The politicians are changing the norms to suit their agendas while teachers lose their jobs, how contradictory. The corruption that takes place with the PPN constantly changing ... Pupils will be sitting up to the board if the PPN drops next year. There will be in*

*excess of 50 pupils per class. How uncomfortable is that? You can barely walk, there's no motivation to control let alone teach.*

The calculation of the number of teachers required by a school using the DoE formulae (weightings have changed yearly) had negatively impacted on the organization of schools. Farida saw the increase in pupils per class as having serious repercussions for classroom management, thus inhibiting actual lesson time.

### **Gender, family obligations and networks**

The majority of migrants in the study were female and married. This was contrary to the findings of previous migration studies by Mulder (1993) and Smith (2001), which suggested that married people migrate less often across long distances than single people. However, the findings in the present study suggest that in respect of experienced migrant teachers, their privileged identity as wage earners took precedence over their role as husband or wife. Also, the appeal of increased remuneration coupled with travel benefits and professional growth, may be responsible for offsetting this trend.

Not discounting the fact that teaching is a predominantly female occupation in SA, the migration of single white females and married Indian females to the UK has significance. It symbolises a change in the status that women occupy within the family/household. The impetus for the migration of married females in the present study evolves from the economic contribution that women wanted to make towards the improvement in the quality of lives of their families.

If the process of migration is linked to the decision-making power of females, their movement could indicate an increase in women's power. This perception is derived from them being the catalysts for socio-economic change of their households as well as in their decision (as women) to migrate. Hence, female migration is a means of empowerment for married Indian women. White female educators were generally single and in the novice teacher category. They were intent on pursuing travel and career opportunities in the UK. As they harboured a negative perception of the SA teaching fraternity, they were thus unwilling to enter the public school arena. Globalisation has provided opportunities for both cohorts of women to migrate transnationally in the pursuit of socio-economic improvement and self-development.

Married or attached migrant teachers were initially departing from the home country (SA) as individuals but were making frequent visits home. Hence, there were numerous movements between the home and host country. The trips to SA coincided with British school holidays. These were frequently at the end of a term or school year. The overarching reason was family ties in SA and a tacit belief held by teachers that their "roots" were in SA. This was apparent in teachers' reference to SA as *home*. The family bonds were so strong for some teachers that major decisions were still grounded in SA (e.g. purchasing property in SA). The study also found that a major reason for return-migration was family obligations. Gmelch (1980) and Stack (1996) noted a similar pattern where migrants returned due to family ties. The majority of the migrants (80%) who participated in the study were married, with only twenty percent being single. However, only a quarter of the respondents who were married migrated as a family unit. The re-



maining three quarters had opted to teach in the UK without being accompanied by their families. They were thus “phantom parents and partners” as they had to attempt to fulfil relationship obligations regardless of the geographical distance separating themselves and their families. A major challenge for migrants whilst abroad, especially those married or in committed relationships, was coping with the absence of family.

The gravity of teaching in a foreign country without their next of kin took its toll and teachers spoke at length about the loneliness and being away from family. Female migrants in particular commented on the emotional trauma of being apart from their families. Mala (interview, 21-08-03) explained that she had a small close-knit family and that her “husband and son pined” for her. Suraida (interview, 19-08-03) commented that she had returned twice from the UK because she missed her children. Her role as primary care-giver took precedence over her role as “producer” (as a wage earner). The emotional impact of being phantom partner or parent was evident in migrants’ articulations. Some male migrants professed the extent of their loneliness. Benjamin (interview, 07-08-03, SA) who had never been apart from his family before stated:

*I’m sorry, sir, I won’t do it again – not there ... you know at night you want your family – people that care about you. There were so many of us without our families and I was away from my family for the first time in my life ... it was hard. When you go shopping everyone is with their family and you are alone.*

Hanah (interview, 17-08-03) who had originally migrated with three friends still yearned for her son. She asked him to join her after three months of being in the UK. Hanah’s role as a mother constrained her psychologically while she was in the UK. All migrants conceded to telephoning family in SA on a daily basis, thus accounting for international phone calls taking a fair slice of their budget. Thus it was evident that migrants experienced feelings of trauma and depression whilst in the UK.

The strain of long distance relationships resulted in many married teachers (44%) being joined at a later stage by their families or partners. The time period within which this occurred varied from three months for Asha (interview, 12-04-03) who left SA soon after her marriage; to a year for Mersan (interview, 06-12-02). Mersan did not intend visiting SA in 2003 but made an impromptu trip to spend time with his parents and parents-in-law. His trip was facilitated by the exchange rate of the pound to the rand which made it affordable even though he had a family of four.

The remaining cohort of married teachers had been scouting for suitable accommodation and prospects for their families, as well as awaiting the sale of their assets in SA with a view to having their families join them. A quarter of respondents from the married cohort of teachers that had exited without their families declared that family members had visited over holidays solely on a temporary basis. These teachers had made a decision to return to SA within a period of 1–2 years.

Even the migrants who were single alluded to returning regularly during UK school vacation times to SA to spend time with family and friends. In essence, a recharging of their ties with family and friends. Furthermore, important events in migrant teachers lives were grounded in SA. Lyn was a typical example: she got engaged on a romantic trip to Italy yet planned for her wedding to be held in SA. She specifically made a trip to Durban four months prior to her wedding to expedite arrangements.

The majority of the migrant teachers interviewed had an existing social network in the UK, either friends or family. Les (07-08-03), Meena (12-05-03) and Resmi (14-07-03) were single and had family/friends in the UK with whom they lived upon initial migration. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) maintained that such networks facilitate migration by reducing the costs and helping migrants in the process of adjustment in a new environment. For example, although Abdul and Ravin had chosen to migrate alone, they had a social network in the UK. Ravin had a brother and sister-in-law teaching and they assisted him to find a job. Abdul had three friends in the UK who had assisted him upon arrival in that country. Once Ravin and Abdul had settled, they had requested for their families to join them. Farida had decided to migrate with her entire family as she had a brother living in the UK. He was finalizing arrangements to secure a job for her husband. Farida was using her social network to assist her husband who was unemployed. When migrants were asked about their social life during their interviews all SA teachers spoke of mingling with ex-patriots, many of whom were also educators.

There appeared to be a distinctly separate South African Indian diaspora and a South African white diaspora in the UK. SA white migrant teachers interacted with each other on weekends and holidays as did SA Indian migrant teachers, but in distinctly separate groups. This became apparent when the snowball sampling technique was used in the UK. SA Indian teachers only provided the details of other SA Indian migrants with whom they mingled. SA white teachers also referred to other white teachers from their home country. In addition to feeling isolated socially, migrants did encounter problems linked to poor discipline in the UK classrooms.

### **Experiences in the UK classrooms**

An overwhelming majority of migrant teachers experienced a culture shock in UK classrooms and described their first month in negative terms ranging from “shocking and appalling” to “nightmarish”. They expressed horror at what they called “shockingly low levels of discipline” amongst pupils. Rajen (interview, 16-01-03) attempted to explain why there were serious discipline problems:

*Pupils are not allowed to go “skyving” which is bunking a lesson as their parents can be jailed. Pupils therefore remain in class yet fail to give you their attention. They indulge in childish behaviour like making and throwing paper rockets at the teacher or retorting: I can’t be bothered.*

Hanah (interview, 17-08-03) felt that as a teacher she became exasperated with non-participation in the lessons. She stated that the “kids don’t want to learn and you can’t touch them or anything”. Hanah’s remark is significant because migrant teachers exit SA with their baggage of past experiences and perceptions. Although it was abolished in terms of the South African Schools Act of 1996, there were still isolated incidents of corporal punishment being administered in SA (*Sunday Tribune*, 16-05-04: 1).

Lyn recalled her experiences (diary and e-mail, 25-10-03; interview 03-04-03) at Worthington (school she taught at from September to December 2002) as psychologically destructive to her. Her diary entry stated:

*The year nines are shockingly behaved and many teachers are complaining. But in ge-*

*neral pupils swear openly, disrespect the teachers and other pupils and are not aware of how to behave appropriately.*

She later alludes in her diary to a traumatic incident in her class:

*Major incident! Girl (awful past experiences and sad background from Africa) went ballistic in my classroom. She held a boy up by his throat and also picked a desk up and slammed it down. She slammed the door so hard that I couldn't open it. Dan was trying to help me, which made things worse (she is afraid and gets upset by males). I spent the next period being consoled, I was so shaken up and then was sent home after writing a detailed report. Awful experience...*

In her interview she explained the difficulty of teaching in the UK:

*There is graffiti on the tables, on their books, they will be jumping on the desks, sometimes throwing things out of the window, truanting lessons and standing in the corridors. They will leave lessons without permission and run to the bathroom or where ever they want to without asking. It's unbelievable. If you grow up in SA where you do not swear or say no indignantly, especially to the teacher, you don't slam a door in someone's face, you don't touch the teacher, you just don't use her things, the behaviour that we foreigners were experiencing is totally unacceptable in our countries. That is why it is so difficult to deal with – it was shocking.*

Lyn identified her role as a teacher in SA as being in control and therefore having power over the pupils. The extension of this power translated physically into respect by the pupils for the teacher by not interfering with her. It is evident that she is comparing pupils in the UK to SA. This was an unfair comparison as cultural norms in these societies differed. Nevertheless, it is understandable that she reacted in this manner as teachers draw on their past experiences in their classroom interactions.

Rena (interview, 08-04-03) was a teacher who had changed her thinking and attitude in order to compensate for the disciplinary problems in school. She revealed that in SA her behaviour was similar to other teachers: the traditional role with the teacher as authority and becoming emotionally involved with the students (building close relationships). In the UK she had purposefully chosen to be detached to prevent herself from becoming frustrated and stressed. The transcript below bears testimony to her strategy for coping with disciplinary problems:

*I think there are a lot of social problems in this area and that's how they come to school. I don't think there is an outlet for those problems: divorces, single parents, low income, children living with their grandparents. When I came here I decided that I was going to choose my battles. I'm not going to get into a fight. I might as well ask them to leave the room. In this school you have a special room called the PRU (pupil referral unit) and if a student is rude, you just send them to the PRU.*

Rena was aware of the different social contexts when comparing SA to the UK. She realized the "supremacy" of children was related to British legislation. Pupils have more power than the teachers in UK classrooms and Rena was willing to compromise. She thus saw the need to change her professional identity in order to maintain her emotional strength:

*If you are a person who is always a traditional teacher, you're the power in the class-*

*room and you find a student saying I'm not doing it, what are you going to do? You can't beat them up, here there's no corporal punishment, and you'll lose your job ... That's why I say I'm gonna choose my battles. If I get into a one to one I'm going to get frustrated and stressed out, so it's basically their choice. I'm not going to be the way I was in SA – gets so emotionally involved into the student that you can't see reality at the end of the day. You know I hold back a lot here, SA experience has made me wiser – emotionally... definitely – to choose your battles and some battles are just not worth it.*

Her comment “I hold back a lot” reveals that she is suppressing her core professional self. In addition, the experiences of other teachers impacted on her, prompting her to develop “survival strategies” for herself in the classroom. As a teacher in a foreign environment, she transformed her style of teaching and her attitude.

Ash (interview, 12-04-03) revealed that initially she wanted to quit teaching because she could not handle the rudeness of the children and the lack of respect. Once a pupil bit her and she walked out of school in exasperation because “the child is never reprimanded”. She felt that management always believed and supported the child. The supremacy of the child reigned and migrant teachers were at odds with the degree to which schools supported pupils, especially when they had erred. The lack of respect by pupils, in addition to the lack of support by management, had the effect of eroding teachers' confidence in their professional capabilities.

The effect of agency, of individual teachers' resilience indicated that migrants were not a homogenous group. Ash changed her mind about quitting when she had class inspections by OFSTED (Office for the Standards in Education) with what she termed “a rotten class” and she did well. She added that the head teacher came over and gave her a hug. This was the beginning of Ash's professional growth and her pursuit of a negotiated identity to become a confident and efficient teacher in the UK. She commenced by acquiring skills to integrate into the UK classroom. She attended a course on tackling discipline (called the Bill Rogers Course) to aid her in classroom management. This assisted her enormously in tackling discipline problems. She learnt: “don't be confrontational, change the tone of your voice – whisper in the child's ear”. She said that her strategies had resulted in her commanding a great deal of respect from other teachers.

It was thus evident that problems with classroom discipline impacted negatively on teachers' personal and professional identities. Migrant teachers felt powerless as UK policies tend to protect children, even if they misbehave in the classroom. Consequently, some migrant teachers were considering returning home, while others were seeking greener pastures in the global, transnational arena.

### **Globalisation and transnational teachers**

A global teacherhood occurs in the tangible traversing of teachers across borders and continents to fulfil the demand for teachers abroad. Hughill (2002) recognised this possibility when he mentioned the advent of the global teacher, which this paper refers to as the transnational teacher. However, what Hughill (2002) did not allude to is the commodification of teachers that has prompted this phenomenon: teachers being able to trade their skills in a global market in return for socio-economic and career gains.

Recruitment agencies were acutely aware of the position of teachers as commodities and maximized their profit in facilitating their movement across countries. The arrival this breed of teacher was also facilitated by what Harvey (1989) terms the "time-space compression of a global society".

Johnston (1991) in his study of global work patterns identified attributes of a diverse workforce, one of which was the standardisation of labour practices occurring around the world. He argued that while the world's skilled human resources were being produced in the developing world, most of the well-paid jobs were in developed countries. This offers a possible explanation for the mobility of teachers, especially between developing and developed countries. Marquardt (1999) identified a number of competencies for global staff. Recruitment agencies have been screening possible migrants for particular characteristics before seeking overseas employment on their behalf. These were also the attributes that SA teachers had alluded to in their experiences abroad: language proficiency and communication skills in the class; self-management and professional learning; a sense of humour and respect for the values of others; emotional resilience and adjustment skills and a cultural awareness of knowing oneself. The above contributes to a specific global mindset, a teacher willing to be part of the exchange of ideas and concepts between countries.

The teaching profession is faced with the same encumbrances, regardless of whether one is a teacher in SA or the UK. Internationally the teaching profession has been faced with a depleted social status. Although teachers were regarded as professionals, the working hours were long, the pay was relatively unattractive, and there was a lack of autonomy at all levels. Teachers were still bureaucratically controlled and were answerable to an array of stakeholders including management, school governing bodies, parents and politicians. Teachers were pressurized by many diverse duties and felt burdened (Apples and Jungck, 1992; Hargreaves, 1994). Broadfoot and Osborne (1988: 21) have coined a phrase to describe teachers' work as never ending "compressed time". Thus teachers globally were perceived as mere workers, what Carrim (2003: 333) notes as "executioners of tasks". What was apparent from migrant teachers' responses was that they would not view their duties in a negative light if there was financial gain for the acceptance of additional tasks.

Thus globalisation provided the context to facilitate teacher movement between SA and the UK. This is in keeping with Stalker's (2000) contention that globalisation of the world's economy will intensify migration in the twenty first century. The impact of globalisation with its linkages (e.g. transport) and the ease of crossing national borders had facilitated migration. Globalisation also paved the way for the generation of various modes of migration for transnational teachers.

The findings of this study advance the existence of three distinct divisions of transnational teachers based on their goals and migration strategies: goal achievers, lifestyle emigrants and transients. Migrant teachers exiting SA fell into one of three groups:

- i) "goal achievers" – who exited SA on a temporary basis to achieve particular socio-economic goals. These SA teachers felt burdened by their existing accounts (e.g. a house bond) or inescapable debts in the near future (e.g. children's university fees). However, whilst in the UK their salary in pounds allowed them to capitalize on travel prospects available.

- ii) “lifestyle emigrants” – who were exiting permanently for a better quality of life with a view to starting life afresh in a new country. Many of the lifestyle emigrants spent a trial period in the UK before embarking on a family emigration. Their migration was motivated by future gains rather than immediate returns.
- iii) “transients” – who had no intention of permanently settling in either UK or SA and were at ease crossing national boundaries. Such teachers indicated a willingness to migrate to other countries in the future. Given the intensity of interconnectedness between countries, people are able to move across national borders at will.

Each of the above categories was not a discrete entity and teachers who may initially have exited as goal achievers could become lifestyle emigrants or transients, depending on their circumstances and particular experiences. One of the consequences of migration is that it can lead to a brain drain or gain for sending and receiving countries, respectively.

### **Brain drain/gain/circulation?**

A significant question arises from the study: Can the migration of teachers from SA be viewed as a brain drain? The answer is complex. There are no quick fix solutions to the out-migration of teachers from SA. In addition, the right and freedom of individuals to migrate to a location that appears to be desirable and beneficial cannot be denied.

The South African government’s response in 2001 to the migration of educators was to call for the regulation of teacher recruitment to the UK (Gilbey, 2001). However, there was no plan of action to curtail teacher losses from SA. Nevertheless, concerns about teacher recruitment from developing countries within the Commonwealth did result in the SA Minister of Education and 22 Commonwealth states signing a protocol on teacher recruitment on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2004. The aim was to protect the rights of all stakeholders in the teacher recruitment process, especially that of source countries and recruited teachers. The protocol would also serve as an ethical guideline for the recruitment of teachers at an international level. More importantly, it provided a framework for countries such as SA to develop appropriate legislation on teacher recruitment.

The protocol was not a legal document and member countries were requested to use it as a framework to structure relevant legislation to protect national education systems and recruited teachers. The protocol called for teachers to be transparent in their liaisons with current and prospective employers. This was a valid concern that was raised as the present study revealed that some teachers were using unconventional or illegal methods to exit SA and teach in the UK, thus eluding the general methods of disclosure. Such methods employed included “pretence holidays” (travelling to the UK pretending to be on vacation but approaching recruitment agencies for teaching positions) and “unpaid leave” while teachers were still permanently employed in SA.

What about brain circulation and gain? Indeed, some migrant teachers who had returned from a period abroad, did comment about using their knowledge to develop their SA schools. Thus return-migrants remain an untapped resource in SA education. The initiation of teacher exchange programs not only to the UK but also to other countries such as Australia, Taiwan and New Zealand and Middle East would lead to teachers’

professional development, especially in terms of a cross-pollination of ideas and experience. This would assist in alleviating the need for teachers' resigning and exiting South African public schools permanently. A maximum period for exchange can be negotiated. There was also a need to encourage the return of teachers to SA to share the knowledge gained in host schools. SA teachers suggested that the advanced OBE syllabus and the provision of resource packages in the UK can be adapted for application in SA. Their knowledge, skills and expertise gained from their experiences abroad could be harnessed in fine-tuning the OBE curriculum for use in SA. The protocol on teacher recruitment did suggest that source countries implement measures to retain qualified teachers.

Some return-migrants had indicated a desire to leave SA on a further migration in the future. This could be a return to the UK or to another developed country. Thus there is evidence pointing to a re-migration although the magnitude, once again, is unknown. Nevertheless, it cannot be overlooked that the brain drain has serious economic repercussions for the development of SA. Van Rooyen (2003) has commented that the brain drain costs SA R2, 5 billion a year and the departure of each skilled emigrant translates into the loss of ten unskilled jobs in SA.

## Conclusion

Teacher recruitment is taking place on a significant scale from developing countries such as South Africa. South African teachers perceived themselves as economically marginalized professionals. Structurally, it can be argued that the migrant teachers from SA in the UK are pawns, subject to global labour-market conditions during recruitment drives. However, migrants should not be viewed as being constantly controlled by structural conditions, although their impact cannot be ignored. This paper has illustrated migrant teachers' ability to be independent actors in the pursuit of attaining their personal goals and priorities. The migration of teachers from SA to the UK was influenced by the declining economic status of teaching as a profession in SA, and global labour market conditions.

One of the impacts of teaching in a foreign country, especially for married migrant teachers who left their families in SA, was the feeling of loneliness. The absence of spouse and children coupled with adaptation to a new professional and social environment impacted on migrant teachers. Identities of being phantom fathers, mothers, husbands or wives affected the emotional resilience of teachers. This was compounded by the poor discipline and the psychological and emotional trauma they experienced in UK classrooms. A significant proportion of the migrants were women. Migration theories have been gender neutral and have thus masked the migration of females (Ekland, 1999). The impetus for the migration of married females in the present study was the economic contribution that women wanted to make towards the improvement in the quality of lives of their families.

This paper suggests that the emergence of transnational teachers has led to a global teacherhood and associated transnational identities. A global teacherhood occurs in the tangible traversing of educators across borders and continents to fulfil the demand for teachers abroad. In an era of globalisation, Bhagwati has suggested that "the ability to control migration has shrunk as the desire to do so has increased. Borders are largely be-

yond control and little can be done to really cut down on immigration” (2003: 99). Teachers’ opportunities for self-fulfilment and personal gain (by migrating to developed countries) should not be spurned. Rather, stakeholders in SA education (e.g. the DoE) need to concentrate on two aspects related to teacher migration: firstly, ways of making the teaching profession attractive and nurturing talented educators. In this manner “home-bred” teachers can be retained and it will also pave the way for attracting foreign skills. Secondly, there is a need to understand and appreciate the value of local teachers gaining global experience, and thus encourage their return.

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## GLOBALIZACIJA I TRANSNACIONALNI UČITELJI: MIGRACIJA UČITELJA IZ JUŽNOAFRIČKE REPUBLIKE U UJEDINJENO KRALJEVSTVO

### SAŽETAK

Globalizacija svjetskih tržišta omogućila je razmjerno lako kretanje ljudi s rijetkim vještinama, kao što su učitelji, preko nacionalnih granica. Ovaj se rad usredotočuje na migraciju učitelja iz Južnoafričke Republike u Ujedinjeno Kraljevstvo koristeći se pritom kvalitativnim, etnografskim pristupom. U radu se dokazuje postojanje društveno-kulturne kompleksnosti u transnacionalnoj migraciji južnoafričkih učitelja. Na početku se identificiraju razlozi odlaska učitelja iz južnoafričke učiteljske zajed-

nice na rad u londonske škole, a zatim se istražuju njihova iskustva u školama Ujedinjenoga Kraljevstva. Istraživanje je pokazalo da su razlozi odlaska učitelja iz Južnoafričke Republike u inozemstvo mnogobrojni. Na migraciju južnoafričkih učitelja u Ujedinjeno Kraljevstvo utjecao je pad plaća u nastavničkom poslu kao profesiji u Južnoafričkoj Republici, kao i uvjeti na globalnome tržištu rada. Većina intervjuiranih učitelja migranata već je imala društvenu mrežu u Ujedinjenom Kraljevstvu (prijatelje ili rođake). Ipak, težina učiteljskoga posla u stranoj zemlji bez blizine uže obitelji ostavila je trag te su učitelji opširno govorili o osamljenosti zbog razdvojenosti od bliske obitelji. Golema većina učitelja migranata doživjela je kulturni šok u tamošnjim učionicama, a posebno su istaknuli probleme s disciplinom. Učitelji migranti osjećali su se bespomoćno jer je politika Ujedinjenoga Kraljevstva sklon na zaštitu djece čak i kad je riječ o doista neprimjerenom ponašanju u razredu. U zaključku rada ističe se činjenica da učitelji postaju roba; na dobitku su oni koji mogu trgovati svojim vještinama na globalnome tržištu u zamjenu za društveno-ekonomsku dobit i karijeru. Dolazak te vrste učitelja olakšan je i onime što D. Harvey naziva »vremensko-prostornom kompresijom« globalnoga društva.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI: globalizacija, transnacionalizacija, migracija, učitelji, odljev mozгова

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## LA GLOBALISATION ET LES INSTITUTEURS TRANSNATIONAUX : LA MIGRATION DES INSTITUTEURS D'AFRIQUE DU SUD AU ROYAUME-UNI

### RÉSUMÉ

La globalisation des marchés mondiaux permet aux personnes possédant des savoir-faire peu répandus, tels les instituteurs, de jouir d'une mobilité transnationale relativement aisée. Le présent article se penche sur la migration des instituteurs d'Afrique du Sud au Royaume-Uni, selon une approche qualitative, ethnographique. Les auteurs montrent que la migration transnationale des instituteurs sud-africains présente certaines complexités socio-culturelles. Dans un premier temps, ils identifient les raisons pour lesquelles les instituteurs sud-africains acceptent un emploi dans les écoles londoniennes, au Royaume-Uni, puis ils étudient leurs expériences dans les écoles du Royaume-Uni. La recherche montre que le départ des instituteurs sud-africains pour l'étranger s'explique par de nombreuses raisons. L'émigration des instituteurs sud-africains au Royaume-Uni se situe dans le sillage du déclin du statut économique des métiers de l'enseignement en Afrique du Sud et de la conjoncture sur le marché global du travail. La plupart des instituteurs migrants enquêtés possédait déjà un réseau social au Royaume-Uni, à savoir des amis ou une parenté. Toutefois, la difficulté du travail d'instituteur dans un pays étranger, loin de leurs proches, a marqué ces instituteurs, qui ont largement évoqué leur solitude, liée à la séparation familiale. La grande majorité des instituteurs a vécu un choc culturel dans les classes du Royaume-Uni, en particulier quant au problème de la discipline. Les instituteurs migrants se sont sentis désarmés, car l'attitude du Royaume-Uni est encline à protéger les enfants même lorsqu'ils se comportent mal en classe. La conclusion souligne que les instituteurs sont transformés en marchandise ; ceux qui peuvent obtenir une amélioration de leur condition économique et sociale et de leur carrière en échange de leurs savoir-faire sur le marché global y gagnent. L'immigration de cette sorte d'instituteurs est facilitée par ce que D. Harvey appelle la « compression de l'espace et du temps » de la société globale.

MOTS CLÉS : globalisation, transnationalisation, migration, instituteurs, fuite des cerveaux