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## MIGRATION THEORIES AND ZIMBABWEAN MIGRANT TEACHERS AS REFLECTED IN A SOUTH AFRICAN CASE STUDY

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**Abstract:** Neo-classical and neo-Marxist theories oppose each other in terms of explaining motivation for migration and its development impact. Neo-classical theories posit that migration occurs because of economic considerations: higher incomes and economic gain. Neo-Marxist theories emphasize that migration occurs because of unequal and structural levels of development between developed and developing countries, regions or areas. In sub-Saharan Africa, South Africa is relatively economically developed compared to other countries in the region and, according to neo-Marxist philosophy, exploits the labour from other poorer countries. In this case study, the focus is on migrant teachers from Zimbabwe. According to neo-Marxist theories, migrants exist in an exploitative relationship with their host regions and/or countries. Apart from neo-classical and neo-Marxist theories, pluralist theories have evolved from these distinctive schools of thought that emphasize that migration is the result of a conscious family decision aimed at diversifying their resource base when faced with crises and/or scarcity, asserting that migration does indeed bring about development. This paper contends that neo-classical theories do apply to the case of Zimbabwean migrant teachers because they satisfactorily explain why these teachers came to South Africa, whereas neo-Marxist theories have limited relevance. Pluralist theories, however, through their emphasis on remittances, add meaning to people's motivations for, and the consequent impact of development related to this particular aspect of migration.

**Keywords:** *Neo-classical theories, neo-Marxist theories, pluralist theories, migration, development, Zimbabwean migrant teachers, remittances*

### I. INTRODUCTION

The basic premise of neo-classical theories of migration is that migration is part of economic development (Hagen-Zanker 2008) that is triggered by the choices of individual migrants based on observed employment and income

differentials between regions or countries (Ketso 1991). Neo-Marxist or historical structural theories of migration developed as a response to these neo-classical approaches to migration. The main argument in these theories is that differential structural, political and economic conditions are responsible for migration (De Haas 2008:7). Neo-Marxists see migration as a way of changing life of underdeveloping area's migrants. Migration is also seen as leading to an increase in spatial and interpersonal disparities in that migration sets in motion consumerist, non-productive and remittance-dependent attitudes on non-migrants (De Haas 2008:27). Hagen-Zanker (2008) and De Haas (2008) note that in the 1980s there was a growth in the debate around the migration-development link. The debate resulted in a paradigm shift in migration theory away from the established neo-classical and neo-Marxist theories of migration towards a migration theory that considered the influence of migrants themselves. This took place within certain social, economic and sometimes political situations and the migration behaviour that resulted from it. This is referred to as structure actor interaction, which has produced pluralist theories of migration (De Haas 2008:28). This paper presents a case study that focuses on Zimbabwean migrant teachers in the inner city of Johannesburg in South Africa and argues that the neo-Marxist theories in this case study are of limited relevance, while the neo-classical and pluralist perspectives, to a large extent, explain the reasons for migration and the development impact it had on these migrant teachers and their families in Zimbabwe.

## II. METHODOLOGY

Both a qualitative and a quantitative research methodological approach were adopted. Nine schools were identified in the Johannesburg inner city. A pilot survey done in these schools established that there were a total of 180 Zimbabwean teachers in the area. For this case study, a total of 63 Zimbabwean teachers from the nine schools were selected to furnish their information in the questionnaires. While selecting individuals, a probability sampling approach was employed. In addition nine in-depth interviews were conducted with one teacher from each of the nine schools in Johannesburg inner city selected on the basis of a non-probability sampling method. The value of the qualitative interviews is that they provide researchers with narratives that are meaningful and representative of the individual interior experience of migration (Miles & Crush 1993; Vandsemb 1995; Chimhowu et al 2005). The in-depth interviews provided valuable insight into the experiences and/or failures and achievements of Zimbabwean migrant teachers within the context of the applicability of the theories of migration.

### III. THE MAIN RESULTS

The following sections consider the results of the research in light of neo-classical, neo-Marxist and pluralist theories of migration, first by exploring why Zimbabwean teachers migrated to South Africa, followed by the development impacts of this migration on the migrant teachers themselves and their families in Zimbabwe. An analysis of the responses of the migrant teachers to the quantitative questionnaire, revealed the reasons why the respondents came to South Africa that are ranked (Table 1) in order of importance. Most of them (75%) came to South Africa in search of a better life. The second most important reason (14%) was attributed to socio-economic conditions and only slightly less importantly (8%) were reasons of a political and economic nature. Work and study were insignificant and only one had an undisclosed reason.

**Table-1: Causes for Migration of Zimbabwean teachers to South Africa**

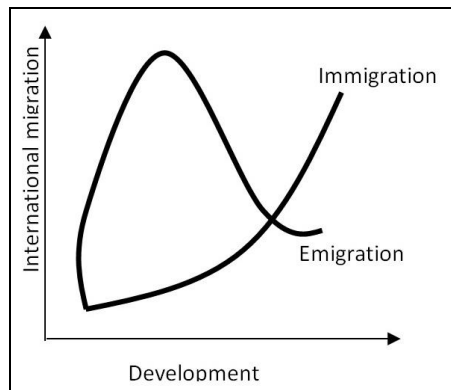
<b>Causes for Migration</b>	<b>Number of migrants</b>
A better life	47
Socio-economic factors	9
Political and economic factors	5
Work and study	1
Other	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>

#### III.1. Neo-classical theories

Neo-classical theories of migration posit that people migrate expecting economic benefits (Da Vanzo 1981) therefore migrants vote with their feet in pursuit of choice and utility (Mafukidze 2006). As noted by Kabeer (1994:97) *the simplifying core of the neo-classical theory is the assumption of rational choice... all human behaviour is explained as the attempt to maximize individual utilities in the face of economic scarcity*. Neo-classical theory does not accommodate other constraints, which may be social or political, because all human behaviour in migration decision making is reduced to price and income (Sigler and Becker 1977 as cited in Kabeer 1994). The neo-classical theories of migration discussed in this paper are, Zelinsky's Mobility Transition Model (1971); Everett Lee's Theory (1966); Todaro-Harris Theory and Value Expectancy Model. These theories were chosen because they demonstrate the main argument of neo-classical migration theory; that migration behaviour is motivated by economic considerations and gain.

### **Zelinsky's Mobility Transition Model**

Zelinsky's model (1971) argues that migration is part of the development process and that migration increases with an increase in development. The model demonstrates, through its five stages, that certain types of migration are typical of the level of economic development, population change and the modernization process (De Haas 2008:13). The five stages of the model are: the pre-modern industrial society, early transitional society, the late transitional society, the advanced society and super advanced society. According to this theory, migration is low in pre-modern industrial societies and it increases up to the super advanced society. Zelinsky (1971) argues that as development increases so does the different types of migration and in the context of this theory, the international migration of labour can be seen as an expression of the level of economic development that has been achieved by the destination areas such as South Africa in this research. Zelinsky's (1971) Mobility Transition Model *fits rather well into the broader theoretical perspective on migration and development... acknowledging the fact that migration tends to increase in particular in the early phases of development in which improvements in transport and communication, flows of knowledge, a perceived lack of economic opportunities and growing level of welfare, increase both the capabilities and opportunities of people to move* (De Haas 2008:13). Figure 1, is a simplification and an adaptation of Zelinsky's theory of migration. For example, as a country becomes more economically developed immigration increases and emigration decreases.



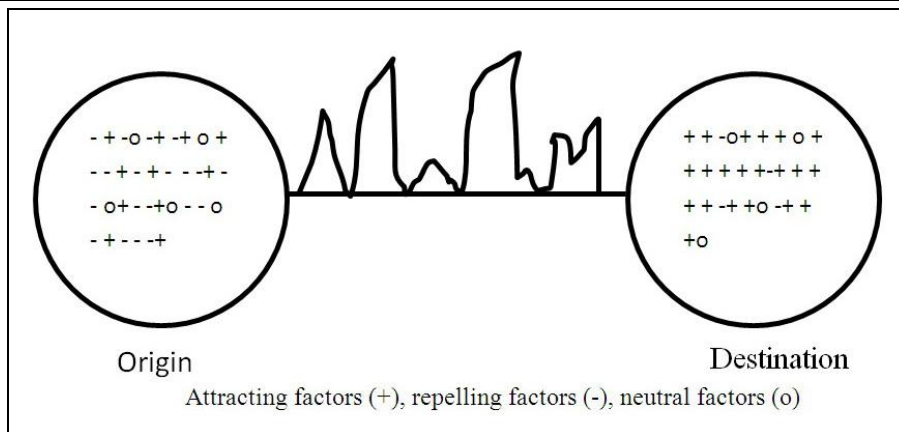
**Fig. 1:** General Effects of Development on Migration Patterns (De Haas, 2008)

As a result of the economic meltdown in Zimbabwe the country has been subjected to high rates of poverty and a number of other negative economic repercussions. For many Zimbabweans, South Africa became a destination of choice because it was economically more stable and offered better economic opportunities for migrants. With the worsening political and socio-economic circumstances in Zimbabwe, South Africa has increasingly been perceived as a place of opportunity for Zimbabwean teachers to work in, and thus migration to South Africa became a considered option amongst qualified teachers. The potential migrants are further encouraged to move to South Africa as they would be earning a better salary and could therefore afford access to the basic needs of life. The reasons provided by respondents in the case study are similar to the reasons provided by rural to urban migrants, where their motivation for migration from rural areas to the urban areas is based on the perception that the urban area offers more and better economic opportunities and chances in life. The same principle was established during the interviews of the Zimbabweans teachers who had migrated to South Africa.

#### **Everett Lee's theory 1966**

Everett Lee's model 1966 (De Jong & Fawcett 1981; Parnwell 1993; Jones 1990; Richmond 1994; De Haas 2008; Hagen-Zanker 2008) states that migration takes place after the migrant has evaluated the positive and negative factors at both the origin and destination areas (Figure 2).

From the results gathered in this case study, it was determined that the migrant teachers felt that it was better for them to move to South Africa than to stay in Zimbabwe as there were more negative economic and political factors in Zimbabwe that pushed them to migrate to South Africa. Their salaries were so low in Zimbabwe that they just could not afford to feed their families. Intervening factors included the fact that the teachers had the skills and immigration laws at the time, such as the 2002 Immigration Act (as amended in 2004) (Crush et al. 2006) were favourable. On the basis of this explanation, Everett Lee's theory satisfactorily explains why Zimbabwean migrant teachers came to South Africa.



**Fig. 2:** Origin and Destination factors and Intervening obstacles in migration (Jones, 1990)

**Todaro- Harris Theory**

Todaro (1969) and Todaro & Harris (1970), as cited in De Haas (2008), stipulate that migration occurs because people make a rational choice to improve their welfare or utility (Mafukidze 2006), and by moving to a place where there is a positive or higher income gain (Hagen-Zanker 2008). The Todaro and Harris theory argues that if the probability of employment and the expected income is high in the destination area, the migrants will move to the destination area even if unemployment prevails there (De Haas 2008:5). This theory rings true in this case study because 47 out of the 63 migrant teachers (75%) showed that they came to South Africa for a better life (Table .1). This supports the theory in the sense that the migrants were of the opinion that South Africa was a better place to work in so that they could gain economically. The data collected for this case study indicates that migrants thought that, as there were better and higher incomes in South Africa, this would in turn improve their welfare and utility as migrants as well as their families who remained in the country they were leaving. Mafukidze (2006) identified a similar trend in his work.

**Value Expectancy Model**

According to De Jong & Fawcett (1981:50), migration occurs because of the goals and values that individuals want to achieve as a result of migrating, a construct of the Value Expectancy Model. These goals are associated with wealth, status, affiliation, comfort, stimulation, autonomy and morality. One result of the research undertaken for this case study seems to indicate that some of the values in this theory could have contributed to the migrant teachers’ decisions to come to

South Africa. From the questionnaire results shown in Table 1, most migrants moved to South Africa because they were looking for a better life. The search and achievement of these values would obviously lead to the attainment of wealth and status. Most migrant teachers indicated that they were the laughing stock in Zimbabwe, because they were earning a salary less than that of a taxi driver.

The migrant teachers indicated that they wanted to buy houses and, according to this model, this would achieve comfort that would enable them to enjoy their jobs, seen as stimulation. Furthermore, and to a certain degree, allowing them to be independent giving a sense of autonomy. While the last two goals of affiliation and morality did not come out strongly, it is worth mentioning that wealth, status, comfort, stimulation and autonomy, as expressed in the Value Expectancy Model, apply to this research to the extent that these values and goals influenced the Zimbabwean migrant teachers to come to South Africa. Some of the migrant teachers may not have achieved these values and goals, but what is evident is that these same values and goals played a fundamental role in the decisions of the migrant teachers to come to South Africa.

### **III.2. Neo-Marxist theories**

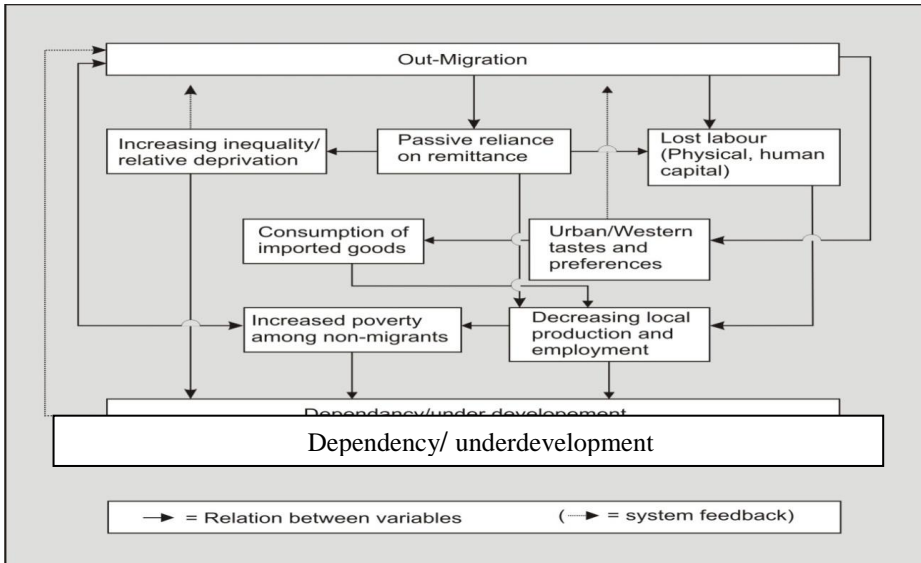
The main argument in these theories is that economic and political power is unequally distributed between developed and developing countries and that people do not have equal access to resources, and that capitalist growth reinforces these inequalities (De Haas 2008:7). The central argument in all neo-Marxist theories of migration is that developed parts, which could be countries or regions within or bigger than a country (core), exploit the least developed parts, which could be countries or regions within or bigger than a country (periphery) (Brown and Sanders 1981). This periphery is the source of migrants and in this case Zimbabwe is the periphery. South Africa in general and Johannesburg in particular, would be a core. Furthermore, migration is a product of economic forces that are controlled by developed countries, and this pattern leads to structural inequalities (Cohen 1976; Magubane 1976; Wallerstein 1976; Armin 1981). These inequalities will always lead to migration because the undeveloped regions will lag behind and therefore become suppliers of labour to the core; hence fostering the development of underdevelopment (Wallerstein 1976; Armin 1981). As a result of the structured way of inequalities, rural and backward regions or areas of countries will be suppliers of labour to capitalist industries or mines, a process referred to as the proletarianisation of labour (Cohen 1976; Magubane 1976; Wallerstein 1976). As noted by Richmond (1994:62) extreme inequalities of wealth and resources between different countries and regions of the world are some of the predisposing factors that increase the probability of reactive migration.



As a consequence, according to the neo-Marxists, migrant workers, in this case Zimbabwean migrant teachers are just pools of labour that are directed by the political economic capitalist system where South Africa is the core and Zimbabwe is the periphery. According to the argument of the neo-Marxists, migrant teachers from Zimbabwe, are directed where and in what quantities to flow, where in the end they are harnessed, exploited and thrown away, so much so that capitalism flourishes and the periphery further sinks into poverty (Frank 1969; 1979) as cited in Brown & Sanders (1981).

The labour-sending areas, according to this thinking, will not develop because they lose 'brains' and exist as a natural reserve army of labour (Armin 1981; Miles 1987; Mafukidze 2006). The migrants from the sending regions like Zimbabwe, according to this theory, are inextricably linked to the capitalist economy in South Africa in an exploitative capacity and as proletarianised workers (Magubane 1976; Turok and Maxey 1976). In this regard De Vletter (1991: 28) notes that foreign workers in South Africa are one of the more conspicuous and lasting manifestations of regional dependence from surrounding countries. Hence Wright (1995) comments that labour migration is a consequence of the development of capitalism in South Africa from the discovery of minerals and other capitalist forms of production, which needed cheap labour. This suggests that these foreign workers supply the labour needs of South Africa and, by extension, neglect their own country's development needs.

These views are supported by work done by Lipton (1982) which concluded that remittances from migrants do not lead to development because they are not spent on productive investment. Further to this view, Zachariah (2001) as cited in De Haas (2008), argues that migrants and remittances will widen the inequalities since it is the educated and better-off who migrate, thereby depriving the sending regions of their people who should be the driving engines of development. Figure 3, captures the main argument of the neo-Marxists, that the migration of labour has negative consequences for the labour-sending regions. As the diagram reflects, neo-Marxist theories are regarded as pessimistic because, in terms of the impact on development in the migrants' areas of origin, these theories project a gloomy and negative picture of exploitation and underdevelopment.



**Fig. 3** Conceptual framework of the Pessimistic perspective of Migration (De Haas, 2008)

A synopsis of neo-classical and neo-Marxists theories reveal that, neo-classical theories of migration have the short-coming of reducing migration as a utility of capitalism (Kimble 1985 as cited in Wright 1995). Hence Wright (1995:778) notes that *where the neo-classical model is open to the charge of functionalism for placing too much emphasis on the benefits of migration to individuals, the structuralist model is open to the same charge with respect to the benefits of migration to capital.*

This study could not prove conclusively that migrant teachers from Zimbabwe migrated only because of structural economic inequalities. Consequently, the argument that migration is a product of structural economic policies controlled by developed countries is difficult to prove in this study.

What is certain, however, is that the economic problems in Zimbabwe forced the migrant teachers to move to South Africa. To say that the economic problems in Zimbabwe were controlled by developed countries so as to harvest large amounts of labour for South African schools would be false. False because the unprecedented numbers of migrant teachers to South Africa occurred between 2005 and 2008 (Table 2) and, before this time the Zimbabwean teachers were happy in their country. Even though there was migration taking place at the time, it was not very significant.

While structural economic inequalities exist between South Africa and Zimbabwe, these do not per se initiate the huge flow of migrants to South Africa on

a grand and extraordinary scale as has been witnessed in more recent times. Rather, as the results of the research show, it is what the migrants themselves evaluated out of these inequalities before deciding to move. The research has shown that the migrant teachers made a conscious effort and choice and were not forced by structural economic inequalities. This reveals a divergence with the main argument of neo-Marxist thinking in terms of why the migrant teachers moved to South Africa. Perhaps other aspects of the neo-Marxists such as the existence of structural economic inequalities between South Africa and Zimbabwe are true and apply to this study. These theories in their purest form of argument are difficult to accommodate and do not seem to fit into the investigation undertaken. The argument by neo-Marxists that migrant labour is a manifestation of political and economic control and machinations by the developed countries that want to exploit the poor labourers through the process of proletarianisation is difficult to apply in this study relating to Zimbabwean migrant teachers.

### **III.3. Pluralist theories**

In the 1980s there was a growth in debate around the migration-development link (De Haas 2008; Hagen-Zanker 2008). The result of this debate is that it led to a paradigm shift in migration theory away from the neo-classical and neo-Marxist theories of migration. This shift was strongly influenced by structuration theory as formulated by Giddens (1984) and cited in De Haas (2008). The thinking about migration theory takes into account the influence of migrants themselves within a given social, economic and sometimes political context that triggers a reaction that stimulates thinking about proactively considered migration. This is referred to as structure actor interaction (De Haas 2008). In this regard, three perspectives can be identified (Mafukidze 2006; De Haas 2008; Hagen-Zanker, 2008; Stjernstrom 2009) within the pluralist theories.

The first perspective on migration is described as the New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM). Massey et al. (1998) as cited in Mafukidze (2006:107) and Hagen-Zanker (2008:12) observed that the New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) suggests that the migration decision is not taken in isolation by individuals, but that other affected people, such as families and households and even communities, too are involved. In essence, migration is a way of minimizing risks and constraints that are a threat to individuals, families and communities (Stark and Levhari 1982 as cited in De Haas 2008:35). NELM views international migration as yielding remittances as a way of overcoming uncertainties. De Haas (2008:35) observes that migration aims to diversify household income and also overcomes constraints on economic activities and investments in areas from which migrants move.

The second perspective is the Household Livelihood Strategy or Sustainable Livelihood perspective. A livelihood strategy is defined by De Haas (2008:35) as *a strategic or deliberate choice of a combination of activities by households and their individual members to maintain secure and improve livelihoods*. In this migration perspective, migration is seen as a possible option of having a sustainable livelihood through improving or avoiding deterioration of household poverty, well-being, capabilities and the natural resource base (Adepoju 2003; De Haas et al 2002 as cited in Hagen- Zanker 2008). Migration is therefore a means to have many assets that act as an insurance against future shocks and stresses, maintain contact with and even develop areas of origin (De Haas et al 2002 as cited in De Haas 2008:37). Sander and Maimbo (2005:60) observed that, in this regard, remittances contribute to a family welfare system.

The last perspective on migration is the transnational perspective which posits that international migration is based on the recognition that migrants can and do maintain ties with their families in their countries of origin as well as their host countries (Guarnizo et al 2003 as cited in De Haas 2008). This has been made possible by developments in transport, communication and technology and as such migrants find it easy to foster double loyalties (De Haas 2005; Guarnizo et al 2003 as cited in De Haas 2008). This perspective is relevant to this study because it challenges neo-Marxist theory of migration in that it implies that migrants are not uprooted from their areas of origin to serve as labour objects, but that these transnational immigrants have a penchant for keeping a foot in both their areas of origin and destination (Crush 2002:149). As De Haas (2008:28) observes, *this has fundamental implications for the study of migration and development because it implies that integration in receiving societies and commitment to areas of origin are not substitutes but complements*.

These pluralist theories of migration emphasize the influence of migrants themselves within given social, economic and political situations and the resulting migration decision (De Haas 2008). The results of this research show that there is a convergence between this study and the arguments of the pluralist theories of migration. This is because, as shown in Table 1, most migrants migrated in search for a better life. In other words, migrant teachers from Zimbabwe came to South Africa in order to overcome the economic constraints they experienced in Zimbabwe. This is in line with the New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) perspective that states that migration occurs because of the need to minimize risks and constraints that are a threat to individuals and communities. The search for a better life could also mean achieving a sustainable livelihood through supplementing or averting worsening household poverty, and resource base (Adepoju 2003; De Haas 2002 as cited in Hagen-Zanker 2008). This is in line with

the sustainable livelihood perspective on migration.

Results of the study also show that the majority of migrants want to stay in South Africa for the time being, because they do not want to disconnect themselves from their native places. In other words, they migrated to South Africa just to improve their socio- economic status while retaining their native belongings at Zimbabwe. This confirms the transnational perspective on migration that states that migrant workers have an inclination for maintaining their status and possessions at both the origin and destination areas (Crush 2002:149). In the final analysis, it is worth mentioning that pluralist theories of migration confirm the results of this study to a large extent. To the extent that Zimbabwean migrant teachers came to South Africa in search of a better life confirms the arguments of pluralist theories of migration.

#### **III.4. Zimbabwean Migrant Teachers in South Africa**

The majority of the Zimbabwean migrant teachers in South Africa had been in the country for between 2-4 years, followed by those who had been in the country for 1-2 years, then those whose stay had exceeded five years with the shortest time applying to those migrant teachers who had been in the country for less than a year (Table 2).

**Table-2:** Duration of Zimbabwean Migrant Teachers` stay in South Africa

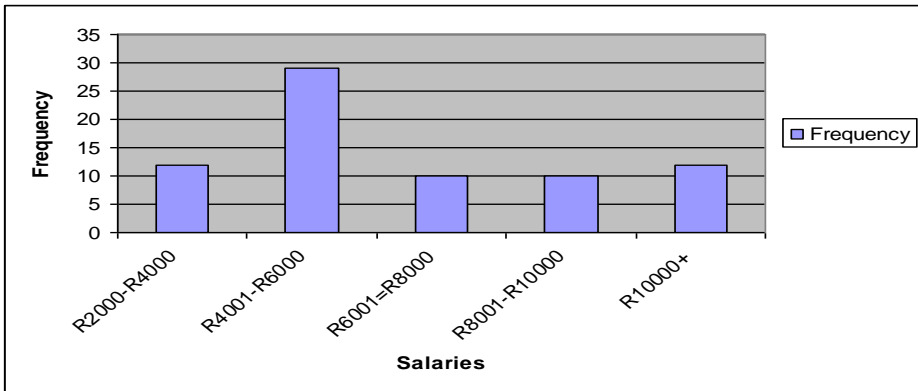
<b>Length of stay in South Africa</b>	<b>Number</b>
Less than a year	5
1-2 years	20
3-4 years	25
5+years	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>

These results suggest that the majority of Zimbabwean migrant teachers moved to South Africa between 2005 and 2008 and coincided with the time when the economic paralysis in Zimbabwe had reached an all-time low. This lends credence to the neo-classical and pluralist theories of migration in terms of the fact that they explain that the Zimbabwean migrant teachers moved to South Africa for bread and butter reasons and a better life. Furthermore, as shown in Table 3, most of the Zimbabwean migrant teachers are primarily teaching, but some have other income-generating activities over and above their teaching responsibilities.

**Table- 3:** Migrant teachers’ Livelihood activities in South Africa

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Number</b>
Teaching	46
Selling goods	10
Adult school facilitation	2
Carpentry	1
Counselling	1
Own internet shop	1
Agent for Vodacom products	1
Other	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>

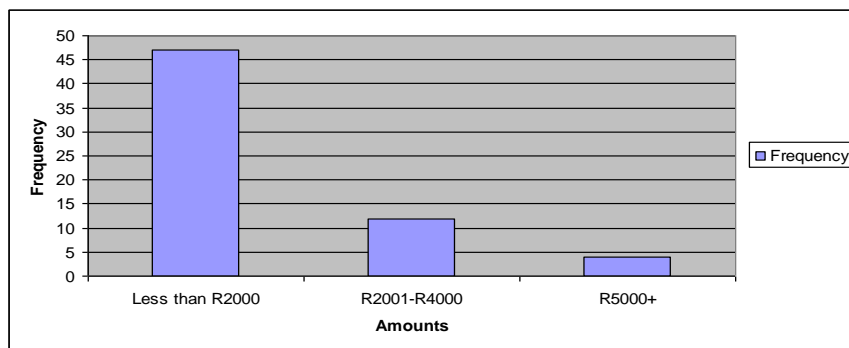
Figure 4, shows that the majority of the migrant teachers are paid between R4001-R6000 per month, followed by R2000-R4000 per month, then those that are paid R10000 per month and lastly those who are paid between R8001-R10000 monthly.



**Fig. 4** Salary distribution of Zimbabwean migrant teachers

Linked to this, is the fact that most migrant teachers frequently send money to Zimbabwe and the pattern of sending money is that the majority send monthly, followed by those who send quarterly, then six- monthly and there are those who had never sent anything to Zimbabwe. The migrant teachers reported that they found their salaries relatively low yet many sent at least some money home quite frequently. This could explain why some migrant teachers engaged in extra income generating activities as well as teaching full-time. The migrant teachers did send money (Figure 5) as well as different types of goods (Table 4). The amount of money sent did not depend on a foreign exchange rate because by the time this

study was undertaken Zimbabwean economy had been dollarized.



**Fig. 5** Value of Remittances sent to Zimbabwe

**Table- 4:** Goods sent to Zimbabwe by migrant teachers

Type of goods sent to Zimbabwe	Number
Food	18
Electrical	11
Clothes	10
Furniture	6
What is needed	5
Toiletries	5
Other	5
Never sent	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>

The data collected provided evidence that the migrant teachers had significant financial burdens to bear and that majority were paid relatively low salaries in South Africa of between R4001 and R6000 a month. At face value this may appear to be blatant exploitation, but it must be noted that this is better than what most of these migrant teachers would have been receiving in Zimbabwe. This is because in 2009 teachers in Zimbabwe were paid US\$155 (Sibanda 2009), which is about R1200 at the exchange rate at the time. Therefore, this financial incentive could explain why Zimbabwean teachers continue to come to South Africa. Even though by January 2012, Zimbabwean teachers were paid US \$ 300 (Mavhunga 2012), which is about R2550 at the current exchange rate, these salaries are relatively low compared to what the majority of their counterparts in South Africa earn.

### III.5. Assets acquired by migrant teachers- development impact of remittances

In relative terms, the results show that Zimbabwean migrant teachers have acquired considerable assets of value. Some of the migrant teachers had bought houses and others were in the process of constructing houses in Zimbabwe. A relatively small number had bought cars that they were using in South Africa and for frequent travelling to Zimbabwe.

**Table 5** Assets acquired by migrant teachers

<b>Assets acquired</b>	<b>Number</b>
Nothing	16
House	15
Furniture and electrical goods	11
Process of building a house	10
Car	6
Other	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>

It is evident from the findings of this research that the migrants had achieved different things in different ways since coming to South Africa. Some (25%) owned houses but most migrant teachers who did own or were in the process of building a house indicated that this had only been possible because of the relatively better salaries that they received here in South Africa when compared to the Zimbabwean situation.

What comes out strongly in these results is that remittances, in this case, the money that the migrants send to Zimbabwe, had enabled the migrant teachers to access these acquisitions in their home country. There are generally two schools of thought regarding the impact of remittances of this nature. The developmentalist perspective emphasizes that remittances promote development (Adepoju 2003; Chimhowu et al 2005; Kapur 2005; Omar & Koury 2005; Sanders & Maimbo 2005). This view is in line with the general assumption of the neo-classical theories and pluralist perspectives of migration that migration has a development impact on the areas of origin, that migrant workers reduce household poverty and increase resources so as to protect their families against future uncertainties.

The other school of thought on the development impact of remittances is the migrant syndrome perspective that points out that remittances are not put to good use and do not bring about development (Keeley 1989; (Taylor 1999; Gammeloft 2002); as cited in Chimhowu et al 2005). This view is in line with the



arguments of the neo-Marxist theories of migration which assert that remittances do not lead to development but that they increase inter-personal inequalities (Zachariah (2001) cited in De Haas (2008) and as captured in Figure 3. Lipton (1982) further argues that remittances are not spent on productive investment but promote consumerist attitudes that do not bring development.

The results of this study suggest that, in terms of asset accumulation, remittances do indeed play a positive role. On the strength of the money that the migrants send home, they have built and some are in the process of building houses. Indeed this has been possible because the migrants are working in South Africa. This directly challenges the migrant syndrome or pessimistic perspective of migrant workers and their remittances. The construction of houses may not be productive investment as Lipton (1982) maintains, but it must be noted that not all development is about investment. Not all development should and can be expressed in economic terms. Therefore, if the migrant teachers did not have a house and now, because of working in South Africa, have built or are in the process of building, having a house is surely a sign of progress, evidence of development. The results also show that the migrant teachers have acquired a variety of assets ranging from houses to cars, furniture, electrical and other goods. The migrant teachers indicated that they would not have acquired these goods had they not migrated to South Africa. It must be admitted, however, that not all the migrant teachers have achieved as much. Some had not achieved anything on account of their low salaries, short duration of stay in South Africa and needing to provide for a large number of extended family members and other dependents.

Consequently, to argue (as the migrant syndrome perspective does) that migration widens the inequalities between the migrants and their families on the one hand and those and their families that did no migrate, is to miss the point. This is because, even if the migrants had stayed in Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwean economy had remained in a good state, these migrant teachers would have been better off anyway compared to other members of the community. If the comparison is made solely among the teachers themselves perhaps there would not have been significant inequalities. However, if the comparison is made between teachers and other members of the community who do not have the education and skills, disparities would definitely and inevitably be evident. That the migrant teachers came to South Africa and acquired more assets should not make the widening of interpersonal inequalities seem detrimental. Nor would it be right if these migrant teachers had stayed in Zimbabwe in their areas of origin and become poor merely to reduce inter-personal inequalities. To this extent, the charge that migrant workers and remittances widen inequalities does not have substantive merit, at least as far as the results of this research show.

This paper does not suggest that inequalities between migrants and those who stay behind must widen as being beneficial. As far as possible it is the contention of this paper that Zimbabwean migrant teachers, do and should continue to bridge the income and wealth disparities. For instance, if while working in Zimbabwe the migrant teachers could not afford a house and now they can, means they have moved to the class of ‘haves’. The Zimbabwean migrant teachers who provided information for this study demonstrate that, by migrating, they were able to lead a decent life with at least owning a house. It would be encouraging if many more could achieve similar success.

### III.6. Changes in lifestyle

Most migrants reported that many changes had taken place in their lives. As shown in Table 6, most migrants said that they could look after their children and family better and that life was back to normal. A few said they felt the same as before they migrated to South Africa.

**Table 6.** Changes in Zimbabwean migrant teachers lives

<b>Change</b>	<b>Number</b>
Can now look after my family and children, life is back to normal, good diet and entertainment	51
Feel the same—hand to mouth existence	8
Not much change but better than in Zimbabwe	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>

In addition to the above, 71per cent of the migrant teachers said they had savings as opposed to 29 per cent who said they did not have any savings. The aspect on the changes in the life of migrant teachers shows that migration to South Africa had changed the well-being of the Zimbabwean migrant teachers and their families. In other words, there had been a positive change in the welfare of the families of migrant teachers as a result of migration to South Africa. Furthermore savings had improved their financial status. This demonstrates that remittances have had a positive developmental impact in respect of changing the migrants’ lives positively and their disposal income. This conclusion lends credence to the developmentalist perspectives of remittances which is in line with neo-classical and pluralist theories of migration, strongly challenging the migrant syndrome perspective of neo- Marxist theories of migration.

### **III.7. Perceptions of exploitation**

More than 70 per cent of the migrants indicated that they were of the opinion that they were being exploited. While exploitation is not regarded as acceptable practice it seems paradoxical that, despite their claim of being exploited, they were actually in a favourable enough position to support both their families in Zimbabwe as well as themselves when working in South Africa. This argument is placed against the background that the dominant form of exploitation, according to the results of this study, was being paid low salaries. Although the Zimbabwean teachers claimed exploitation, they were definitely better than their counterparts in Zimbabwe who were being paid much less, even if working for the government. Clearly Zimbabwean teachers who are in Zimbabwe are over-exploited by their government, while those who are in South Africa also suffer exploitation stay on because life is better (Ku 2005) than if they were in Zimbabwe. Even in the midst of exploitation, the Zimbabwean migrant teachers are far better off. While neo-Marxists theories emphasize the exploitation and proletarianisation of migrant workers, which may be true, it is clear that their argument did not apply in this study.

### **III.8. Migration decisions**

On the aspect of whether coming to South Africa was a family or individual decision, the results of the research show that 70% of the migrant teachers came to South Africa as a result of a family decision and 30% said it was an individual decision. The fact that most migrants who came to South Africa did so as a result of a family decision emphasizes the applicability of pluralist theories on migration. In particular the New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) notes that migration decisions are not taken in isolation, but as families as a strategy of diversifying resources and minimizing risks (Stark & Levhari 1982 as cited in De Haas 2008). The sustainable livelihood strategy perspective is also relevant because, as the results show, families play an important role in migration decision making. Families are trying to achieve a sustainable livelihood through averting worsening household poverty and augmenting dwindling resource bases (Adepoju 2003; De Haas 2002 as cited in Hagen-Zanker 2008), through allowing some of their family members to migrate. It is worthy of note that not all Zimbabwean migrant teachers are not the only ones in South Africa. Other members of their families are also in South Africa or the United Kingdom, the USA, Canada and other countries all over the world - all making the effort of improving their lives and those of family members.

Some migrant teachers do indeed augment the incomes earned in Zimbabwe by other family members. All this evidence supports the applicability of the New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) and sustainable livelihood strategy perspectives in that the migrant teachers working in South Africa create a family welfare system as a form of surety for family security. This is what Hagen-Zanker (2008), calls co-insurance and diversification of income.

### **III.9. Education, health and nutrition**

The results of this research have also shown that savings and asset accumulation have also improved as a result of the migrant teachers' cash remittances to Zimbabwe. In addition the results show that 69 per cent of the families of migrants have experienced definite and positive improvement in access to better education, nutrition and health care. It is not difficult to conclude that indeed the remittances that the migrant teachers send to Zimbabwe have improved their families' status. While this may not apply to all the migrants, the majority have made significant achievements and on the basis of these majority results, the evidence is compelling enough to arrive at the decision that indeed there has been a human development impact and improved human welfare on the migrants and their families and this lends credence to the neo classical theories and pluralist theories of migration. It must be mentioned however, that the pluralist theories especially NELM and sustainable livelihoods, explicitly mention the development role of remittances while neo-classical theories make an implication. To this extent it must be stated therefore that the development impact of remittances proves more the applicability of pluralist theories of migration.

While the neo-Marxists may view the development of migrants and their families as increasing inequalities between themselves and those families that did not migrate (De Haas 2008), it is the contention of this paper that it is better to have inequalities where some are rich and some poor than to have equality in poverty. May be, if some are rich and others are poor, the poor will strive to be rich - there is everything right in this. Neo-Marxists argue that this increased gap between migrants and non- migrants will fuel more migration as non-migrants will want to be rich as well (Zachariah 2001 as cited in De Haas 2008). According to neo-Marxists this will further underdevelop migrant sending areas. There is nothing wrong with all people migrating as long as this migration brings development of the nature shown in this research, rather than staying and trying to be comfortable in poverty and deprivation.

### III.10. Future plans

Most migrant teachers do not want to stay in South Africa permanently. 68 per cent said, they want to go back to Zimbabwe, about a third of them did. In addition, 43 migrant teachers who did not want to stay permanently in South Africa said that if the political settlement and economic situation in Zimbabwe improved, they would go back to their home, because they wanted to work and retire at home closer to their families and friends, rather than to stay in a foreign land where they felt that they are not appreciated. Furthermore, the majority of Zimbabwean migrant teachers indicated that they were not satisfied with life in South Africa for specific reasons (Table 7).

**Table-7:** Reasons for Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction in South Africa by Zimbabwean migrant teachers

<b>Reasons why migrant is happy</b>	<b>Number</b>
Educated professionals receptive	9
Many opportunities	9
Political and economic situation in South Africa	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Reasons why migrant is not happy</b>	<b>Number</b>
No place like home	18
Xenophobia	13
Not a nice place except for the money	8
No freedom and social life as a foreigner	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>

### III.11. Migrants experience of xenophobia

Many migrant teachers feel very unsafe in South Africa but others feel that it was better to be in South Africa than in Zimbabwe in spite of the challenges that they were facing in South Africa. Generally those who feel unsafe were distressed by the xenophobic attacks that took place in May 2008. However, for as long as the political and economic problems remain unsolved in Zimbabwe, all migrant teachers said they would remain in South Africa. This is why they came to South Africa in the first place. The applicability of neo-classical theories of migration comes again to the fore. The fact that the migrant teachers maintain households in Zimbabwe and in South Africa demonstrates the relevance of pluralist theories, particularly the transnationalist perspective which states that migrant workers foster double loyalties in their host and countries of origin (Guarnizo et al 2003

cited in De Haas 2008).

As the results have shown, transnational perspectives directly challenge the neo-Marxist theories of migration which argue that migrants are uprooted from their areas of origin to the host country, where they are exploited, proletarianised and lost to the host country forever (Cohen 1976; Magubane 1976; Wallerstein 1976). Results from this study point to the fact that the Zimbabwean migrant teachers are neither all lost to the host country nor willing to be so. They maintain ties and develop their areas of origin. In fact this study shows that the migrant teachers are investing more in Zimbabwe than in South Africa. The majority did not see themselves staying in South Africa for the rest of their lives. The migrant teachers were in South Africa to make money to go back to Zimbabwe.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

The results of this research are at a convergence with the arguments of both neo-classical and pluralist theories on migration. What comes out clearly is that the migrant teachers came to South Africa in search of a better life, because their incomes in Zimbabwe were low and life was neither good nor bearable. All the neo-classical theories of migration in different variations emphasized that migrants are attracted to areas that are economically developed, with high or expected high positive incomes and a possibility of a better life. The results confirm the positions of the neo-classical theories. They explain that migration of Zimbabwean teachers to South Africa occurred for economic reasons even though there was no income equalization (De Haan 1999) between what teachers in South Africa and Zimbabwe earn.

In addition, the questionnaire results also confirm the pluralist theories on migration. This is because the New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) and the sustainable livelihoods strategy and transnationalist perspective on migration emphasize that migrant workers moved to other countries as a result of a family decision so as to increase family welfare and diversify the family resources (De Haas 2008). The pluralist theories explicitly mention the development impact of remittances; the findings from this research support this contention. It means that these theories satisfactorily explain the potential and development impact of remittances on the Zimbabwean families of migrant teachers.

It is instructive to mention that the results of the research challenge the neo-Marxist theories of migration. The Zimbabwean migrant teachers in South Africa did not appear as helpless victims of a political-economic system devised by developed countries operating through South Africa. In many ways the results show that while the Zimbabwean migrant teachers were getting low salaries, they are better off than their counterparts in Zimbabwe who were working for the

Zimbabwean government. It is difficult to sustain the argument that the Zimbabwean teachers in South Africa are exploited to the extent that they failed to cater for their families in Zimbabwe. To the contrary, the Zimbabwean migrant teachers showed that financially they were managing relatively better than they would have remained in Zimbabwe. The research can therefore state without fear of contradiction that, while there are Zimbabwean migrant teachers who earned low salaries that could be seen as exploitation, they were decidedly better off than those in Zimbabwe. Of course, more concrete evidence on the aspect of exploitation in general is needed before it can be unequivocally stated that it is not rampant in the schools under study.

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