

**THE GEOGRAPHIES OF MIGRANT LEARNERS IN THREE SOUTH  
AFRICAN SCHOOLS: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY**

**JUDE IFEANYICHUKWU NNADOZIE**

**(Student Number: 207520704)**

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Social Justice Education, School of Education, Faculty of Humanities, University of KwaZulu-  
Natal, Durban,  
South Africa

**Supervisor:** Professor Pholoho Morojele

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this study “The Geographies of Migrant Learners in Three South African Schools: A Narrative Inquiry” is my own work and has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university.

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Jude Ifeanyichukwu Nnadozie (Student)

Date: -----

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Professor Pholoho Morojele (Supervisor)

Date: -----

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my dear wife Ijeoma Jacinta Nnadozie, and my children Theresa Chizitere, Alfred Chinedu and Vincent Chukwudi Nnadozie, my late parents Mr. Alfred Nnadozie Nwokocha and Mrs. Mary Nnadozie Nwokocha, my elder brother Mr. Godwin Uwazie Nnadozie, my elder sister Sr. Jovita Chioma Nnadozie, and to my good friend and SEM Mr. N.S Shezi.

## **ABSTRACT**

In the recent times, migrants including significant numbers of African migrants have continued to enter South Africa. The high volume of immigrants into South Africa has attracted research attention. However, perhaps overlooked in research is inquiry into the migrant learner's experience, in terms of what are the migrant learner's schooling experience and how does it matter. In particular, focal attention is given in this study to the migrant learners from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Zimbabwe. Drawing on a qualitative research approach, and employing narrative inquiry methodology, this study explores the schooling experiences of migrant learners from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zimbabwe in three schools in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Central to the inquiry in this research is the understanding of migrant learner experience of school as space and place in South Africa. The ways the migrant learner experience school as space and place is very much material to the quality of their overall schooling experience which in turn is consequential to the ways in which schools as space and place are constructed in the cultural economy of current South Africa. The study is situated within Social Constructionism and engages the New Sociology of Childhood and Children's Geographies as the theoretical framework. The theoretical framework as well as the methodology employed in this study make provision for a critical engagement in the analysis of these experiences.

The findings in this study reveal the factors that contribute to the schooling experiences of the study participants. Eight themes emerged from the data collected through the means of story account, open-ended interviews and photo voice by the participants. The themes unveil the challenges and limitations the study participants encounter as migrant learners in South Africa.

Among the challenges and limitations experienced by the participants are issues of difficulty in gaining access to schooling in South Africa, lack of proper participation in school as a result of lack of proficiency in the use of the languages of instruction and communication in school, experiences of stereotypes about migrants in South Africa and the resulting xenophobic tendencies from some learners and some teachers in school, a sense of exclusion and isolation in school as a result of differences in identities and value systems with South African locals, cultural alienation in school as a result of differences between the way things are done in schools in South Africa and the way things are done in schools in home countries of the participants. On the other hand, findings of the study also reveal the opportunities the study participants have gained from schooling in South Africa, such as opportunities to interact with people from diverse backgrounds and the knowledge gained from such interactions, learning new cultures and languages as well as exposure to better learning resources which the study participants were not used to in their home countries. Based on the findings of this study, recommendations are made for the attention of education authorities, school authorities and educators, authorities in the Department of Home Affairs, authorities in charge of social development in South Africa and recommendations for further research.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **MIGRANT LEARNERS IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS: AN INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Schools are spaces and places for social interaction with certain cultural connections and frames of references which profoundly shape the definitional space of school geographies. School geographies are critical in understanding the positioning of learners within them, either as being at the margins or in the mainstream, thus influencing, in terms of experiences, the spatial expressions of their schooling (Ingen & Halas, 2006; Zapf, 2010). In these ways, schools' spatialities are recognized by van Ingen and Halas (2006) as constituting and reinforcing aspects of the social. What this possibly implies is that school, in targeting inclusion, can be mediating by re-constructing, contemplating what Henderson points out as, "...a concept of landscape (place and space) that helps point the way to those interventions which are possible to bring about greater social justice" (Henderson, 2003: p 498).

There is a gap in the literature on the extended and immediate effects of migration upon the development of school geographies in the landscape of South African schools. This research highlights the experiential aspects of migrant geographies within schools and, at the same time, it seeks to grapple with the processes that maintain or challenge the spatial conditions for the construction of school geographies (Henderson, 2003).

In recent times, significant numbers of African migrants have continued to enter South Africa. The high volume of immigrants into South Africa has attracted research attention (Waller, 2006). However, perhaps overlooked in research is inquiry into the migrant learner's experience, in terms of what are the learners schooling experience and how does it matter. In particular, focal attention is given in this study to the migrant learners of African origin from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Zimbabwe. These are visibly representative of the migrant schooling population (Vandeyar, 2011). How and what their experiences of schooling is, appear not to be adequately captured within the remit of immigrant schooling discourse. As a result, little is known about how the migrant learner experiences schooling in South Africa. Drawing from qualitative research approach, this study explores the migrant learner experiences using as research participants, grade 8 to 12 school learners in three different schools across Durban, South Africa.

This chapter provides an overview of the background of the study and study orientation, problem statement, rationale for the study, purpose and objectives of the study. The chapter also highlights the study context, including the following: the geographical context of the study, socio-cultural context of the study, education policy context of the study and theoretical context of the study. Also, the significance of the study and the overview of the thesis are discussed in this chapter.

## **1.1 BACKGROUND AND THE STUDY ORIENTATION**

Recent research shows that migration results in huge stress for children (Landale, Thomas, & Hook, 2011; McCarthy, 1998). This stress may come from leaving social environments children

are already used to and finding themselves in a new and strange socio-cultural environment with an unfamiliar language and sometimes an unfriendly and unwelcoming social atmosphere (Hay, 2014; McCarthy, 1998). However, McCarthy (1998) notes that studies demonstrate that there are good outcomes to positive approaches to immigration and acculturation. Further, studies show important information about not only the risks but also the strengths that result from the immigration experience (McCarthy, 1998; Palloni, Massey, Ceballos, Espinosa, & Spittel, 2001). McCarthy (1998) describes this strength in terms of *bicultural competence* – that is to say such ability to function successfully in family (‘traditional’) and school (‘mainstream’). These are explicable in cultures – which can emerge as a result of immigrant children’s conflicting immigration experiences.

Since South Africa introduced democratic governance in 1994, the country has become a favourite destination for many African migrants. This is attributable to its growing and promising economy (Shimeles, 2010). Many of these migrants are in the main skilled migrants (Martin, 2015). However, beyond the skilled economic migrants to South Africa, there are other migrants whose migration is being determined not so much by economic reasons as by escaping displacement, war and political victimization from their home nations (Martin, 2015). Migrants as a category do however undergo many challenging experiences not withstanding whether their migration is informed by economic decisions or results from contingency (Byron & Condon, 2008; Giuffre, 2013). The challenges migrants face define their self-perception and identity, more especially where and when they are not yet welcome to the new environment (Fukuyama, 2007). With the school-age migrant population, migrants’ challenges of definition and self-perception impact on schooling experiences.

However, the notion of inclusion and diversity in South African schools and classroom practices does suggest that South African schools and classrooms are expected to be accommodative in nature. It also demands accordingly equal opportunities to be given to all learners irrespective of background (Parker et al., 2001). Inclusive schools are meant to serve the broader purpose of achieving national cohesion through processes of internalizing values and respect for diversity and social integration (Lazarus, Daniels, & Engelbrecht, 1999). In view of these imperatives, issues of race, gender, culture and country of origin should not be hindrances to accessibility to quality education in South African schools (Parker et al., 2001).

Accordingly, for migrant learners in South African schools, the expectations and possibilities are that their experience of schooling ought to be the same as that of their local peers. The question here becomes: how do migrant learners experience schooling in South Africa? What are these migrant learners' perception of school as a place and space? It is considered necessary to ask questions as these above to enable an understanding of, and enhance the migrant learner's schooling experience.

Approaches presented in theoretical perspectives tends to suggest that a combination of the individual, the family, community (for instance the school community) and the larger society can be a factor in the outcome of how the lives of young people develop and change (Walker & Donaldson, 2011). Bronfenbrenner (1979) developed a model by which the influences of society upon children's development can be examined. This model which was to become known as the ecological perspective aims at demonstrating the reciprocity of influences in the interactions

within, and shared between, the relationships found in the environment; for instance families, school and communities. In other words, the ways in which such interactions define and shape our understanding of these relationships, and how such understanding influence practice over time, are crucial in understanding what shapes the lives of all young people, not least migrant learners.

In this way we can identify the relevance of school as space and place in the experiences of the migrant learner; how is the life of the migrant learner given spatial expression within the school geography as place and space? What informs their understandings and construction of schools as places and spaces? In what ways and how do these understandings of school shape and play out in such relationships and the power dynamics inherent, given that (Lefebvre, 1991) stated that schools are places of power? Central to the inquiry in this research is the understanding of migrant learner experience of school as space and place in South Africa. The ways the migrant learner experience school as space and place is very much material to the quality of their overall schooling experience which in turn is consequential to the ways in which schools as space and place are constructed in the cultural economy of current South Africa.

## **1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

Migrant learners in schools are assumed to experience schooling in similar ways as their local peers. Yet, migrants undergo a lot of challenging experiences (Byron & Condon, 2008). Migrants face the pressure of dropping their culture and lifestyle for the demands of the new environment's cultural lifestyles (Orgad, 2010). Migrants find it difficult to get adjusted and well integrated into the new socio-cultural settings, a situation which impacts self-perception and identity (Kankonde,

2010). Furthermore migrants do face new environments that may not be welcoming (Fukuyama, 2007). The impact of these challenges and their nature on the schooling experiences of school-age migrant population need to be closely examined.

Thus the focus of this study is on understanding how migrant learners' schooling experience is impacted by their constructions of school as space and place. It does so by drawing on their narratives and by tracing how patterns of such narratives compare between learners from the DRC and Zimbabwe who are schooling in Durban, South Africa. Vanderbeck & Dunkley (2004) observe that recent work by social and cultural geographers on the notions of identity and differences show how space and place play a critical role in the processes that engender exclusion. This study reveals the nature of similarities and differences in these learners' schooling experiences. These similarities and differences underlie migrant experiences of school as space and place; contested, culturally condensed and tensed with power and identity.

Understanding how migrant learners experience schooling can inform our understanding and theorising of inclusion and diversity in South African schools system and the promotion of social justice in education. This can be drawn on in policy and action to enhance the schooling experience of migrant learners and to actualize the ideas and ideals of inclusive education in South Africa. The concepts of inclusion and diversity entails that South African schools and classrooms are expected to be accommodative in nature and give opportunity for the full and proper functioning of learners/students from diverse backgrounds (Parker et al, 2001). The aim of building an inclusive school is to ensure an inclusive society where everyone in the society can function properly and actualize his/her potentials and participate optimally.

It is equally seen as important in order to ensure that schools are where respect and value for diversity and social integration are encouraged and valued (Lazarus et al., 1999; Lebona, 2013). This being the case, race, culture, gender and country of origin should cease to be hindering factors to accessibility of sound and quality education in South Africa. The question here becomes, what is the nature of experiences migrant learners have in these schools? Particularly of interest are those migrant learners of African origin coming from situations of displacement and dislocation from schooling in their own home countries. Furthermore, how can their schooling experience be enhanced through our understanding of what these experiences are and identifying ways of meeting areas of learning needs within an inclusive schooling agenda?

### **1.3 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF STUDY**

In South Africa, xenophobia seen in the school cultural geographies (Harris, 2002) perhaps in uncertain ways impacts and shapes the schooling experiences of the migrant learner. Anecdotal evidence however indicates that migrant children, especially African migrant children in schools in South Africa, experience conditions that result in exclusion and in limitations to participation and healthy functioning in school. The purpose of the study therefore is to examine the schooling experiences of migrant learners by attempting to understand the ways in which migration, identity and space intersect and condition each other at school; shaping migrant positioning in the social and cultural dynamics of schools. This study focuses on the schooling experience of migrant learners in South Africa using as participants Grade 8 – 12 migrant learners from the DRC and Zimbabwe selected from three different schools across Durban.



It is important to explore how interpreting the processes of constructing school geo-spatial meanings can enable us understand models of school landscape that create conditions where migrant children are or are not able to enjoy quality and supportive schooling experiences. In order to do this, we need to see and identify factors that impact on the quality of schooling experiences of migrants. We need to more fully examine the ways in which migration, identity and space intersect and condition each other at schools. Furthermore, in order to respond to and intervene in the school landscape, there is a need to hear both the good and the difficult stories of migrant learners.

This study is guided by the following objectives; to contextualise and map understanding of schooling experiences common to migrant learners from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zimbabwe who are schooling in Durban, to identify the processes of the migrant learners' understanding of school as place and space, and to explain how understanding of the migrant learners' schooling experiences can improve knowledge of children geographies and inclusive schooling in South Africa.

The choice of this study to focus on migrant learners from the DRC and Zimbabwe is made because both categories of learners come from similar situations of displacement as a result of social, economic and political problems in their home countries. Given that these learners are coming from the same situation of displacement in their respective countries, their migrant background experiences and sensibilities were considered likely to be similar. Secondly, there is a visible

dominance of students from these countries in the school-age migrant population of schools across Durban and surrounding communities. This is perhaps partly explainable by the massive influx of migrant families from DRC and Zimbabwe to these areas (Guild & Mantu, 2011).

The overarching question that informed this study was: How might the migrant learner's narrative of schooling experiences of school space and place be understood as a form of praxis to sustain attentiveness to issues of migrant identity in South African schools? This was further refined to form the following key research questions that guided this study:

1. What stories do migrant learners from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zimbabwe in Durban tell about their schooling experiences in South Africa?
2. What challenges and limitations do migrant learners in schools in South Africa experience, and why?
3. How do social identities of migrant learners in schools in South Africa affect the extent to which they experience inclusion or exclusion in school space and place?

In order to address the above questions, the study adopted a qualitative research approach, and employed the methodology of narrative inquiry to enable an inquiry into the schooling experiences of the migrant learners in South African schools. Three methods of data collection were used in generating data in this study. The schools and participants for this study were selected using convenient and purposive sampling techniques. An overview of the study methodology is

presented in section 1.4.5, on the methodological context of the study. A full account of the study methodology is presented in chapter six, which addresses the research methodology of the study.

## **1.4 THE STUDY CONTEXT**

### **1.4.1 Geographical context of the study**

Geographically, South Africa is situated at the southern tip of the continent of Africa forming part of the Southern region of the continent. South Africa is bordered by countries including Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe to the north, Mozambique and Swaziland to the east, while Lesotho is an enclave surrounded by South African territory.

South Africa has a population of about 48, 601, 098 with a net migration rate that stands at -6.22 migrant(s)/1,000 populations (CIA, 2013). The country is made up of four racial groups, namely black African 79%, white 9.6%, coloured 8.9%, Indian/Asian 2.1% (CIA, 2013), and multiple ethnic languages. Politically, South Africa is divided into nine provinces namely, Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Northern Cape, North West, Mpumalanga, Limpopo and Western Cape.

The study was carried out in three schools in Durban South Africa. Durban is located on the far-east side of South Africa. It is major city, the largest in KwaZulu-Natal Province, and one of the country's main seaside cities. Durban Metropolitan Area ranks among the most populous urban areas in South Africa (John, 2012). Durban is also the second most important manufacturing hub

in South Africa after Johannesburg (John, 2012). Durban has excellent beaches and a distinctive tropical climate.

Durban forms part of the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality. The eThekweni Municipality, which includes the neighbouring towns, has a population of almost 3.5 million people (eThekweni Municipality: Integrated Development Plan, 2015). It is the home of the Zulu tribe. It is ethnically diverse, with a cultural richness of mixed beliefs and traditions. Zulus form the largest single ethnic group. Durban has a large number of people of British descent and has more Indians than any other city outside India (Mukherji, 2011).

#### **1.4.2 Socio-cultural context of the study**

South Africa transitioned from apartheid in 1994 with the first multi-racial election which ushered in majority rule under the African National Congress (ANC) party led government. Since the inception of democracy, the government and people of South Africa have struggled to address apartheid-era inequalities in the provision of health care, decent housing and education.

South Africa is a middle-income country with Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of \$578.6 billion and household income of R119 542 (Statistics South Africa, 2012). The South African 2013 annual budget was R1.15 trillion of which education as a sector made up 5.3% of the total budget (Department of National Treasury, 2013). Education is the largest category of government spending. According to Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2008), each province in the country spends on average a third of its annual budget on education. However, the

endemic nature of poverty has greatly affected access to, and potential benefits from, education. Poverty remains high among people living in the rural areas and in the urban fringes (Westaway, 2010). Despite this fact, comparatively South Africa's economy is considered among the best in the continent (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2008), perhaps partly explaining why there are many migrants, especially African migrants, in South Africa. Stability and largely violence-free democratic transitions had mapped South Africa as model of democracy in Africa after the successful conduct of fully conclusive democratic elections in 1994, 1999, 2004 and 2009.

One of the achievements of the democratic regimes in South Africa since 1994 has been the prioritisation of education reforms which address the injustices and inequalities of the apartheid era. Historically, education in South Africa was used to perpetuate racial segregation and to maintain minority white rule (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2008). Today, schooling in South Africa is compulsory for children from the ages of 7 to 15 years. Figures from the 2005 statistics show that about 96% of ordinary schools in South Africa were public schools (the majority of migrant learners in South Africa attend public schools), and only 4% were independent schools (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2008). The medium of instruction in South African schools is mainly English, but most learners first acquire initial literacy and numeracy in their home languages.

Durban is a city with a cosmopolitan setting. It is a city that has an all year round appeal to tourists making it boisterous and socially saturated. Durban has a stratified local economy being a strong base for manufacturing, tourism, transportation, logistics and shipping, and serving as a key import/export gateway. Durban also has a large share of the country's financial institutions and public sector services. As a result, Durban has a culturally diverse population, including new migrants attracted by job opportunities for both skilled and unskilled labour. This perhaps partly explains why there is a large number of migrants in the city. Many Zimbabwean and Congolese migrants move to Durban as most may already have their relatives and some sense of community network and support system in the city.

#### **1.4.3 The education policy context of the study**

Before the inception of democratic governance in South Africa in 1994, South Africa was a country denominated by inequality and discrimination as a result of the policies of the defunct apartheid regime (Daniels, 2010). Successive democratic regimes have made considerable efforts to enable the country move towards becoming a non-racial, democratic society, with a culture of human rights and promotion of the rule of law and social justice. One of the major steps towards this direction has been the reform of the education system (Daniels, 2010).

Hence, in meeting with the challenges of reforming education and training, government has committed itself to a paradigm shift in the education and training system underpinned by the principles of integrated approach to education and training, lifelong learning, equity and redress, accountability and transparency, responsiveness and relevance, diversity, quality, efficiency and

credibility (Department of Education, 2004). This shift in education policy also includes a move away from what Christie (1999) describes as a content-based approach to an outcome-based (OBE) approach, and it also includes a shift from an examination-driven approach towards an assessment approach (Government Gazette, Republic of South Africa, 2004).

Furthermore, successive governments since 1994 have come up with education legislations, policy development, curriculum reform and implementation of new ways of delivering quality and equitable education (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2004) with the main aim of redressing the past inequalities and ensuring a just and inclusive society where every individual will access equal opportunities for personal and collective development, through functional education system built on the principles of equity and inclusion. Then again, to ensure the equitable delivery of education, public schools are by law funded by the state with funding from public revenue on an equitable basis to ensure the proper exercise of the rights of each learner to education, and to amend past inequalities in the provision of education (Department of Education, 2006). Department of Education (2007) describes education funding as being firmly rights and equity based as reflected in the explicitly pro-poor revenue distribution of National Treasury and the Department of Education.

The apartheid era was characterised with inequality in education funding that created very huge gap in the way schools were funded by the government/state based on racial segregation - whites-only schools received 20 times more per learner than the poorest black schools, for personal as well as for non-personal and capital needs (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2004). In contrast, consistent and persistent efforts are now being made to make

education structurally accessible to all who were previously denied or had limited access to education, and also to realise the ideals of nine years of compulsory schooling. Marginalised or vulnerable groups have received particular attention in the form of inclusive education programmes and pro-poor funding policies (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2004).

The 1996 Constitution requires education to be transformed and democratised in accordance with the values of human dignity, equality, human rights and freedom, non-racism and non-sexism, and guarantees the rights to basic education for all, including adult basic education (Department of Education, 2006). Likewise, the South African Schools Acts (1996) aims to provide for a uniform system for organisation, governance and funding of schools, and seeks to ensure that all learners have right of access to quality education without discrimination, and makes schooling compulsory for all children from the year they turn 7 to the year in which they turn 15 or end of grade 9 (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2004, Department of Education, 1995). Thus, the Department of Education sees it as its strategic objective to extend quality integrated early childhood development services, including the pre-school and the reception school year (grade R), to the most marginalised communities (Department of Education, 2001a).

The heart of school reform since 1994 was the establishment of comprehensive curriculum projects (Jansen & Taylor, 2003). Hence, curriculum reform in South African school system becomes one of the major moves towards achieving quality education and redressing the inequalities of the past (Department of Education, 1997). However, a remarkable effort made towards education reform since the inception of democratic governance in South Africa is the introduction of the education



policy on inclusion. According to the Department of Education (2001b), special needs education is a sector where the ravages of apartheid remain most evident; the segregation of learners on the basis of race was extended to incorporate segregation on the basis of disability. Hence, black learners with disability experienced great difficulty in gaining access to education because very few special schools existed for them and the special schools were limited to admitting learners according to rigidly applied categories (the categorisation system allowed only those learners with organic, medical disabilities access to support programme), and learners who experienced learning difficulties because of poverty did not qualify for educational support (Department of Education, 2001). It therefore becomes necessary that the inequalities in the special schools sector are eradicated and the process through which the learner, educator and professional support services populations become representative of the South Africa population, is accelerated (Department of Education, 2001).

It is against this backdrop that the Department of Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education on building an inclusive education and training system was introduced into the education system (Department of Education, 2002). The White Paper 6 outlined what an inclusive education and training system is. It provides the framework for establishing such an education and training, details a funding strategy, and lists the key steps to be taken in establishing an inclusive education and training system for South Africa. In the White Paper, the Department of Education outlined its commitment to the provision of educational opportunities, in particular for those learners who experience or have experienced barriers to learning and development or have dropped out of learning because of the inability of education and training system to accommodate their learning needs (Department of Education, 2001).

Inclusive education is also defined in the White Paper 6 as:

- *Acknowledging that all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support.*
- *Enabling education structures, system and learning methodologies to meet the need of all learners.*
- *Acknowledging and respecting differences in learners, whether due to age, gender, and ethnicity, language, class, disability, HIV or other infectious diseases.*
- *Broader than formal schooling and acknowledging that learning also occurs in the home and community, within formal and informal settings and structures.*
- *Changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methods, curricula and environment to meet the needs of all learners.*
- *Maximising the participation of all learners in the culture and curriculum of educational institutions and uncovering and minimising barriers to learning (Department of Education, 2001, p 16).*

However, achieving inclusion in education in South Africa may still prove to be a long march. This can be said not only because of the impact of the lingering, even if tenuous, legacy of historical apartheid influences on the educational landscape, but equally because of the increasingly changing social and cultural contour of school-age demography in part influenced by learners from families moving into the country in the wave of migration post-apartheid era. Increasing migration is likely being largely caused by wars and displacements, political crisis and

economic destabilizations of migrants' home nations on the one hand and the promises of an emerging African economy on the other for the highly skilled migrants.

#### **1.4.4 Theoretical context of the study**

In enquiring into the schooling experiences of migrants learners in South African schools, this study is first located within the strictures of social constructionism. It employed Children's Geographies and New Sociology of Childhood as the theoretical framework. The theories employed provide a framework for understanding of migrant learners' experiences in schools in South Africa. The theories employed also enable a deconstruction of the social positioning of migrant learners in the school social context and cultural landscape in South Africa and of the migrant learners' understanding of school as a place and space.

Secondly, I propose to use the theories because of the social position of migrant children from the DRC and Zimbabwe in South Africa first as children and secondly as African migrants. Having myself functioned in this social context and having been exposed to the social realities of African migrants in South Africa, I considered these theories to be the most appropriate to unpack and elucidate my ideas, arguments and analysis in this study.

#### **1.4.5 Methodological context of the study**

This study focuses on how migrant children in South African schools experience schooling in South Africa. This is located within the qualitative research approach, and it employed narrative

inquiry methodology. Data was collected using story accounts, semi-structured interviews, and photo voice methods. Three schools were selected within Durban KwaZulu-Natal South Africa for the purposes of this study. The selection of the schools for this study was decided on based on the school population size and proportionality of representation of learners from DRC and Zimbabwe in the population. Convenient sampling was employed to select the three schools, and purposive sampling was used to identify participants in this study from the three schools selected. The participants were drawn from learners who were in grades 8 to 12 at the time data for this study was collected. A total of twelve (12) participants participated in this study. Four participants each were selected from the three schools. Participants comprised of boys and girls between the ages of 14 – 18 years.

## **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Since the abolition of apartheid regime in 1994, South Africa has become the target country for many African migrants especially from poor and troubled African countries such as the DRC and Zimbabwe. Many migrant children especially from the DRC and Zimbabwe, some with and some without their family members, migrated to South Africa when crises stated in their countries. Some of these migrant children, especially those from the DRC and Zimbabwe fall, under the category of forced migrants while some willingly migrated to South Africa because of a desire for better conditions. This means that many of these migrant children do not voluntarily leave their home countries but were forced to leave their countries as a result of war, socio-economic and political crisis. As a result, these migrant children do not have control over any experiences they must have

passed through and are still passing through. Having myself been a migrant in South Africa, and having been exposed to the experiences and challenges of migrants in South Africa, I see it as befitting to study the experiences of migrant children in South African schools. It is important to note here that in order not to allow my personal experiences as a migrant in South Africa to influence the findings and interpretation of the findings in this study, the study is designed in a way that enabled active and full participation of the study participants. Also I carefully decided on the methodological approach and research design employed in this study in order to achieve an objective analysis of the data collected.

This research therefore examined the experiences of migrant children from the DRC and Zimbabwe in South African schools. The aim is to expose and understand the various factors that contribute to these school experiences. It is hoped that the outcome of this research will contribute to ongoing inquiries on how best to achieve an inclusive schooling within a diverse population. It is also hoped that this work will be particularly important in helping the understanding of, and meeting the learning needs of, an increasing number of migrant children within an inclusive schooling system in South Africa. Finally, it is anticipated that this work will spur further research interest and enquiry in this area.

## **1.6 OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS**

**Chapter one** is the introduction to the study. It presents the background and the study orientation, the rationale for the study, the purpose and objectives of the study, the study context, the

significance of the study and the overview of the thesis. The background information helps to guide the data analysis of this study. Also, an outline of the chapters to follow is presented.

**Chapter two** provides an understanding of migrant learners' home countries background. It provides an overview of contexts and backgrounds of migrant learners under study. It provides brief historical and contextual accounts of Zimbabwe and the DRC. This chapter also presents the social, economic and political backgrounds of both countries. The background information helps to guide the data analysis. The chapter provides the reader with in depth understanding of the participants' social, cultural, and economic backgrounds. It also enables understanding of the social and cultural factors that might have contributed in their experiences at school and in the larger South African society.

**Chapter three** is the literature review of the study which provides the introduction to the chapter. It focuses and explores relevant literature around the themes and issues on migration. It provides discussions on issues around trends in international migration, child migration in Africa, education and migration and experiences of African migrant children in South Africa. This chapter provides the reader with an insight into issues on migration and migrant experiences by reviewing relevant literature on these issues. In addition, this chapter helps in the analysis of the participants' experiences at school and in larger South African society drawing from existing literature.

**Chapter four** is an overview of theories of migration. It provides brief review of the existing theories of migration by looking at the neoclassical theory of migration, the new economics of migration (NEM), the human capital theory of migration, the world systems theory of migration,

the dual labour market theory of migration, the network theory of migration, migration systems theory of migration and the transnational migrations theory of migration. The relevance of this chapter in this study is to provide the reader with an insight into social, political and economic factors that necessitated the participants' emigration from their home countries to South Africa.

**Chapter five** is the theoretical framework. This chapter uses literature to unpack the ideas around the theoretical framework of this study. This chapter also provides an overview of the study paradigm and discusses the key theories of the study. This chapter provides the reader with an insight into the theoretical framework that underpins this study.

**Chapter six** focuses on the research methodology employed in this study. It throws light on the researcher's position in the research/study. It also provides an overview of the research design, the research methodology, the research methods, the research site, the ethical consideration, the sample and sampling, data analysis, trustworthiness and limitations of the study. This chapter provides an insight into the methodology employed in the study.

**Chapter seven** presents the participants' narratives of their emigration from home countries to South Africa, and the study findings on the early experiences of migrant learners in South Africa. It presents findings on the early challenges and limitations the study participants encountered on their arrival in South Africa. It also presents findings on the benefits the participants derived from schooling in South Africa. This chapter serves to provide the reader with a clear understanding of the participants' early experiences on their arrival in South Africa.

**Chapter eight** presents findings of the study on migrant learners schooling experiences in South Africa. It brings to light the participants' experiences of stereotypes, xenophobia, exclusion and isolation in school, and the negative effects of these experiences on how the study participants experience schooling in South Africa.

**Chapter nine** presents the summary, reflections and implications of the study. It pulled together all the issues and ideas in the study, and recommendations are made based on the study findings.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **UNDERSTANDING MIGRANT LEARNERS' HOME COUNTRIES BACKGROUND**

#### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides an overview of context and background to the onset of emigration from the home countries of the migrant learners under study. It provides in brief the social, economic and political background that might have influenced decisions of migrants to migrate from their respective home countries. While understanding learners' social and cultural backgrounds based on their individual countries' backgrounds is not one of the research questions, it is important to provide this information to frame the findings related to the migrant learner experience in South African school. Furthermore, this chapter is relevant to this study as it enables in depth understanding and analysis of the social and cultural factors that might have contributed in the way the participants in this study position themselves socially and culturally within the school space and place in South Africa as migrants.

## **2.1 HISTORICAL AND CONTEXTUAL ACCOUNT OF ZIMBABAWE**

### **2.1.1 Location and make up of ethnic groups**

Zimbabwe is located in Southern Africa. It lies just north of the Tropic of Capricorn between the Limpopo and Zambezi rivers. Zimbabwe is land locked, bordered by Mozambique on the east, South Africa on the South, Botswana on the west and Zambia on the north and north west. In 1992, Zimbabwe's population was 10.4 million, of those 98% were African, and about 2% were European, Asian, and mixed-race (Carael & Glynn, 2008). Currently, Zimbabwe's population is estimated to be 14, 229 541 (CIA, 2015). The African population of Zimbabwe is made up of at least ten ethnic groups, each speaking a different language. The two largest are the Shona and Ndebele. The Shona people make up about 60% of the population (Ember & Ember, 2001). They are well known for their skill over the centuries in working with iron, gold, and copper (Ember & Ember, 2001). The Ndebele people, recognized for their skill as military strategists before the arrival of the British, make up about 20% of the population (Ember & Ember, 2001). Most people in Zimbabwe speak at least two languages, including one of the three official languages: chiShona, isiNdebele, and English (Ember & Ember, 2001). Even though there are many different groups, certain cultural practices or customs unite all Zimbabweans, and one of the greatest experiences shared by all these groups was the war for independence.

### **2.1.2 Historical account of the formation of Zimbabwe**

Zimbabwe was a British colony known as Rhodesia from 1896 until 1980. Before the British arrived, the country was made up of a number of separate kingdoms (Ember & Ember, 2001). The earliest to inhabit the country, as noted by Ember and Ember (2001) were the San, sometimes called the Qoisan or Khoisan. Ember and Ember (2001) also note that after the San, the Shona arrived, and they built stone walls in the region around 1200 AD. The best known of these walls survive today as the remains of two cities, Great Zimbabwe and Khami (Ember & Ember, 2001). The city of Great Zimbabwe prospered until the fifteenth century, and gave modern Zimbabwe its name (Ampim, 2004).

In 1965 the white minority-ruled government of Rhodesian Front, under Ian Smith, broke away from Britain. Ian Smith's party, the Rhodesian Front party, was highly opposed to black majority rule in Zimbabwe, stripping black people of rights (Moorcraft, 1990). This government sparked international outrage and economic sanctions were introduced (Wood, 2012). Black Zimbabweans fought for their rights for many decades (Salisbury, 1990). Opposition parties were formed, such as the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) under Joshua Nkomo (Mapuva, 2010). In 1963, this party split and the more radical wing formed the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) led by Robert Mugabe (Todd & Bottaro, 2015). Guerrilla warfare broke out, turning into civil war in the 1970s (Todd & Bottaro, 2015). As noted by Todd and Bottaro (2015) the Republic eventually surrendered control to the rebels. Temporarily, Zimbabwe reverted to British control as a way to protect the fragile new government while Robert Mugabe convinced the rebel armies to demobilize

(Moorcraft, 1990). By 1979, Zimbabwe had managed to negotiate its settlement and was able to declare its independence from Britain (Moorcraft, 1990). By 1980, Zimbabwe became an independent nation and Robert Mugabe became the Prime Minister (Moorcraft, 1990).

### **2.1.3 Background to the socio-political crisis in Zimbabwe**

The socio-political crisis in Zimbabwe can be traced back in the 1960s when black opposition parties were formed, advocating for political and economic rights - demanding black majority rule. The two major parties leading this movement were the ZAPU led by Nkomo, and ZANU led by Mugabe as already highlighted above. Both ZAPU and ZANU had similar aims and similar approaches in achieving these aims which include political tactics and guerrilla warfare (CHOICES for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education Program, 2009). ZAPU and ZANU however competed for popular support, and as a result, violence broke out between these two parties in the 1960s and continued into the 1980s (CHOICES for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education Program, 2009).

From 1966 to 1979, ZANU and ZAPU fought the Rhodesian government to achieve majority rule and end white domination, discrimination and racism (CHOICES for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education Program, 2009). From 1965 onwards, the country was kept under state emergency, and government passed laws to ban public meetings, limit political activities and detain people without trial (CHOICES for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education Program, 2009). According to Jakobsen (2012), war for black majority rule in Zimbabwe became more and more intensified and violent in the 1970s. Ordinary citizens were oftentimes caught in the middle and punished by the Rhodesian army for supporting the guerrilla fighters or by ZANU or ZAPU for not helping the liberation

cause (CHOICES for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education Program, 2009). CHOICES for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education Program (2009) also highlights that many crops were destroyed, many families were displaced from their homes and tens of thousands of people were killed.

After the February 1980 election that brought Mugabe to the position of a prime minister, peace returned to Zimbabwe and many believed that a peaceful and prosperous Zimbabwe would bring change to the people, but peace in Zimbabwe was short-lived (CHOICES for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education Program, 2009). In 1981, Mugabe announced his intention to make Zimbabwe a one party state (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012). There was a renewed violence between former ZAPU and ZANU (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012). There were reports of heavy violence involving killings, stealing and damaging of properties in Matabeleland, a region in western Zimbabwe where many of ZAPU supporters and fighters came from (CHOICES for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education Program, 2009). The government of President Mugabe accused the people of Matabeleland for supporting violence in their region in order to overthrow his government (CHOICES for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education Program, 2009).

In January 1983, the government troops were sent to Matabeleland to target not only the dissidents but also ordinary people in the region, and as a result of this development, detention, torture, and mass murder became the order of the day (CHOICES for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education Program, 2009). Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2011) notes that many people were killed in Matabeleland as a result of heavy violence in the region. The violence in Matabeleland finally stopped in 1987, with a Unity Accord in which the ZAPU merged with the ZANU-PF (Mashingaidze, 2005). In 1987, Mugabe who was then a prime minister dissolved the position of prime minister and became the executive

president – the head of state with the power to dissolve parliament (Saati, 2015). CHOICES for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education Program (2009) highlights that members of parliament were forced to agree with ZANU-PF or they were fired from government, During this period, elections were continuously marred by electoral fraud and violence, and opposition leaders and activists faced intimidation, abuse, detention and torture (CHOICES for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education Program, 2009). There were reports of human rights violations and wide spread corruption among top government and ZANU-PF officials which started crippling the economy, as noted by CHOICES for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education Program (2009). In the mid-1990s, the government of President Mugabe sent troops to fight in the civil war in the DRC in return for mining rights, and this sapped resources from Zimbabwe's struggling economy, and as a result, many Zimbabweans became increasingly frustrated at the state of the economy (CHOICES for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education Program, 2009).

As the 1990s progressed, Zimbabwe faced growing economic crises; economic deteriorations muffled job growth, and despite being well educated most Zimbabwean youths were unable to get employment (Thomson Reuters Foundation, 2010). Furthermore, as the economic crisis worsened in Zimbabwe, food disappeared from shelves, fuel shortages crippled the economy, and many fell deeper and deeper into poverty (CHOICES for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education Program, 2009). CHOICES for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education Program (2009) also notes that services such as health care and education suffered from lack of resources, and there were repeated power and water shortages. As result of the growing economic crisis, more than three million Zimbabweans fled the country to other countries by 2004 (Thomson Reuters Foundation, 2010).

In 2008, social and political crisis in Zimbabwe deepened when President Mugabe and the leader of newly formed opposition party MDC, Morgan Tsvangirai stood for president. Official results showed that Tsvangirai beat Mugabe, but not by enough votes to win outright, forcing a run-off, and Mugabe's ZANU-PF party also lost its parliamentary majority (Thomson Reuters Foundation, 2010). Violence escalated ahead of the presidential run-off in June 2008. The opposition party, MDC accused President Mugabe's party of deploying security forces, veterans of the independence struggle and youth militia in a campaign of violence which the opposition claimed was to cripple Tsvangirai's chances of victory (Thomson Reuters Foundation, 2010). The opposition party also claimed that some of their supporters were killed and others beaten up. There was reported violence, including numerous detentions of the opposition leader, Morgan Tsvangirai by the police.

African countries joined Mugabe's Western critics in voicing out anger over the bloodshed and violence. Mugabe, Tsvangirai and the leader of the breakaway MDC faction, Arthur Mutambara, eventually signed a power-sharing deal in September 2008, and talks over allocation of key ministries were deadlocked for months but a final agreement was reached in January 2009, under strong international pressure (Thomson Reuters Foundation, 2010). Tsvangirai was sworn in as prime minister in February 2009, and Mutambara became the deputy prime minister. Mugabe remains president with control over security services. Tensions remain between ZANU-PF and MDC over power sharing issues in the government and incidents of political violence and economic hardship continued.

#### **2.1.4 Economic crisis in Zimbabwe**

Violence and unrest have continued to plague Zimbabwe over the last decades, with Robert Mugabe's Zanu-PF party challenged by the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) led by Morgan Tsvangirai (International Crisis Group, 2014). Robert Mugabe won another term of office in controversial elections held in 2013. In addition, President Robert Mugabe's national policies led to a severe economic collapse and great failure of the national health system (Coltart, 2008). Failed monetary policies, currency devaluations, corruption and land seizure policy that devastated Zimbabwe's once thriving agricultural sector led to an economic crash that left 80% of the population unemployed and hyper-inflation at approximately 231 million percent (Kanyenze, Kondo, Chitambara, & Martens, 2011). The land seizure policy in particular displaced over one million civilians and allowing the farms to fail (Thomson Reuters Foundation, 2010). This also results in resource crisis, leaving much of the country without welfare, food, or the ability to afford healthcare (Thomson Reuters Foundation, 2010)

Zimbabwe's economy depends on its mining and agriculture sector (Dashwood, 2000; Hawkins, 2009). Following a decade of contraction from 1998 – 2008, the economy recorded real growth of more than 10% per year from 2010 – 2013, before slowing to roughly 3% in 2014 due to poor harvest, low diamond revenues, and decreased investments (CIA, 2015). Infrastructure and regulatory deficiencies, a poor investment climate, a large public and external debts burden, and extremely high government wage expenses impede the country's economic performance (CIA, 2015).



Until early 2009, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) routinely printed money to fund the budget deficit, causing hyperinflation (CIA, 2015). Dollarization in early 2009 which allowed currencies such as the Botswana pula, the South African rand, and the US dollar to be used locally ended hyperinflation and reduced inflation below 10% per year, but exposed structural weakness that inhibit broad-based growth (CIA, 2015). In January 2015, as part of the government's effort to boost trade and attract foreign investment, the RBZ announced that the Chinese renminbi, Indian rupee, Australian dollar, and Japanese yen would be accepted as legal tender in Zimbabwe (CIA, 2015). Foreign and domestic investments continue to be hindered by lack of clarity regarding the government's Indigenization and Economic Empowerment Act (CIA, 2015).

### **2.1.5 Education in Zimbabwe**

Zimbabwe is one of the very fortunate countries in Southern Africa to have basic education, especially for young people (Ember & Ember, 2001). While there are still some people in Zimbabwe who cannot read or write, many people have at least three years of elementary education (Ncube, 2015). Education in Zimbabwe is seen as valuable since it can be the way to a good job. Parents are usually willing to spend money on the education of their children as an investment in the future (Ember & Ember, 2001; Ncube, 2015).

Public education in Zimbabwe was made free in 1980 and inequalities from the existing colonial system lessened (Kanyongo, 2005). Education was declared a basic human right by President Robert Mugabe's incoming government and racial integration pursued, and in principle, all

children in Zimbabwe have the right to education. (Kanyongo, 2005). The Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development of Zimbabwe maintain and operate the government schools but fees charged by independent schools are regulated by the cabinet of Zimbabwe.

### **2.1.6 Social conditions in Zimbabwe**

Despite the abundance of natural resources and the high literacy rate, Zimbabwe remains one of the poorest countries in Africa with an unemployment rate around 92%, including underemployment (Africa And The World, 2015). The majority of Zimbabweans live below the poverty line, which implies that the majority live on less than \$1.25 a day (Africa And The World, 2015). Again, despite the high literacy rate, people graduate from universities with degrees and more degrees but are unable to use these degrees to better their living conditions as a result of the high unemployment rate.

Furthermore, as a result of the socioeconomic and political crisis in Zimbabwe most Zimbabweans do not enjoy good living standards (Ember & Ember, 2001). Most rural families in Zimbabwe do not have tap water and most of the roads in the rural areas are not well paved (Ember & Ember, 2001). Some rural areas are not served by any modern form of transportation and roads worsen during the rainy season (Ember & Ember, 2001).

Also, Ember and Ember (2001) note that the whole country has inadequate health care, but the rural population is the hardest hit. Some communities in the rural areas do not regularly have the

services of a fully trained nurse, let alone a doctor, and medicines are always in short supply (Ember & Ember, 2001). As noted by Ember and Ember (2001) some of the most common diseases are malaria, bilharzia, sexually transmitted diseases, tetanus, cholera, polio, and typhoid.

In both the urban and rural areas, there are local differences in the standard of living. Ember and Ember (2001) further note that in the urban areas, the differences are based on level of education, gender, and social and economic class. In the urban areas, women are in the worst situation as many still face employment discrimination and other sexist practices (Ember & Ember, 2001). In the rural areas some families are wealthier than others because of support from their family members who work in the urban areas and those who have migrated to other countries, have settled and are working in their countries of destination (Ember & Ember, 2001). Zimbabwe remains one of the HIV/AIDS killing zones in Africa (Africa and the World, March, 2013). Despite the numerous HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns, more than 1 million Zimbabweans are living with HIV/AIDS and the HIV/AIDS adult prevalence rate remains 14.3% (Africa and the World, 2015).

As Venter (2003) notes, poor leadership and corruption remain the major problems facing Zimbabwe today; corruption levels remain at an all-time high. Currently, the economic structure and status of Zimbabwe is destroyed, and this has forced approximately one-third of the population to depend on food aid; many Zimbabweans to migrate to other countries, mostly to neighbouring countries (King, 2012). South Africa is the main destination country for most Zimbabweans leaving the country

### **2.1.7 The onset of mass emigration from Zimbabwe**

Since the recent political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe, hundreds of thousands of people have left the country to seek a living abroad. The Zimbabwean diaspora is spread out mainly in South Africa, Botswana, United Kingdom, United States, New Zealand and Australia (Mbiba, 2005; Ndlovu, 2013). In the 1990s, economic hardship in Zimbabwe brought about by the implementation of the economic and structural adjustment programme, which was backed by the World Bank, prompted a wave of migration of Zimbabweans to England (Ndlovu, 2013).

Second to South Africa as a destination of permanent settlement for Zimbabweans is the United Kingdom (Ndlovu, 2013). Zimbabwean migration in the United Kingdom can be put into three different waves: the 1980s, the 1990s and the beginning of the new millennium (Mupakati, 2012). After the country's independence from Britain, immigrants moved to the United Kingdom as political and economic uncertainty gripped the new country (Ndlovu, 2013).

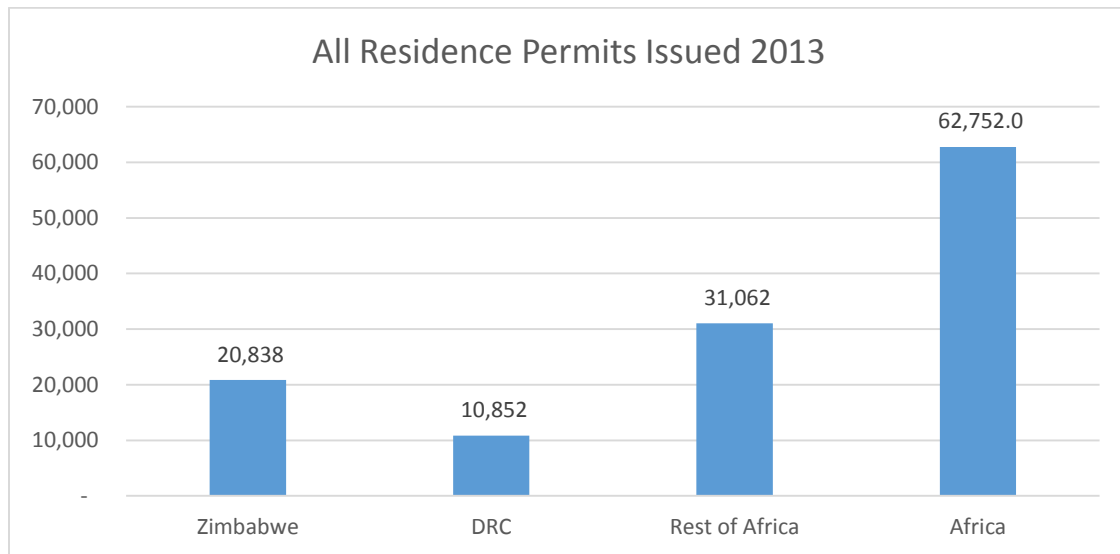
Elsewhere overseas, a breakdown of different host nations indicates that the Zimbabwean population in Australia has also grown significantly since 2001 with the majority of Zimbabweans living in Sydney (Johnson, Berstein, & Villiers, 2008). Furthermore, the Zimbabwean communities/populations in Botswana, Canada, the United States and South Africa have also risen significantly since the onset of crisis in Zimbabwe. The population of Zimbabweans living in other African countries besides South Africa and Botswana is not known (Crush & Tevera, 2010).

Over the past decades Zimbabwe has experienced significant changes with regards to international migration flows (Jager & Musava, 2015). Historically, Zimbabwe has been a country of origin, transit and destination all the same time, although the balance between these three elements has evolved over time, and Zimbabwe is now primarily a country of origin, and also a country of transit, especially for migrants from East African countries travelling towards South Africa as a destination.

South Africa is estimated to have the bulk of the Zimbabwean diaspora community, with an estimated two million to three million Zimbabwean nationals living in the country (Ndlovu, 2013). This is so because of the opportunities South Africa offers for both skilled and unskilled migrants and secondly because of language convenience, given that many Zimbabweans are competent in the use of English language for communication. Zimbabwe is one of the top African sources of recipients of temporary and permanent residence in South Africa. According to Statistics South Africa Zimbabweans make up the highest number of documented African immigrants in South Africa by 2013. The data below shows all residence permits issued in 2013 by the South African Department of Home Affairs.

**Figure 2.**

**All Permits Issued 2013**



*Source: Statistics South Africa (2013)*

## **2.2 HISTORICAL AND CONTEXTUAL ACCOUNT OF THE DRC**

### **2.2.1 Location and make up of ethnic groups**

The DRC is located in Central Africa and is the third largest country in Africa by area (Ziemke, 2001). French is the official language in DRC, and there are many other tribal or ethnic languages. The DRC is also known as the Congo Kinshasa; a name taken after its capital Kinshasa. It has a population of 79 375 136 and is made up of many different ethnic groups and many different ethnic languages (CIA, 2015). People of the DRC (Ziemke, 2001) are known for their ability to speak in more than one of their local languages. The official language is French, which was introduced by the Belgian colonial masters. Other languages include Swahili, Lingala, Kikongo, and Tshiluba.

Lingala is widely spoken across the ethnic groups. It is the common language for business transaction in Congo (Ziemke, 2001).

### **2.2.2 Historical account of formation of the DRC**

Congo Kinshasa gained its independence in 1960. At this period there were not enough trained personnel to manage the affairs of the nation, and between 1960 and 1964, Congo saw a number of coups, mercenary-led rebellions, the arrival of the United Nations (UN) peacekeeping forces, and the formation of movements based on tribes (Ziemke, 2001). In May 1960 Patrice Lumumba and his Mouvement National Congolese won most seats in the parliament; he was murdered on January 17, 1961.

After Lumumba's death, Joseph Mobutu, who was a military officer, took over power. He remained in power for twenty-three years. Mobutu changed the political system of the country by declaring all political parties illegal, except his Mouvement Populaire la Revolution, thereby making Congo a one party state (Ziemke, 2001). Also, Ziemke (2001) notes that parliament was also abolished under his regime. In his moves to Africanize the country, he changed the name of the country to Zaire. Mobutu's regime was marked by high levels of corruption and brutality. Ziemke (2001) maintains that as result of Mobutu's high level of corruption, the high level of inflation, the fall of copper on the world market, currency devaluation, and not meeting up with the agreement and requirements of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank payments, the country's economy suffered in the 1970s and 1980s.

Ziemke (2001) describes how Laurent Kabila, a leader of a rebel group, whose aim was to remove Mobutu from power, came into power in 1997. The initial celebration gave way to an internal conflict that eventually involved five other African nations (see below).

### **2.2.3 Background of war and social crisis in the DRC**

The war that started on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1998 was connected to the 1994 civil war in Rwanda (Andrews, 2010). This conflict came to an end with the Tutsi taking control of Rwanda. Hundreds of thousands of Hutu refugees and a good number of former Hutu soldiers fled into Congo to seek refuge. At this time, Laurent Kabila gave the Hutu rebels in exile in Congo the opportunity to carry out cross-border raids into Rwanda. At this time tension started to develop in Congo against the Tutsi of both Rwanda and those from the eastern part of Congo. The Tutsi from Rwanda encouraged the Tutsi in Congo and every other group that is against the Kabila regime to rebel against Kabila in 1998 (Ziemke, 2001). Also, Rwanda saw this as an opportunity to eliminate the Hutu rebel problem in the border areas. At this time, Burundi and Uganda were two strong Rwandan allies, and they also took part in the war (Helium, Undated). Burundi on its own had similar problems between Tutsi and Hutus, and Uganda on the other hand wanted to strike its own rebels who were hiding in the Congo border areas. Kabila on his part invited the assistance of Angola, who aided him to take over power in 1997. He also called help from Zimbabwe and Namibia (Ziemke, 2001). The involvement of many African countries in the war made it to be more than a mere civil war.



Furthermore, Angola at this time saw this as a good opportunity to enter into Southern Congo to attack its own UNITA rebels. Namibia also had problems with the UNITA rebels in the border areas with Angola, while Zimbabwe and Chad aided Kabila in the fight (Ziemke, 2001). As the government and the rebels continued to fight and intermittently negotiate, the supporters from both sides took advantage of their presence in Congo to extract natural resources such as gold, silver and diamonds (Ware, 2001). The war claimed the lives of many civilians, and troops from Rwanda and Uganda then fought each other over who will take control of the mineral rich area of the eastern Congo. The complicated nature of the war is as the result of many African nations' involvement, and each had some motive behind their involvement more than just mere taking sides.

#### **2.2.4 Rape and social violence during the war in the DRC**

About 100 000 cases of sexual assault happened during the war in the DRC (Andrew, 2010). Sexual violence was purposefully used as a weapon by one group against the other. Ziemke (2001) notes that this was intended to humiliate, intimidate and break apart families and communities, and somehow force the communities into alliance. This violence was widespread and involved many of the combatants.

#### **2.2.5 Conditions of schools, health facilities and agriculture during the war in the DRC**

Ziemke (2001) notes that most primary, secondary and vocational schools were destroyed and their furniture were used for firewood. Books were also stolen. Salaries of civil servants were not paid

by the state. To see that their children continued their education, parents took over the responsibility of paying teachers in whatever way they could afford (Ziemke, 2001). Though schools were open and teachers were teaching, the infrastructural facilities and resources for teaching and learning were not in place and the conditions for learning were bad. Parents of learners were responsible for providing text books, exercise books and other basic learning materials for their children (Ziemke, 2001).

Hospitals and clinics, as noted by (Ziemke, 2001), were vandalized, and the entire health care system looted. Like other public servants, medical staffs were not paid for years. There was no medication to treat the sick, and the little available was too expensive and too little for the number of people in need of medical attention. As a result there were many health problems like malnutrition, diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections.

There was serious displacement of people during the war, including those living in the rural areas, and the effect of this was a corresponding problem of food security. In the rural areas many people left behind all their belongings, including their farms and animals. The majority of the population in the Democratic Republic Congo are farmers, and they rely on their farm produce for food and livelihood (Ziemke, 2001). The war meant that many towns were cut off from their source of food supply and experienced food shortages.

### **2.2.6 Economy and social conditions in the DRC**

Congo is a Third World economy with a very low Gross National Product (GNP) (Ziemke, 2001). Commercial activities are based on survival of the fittest as people use any means necessary to get what they want and to find food for their families (Ziemke, 2001). Ziemke (2001) notes that the Mobutu government failed to put in place effective administration for the people; this led to a situation where the rich were getting richer and the poor poorer. Apart from the few rich people in the society, people were unable to buy basic necessities as a result of scarcity and over pricing. This situation possibly led to the existence of a black market system in the economy. Like most other African countries, the majority of the people of the DRC are subsistence farmers (Ziemke, 2001). Despite this, the country is rich in natural resources like diamond, gold, copper, and oil, and many economic powers compete for these resources.

Ziemke (2001) reports that the richest class in the DRC live in Kinshasa; these are mostly government officials, businessmen and expatriates. A large number of the population live in abject poverty with a very low standard of living. Ziemke (2001) also notes that teachers and clerks who live in the rural areas are seen by the majority of the population in the rural areas as rich, but in reality are rarely paid, and depend on the government for income. The rest of the population who live in the city operate in the unofficial economy (Ziemke, 2001). This group includes taxi drivers, soft drink vendors, sales people, shoe repairmen, and artisans.

Ziemke (2001) reports that Western education is also present in communities. The Catholic Church has many mission schools, especially for outstanding children. There are also state owned schools which are often understaffed. Salaries for teachers who teach in state owned schools are mostly not regularly paid. Government owe teachers' salaries, and this results in some teachers looking for alternative ways of survival (Ziemke, 2001). There are four universities in Congo, and there are many other technical and teacher training schools located in different parts of the country.

### **2.2.7 The onset of mass emigration from the DRC**

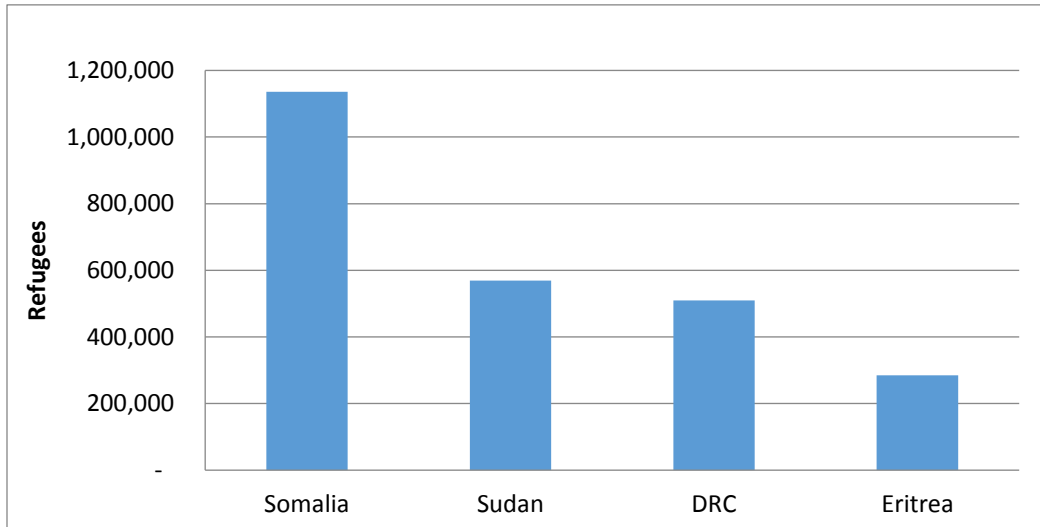
A period of political instability encouraged political migration and heavy outflows of refugees across porous borders to countries like Burundi, Tanzania, Rwanda, Zambia, Congo Brazzaville and Angola. Although in the early stage of the Mobutu regime, from 1965, the economy was strong, from 1975 to 1982, the economic situation again degenerated and social and political problems came back in the system (Ratha & Zhimei, 2010).

The war that started with the uprising against Mobutu encouraged more and more Congolese to embark on cross border migration to neighbouring countries, and intensified pressure on the movement of people from one part of the country to another; from places where the war has greatly affected people to less chaotic places (Andrews, 2010). This movement was in response to the war and food scarcity, especially in the rural areas.

The World Bank estimated that there are about 570 000 citizens of the DRC living abroad, of whom 120 000 live in Europe, the United States and Canada (Ratha & Zhimei, 2010). Ratha & Zhimei (2010) maintain that the number of the DRC citizens living in African countries cannot be actually estimated given that many of them are undocumented immigrants in the countries where they live. Also, it is believed that those who migrated to Europe are able to send money home in order to take care of those who stay at home.

Inasmuch as the actual number of citizens of the DRC living in other African countries has not been ascertained, it is nonetheless clear that African countries like South Africa, Angola and some others remain the main destinations of most emigrants from the DRC (Ratha & Zhimei, 2010). Reports produced by UNDP (2009) also state that 79.7% of emigrants from the DRC live in different African countries. Also United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) report indicates that DRC is among the countries with the highest number of displaced people in the world (UNHCR, 2012).

**Figure 3: Top Countries in Terms of Displaced People in Africa**



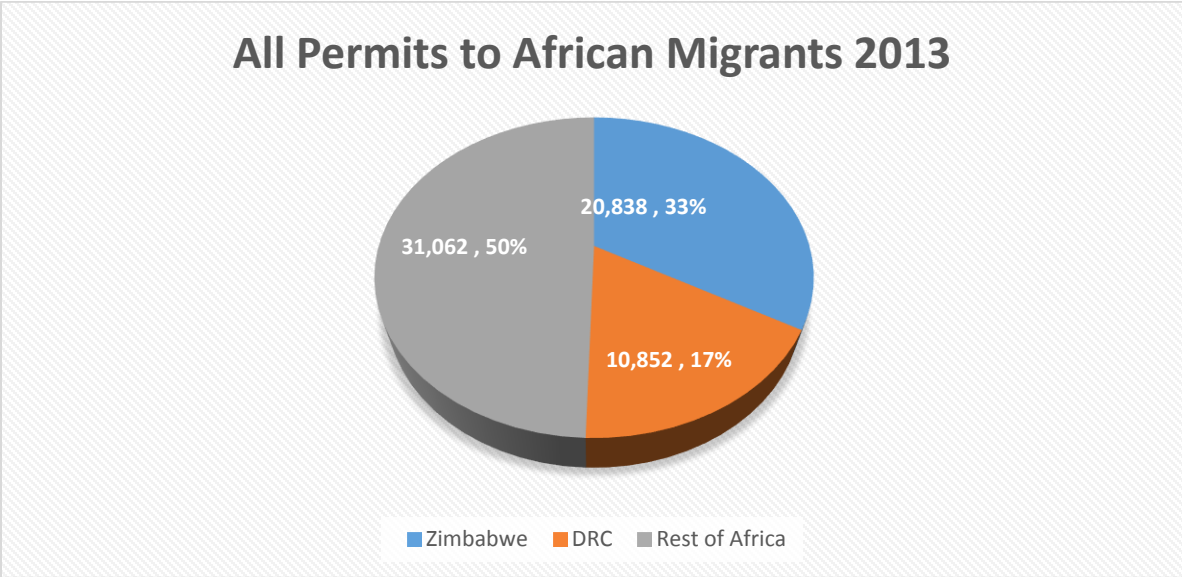
*Source: UNHCR (2012)*

In the African continent, the DRC is the third country with the highest number of originating refugees as shown in Figure 2. The UNHCR estimates put the number of refugees originating from the DRC at about 509,400 people.

Since the 1990s South Africa has been a destination for many Congolese emigrants (Ratha & Zhimei, 2010). Refugees from the DRC account for 20% of refugee population in the country. This translates to about 13,000 refugees from the DRC out of a total of about 67,000 in South Africa in 2012 (UNHCR, 2012).

In terms of other immigration categories, the DRC is also one of the top African countries with recipients of temporary and permanent residences in South Africa. According to Statistics South Africa, out of the 141,550 recipients of temporary residence in 2012, the DRC is the fourth country with the highest number of recipients (Statistics SA, 2012), as shown in the chart below.

**Figure 4:** *All permits to African Migrants 2013*



*Source: Statistics South Africa (2013)*

There are more Congolese emigrants in South Africa than in other African countries because of South Africa’s developed infrastructure and rapid economic growth (Mazars, Matsuyama, Rispoli, & Vearay, 2013), and secondly, because of opportunities South Africa offers to both skilled and unskilled migrants (Moseki, 2011). Apart from South Africa, Nigeria and Senegal have also

recorded high numbers of migrants from the DRC, though these countries are merely transit countries for these emigrants, not their main destinations.

## **2.3 CONCLUSION**

This chapter presented the historical and contextual account of Zimbabwe and the DRC. It looked at the background of social and political crisis in Zimbabwe, economic and social conditions in Zimbabwe and the onset of mass emigration from Zimbabwe to other countries within and outside the continent of Africa. Similarly, the chapter presented the background of the war and social crisis in the DRC, conditions of schools, health facilities and agriculture during the war in the DRC, social and economic conditions in the DRC, and the onset of mass emigration from the DRC. The following chapter is the literature review chapter presents review of existing literature on migration and related issues.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **MIGRANT LEARNERS' SCHOOLING EXPERIENCES: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

Migration has been a serious area of interest within political, social and academic circles. In recent times, studies have been and are being conducted on issues of migration, especially with the aim of exploring migrants' experiences and challenges, the cost-benefits of migration and other related issues. This literature review therefore aims at exploring the experiences and challenges of migrant children and education in host communities and countries, and related issues. Based on the existing studies carried out, the literature review will be organized around the following themes: trends in international migration, child migration in Africa, education and migration, and experiences of African migrant children in South Africa.

#### **3.1 TRENDS IN INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION**

##### **3.1.0 Introduction**

Global/trans-national migration has been in existence since time immemorial (Castles, 2004). People are pushed as a result of social, political, environmental and economic factors to migrate from their country of birth to settle in other countries (Rothberg, 2006). International migration

has ever been on the increase as a result of globalisation, which makes it easier for people to have full access to other countries of the world through more efficient communication networks, easy and cheap transportation and most importantly, common and new economic, social and cultural ideologies (Kok, Gelderblom, Oucho, & Zyl, 2006). As back as 2001, an estimated 150 million people were living outside their country of birth or nationality (Martin, 2015). This section provides an overview of recent trends in international migration that have triggered this mass movement of people across borders.

### **3.1.1 Voluntary and forced migration**

International migration is classified into voluntary and forced migration (Martin, 2015). According to Martin (2015), voluntary migration is kept alive through organised and well established systems which serve as a link between the supply of labour and the demand for both highly skilled and unskilled work force. Forced migration on the other hand is fuelled by negative factors such as socio-economic instabilities, human right abuses, natural disasters and wars (Martin, 2015). An instance in this case was the war in the DRC which drove away many of the citizens to different countries including South Africa. However, it still remains difficult to distinguish between voluntary and forced migrants given that one may start up as a voluntary migrant and later end up as forced migrant. This situation, as noted by Martin (2015), may arise if voluntary migrants are forced as a result of problems in their home countries to seek new homes or are naturalized in the countries where they have migrated. Forced migrants, on the other hand, may decide on where they would like to seek refuge given that they have family members, friends or a good number of people of the same community/tribe in those places. They also choose their

countries of destination based on economic reasons (i.e. countries that will provide them with better economic opportunities).

One can agree with Martin (2015) on the fact that many migrants, forced or voluntary, target countries where there is economic, political and social stability and where the country would offer them better economic opportunities. For instance, as noted in the introduction chapter earlier, South Africa has in more recent times been a fertile location for huge trans-African migration due to its vibrant economy and high opportunities especially for skilled migrants. This could explain the reason why many African migrants from mostly troubled African countries like the DRC and Zimbabwe decided to choose South Africa as their country of destination. In the case of the migrant children from the DRC and Zimbabwe in South Africa, inasmuch as they are forced migrants, they may at the same time have voluntarily chosen South Africa as their country of destination based on the abovementioned reasons. Martin (2015) also notes that forced migrants who manage to settle down in the host country may decide to bring over other family members.

On the other hand, voluntary migrants may turn into forced migrants when they find out that socio-political and economic changes in their home countries will not favour them if they should return back to their home countries (Martin, 2015). Furthermore, dual nationality also gives migrants the opportunity to belong to or become part of two socio-cultural, economic and political environments (Castles, 2004). Hence, most migrants have come to see and accept where they are as one of their homes, and as a result participate in every aspect of social, economic and political life of the society/community they have found themselves (Martin, 2015). This situation however has made it difficult to classify or rather categorise migrants on the bases of voluntary or forced.

For instance, in recent times, some host countries offer asylum seekers the opportunities to reside permanently or even naturalize in their host countries, thereby changing their status from forced to voluntary migrants. The migrant children from the DRC and Zimbabwe in South Africa may as well have adopted this ideology, where they will have to consider where they found themselves presently as their home. They may think of taking South Africa as their second home. However, as children in school this largely depends on how they are positioned and how they understand their positioning as inclusive or exclusive within the school space and place, and their overall experiences as migrants in South Africa.

### **3.1.2 Women and children in cross-border migration**

Certain factors explain why global/international migration is on the increase especially in the recent times. Dobrowolsky and Tastsoglou (2006) note that one of the most recent and major factors influencing international migration is the active involvement of women in international movement as principal migrants. Where the main aim for migrating is survival, like in a situation such as the war in the DRC and the socio-political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe, women without husbands or whose husbands have been killed may have no other options than to seek refuge in other countries with their children. Also, given that many women today are single parents, which means that they are as well economically active like the men as they need to provide for their children, it then means that if international migration is what they have to do to enable them to carry out their responsibilities of taking care of the financial needs of their children, they will have no other option than to embark on international migration like the men. In this study, children

may have migrated to South Africa in the company of their mothers and this may affect the way they experience life in South Africa. Martin (2001) comments that more women continue to take part in active economic activities, which may encourage international migration as principal migrants and wage earners.

Furthermore, the focus of this study is the child migrant, a phenomenon which equally requires attention. This has recently been a common phenomenon in the African continent where migrants from countries with political, social and economic instabilities had to leave their countries for countries where there are more economic, political and social stability. A good number of these migrants are children, some with and some without their parents or anyone to take care of them in the countries of destination. It may be the case that some of the migrant children from the DRC and Zimbabwe in South Africa have come without their parents. In line with this, Palmary (2009) notes that there are a good number of migrant children without their parents in South Africa from different African countries and many of these migrant children migrated for employment. This report by Palmary (2009) suggests that many of unaccompanied migrant children are voluntary migrants who migrated to South Africa for employment.

### **3.1.3 Family reunification**

Family reunification is another factor influencing the international migration pattern. The governments of most countries of the world today permit close family members of migrants who are legally staying in their countries to enter through legal means (Martin, 2001). Martin (2001) notes that family reunification is made possible and sustained by the international human rights

law of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which clearly states that “*the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by the society and state*” (United Nations, 1989). With this in mind, it therefore means that families should not be detached as this denies family members their fundamental right to respect of family life. Also, Martin (2001) argues that since the family serves as the main support unit of each member of the family, separating families would constitute a big threat to the other rights of the family members who need full support and protection from the family unit. And in order to protect this fundamental right to family life, most countries grant legal entry to family members of migrants with legal resident status.

Host countries still recognize the importance of family reunification as it serves as a helpful means through which immigrants find their feet in their new environment (Martin, 2001). Family members as noted by Martin (2001) who have settled in a given country assist new arrivals to also get settled by giving them the necessary support they need to enable them to get easily settled in the new environment. This may be one of the reasons why the participants in this study decided to choose South Africa as their country of destination. Some of them may have family members or friends who encouraged and brought them to South Africa. This implies that the participants whose relatives have been living in South Africa, and who encouraged them and probably brought them to South Africa, might later change from forced migrants to voluntary migrants as noted by Martin (2001) above. This will happen if the participants and their relations who brought them to South Africa decide to settle permanently in South Africa with no intention of going back even when things get better in their home country.

### **3.1.4 Cultural mobility**

Migration brings about mobility of cultures from one cultural location to another. Many societies get richer and richer culturally because of migration. Moreover, as our cities become more cosmopolitan in nature and the world becoming more and more globalized, they also become more diverse in cultures (Dobrowolsky & Tastsoglou, 2006). The concern at this point becomes the issue of how prepared the host countries are to accept any form of cultural infiltration as migrants bring in their own cultures. The idea of cultural diversity in this sense should and does suggest and promotes cross-cultural ideas which contribute immensely to socio-economic development. By this, people of different cultures become aware of other cultures in existence which they might not have known (Castles, 2004). Migration has made it possible for different cultures to come together, and new cultures are formed as a result of the cross-breeding of cultures (Goldin & Reinert, 2006).

In line with the above, the question here becomes: has the course of migration and cultural globalisation achieved the goal of bringing cultures, in turn promoting unity in diversity across all continents, countries and cities of the world? According to Harris (2001), such a goal has not been achieved, given xenophobic attacks, stereotypes and other forms of discrimination against migrants in South Africa, especially in the recent past. At the individual level, migration gets people exposed to various cultures and the socio-economic conditions and benefits in other countries Harris (2001). Migrants benefit from this type of exposure as it develops their minds and widens their horizons (Pries, 2006). Therefore, migration can be regarded as a part of education whereby people come in contact with different cultures. A study on the impart of migrant children

in Glasgow schools by Dillon (2013), shows the positive impact of migrant children in Glasgow schools as cultural awareness was seen to increase amongst native children as a result of having migrant classmates, who in effect imparted an alternative world view on their peers and increased native children's awareness of languages and cultures. Dillon (2013) further argue that migrant children are uniquely positioned to educate their peers and teachers about the world. Migration in this sense benefit both migrants and locals alike. Findings from this study indicate that migrant learners in South Africa benefit from the exposure and interaction with people from different social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. On the other hand, the extent to which South African learners have benefited from the presence of migrant learners in schools in South Africa depends on how they value and position migrants in the school space and place.

### **3.1.5 Skilled labour mobility and brain-drain**

According to Levitt and Nyberg-Sorensen (2004), migration gives room for the importation and exportation of skilled labour from areas with very high number of skilled workers to areas where there are acute shortages of skilled workers. Countries with very low resources of skilled labour benefit a lot from the technical/professional skills, knowledge and input of skilled migrants (Ozden & Schiff, 2005). Inasmuch as I agree with Levitt and Nyber-Sorensen (2004) that migration brings about skilled labour mobility, skilled labour does not in my view only move from locations where it is in surplus. This is because many underdeveloped countries such as countries in Africa and many countries in Asia are sources of skilled migrant labour to countries in Europe and America.



These underdeveloped countries on the other hand do not have enough skilled personnel to develop their countries (Adepoju, 2006). The mass exodus of professionals from these underdeveloped countries is as a result of wars, political and economic instabilities, and not because of excess skilled labour (Adepoju, 2006). The relevant term is less ‘skilled labour mobility’ (Levitt and Nyber-Sorensen, 2004) than ‘brain drain’ (Adepoju, 2006). According to Adepoju (2006) “Between 1960 and 1987, Africa lost 30 per cent of its highly skilled nationals to mostly Europe”. These are professionals who would have helped in the socio-economic development of African nation-states. The negative impact of this is that some source countries of migrants continue to dwell in economic and infrastructural stagnation due to the lack of skilled labour and professional personnel to help in developing their economies and infrastructure. Given that receiving countries of migrants such as South Africa have better infrastructure than source countries of migrants such as the DRC and Zimbabwe, migrants from these source countries of migration continue to migrate from their home countries to countries with better infrastructure. Some of the participants in this study may have come to South Africa partly because of better infrastructure such as schools and hospitals available in South Africa. However, the extent to which the participants have benefitted from better infrastructure in South African schools depends on the extent they experience inclusion or exclusion in the school space and place.

### **3.1.6 The cost-benefit of migration**

Like every other human endeavour, migration has its own cost and benefits. Therefore, a critical study on migration should embrace both the costs and the benefits of migration. According to

Goldin and Reinert (2006), one of the main benefits of migration on the national/societal level is the cross-cultural experiences shared by countries involved. In a different light, this assertion suggests that all countries benefit from migration culturally speaking but tend to neglect the fact that most patterns of migration are only one-way in nature (meaning that there are countries that serve as only receiving countries of migrants and there are other countries that serve only as source countries of migrants). A typical example here is other African countries such as the DRC and Zimbabwe that serve as the source countries of migrants to receiving countries like South Africa. In this case, the receiving countries get more and more culturally enriched with cultures brought in by migrants from different source countries (Goldin & Reinert, 2006). On the other hand, migration offers migrants job opportunities and good wages which their home countries failed to offer them (Cohen, 2006). Hence, people get the motivation to migrate in order to get better jobs and better wages in countries where their skills are needed and valued most (Dobrowolsky & Tastsoglou, 2006). In this sense, Muniz (Undated) maintains that migrants save their families from economic hardship as they constantly send money home to support their families and dependants.

Countries benefit immensely economically from migrants in many different ways. For instance, migrants contribute in bringing down inflation and wages and also help in facilitating economic efficiency and growth (Muniz, Undated). A typical example here as noted by Muniz (Undated) is the American agricultural sector which largely depended on migrant workers/labour from neighbouring countries like Mexico for a good number of years. Because migrants are hired at a very cheap rate, this helps to bring down the cost of production which on the other hand controls and brings down inflation. However, the cost of this may be linked to the issue of xenophobia, where locals compete with migrants for available jobs and migrants being desperate for a means

of survival in their host countries, are forced to accept any wage offered by the employers. This explains the reasons for many xenophobic attacks that have happened in South Africa in the recent times and other similar experiences like stereotypes targeted against African migrants in South Africa. This may also explain how participants in this study being African migrants are positioned in school, and how they understand their positioning within the school space and place given negative stereotypes targeted against them as migrants by South Africans.

Generally speaking, benefits of migration on the host countries and on migrants themselves depend mainly on the qualification or level of education of the migrants (Cross & Omoluabi, 2006) and on the experiences migrants go through in their host or receiving countries. Cross and Omoluabi (2006), maintain that host countries benefit from well-qualified migrants, especially in skills that are in high demand. On the other hand, in terms of remittances, sending countries seem to benefit economically from migration but would experience costs in the form of the brain drain which leads to serious loss of capacities (Cross & Omoluabi, 2006). Also, the negative side of migration comes in a situation where migrants experience xenophobia, stereotype, and exclusion and sometimes harsh treatment in the hands of locals of their host countries, which they would not have experienced in their home countries.

## **3.2 CHILD MIGRATION IN AFRICA**

### **3.2.0 Introduction**

Most studies on migration and mobility mainly focus on adult migration. There has not been much discourse around the issue of child migration, especially in Africa. There is always the assumption that migration is synonymous with adult movement/mobility, particularly labour migration. On the other hand, children are regarded to be less mobile. Contrary to this notion is the fact that adult migration most times necessitates child migration especially when mothers are involved (Cortes, 2007; Edmonds & Salinger, 2007). Also, child migration is propelled by many of the same factors and processes that propel adult migration. Studies have shown that in Africa, children commonly migrate as part of independent or household livelihood strategies (Crush, Williams, & Peberdy, 2005). Whitehead, Hashim, and Iversen (2007), on the other hand, are of the view that child migration in Africa is caused by a number of factors such as family dysfunction: marital dissolution, poverty, cultural practices, etc. This section discusses the dynamics of child migration in Africa.

### **3.2.1 Child mobility and child trafficking in Africa**

Evidence from various literature on child migration and trafficking suggest that the trafficking of children is a dynamic phenomenon, which takes different forms of movement of children both across and within national borders. For instance, in the East African region, child trafficking is not

only transnational, but internal trafficking is also evident and endemic (Njuguna, 2010). Similarly, in Ghana, children between the ages of four and 17 were reported to have been rescued along Lake Volta after they had been trafficked from the country's Central, Eastern, Greater Accra, and Volta regions (Mitchell, 2011). Mitchell (2011) highlights that Ghana is noted as providing source, transit and destination areas for trafficking of women and children for prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation, as well as for domestic and commercial purposes. The majority of the children in Ghana who embark on migration, migrate voluntarily and often independently of their birth parents (Mitchell 2011). These voluntary migrant children, as in many other parts of Africa, move for a variety of reasons; many are motivated by economic factors which include searching for paid work (Punch, 2007). This might be the case with some of the migrant children from the DRC and Zimbabwe in South Africa who later found themselves in schools and classrooms in South Africa. Therefore, a better understanding of their schooling experiences and positioning within the school space and place in South Africa becomes important so as to improve their schooling experiences, and prevent them from possible child labour/abuse.

Child migration in Africa can be linked to imbalances in development levels between origin and destination areas and also by wide differences in the levels of household income and poverty (Alonso, 2011; Kwankye, Anarfi, & Tagoe, 2009). One can use Ghana as an instance in this case. Mitchell (2011) highlights that over the years, thousands of workers from Ghana's North migrate to the South to work in the mines, cocoa and timber sectors. This led to the North becoming a labour reserve for the South. Hence there has been more migration from the North to the South motivated by strong economic growth in the labour market in the South. Mitchell (2011) goes further to highlight that this migration trend which historically was associated with seasonal adult

labourers from the North has in the recent years been undertaken by younger children, and many of these child migrants are in some form of step migration, where they move from an initial destination to another.

### **3.2.2 Motivation and patterns of child migration in Africa**

Existing studies on child migration show that both boys and girls are involved in independent child migration, however, Mitchell (2011) argues that the term ‘independent migration’ is somehow misleading, as very few children migrate entirely independently of their family network. In the case of child migration in Africa, Mitchell (2011) highlights that studies on child migration indicate that parents and other family members living in rural households and elsewhere are often involved in the decision to migrate. However, in some cases many of these children migrate against the wishes of their family, sometimes leaving their households without the knowledge of their parents (Boabang, 2011; Mitchell, 2011). Child migration in Africa, as in many other parts of the world, mostly involves children who embark on migration as part of household strategies for economic survival, or independently, particularly when households are no longer considered to be economically viable, and or able to take care of children’s basic needs (Kanics, Hernandez, & Touzenis, 2010). One would argue at this point that child migration is sometimes employed by families as a way to cope with economic hardships. Child migration in Africa is driven by factors such as poverty, natural disasters, and harsh conditions caused by wars and different forms of social and political instabilities. Instances in this case are child emigration from the DRC and Zimbabwe as a result of hardship caused by wars and social and economic instabilities in both countries. According to Tamanja (2014), in Africa many children migrate unaccompanied by

parents or adult caregivers and do not necessarily migrate at the same time as adults, thus their migration pattern do not necessarily follow that of adults.

Children embark on migration both independently, as well as migrate with parents and adult caregivers when the entire households embark on migration (Boabang, 2011; Konseiga, 2008). One of the reasons for child migration in Africa as noted by Harris (2002) is that the home countries are no longer economically and socially conducive for them to live and function as children. Child migrants in some cases are accompanied by their parents or other family members, and on the other hand, unaccompanied child migrants seek better opportunities for good, safe and comfortable living in other countries (Mitchell, 2011). According to Harris (2002), many countries in Africa are undergoing severe economic, social and political crises, and as a result of this situation, citizens of these countries move to other countries where there are opportunities for better living and where the socio-political and socio-economic environments are more stable, suitable and conducive than conditions in their home countries.

Furthermore, Levitt (2004) maintains that high unemployment, poverty, war and natural disasters are among the main reasons children embark on migration to other countries. And Muniz (undated) is of the view that apart from running away from war and natural disasters, families in African countries see migration as a way of diversifying the source of their family's income. Similarly, family members migrate with their children to other countries with better economic stability, better job opportunities, better wages and greater safety Levitt (2004). This also accounts for the rise in the number of people; adults and children leaving their countries for other countries with the hope of getting better jobs and better education for children, receiving better wages and staying in a

safer environment (Muniz, undated). The aforementioned could be considered as one reason behind the migration of families and children from the DRC and Zimbabwe to South Africa.

### **3.2.3 Voluntary and involuntary child migration in Africa**

Child migration in Africa can be viewed from the perspectives of voluntary and involuntary child migration. Mitchell (2011) argues that voluntary migrant children move for a variety of reasons; many are motivated by economic factors, which include searching for paid work or training or schooling. Involuntary migrant children on the other hand are forced to leave their homes as a result of social or political instabilities in their home countries, regions or communities which usually result in conflicts and wars, or leave to stay away from the hazards of natural disasters (Mitchell, 2011). Furthermore, others are victims of child trafficking or forced migration by their parents for economic reasons Mitchell (2011), as highlighted above. One would therefore argue that many of involuntary child migrants in Africa, as in other continents of the world, do not decide their destination as they are not capable of making such decisions. In most cases circumstances necessitating their movement may not permit them to make such decisions themselves. For instance, in the case of those leaving their home countries for safety in times of war or natural disasters, their main aim for migrating is to find any place they consider safe. Likewise, for those who are victims of trafficking or forced migration by parents, their destination and purpose of migration are decided by those holding them hostage or their parents as the case may be (Mitchell, 2011).



Child mobility within African countries is mainly related to poverty, which often allows children to be subjected to unfair treatment and abuse (Thorsen, 2012). In many African countries, many children are victims of child trafficking and abduction where some of them have been taken from their homes to work as domestic workers, hawkers, vendors, mine, agricultural, manufacturing and industry workers (Ebigbo, 2003). Many also are forced or lured to work as prostitutes in big cities. In countries such as Togo where many children have been orphaned by HIV/AIDS related illnesses, some children as young as three years old are lured to leave their homes for the cities to become domestic or agricultural workers (Multinational Monitor, 2003). Similarly, Sengupta (2005) notes that in Sierra Leone, children from poor backgrounds are sometimes taken from their homes and are moved across the country to work in the mines. In Liberia children were moved from their homes and were in constant movement from one destination to another as the war escalated (Briggs, 2004). Tiefenbrun (2007) highlights similar movements in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Sudan where several children involuntarily left their homes and were forced to take up arms as child soldiers, many flee to neighbouring countries for safety. High levels of poverty in African countries have caused many children with poor backgrounds in countries like Angola and Kenya to take up prostitution as a means of survival Tiefenbrun (2007). This incidentally is accepted among some poor people in these countries as a normal means of livelihood, thus causing some parents to force their young females to migrate to the cities for economic reasons (Tiefenbrun, 2007).

Furthermore, in South Africa, many children are also victims of sexual exploitation, which can be commonly seen in big cities such as Johannesburg and Cape Town (Allais, 2006; Martens,

Pieczkowski & Vuuren-Smyth, 2003). This goes to suggest that many children from impoverished rural communities in South Africa arrive unaccompanied by any adult in urban centres and big cities where they are exposed to all forms of exploitations. Mitchell (2011) maintains that in some circumstances, child migration in Africa is pursued for a variety of non-economic factors, such as societal norms and values about immigration, marriage incentives, or the attainment of knowledge and status that often comes with being a child migrant.

### **3.3 EDUCATION AND MIGRATION**

#### **3.3.0 Introduction**

Education has been among the most dominant issues in migration discourses. Education and migration are seen as playing a vital role in development outcomes. Education is understood to have a positive impact on development, playing a life changing role in the lives of people by providing knowledge and information, skills, autonomy, freedom and confidence. Migration, on the other hand, has in the last decade been increasingly seen among scholars, donor governments and development organizations as holding some potential benefits for development. Theory and empirical evidence suggest a positive association between education and migration. The Human Capital theory suggests that education and migration are related investment decisions. Dustmann and Glitz (2011), are of the view that migration is the same as education as both are investments in the human agent. This section provides an insight into the relationship between education and migration by looking at issues such as the effect of migration on education and migrant children and education.

### **3.3.1 The effects of migration on education**

One important aspect of migration and development is the effect of migration on educational attainment. There is the general view that migration has the potential of positively or negatively affecting educational attainment of an individual, especially the child migrant (McKenzie & Rapoport, 2006). Several recent empirical studies have highlighted the potential for remittance transfers to increase the educational attainment of children in migrant families by alleviating credit constraints. McKenzie and Rapoport (2006) maintain that recent theoretical and empirical literature on the beneficial ‘brain drain’ or ‘brain gain’ suggest another channel through which migration can increase educational attainment. The basic idea here is that education has a high return when migrating, and so the prospect of migrating in the future raises the expected return to education, including higher domestic enrolment in schools.

On the other hand, studies have shown that migration of a family member may have a number of effects on child education. Parental absence as a result of migration may translate into less parental inputs into education acquisition and may also require remaining children to undertake housework or work to help meeting short-term labour and cash shortages (Hu, 2013). A study on the impacts of migration on educational attainment in rural Mexico by McKenzie and Rapoport (2006), shows evidence of a significant negative effect of migration on schooling attendance and attainment of 12 to 18 year-old boys and 16 to 18 year-old girls. The study reveals that living in a migrant household lowers the chances of boys completing junior high school and of boys and girls completing high school. Similarly, a study conducted by Lu and Treiman (2007), on the effect of

labour migration and remittances on children's education among blacks in South Africa finds that the disruption of family life and the loss of parental attention and discipline resulting from the absence of a parent may hinder children's performance in school. Also, Chaaban and Mansour (2012) are of the view that the negative impact of migration on educational attainment resides in the fact that migration returns are sometimes higher than the returns from investing in schooling and higher education degrees. This therefore entails negative consequences for educational attainment. They further argue that, in effect, individuals, especially young people, might opt to migrate after school in order to send back remittances to their families as soon as possible, and thus will choose to forgo higher education.

According to Amuedo-Dorentes & Pozo (2010), migration in and of itself may induce changes in the schooling of remaining children in many ways. These may be in the form of children engaging in market activities to replace the household's lost income, leaving less time to devote to their studies, skipping or even quitting school in order to do necessary household chores that the absent migrant no longer attends to, or take care of younger children or elderly family member, and devote less time to study if they are expecting to follow their family member/s and migrate in the future (Amuedo-Dorentes & Pozo, 2010). Furthermore, Whitehead et al. (2007), note that studies tend to establish that child migrants have not attended school or are not able to attend school where they are migrants. In line with this, findings from this study suggest that some migrant children in South Africa are out of school as the participants' narratives reveal the difficulty migrant children encounter in getting into school in South Africa. One would argue that many migrant children in South Africa may have given up education as a result of their social positioning as migrants. In

line with this, Amuedo-Dorentes and Pozo (2010) argue that migration can create impediments for education.

### **3.3.2 Migrant children and education**

Despite recognition of the importance of providing education to migrant children, challenges remain in its implementation in terms of access, costs and quality of education (Glind, 2010). It is important that migrant children have access to education irrespective of their status. Without such access, they will likely spend time on the street and are at risk of child labour. Glind (2010) highlights that governments of many countries have come up with strategies and policies that would accommodate the education needs of migrant children. The international and domestic laws of most nations today, of which South Africa is one, endorse the right of children to basic education. Also, the rights of the child as stipulated by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child state clearly that all children have the right to education including respect for the child's parents, respect for his or her own cultural identity and the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society (Adams, 2008). It therefore becomes important for every country to offer children, both local and migrant, opportunities to good education and training. This will enable them to fit into society in the future as adults and to contribute meaningfully to the global economy. To achieve this goal, Adams (2008) highlights the need for host countries to come up with policies which would ensure the enrolment of migrant children into schools, but should as well include explicit provision for practical issues such as assistance with learning the language of the host countries, appropriate assessment of the migrant children's needs and protection from any

form of discrimination. What this therefore means is that migrant children should be properly included into the school system through measures that promote inclusion and diversity.

The aim of the inclusive system of education in South Africa, for example, is to ensure that every child has access to quality education and to eliminate all forms of discrimination and limitations in the school system (Lazarus et al., 1999). The effect of this on the education of migrant children is that when properly put into practice, migrant children should have the same opportunities as the locals in terms of having access to quality education without any form of discrimination and limitation based on nationality, cultural or language backgrounds. I understand inclusion here to suggest measures that would enhance and enable all learners from different backgrounds and of all learning abilities to participate in the learning process. This means that materials for learning such as test materials, curricula, teaching styles and practices should be geared towards accommodating learners from diverse backgrounds.

On a similar note, countries such as New Zealand and the United States of America, as noted by Adams (2008), have taken actions which are helpful to newly arrived migrant children in their countries. These actions are in the form of programmes designed to enable migrant children to learn the language of instruction in schools while they still retain their native languages. On the contrary, findings in this study suggest that migrant children in schools in South Africa do not receive necessary support from schools and from the Department of Education to enable them overcome the challenges such as language barrier they encounter at school. Therefore, host countries of migrant children such as South Africa should come up with similar programmes as in New Zealand and the United States of America to enable migrant children in their countries to

have access to quality education without any form of discrimination and limitation. In line with this, Adams (2008) further maintains that in relation to the education of migrant children, host countries of migrant children should address issues related to language learning, teacher training, and appropriate curriculum and instructional materials that would accommodate the learning needs of the migrant children in schools. I would further add to the above mentioned that there is also the need for teachers to develop inclusive teaching practices and methods to accommodate the learning needs of migrant children with diverse backgrounds.

### **3.3.3 Academic performance of migrant children**

Studies on the academic performance of migrant children in their destination countries or communities found that migrant children of Asian and Indian origin in the United Kingdom tend to be overachievers in school (Heckmann, 2008). In comparing their performance to that of their local counterparts, studies show that they perform better than most their local counterparts (Heckmann, 2008). The question therefore becomes, why migrant children in some destination countries or communities perform outstandingly academically, while other migrant learners in some other destination countries or communities do not? One would argue that social and economic contexts and situations matter a lot to the academic performance of migrant children. Also, educational systems, policies, curriculum, proficiency in the use of the language of instruction/learning in schools, as well as teaching and learning styles and methods also contribute to the academic performance of the migrant children in schools in the country or community of destination. There may still be other factors that contribute to the performance or underperformance of migrant children in schools in their countries or communities of destination.

In relation to the above, a comparison of academic performances of Chinese and Afghani migrant children in Hungary shows that Chinese migrant children do better than Afghani migrant children due to factors such as differences in social and economic positions or statuses of Chinese migrants and Afghani migrants (Pulay, 2006). Pulay (2006) notes that Chinese migrants in Hungary are better placed socially and economically than the Afghan migrants. This is because of the social status of the Afghan migrants as refugees. As a result, children from the Afghan families attend public schools where they experience negative attitudes from their Hungarian counterparts. This may be similar in the way African migrant children experience schooling in South Africa given the way they may be positioned in school as ‘migrants’ and as the ‘other’ within the school space and place. On the other hand, Chinese children attend international schools with developed strategies for checking and easing xenophobic tendencies among learners in school by enabling the presentation of students’ diverse cultures throughout the school (Pulay, 2006).

Suarez-Orozco, Rhodes, and Milburn (2009) argue that a key factor in enhancing the academic performance of students is academic self-efficacy. This is a belief that one is competent and in control of his/her learning. Suarez-Orozco, Rhodes and Milburn (2009) further argue that higher academic self-efficacy as well as relational and academic engagement in turn leads to higher academic performance. Also, proficiency in the use of language of instruction affects a student’s academic success. In this sense, the ability to extract meaning from written text and to argue a point either verbally or in essay are essential for high levels of academic attainment (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2009). On the contrary, inability to use the language of instruction in school is among the major barriers migrants encounter in their schooling experiences. In agreement with Suarez-



Orozco et al., Rhodes and Milburn (2009) state that there is a need that migrant children be proficient in the use of the language of instruction in school if they are to achieve academically. Hence, any programme geared towards integrating migrant children in the learning process should first start with programmes that would enable them to master the use of language of instruction in school.

In addition, Reynolds (2008), is of the view that the education of migrant children in schools is difficult as a result of an “endemic” dilemma between “community” and “difference”. She highlighted that over the past five decades the British government has come up with education policies geared towards addressing this dilemma in the forms of promoting assimilation and integration in the 1960s and 1970s, to a multicultural model and ideas of antiracism in the 1980s, and presently settling with the idea of “inclusive education”. One would argue at this point that, contrary to Reynold’s suggestion that migrant children should be recognized as a specific group in schools, should it rather not be the case that the idea of social integration is to be achieved through the school system? This will otherwise create an unhealthy social situation where migrant children may be discriminated against, which does not promote the spirit of integration. Instead the recognition of migrant children as a specific group could be targeted towards tackling the issues of stereotyping, social exclusion and xenophobia in schools. The implication for this study of the literature on academic achievement is that various factors may impede or facilitate academic performance of migrant children schools in South Africa. The literature itself does not clearly predict either success or failure in schools, or what the attitudes towards education amongst the migrant children will be. In this sense, attention should be given to understand how migrant

children in South Africa experience schooling and what factors may impede or facilitate their academic performance in South African schools.

Moreover, given the importance of education in shaping human capital formation, social participation, citizenship competencies, and contribution to social equality, education has attracted the attention of scholars and policy makers, and has increasingly been studied by scholars to understand the impact of migration on education and for migrant sending communities. As in other areas of inquiry on the effects of migration, there is yet no agreement on how migration shapes educational opportunities as some scholars in their studies have shown the positive effects of migration on education, while others have shown the negative effects of migration on education, and yet other scholars in their studies have come up with mixed findings. This goes to suggest or even affirm that inasmuch as migration benefits migrant households, mostly in the form of receiving remittances which may offer children from migrant families the opportunity to perform well and potentially attain greater amounts of schooling as highlighted above, on the other hand studies have shown that migration does also have negative impacts on child educational performance and attainment.

### **3.4 EXPERIENCES OF AFRICAN MIGRANT CHILDREN IN SOUTH AFRICA**

#### **3.4.0 Introduction**

The first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994 introduced a new democracy that has been considered and praised as a smooth transition from apartheid to democracy. The multiracial

dispensation that replaced apartheid has progressively addressed the country's legacy of a racially divided past: discrimination has been criminalized, affirmative action policies are in place, and the new constitution is regarded to be more progressive in comparison to many other democratic states in the world (Katiyatiya, 2014). Nevertheless, in South Africa today, there exist widespread discriminatory attitudes and practices which manifest themselves not just in historically familiar divisions but in new dimensions of identity-based violence towards foreigners. This section focuses on the experiences of migrants in South Africa, with particular attention on African migrant children in South Africa.

### **3.4.1 African migrants' experiences of xenophobia in South Africa**

Xenophobia and related intolerance have continued to increase in South Africa. Issues relating to educational opportunities, access to services, disparate economic status, autonomy and migration are among the manifestations of xenophobia in South Africa (Osman, 2009). According to Rudolf (2012) xenophobia is an intense dislike or fear of strangers or people from other countries and cultures. Tafira (2011) sees xenophobia as the fear of foreigners or strangers. Xenophobia entails attitudes, prejudices and behaviour that reject, exclude and often vilify persons, based on the perception that they are outsiders or foreigners to the community, society or national identity (Adjai & Lazaridis, 2013). Hirshleifer (2007), is of the view that xenophobia on a political level is about the denial of social rights and entitlements to various resources to strangers or perceived strangers. Similarly, on the social level xenophobia is an internalized perception about foreigners with the notion that they do not belong to the "us" (the "in group" and the "out group" notion; the "them" and the "us") which results in social insecurity.

Harris (2002) notes that in South Africa most African migrants are victims of xenophobia and xenophobic violence and stereotyping. Although Nyamnjoh (2010) highlights that attitudes towards African migrants vary across South Africa's socio-economic and ethnic spectrum, Marcos (2010) is of the view that xenophobia in South African context is not just an attitude, it is an activity, a violent practice that results in bodily harm and damage. There is strong evidence that African migrants living, working and schooling in South Africa face physical violence at the hands of the locals. The reasons for this vary and include fear of economic competition and a belief that foreigners are inherently criminals and a drain on public resources (Landau, Ramja-than-Keogh, & Sing, 2005).

Furthermore, Landau et al. (2005) are of the view that migrants have also been made the scapegoats used to justify the shortcomings of elected leaders, and this has resulted in non-nationals, especially African migrants, facing disproportionate difficulties in accessing education, employment, accommodation, banking services, and health care. Various forms of discriminations and violence against African migrants in South Africa have also legitimised extortion, corruption, and the arbitrary arrest and detention of suspected non-nationals from other African countries (Patel, 2013). Adjai and Lazaridis (2013) maintain that over the past decade, incidents of violence and discrimination against foreigners, especially foreigners from other African countries, have increased dramatically. An instance here is a number of recent violent attacks targeted mostly at African migrants in Gauteng and Durban in KwaZulu-Natal provinces in April 2015.

Violence towards African nationals in South Africa is nothing new, as there have been consistent attacks on African migrants in South Africa ranging from verbal abuse to physical assaults and murders. Adjai and Lazaridis (2013) highlight that a prominent feature of xenophobic attacks in South Africa is that foreign nationals targeted in these cases are foreigners from other African countries with those from other continents being excluded. Furthermore, the culture of xenophobia targeted at African migrants in South Africa is also deeply embedded in the school cultural geographies (Harris, 2002). The implication is that, this perhaps in uncertain ways affects and shapes the schooling experiences and education and lives of the African migrant children in South African schools and classrooms.

### **3.4.2 Understanding the dynamics of xenophobic attacks on African migrants in South Africa**

Studies show that one of the identifiable motivations for xenophobic attacks on African migrants in South Africa among others things is the perception amongst most South Africans that African nationals in South Africa steal their jobs, and this perception coincides with the increase in unemployment. Harris (2002) uses the scapegoating hypothesis, the isolation hypothesis, and the bio-cultural hypothesis to throw light on the African migrants' experiences of xenophobia in South Africa. In her scapegoating hypothesis, Harris (2002) argues that migrants' experiences of xenophobia can be linked to competition with citizens of the host countries over limited resources for better living, such as housing, education, job availability and health care. She further maintains

that, for this reason migrants are seen by locals as constituting a big threat with regards to competing with them for resources.

Harris also highlights that due to lack of jobs, good food, housing, health care etc., citizens of host countries find themselves in frustrating situations, and levy their frustration on migrants. . This it is the case in South Africa, where African migrants are constantly accused by South Africans of stealing their jobs. As a result, the locals direct their anger of frustration on migrants and blame them for their poverty and every other social and economic abnormality. Harris (2002) goes further to maintain that locals of host countries see migrants as being a liability to their countries, suggesting or creating an impression that migrants only consume or benefit from the host countries without making any reasonable input to the well-being of their host countries. This may be true in the way the participants in this study experience xenophobia as migrants themselves. In this sense, the participants may be seen and accused by their local counterparts in school of denying them available spaces and resources in school and benefitting from the limited resources provided in school. As a result, the participants may experience hostility and mistreatment from the locals in school.

Furthermore, Harris (2002) also uses the notion of isolation and the bio-cultural hypothesis to further explain the African migrants' experiences of xenophobia in South Africa. She maintains that the isolation hypothesis of xenophobia places foreignness at the heart of hostility towards migrants. The isolation hypothesis understands xenophobia in South Africa as an after-effect of apartheid in South Africa, which prevents South Africa and South Africans from interacting with the rest of the international community. The apartheid regime prevented South Africans from

having contacts with people outside South African borders (Morris 1998). In this light, foreigners become the unknown to South Africans.

Also, long international isolation from the rest of the international community resulted in mistrust and hostility towards strangers in South Africa and impacted on the ability of South Africans to be tolerant of cultural and ideological differences (Harris, 2002). As a result, it becomes difficult for South Africans to accommodate and tolerate difference (Morris, 1998). In this sense, they see difference as threatening and dangerous. Xenophobia therefore is as a result of the perception by South Africans of migrants in South Africa as being and different (Harris, 2002).

The isolation and scapegoating hypotheses for xenophobia only give us a general idea why xenophobia happen in South Africa. In the scapegoating hypothesis, foreigners are considered or seen as scapegoats for social ills, and the difference (or foreignness) engendered by foreigners accounts for violence and hostility (Harris, 2002). In both theories of scapegoating and isolation, foreigners are seen and treated as consisting of one group. The bio-cultural hypothesis explains why this is so. The bio-cultural hypothesis explains that African migrants are always targets and victims of xenophobia as a result of the level of visible difference or otherness in terms of physical, biological factors and cultural differences they exhibit (Harris, 2002). According to Harris, the inability of African migrants to speak South African native languages and their physical appearance may result in their being easily noticed. These biological and physical signifiers reveal the foreignness of the African foreigners and their differences from the locals. As signifiers, these features play a common and important part in igniting xenophobic actions (Harris, 2002).

If migrants are socially constructed by the nationals as the 'other' (the out group), and taken to be foreign, they suffer isolation. Hence, the foreignness of migrants puts them at risk of facing violence and hostility from the locals (Harris, 2002); this is so because locals of many host countries fail to understand migrants in their countries and also refuse to allow any foreign cultures and identities in their midst. Stereotypes that carry negative social constructs about migrants entrench this. Since they are seen in a negative social light, they cannot be considered and categorised as the 'in-group' by the locals who position themselves as such.

Again, Harris' isolation and bio-cultural hypothesis may as well be true in the way the participants in this study experience schooling in South Africa being African migrants themselves. Harris' isolation hypothesis may suggest that migrant learners may experience xenophobic tendencies towards them as a result of negative ideas about migrants being the 'unknown' group in school. This may result in migrant learners being misunderstood, misjudged and mistreated by teachers and learners and, failure of teachers and learners to accommodate them in school. Also, in line with Harris' bio-cultural hypothesis, one would argue that the inability of migrant learners to speak local languages and the differences between their cultures and value systems on one hand on those of their local counterparts on the other may lead to experiences of xenophobia and the resultant mistreatment in school from their local counterparts. This because the locals in school like any other South African would construct migrants in school as the 'other'.



### **3.4.3 Being an African migrant in South Africa and experiences of exclusion**

Migrants normally suffer exclusion from important aspects of societal life. Fukuyama (2007) notes that host communities and countries exclude migrants by constantly limiting the rights of migrants. In line with this, Bangura (2001) and Harris (2002) maintain that African migrants in South Africa suffer all degrees of exclusion, discrimination, xenophobic attacks and stereotypes. The participants in this study, being African migrants in South Africa, may well be facing these same challenges. Crush et al. (2005), maintains that immigration laws and policies are used to further perpetuate migrants' exclusion and denial of vital opportunities. Similarly, in some countries, immigration laws and policies put migrants in difficult situations by denying them basic rights and opportunities. In South Africa, the situation is not different. CoRMSA (2008) notes that apart from xenophobic attacks and stereotypes, migrants are still confronted with discrimination and limitations as a result of immigration documentations. Many migrants in South Africa are unemployed as result of immigration policies and documentations (CoRMSA, 2008).

CoRMSA (2008) further maintains that many migrant children in South Africa face discrimination and limitations in getting enrolled in school and in accessing other social facilities, and where enrolled in school, they still face other forms of discrimination such as denial of school fees exemption, and sometimes may not be allowed to write Matric examinations as a result of not possessing the South African Identity Document. One would argue at this point that such discrimination and limitations experienced by migrants in South Africa limit their socio-psychological freedom.

As xenophobia is characterised by negative attitudes towards foreigners, prejudice against African migrants in South Africa prevents social unity and the freedom of migrants (Bangura, 2001; Harris, 2002). Xenophobic behaviour against migrants in South Africa is demonstrated in many ways including the mass media, verbal attacks and physical violence (Harris, 2001). Harris (2001) also is of the view that African migrants in South Africa are sometimes negatively labelled and are connected with crime, poverty, unemployment and illegality. What this suggests is that these migrants are seen and treated as outcasts by the locals. Because of hostility, fear and hatred shown by the locals, African migrants constantly live their lives under tension, fear and psycho-emotional depression (Crush, 2005).

Furthermore, Harris (2001) highlights that most criminal activities such as bank robbery and home robbery are linked in popular stereotype to migrants of African origin, even when there is no concrete and substantial evidence to prove that they are responsible for these criminal activities. Migrants of African origin are always the targets of arrest by the law enforcement agents as a result of the common view by South Africans that they are responsible for criminal activities in the country Harris (2001). In addition, Crush and McDonald (2001) maintain that criminals capitalize on the negative labelling of African migrants in South Africa to perpetuate their activities, knowing fully well that African migrants are always accused of any crime committed. Such stereotyping contributes to negative social and personal identities, sense of insecurity and exclusion experiences by African migrants in South Africa. Similarly, Adams (2008) notes that many African migrant families in South Africa encounter varying degrees of bias, racism, rejection, and stereotypes from the locals. This treatment affects the emotional and psychological well-being of these migrants.

CoRMSA (2008) also notes that such treatment makes it difficult for migrant children to develop a positive personal identity. Thus, whether the participants in this study undergo similar experiences in their schools as part of their schooling experience in South Africa is a question that arises in this study as it may affect the way they relate with others as well as their performances at school.

#### **3.4.4 Migrant children and inclusion in South African education system**

With the completion of policy and development by the National Commission on Special Education (NCSNET) and National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS) in 1997, the idea of inclusion and diversity in South African schools and classrooms reached an advanced stage (Naicker, 1999). This therefore implies that schools and classrooms in the country are expected to be accommodative enough to cater for diverse learner populations in schools and classrooms in South Africa (Parker et al., 2001). In line with this Lazarus et al. (1999), also maintain that the main purpose of building an inclusive school is for the development of an inclusive society where everyone in the society can function properly and actualize their potentials and participate optimally, and where respect and value for diversity and social integration are encouraged and valued. This therefore implies that issues of race, culture, gender and nationality (country of origin) should cease to be hindering factors to accessibility of sound and quality education in South Africa. If this should be the case, migrant children in South Africa should have access to sound education no matter their national and social identities as migrants. It then becomes critical that all children within the borders of South Africa be provided education irrespective of gender, religion, language, country of origin and so on. Unfortunately, severe obstacles remain for migrant children

to access education in South Africa (CoRMSA, 2009) as already highlighted above. This unfortunately may have negative consequences for both the migrant children and the society as frustrated and desperate migrant children may turn to what they perhaps consider as alternative ways of survival (Foubister, 2011).

It will be important at this point to have a good look at socio-economic, cultural and psychological factors that may define the way migrant children especially African migrant children live and function in South Africa. Ferguson (undated) maintains that migrants usually feel unsafe and psychologically depressed when they are negatively labelled by citizens of their host communities. This is particularly true of children. Harris (2002), in line with this, argues that discriminations, violence and xenophobic tendencies targeted against migrants in many of the host countries limit their socio-psychological freedom in these countries, and migrant children are not exceptions. Negative assumptions and stereotypes about migrants perhaps mean social exclusion both at school for the migrant children and outside school, nullifying their chances of living fulfilled social and academic lives, and undermine their academic achievement at school. I would further add here that the ongoing hostility defeats the aims and objectives of the idea of maintaining an inclusive society through an inclusive schooling agenda as mentioned above.

The idea behind building an inclusive school in South Africa is to develop and maintain an inclusive society, a society which will create an enabling social, psychological and cultural environment for all to participate and function properly, irrespective of the person's country of origin and identity (Lazarus et al., 1999). This is in line with the principle of diversity which in turn can be regarded as the foundation for furthering the development of an inclusive society. This

also goes to suggest that migrant children in South Africa should not experience schooling differently from their South African counterparts. It is therefore important to link the principle of diversity to that of social integration in order to promote the spirit of unity in diversity.

### **3.5 CONCLUSION**

This chapter presented a review of relevant literature on issues on migration, experiences of migrant children in their host countries/communities, and migrant children in South Africa. The aim is to create a clear understanding of issues around migration, the challenges migrants encounter in their host countries, and the issues around being migrants/African migrants, and migrants' education in South Africa. The next chapter presents an overview of theories of migration.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **OVERVIEW OF THEORIES OF MIGRATION**

#### **4.0 INTRODUCTION**

The field of migration is multidimensional and the diversity of migration experiences makes it difficult to come to settle on one generally acceptable theory and conceptualization of migration. Kurekova (2011) highlights that four different questions have been investigated in the field of migration; they are the origins of migration; the directionality and continuity of migrant flow; the utilization of immigrant labour; and the socio-cultural adaptation of migrants. Analysis of each of these different areas can be done by different tools and requires individual attention. However, a variety of theoretical models or perspective are currently in place which employ varying concepts, assumptions, frames and levels of analysis (Kurekova, 2011). This chapter is an extension of literature review in this study on issues around migrants and immigration. It is important to note here that this chapter is not the theoretical framework of this study. It presents an overview of theories of migration which enables a better understanding of the causes of migration as elaborated by the theories.

#### 4.1 NEOCLASSICAL THEORY OF MIGRATION

One of the dominant theories in explaining causes of migration is the neoclassical theory with its underlying assumption that migration is stimulated primarily by rational economic considerations of relative benefits and costs, mostly financial but also psychological (Kurekova, 2011). This theory assumes that movement is motivated by the desire for individual income maximization, based on rational comparison of the relative costs and benefits of remaining at home or moving (Castles, 2010).

The neoclassical theory understands migration to be driven by differences in returns to labour across markets. Harris and Todaro (1970), Lewis (1954) and (Hicks, 1932) originally developed the most basic models to explain migration in the process of economic development. They highlighted that migration results from actual wage differential across markets or countries that emerge from heterogeneous degrees of labour market tightness. According to neoclassical theory, migration is driven by geographic differences in labour supply and demand and the resulting differentials in wages between labour-rich and capital rich countries (King, 2012; Kurekova, 2011). The central argument of the neoclassical approach focuses on wages; under the assumption of full employment, it predicts a linear relationship between wage differentials and migration flow. This extended neoclassical model holds that migration is determined by expected rather than actual earnings and the key variable is earnings weighted by the possibility of employment.

On the other hand, while the neoclassical theory of migration is considered rigorous, it has at the same time been subjected to what Kurekova (2011) describes as a conceptual critique and rich empirical testing. The theory fails to account for actual migration experiences as its narrow focus on income maximization and its assumption of rational economic decision-making based on full information have little to do with the reality of most migrant flows (Castles, 2010). For this reason, neoclassical methodological individualism has been subjected to criticism on conceptual as well as empirical grounds. Close to neoclassical theory is the push-pull framework which according to Bauer and Zimmermann (1999) continues to emphasize the economic context of the flow of workers. Push-pull factors introduce relational aspects into thinking about migration and compose dyadic frames in which migration flows are studied empirically (Kurekova, 2011). Push and pull factors are largely a mirror-image of each other, and the framework has been criticised for its inability to determine dominant factors (Kurekova, 2011).

#### **4.2 THE NEW ECONOMICS OF MIGRATION THEORY (NEM)**

The new economics of migration (NEM) emerged as a challenge to the assumptions of the neoclassical approach. The new economics of migration theory offers what Stark (1991) describes as a new level of analysis and a focus on different migration determinants, shifting the focus of migration research from individual independence to mutual interdependence. The cardinal point of the new economics of migration argument is that migration decisions are made not by isolated individual actors but typically by families or households, and decisions of migration are influenced by a comprehensive set of factors which are shaped by conditions in the home country (Kurekova,



2011). Thus, migrant decisions are not based purely on individual utility-maximizing calculations but are rather a household response to both income risk and to failures of a variety of markets such as labour market, credit market, or insurance market (Kurekova, 2011).

Furthermore, remittances, according to Taylor (1999), play a valuable and fundamental part in the new economics of migration research as they directly support the concept of household interconnectedness and the diversification of risk while analytically connecting the empirical study of the causes and consequences of migration. The new economics of migration (NEM) theory has been criticized for its limited applicability due to difficulties in isolating the effects of market imperfections and risks from other income and employment variables, though it has been able to analyse in parallel the determinants and effects of migration. And again, Kurekova (2011) states that NEM theory has also been criticised for ignoring dynamics in and within households such as gender roles, and for being extremely concerned about the future.

#### **4.3 THE HUMAN CAPITAL THEORY OF MIGRATION**

The human capital theory is another theory developed to explain and understand migration processes. The human capital theory was introduced by Sjaadstad (1962). This theory enriches the neoclassical framework by incorporating the socio-demographic characteristics of the individual as an important determinant of migration at the micro-level. Kurokova (2011) is of the view that at the centre of such analysis is a rational individual who migrates with the goal of maximizing his or her benefits and gains. Hence, human capital endowments, skills, age, marital status, gender,

occupation, and labour market status as well as preferences and expectations strongly affect who migrates and who does not.

The human capital theory holds that migrants tend to be relatively skilled as it increases their chances of succeeding in their receiving countries. This assumption was investigated in the United States labour market by Borjas (1987). He analysed in particular the relationship between the income distribution and skills of migrants, and found out that immigrants from countries with a higher income inequality tend to be less skilled than the average worker in both host and source countries. He was of the opinion that differences in earning outcomes of immigrants with the same measurable skills but from different home countries are due to variations in political and economic conditions in the countries of origin at the time of migration. However human capital theory has been criticized for presenting an overly optimistic view of migration which is not always a voluntary process to maximize gains.

#### **4.4 THE WORLD SYSTEMS THEORY OF MIGRATION**

The world systems theory is another approach in understanding migration process. This theory links the determinants of migration to structural change in the world market and views migration as a function of globalization, increased interdependence of economies and the emergence of new forms of production (Kurekova, 2011). Kurekova (2011) argues that the expansion of export manufacturing and export agriculture linked strongly to foreign direct investment drifts from advanced economies to semi-developed or developing economies have led to a disruption in traditional work structures and have mobilized new population segments into regional as well as

long distance migration. Therefore movement of capital becomes a very important factor for the world system.

World systems theory presents capital and labour mobility as interlinked. Where migration is a natural outgrowth of the disruptions and dislocations that inevitably occur in capitalist development and can be observed historically, world systems theory brings in global political and economic inequalities (Kurekova, 2011). However, due to its extremely descriptive nature and difficulty in setting testable hypotheses and the character of the assumptions of this theory, its perspective has been lost in the international migration study (Kurekova, 2011).

#### **4.5 THE DUAL LABOUR MARKET THEORY OF MIGRATION**

The dual labour market theory of migration was developed by Piore (1981). Massey et al. (1993) see dual labour market theory as linking migration to structural changes in the economy but explains migration dynamics with the demand side. Kurekova (2011) argues that dual labour market theory suggests a separated occupational structure and a dual pattern of economic organization in advanced economies. Kurekova further maintains that duality unfolds along the line of two types of organizations in the economy, namely capitalist-intensive where both skilled and unskilled labour are utilized, and labour intensive where unskilled labour prevails. The dual labour market theory argues that migration is driven by the conditions of labour rather than by supply. Kurekova (2011) states that the character of the economy in advanced countries creates a demand for low-skilled jobs which local workers refuse to take up due to status and other similar reasons.

As immigration becomes desirable and necessary to fill the jobs, policy choices in the form of active recruitment efforts follow the needs of the market. The theory excludes sending countries and overemphasises formal recruitment practices. It is also not able to account for different immigration rates in countries with similar economic structures. And on the other hand, the theory provides a brilliant explanation for the coexistence of chronic labour demand for foreign nationals alongside structural unemployment in receiving countries.

#### **4.6 THE NETWORK THEORY OF MIGRATION**

The network theory is another theory developed to understand migration processes. The network theory of migration does not look at the determinants which ignite migration but rather at what sustains and perpetuates migration in time and space (Kurekova, 2011). Kurekova (2011) is of the opinion that migrant networks which often evolve into institutional frameworks help to explain why migration continues even when wage differentials or recruitment policies cease to exist. Kurokova further argues that the existence of a diaspora or networks is likely to influence the decisions of migrants when they choose their destinations.

The above is true of the participants in this study as their choice of South Africa as a destination country was made based on their already existing network in South Africa before their arrival. Many of their family members and friends were already in South Africa before they arrived. The network theory further helps to explain the reasons why migration patterns are not evenly distributed across countries, but rather how they tend to form what Faist (2000) refers to as

migration regimes. Network theory is closely linked to another approach in understanding migration process, known as migration systems theory.

#### **4.7 THE MIGRATION SYSTEMS THEORY OF MIGRATION**

Migration systems theory was founded by Mabogunje (1970). The main assumption of this theory is that migration alters the social, cultural and institutional conditions at both the sending and receiving ends, and forms an entire developmental space within which migration processes operate (Kurekova, 2011). Migration systems theory is based on geography, while migration network theory on the other hand is founded on sociological and anthropological origins. Furthermore, whereas network theory mainly focuses on the vital role of personal relationships between migrants and non-migrants, migration systems theory goes on to stress that migration restructures the entire societal and developmental context of the concrete spaces in which it takes place, both at the sending and receiving ends, and suggests that migratory movements arise in response to the prior existence of links between sending and receiving states, such as colonial ties, trade or investment flows (Kurekova, 2011).

Similar to the migration systems theory conceptually is the concept of cumulative causation propounded by Myrdal and developed further by Massey. The central argument of this approach is that migration is a self-perpetuating and self-sustaining phenomenon. It goes further to identify networks rooted in the culture of migration, and a perverse distribution of human capital and stigmatization of jobs generally taken up and done by migrants as factors that contribute to this very dynamic (Kurekova, 2011). Inasmuch as both the migration systems theory and the concept

of cumulative causation explain why migration perpetuates, they on the other hand give very little insight into mechanisms that undermine migration.

#### **4.8 THE TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION THEORY OF MIGRATION**

In the light of the present rapid globalization of the last two decades, both the concepts of migration systems and cumulative causation have been developed and metamorphosed into the theory of transnational migration which conceptualises the existence of transnational social space. Kurekova (2011) maintains that rather than explaining the causes of migration, transnational migration theory describes a new reality in the way of migrating and integrating into the host societies by proposing an emergency of dense networks across political borders created by migrants in search of economic and social advancement. The concepts of transnational migration have important implications for understanding forms of adaptation among transnational migrants as well as the effects of migration on sending and receiving countries.

#### **4.9 CONCLUSION**

This chapter presented an overview of theories of migration which enabled better understanding of the motivations, as well as past and present migration trends. The theories of migration as discussed above all point to the fact that migration of human populations is generally recognized as an integral part of the process of social and economic development of both individuals and communities. The concept of migration is commonly understood to mean the movement of people from one geographical point to another, driven by socio-economic, environmental, political and

cultural reasons (Pries, 2006). Muniz, Li and Schleicher (2010) are of the view that migration especially as it is today is a strong expression of spatial flows, which not only gives life and energy to the dynamic global economy but also brings changes in demography, societies, and cultures.

The primary purpose of migration is to overcome adversity, and to provide an opportunity to access a better life. In recent years, migration has been facilitated by improvement in transportation systems and easy access to information and communication. Migration is also stimulated by large economic and social inequalities in the world. As a result, people are increasingly moving across national borders in an effort to improve their well-being and that of their immediate families and relatives.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **THEORISING MIGRANT LEARNERS' SCHOOLING EXPERIENCES**

#### **5.0 INTRODUCTION**

This study's paradigm is located within social constructionism. The New Sociology of Childhood and Children's Geographies underpin the theoretical framework of this study. The study paradigm and theoretical framework enabled an entry into understanding migrant learners schooling experiences in South Africa through a deconstruction of the construction of migrant learners' social position in the school social and cultural landscape in South Africa; their understanding of school place and space. I employed the New Sociology of Childhood and Children's Geographies as the theoretical framework of this study given what the study aimed to achieve, and the scope it has covered. I therefore considered the theoretical framework and the study paradigm appropriate to unpack the phenomenon under the lens.

In this chapter I present the study paradigm and the theoretical framework of the study. Also the following sub-topics under childhood studies are discussed in this chapter: children as active participants, the geographies of children within schooling contexts, schools as spaces and places for promoting social diversity, schools as spaces and places for perpetuating social injustice, and lastly social justice, migrant children and South African education system. The relevance of the theoretical framework to the study is also presented to show how the theory is relevant to the study.



## **5.1 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM**

### **5.1.1 Origin and philosophical assumption of social constructionism**

Social constructionism originated as an attempt to come to terms with the nature of reality. It became prominent in the United States of America with Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's 1966 book "The Social Construction of Reality." Their contention in this book is that all knowledge is derived from and maintained by social interactions. In other words, a shared understanding in the perceptions and common knowledge of reality are reinforced as people interact. Berger and Luckmann (1991) maintain that through negotiation of common understanding of knowledge by people, typifications, significations and institutions become represented as part of an objective reality. Berger and Luckmann's social constructionism has its roots in phenomenology, in how the social conventions, perceptions and knowledge in everyday life are constructed.

What is central in the constructionist approach is its concern with examining the relationship with reality by trying to understand the constructive processes involved (Flick, 2009). According to Gergen (1994) the terms and forms by which we achieve understanding of the world and ourselves are social artefacts, products of historically and culturally situated interchange among people. It is through this process of social interchange that knowledge is constructed (Flick, 2009). Social constructionism argues that the ways in which we commonly understand the world, the categories and concepts we use, are historically and culturally specific (Clarke, 2011). Burr (2015) is of the

opinion that whether one understands the world in terms of men and women, children and adults, urban life and rural life etc., depends upon where and when in the world one lives. Thus, the question becomes, if our knowledge of the world, our common ways of understanding it is not derived from the nature of the world as really is, where does it come from? The social constructionist answer is that people construct it between them. Burr (2015) therefore maintains that it is through daily interactions between people in the course of social life that our versions of knowledge become fabricated. Therefore, social interaction of all kinds is of great interest to social constructionists. The goings-on between people in the course of their everyday lives are seen as the practices during which our shared versions of knowledge are constructed (Burr, 2015).

Furthermore, the constructionists maintain that what we regard as truth, which of course varies historically and cross-culturally, may be thought of as our current accepted ways of understanding the world. They further maintain that these are a product not of objective observations of the world, but of the social processes and interactions in which people are constantly engaged with each other. Haferkamp and Smelser (1992), are of the view that these social dealings can produce a variety of possible social constructions of events. Social constructionism therefore posits that all aspects of humanity apart from inherited and developmental aspects of humanity are created, maintained and destroyed in our interaction with others through time (Adebisi, 2013). Also the constructionists view knowledge and truth as created, not discovered, by the mind, and support the view that being a realist is not inconsistent with being a constructionist (Schwandt, 2003).

Furthermore, as Steedman (2000) notes, most of what is known and most of the knowing that is done is concerned with trying to make sense of what it is to be human as opposed to scientific knowledge, and individuals or group of individuals define this reality. On the other hand, Berger and Luckmann (1991) are concerned with the nature and construction of knowledge; how it emerges and how it comes to have significance for society. Hence, they view knowledge as created by the interactions of individuals within society, which is central to constructionism (Schwandt, 2003). And this is relevant in understanding how individuals exist in a social context.

### **5.1.2 Criticisms of social constructionism**

Social scholars argue that social constructionism fall towards the nurture end of the spectrum of the larger 'nature and nurture' debate. Consequently, its critics hold that it generally ignores biological influences on behaviour or culture, or suggest that they are unimportant to achieve an understanding of human behaviour (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). The social constructionist argument for cultural and historical specificity is sometimes mistakenly interpreted as just another way of taking the nurture in the nature/nurture debate (Burr, 2015). According to Bussey and Bandura (1999), the view of most psychologists and social scientists is that behaviour is a complex outcome of biological and cultural influences. Again, some scholars argues that many adopted social constructionism because of its potentially liberating stance; maintaining that if things are the way that they are only because of our social conventions, as opposed to being so naturally, then it should be possible to change them into how we would rather have them be (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

Scholars such as John Maze takes social constructionism to task for its internal contradictions. These include its incapacity to assert anything at all given its claims on the nature of language, objects, reality and the like, and the argument that objectivism is inherently authoritarian (Stam, 2001). Adelbert Jenkins criticizes social constructionism on its failure to distinguish content from process. Jenkins argues that the content of self differs radically across cultures but the processes that presumably generate and maintain that self are universal. Again, drawing on a dialectical account, he argues that notions of 'self' and 'other' are mutually created and sustained, and such a humanistic conception denies neither the individual nor sociocultural process crucial for our understanding of persons.

On the other hand, social constructionists argue that social constructionism is not just saying that one's cultural surroundings have an impact upon one's psychology or even that our nature is a product of environmental, including social, rather than biological factors (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). They further argue that most of these views are essentialist in that they see the person as having some definable and discoverable nature, whether given by biology or by the environment, as such cannot be called social constructionist.

Regardless of the above highlighted criticisms by some social scholars, I still see social constructionism appropriate as the study paradigm. The following section highlights the relevance of social constructionism to this study and why it is considered appropriate to frame my study within the strictures of this paradigm.

### **5.1.3 Relevance of social constructionism to this study**

Locating this work within the stricture of social constructionism enabled an understanding of how the social phenomenon of inquiry develops in social contexts of school geographies. Through social construction, and through exploring the processes of social construction of and in schools, the study examines how school spaces and places are represented as reality not based on any inherent quality school possesses in itself but on the contingent variables of conceptualization in the social constructions of school spaces and places as reality. Social constructionism is useful in this study in uncovering the ways migrant learners participate or are excluded in the construction of the social reality of school as space and place. It enables an understanding of the involvement and the experiences of these group of learners, looking at the social phenomena of school as space and place: what it represents for them, how the reality of school spaces and places is negotiated, institutionalized, known, and as such constructed and experienced. Social constructionism presents a framework for prompting a refreshing of, and a critique aimed to transform, the ‘un-just’ effects of the social meaning-making processes, and for understanding the construction and influencing processes of childhood geography and its intersection with school geographies of meanings-making in school spaces and places.

## **5.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY**

In this study I employed New Sociology of Childhood and Children’s Geographies as the theoretical framework for my study. Children’s geographies is a branch of human geographies. It

has developed in academic human geography since the beginning of the 1990s (Holloway, 2014). The earliest work in Children's Geographies can be traced to William Bung's work on spatial oppression of children in Detroit, United States of America and Toronto, Canada, where he deemed that children are the ones who suffer the most under an oppressing adult framework of social, cultural and political forces controlling the urban built environment (Holloway, 2014). Children's Geographies is a lens through which places and spaces of children's lives, characterised experientially, politically and ethically can be viewed (Moodley, 2015). Holloway (2014) views Children's Geographies as an umbrella term that encompasses children, teenagers, youths and young people, which however are still relatively missing in the frame of reference in the complexities of geographies.

Children's Geographies is used to understand childhood as an active period of meanings making where children as active agents play active roles in the negotiation and constructions of social relationships (Morrow, 2011). In line with this, Prout and James (1979) are of the view that children can be understood as active agents in their role in construction and interpretations they give to their own world. Also, James and Prout (1997) maintain that childhood is a distinct phase in human experience, an equally interesting and important phase of experience to be understood for what it is, without adult inter-mediating agency. Researchers in Children's Geographies are of the view that children with perspectives of their own reality are autonomous and should be seen for what they are, especially in exercising the right to having their own voice and influence on decisions relating to their lives. Children's geographies as a body of theory is therefore anchored on the idea that children as a social group share certain experiences with ethical, political and experiential significance (Holloway, 2014). Children's geographies is built on the assumption that

children's lives will be markedly different in differing times and places and under differing circumstances such as of gender, family, and class (Holloway, 2014). Furthermore, *Children's Geographies* enables an entry into understanding the world in which children live and how their world makes particular meanings and significance for them as reality (O'Brein, 1996).

Correspondingly, the childhood studies of the New Sociology of Childhood studies children as social actors, as beings in their own right rather than as pre-adult becomings (Holloway & Valentine, 2005). Rather than accepting contemporary construction of children as less able and competent than adults, children are viewed through the lenses of New Sociology of Childhood as active beings whose agency is important in the creation of their own life-worlds (Holloway & Valentine, 2005). Researchers in the New Sociology of Childhood provide a two pronged challenge to the relative absence of children from the sociological research agenda. First being their insistence that childhood is a social construct which varies with time and place and as it articulates with other social differences forms the basis of a research agenda which places an analysis of the social construction of different childhoods at centre stage (Jenks, 2005). In this regard, Jenks (2005) argues that if childhood is a social rather than a biological phenomenon which varies between social groups, societies and historical periods, its construction, contestation and consequences are worthy of academic attention. Furthermore, scholars of the New Sociology of Childhood view childhood as a time of socialisation where children make meanings of their environment through social contacts and interactions (Holloway & Valentine, 2005; Woodhead, 2006).

### **5.2.1 Children as active participants**

New Sociology of Childhood and Children's Geographies view children as active social participants. However, childhood presents itself more and more as an ambivalent social phenomenon. On one hand, children are seen as autonomous individuals, and on other hand, as objects of protection (Jans, 2004). Nevertheless, children are today seen as active social participants whose ability to learn and play allows them to give active meaning to their environment (Jans, 2004). In line with this assumptions, accepting playful and ambivalent forms of active social participation, child participation presents itself no longer as an ideal, but as a fact. Lindstrom (2014) maintains that in today's world, children are stimulated to present themselves as individuals with their own rights, and Jans (2004) argues that children are active social participants in societies and in cultural life in many respects, who reproduce and produce culture in everyday lives in different localities on par with adults.

According to Aitken, Lund and Kjørholt (2008), children's different forms of participation are an integral part of social life in particular places, covering a range of different social practices, relationships and meanings-making processes in different localities, producing and reproducing economic structures and culture. However, these forms of children's active participation in social and economic production of society are often ignored, partly due to the dominance of developmental discourses, which have been highly criticised for producing images of children as vulnerable, immature and in need of education and socialization if they are to develop into fully competent adults and citizens (Boyden, 2003; Kjørholt, 2004). Much present child socialization,



on the other hand, encourages children to be the author of their own lives, and children seem to utilize every opportunity and possibility to present themselves as social actors with their own interests and rights (Lindstrom, 2014). Jans (2004) maintains that children claim agency within the contours of the family, but also outside the sphere of influence of the family they grasp the opportunity to show themselves as individuals.

In the present day society, child participation is considered being of great importance. Jans (2004) argues that because of the influence of the modern idea of protection, the possibilities for children and young people to get acquainted with social participation is mainly offered in artificial training rooms. However, various studies and authors note that children actually participate in society, also outside these training grounds. This means that children intervene in their environment by simply giving meaning to their environment. The late modern condition allows children increasingly to present themselves as social actors, within as well as outside the family (Jans, 2004). According to Jans (2004), the social participation of children is thus based on a continuous learning process in which children and adults are interdependent, and in this interdependency, the ways in which children give meaning to their environment has to be taken into account.

## **5.2.2 The geographies of children within schooling contexts**

### **5.2.2.0 Introduction**

Schools can be spaces and places that silence voices, when they legitimize only one understanding of knowledge at the expense of and exclusion of a different point of view (Friesen, 2014).

Historically that has been a role of the school, which has led to much traumatic and unhappy schooling experience. Thus, how and what to teach becomes important questions to ask especially when classrooms, schools and communities are populated by people from diverse backgrounds and expectations, all with the right to education. In this section, I present discussions around issues of geographies of children within schooling contexts in line with the theoretical framework of this study. Through the lenses of New Sociology of Childhood and Children's Geographies I look at how schools are spaces and places for promoting social diversity, and lastly, how schools are spaces and places for perpetuating social injustice.

#### **5.2.2.1 Schools as spaces and places for promoting social diversity**

With the increase in diversity in our communities, schooling should also be diverse to reflect the cultures, values and contexts that it represents. How then does diversity affect how and what we educate, and how can schools be spaces and places that promote and represent the diversity that exists in our classrooms, schools and communities? A diverse classroom and school is one where learners and teachers represent a variety of different backgrounds (Allison & Rehm, 2006). Orey (2010) argues that the orientation and goals of teachers and schools and their responses and practice in diverse classroom and school can significantly impact learner experience. Thus understanding where learners come from and the ideology that shapes their thinking can help teachers promote diversity in the learning environment in a way that can make transformative teaching and learning possible (Mckay, 2013). Therefore, in this dynamic environment, the need to appreciate and navigate the ever increasing diversity is an essential part of education of learners in schools (Fry, Ketteridge & Marshall, 2009). This means that schools must reflect the ideals and

principles of social inclusion. Hence, children's voices and their needs and concerns as active participants in the school space and place need to be heard irrespective of their backgrounds. Koutselini, Trigo-Santos and Verkest (2004) maintain that for schools to be spaces and places for promoting diversity, all learners must be treated equally and given the same opportunities to participate and function within the schooling context. This goes to suggest that not only some but all learners with different backgrounds must have say and a stake in their shared social space. This inclusiveness of space and place creates and maintains stability as well as the opportunities needed by all learners within a school context to function and participate, as they should thereby promote unity in diversity among learners.

Furthermore, Parrish and Linder-VanBerschot (2010) suggest that another dimension of promoting social diversity in schools is tolerance for and appreciation of cultural diversity. This includes schools as societies that celebrate multiple and diverse expressions of identities. Maylor, Read, Mendick, Ross and Rollock (2007) argue that by celebrating diversity, there is a recognition and affirmation of the difference between and among members of society. In this case, learners and teachers alike in a school environment must ensure a move away from the labelling, categorizing, and classifying of people towards more inclusive practices (Meltz, Herman, & Pillay, 2014; Sinclair, 2015), and avoid the use of language which causes categorization and discrimination.

#### **5.2.2.2 Schools as spaces and places for perpetuating social injustice**

Educational inclusion constitutes an international policy imperative that promotes the rights of every child to be educated in an inclusive mainstream classroom (Wertheimer, 1997). Even though

inclusive education is a relatively recent policy phenomenon, it embodies ideas and arguments that have long been debated by various scholars and in different domains (Mahlo, 2013). Inclusive education reflects some key values and principles. It is concerned with challenging the ways in which educational systems reproduce and perpetuate social inequalities and injustices with regard to marginalised and excluded groups of school children across a range of abilities, characteristics, developmental trajectories, and social and economic circumstances and backgrounds (Mahlo, 2013). However, school policies and practices do in some cases perpetuate forms of exclusion, inequality and social injustice in the ways schools valorise certain learner identities while devaluing others (Nieuwenhuis, 2010). A typical example is in the case of school children with disabilities, where despite the laudable international policy rhetoric around inclusive education, disabled children are still significantly excluded, marginalised and stigmatised in apparently more inclusive schools (Tesemma, 2012).

Also, school children with presumed deficits are placed on the gaze, and a common practice is to silence the ways in which disability is, to a significant extent, an ideologically and socially mediated phenomenon (Heo, Han, Koch, & Aydin, 2011). Disability is thus regarded as being what Liasidou (2012) describes as a fixed and transcendental human attribute, a negative ontology gauged against normative assumptions of normality. As a result, disabled learners subjectivities are un-problematically presented as being deficient and abnormal, with far reaching implications for educational performance and achievements. This places the responsibility of reducing the achievement gaps between privileged and disadvantaged groups of learners, on individual learners who are entangled in the web of poverty, disability and other forms of disadvantaged situations (Liasidou, 2012).

Schools through policies and practices do pathologize learners' attributes that deviate from what is perceived to be their ideal physiological, emotional, intellectual and cultural functioning. These processes render a school as a space and place for disciplinary power via what Liasidou (2012) describes as the ab-normalization of those who are perceived as being non-ideal learners. The process of ab-normalization exerts a pervasive ideological role in shaping dominant thinking with regard to the notion of otherness on the basis of ability.

Furthermore, the aims of current schooling are in alignment with the demands of the global economy that necessitates increased concerns for effectiveness, value for money and competitiveness (Weert, 2011). The ideologies of the market have given rise to a contemporary versions of 'ideal learners' who are regarded as 'human resources' rather than 'resourcefully human', and the constitution of the ideal learner engenders those thus regarded as 'non-ideal' learners (Liasidou, 2012). These are the disadvantaged and disabled learners, who have subordinated and deficient positioning. Thus, the attributes that epitomise the ideal learner are used as a normative device against which the 'non-ideal learner' is positioned and identified (Liasidou, 2012). School in this sense, becomes spaces and places where individuals are compared, differentiated, hierarchized, diagnosed, and where judgements of normality and abnormality are made, thereby promoting and perpetuating inequality and social injustice.

### **5.3 RELEVANCE OF NEW SOCIOLOGY OF CHILDHOOD AND CHILDREN'S GEOGRAPHIES TO THIS STUDY**

In this study, I used Children's Geographies and New Sociology of Childhood as the theoretical framework to understand and elucidate how migrant children in South Africa construct and navigate schools' social and cultural landscape, and how this impacts on the ways in which migrant learners experience schooling in South Africa. In this way, how migrant learners are understood as creating themselves through construction of their own reality in different social and cultural contexts.

Furthermore, school space and place cannot be separated from the knowledge and representations which express and repress particular identities (Dei, James, Karumanchery, Wilson & Zine, 2003; Gilchrist, Bowles & Wetherel, 2010). Therefore, a geographic focus through the lens of New Sociology of Childhood and Children's Geographies enabled me to unpack the visual, spatial and ideological dimensions of schools as they are experienced in the everyday lives of the migrant learners. This is achieved in this study by highlighting the experiential aspects of migrant learners' schooling geographies within schools and by focusing on understanding the concepts of schools as places that give process and spatial conditions for the construction of migrant schooling geographies as 'others'. Children's geographies and the New Sociology of Childhood as the theoretical framework of this study are used to look at and unpack the ways school geographies leave the migrant learner feeling 'in' or 'out of place' in school.

## 5.4 CONCLUSION

Social constructionism as the study paradigm, and Children's Geographies and New Sociology of Childhood as the theoretical framework of this study enabled me to clearly understand and articulate, first, sociological construction of migrant learners' identity within schooling context in South Africa, and secondly, how they navigate the school space and place (i.e. the extent they participate in the school social space and place). The theoretical framework of this study enabled a deep understanding of how migrant children in South African schools experience schooling. Through the lens of Children's Geographies and New Sociology of Childhood, I aimed to clearly elucidate the role played by social factors in defining the migrant learner participation in school space and place in South Africa and how this contributes to their schooling experiences. And since the theoretical framework of this study focuses on the social construction and children's participation in the social space and place, I consider it as being appropriate to understand and elucidate how children's active social participation and agency position inform and impact on the way the migrant learners understand school place and space, in other words, how they experience schooling in South Africa.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CONDUCTING RESEARCH WITH MIGRANT LEARNERS**

#### **6.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the research methodology of the study. It provides clarity on important issues in the research methodology employed in this study. This chapter also provides accounts of choices made in deciding on the research context of this study, the location, the selection of participants for the study, the sampling and methods of data collection, and the justification for these choices. It also presents the researcher's position in this study. In addition, this chapter also presents discussions on how different methodological dilemmas in the study were taken care of. The study explores how migrant learners in South Africa experience the school space and place, focusing on migrant learners from the DRC and Zimbabwe schooling in three schools in Durban KwaZulu-Natal.

#### **6.1 RESEARCHER POSITION IN THE RESEARCH (RESEARCHER BEING)**

This research is positioned within the stricture of social constructionism. According to Burr (2015), through daily interactions between people in the course of social life our versions of knowledge become fabricated. Burr (2015) further maintains that the goings-on between people in the course of their everyday lives are seen as the practices during which our shared versions of knowledge



are constructed. This study sought to explore phenomena in ways that can enable understanding of it within a given contextual perspective.

According to Grix (2010), the ontological, epistemological and paradigmatic positions of a study are best set out and defined in ways that explain how the researcher intends to carry out the study. In positioning this research within social constructionism, I as the researcher am not making a claim to be entirely objective, being myself not removed from the research process (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011; Creswell, 2014). Ontologically, whilst my perspective was not divorced from the research, I was cognisant of my position in the research, and unlike in the positivist approach, I was subjectively involved in the research.

Being migrant myself and having experienced the challenges and limitations of being a migrant in South Africa to some extent influenced my choice of research approach, methods and instruments. I therefore designed my study in a way that enabled active and full participation of the study participants, being migrants and children. I employed methods and instruments that I considered emotionally and psychologically convenient for the participants. Grix (2010) affirms that the researcher's intention and goals and the researcher's philosophical assumptions are woven in the research. Therefore, in this study, careful thought was given; firstly, to construction of the research questions. Secondly, to decisions on research methodology and methods applied. However, being involved in the research process did not exempt me in this study from taking appropriate steps in mitigating my influence from bearing heavily on the research (Cohen et al., 2011). Therefore, I deliberately took steps in the methodological approach and research design in order to achieve an objective analysis of the data collected (Grix, 2004).

In locating this research in the social constructionism paradigm, this was considered appropriate, given that my epistemological positioning affirms consideration to be given to subjective interpretation and perceptions of the world as critical in understanding phenomena (Ernest, 1994). Furthermore, it is also considered appropriate, given my epistemological position which affirms that reality is not only subjective, but has multiple perspectives (Cohen et al., 2011). It is therefore in line with the paradigmatic positioning that I engaged and applied processes that permitted me in this research to observe reality from the research subjects' perspective through their direct experience, while taking into cognition my own being in the research process (Cohen et al., 2011).

## **6.2 AN OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN**

This study is a qualitative research study, and it employed a methodology of narrative inquiry. Convenient and purposive sampling techniques were used to select the schools and participants for this study. Data collection was divided into the following stages:

**STAGE ONE (Story Account):** This stage offered an expository account of the schooling experiences of the participants in South Africa by providing vital information relating to the critical questions of the study. This took a form of self-expressed oral story account by participants. Open-ended interview questions were developed around the themes that emerged in this stage. This method is employed to give further insight in stage two of the study. It also afforded the opportunity of getting in-depth accounts of the participants' schooling experiences in South Africa.

It further unveiled important information relevant to my study which was otherwise hidden and was not extracted through the formal interview processes. This method enriched the data collected and strengthened the validity and trustworthiness of the study.

**STAGE TWO (Open-ended interview):** This stage strengthened the information/data obtained from the first stage and gave insight into the critical questions of the study. The advantage of employing open-ended interview in this study is that it enabled interaction with the participants which yielded the best information and deepened the data collected through the story account section.

**STAGE THREE (Photo voice):** In this stage participants were given cameras to take photos that touch and express their emotions and their experiences at school. This stage offered me the opportunity to understand more fully, and enabled me to identify the dimensions of participants' daily experiences and situations that were not captured through other methods of data collection employed. This stage helped to strengthen data collected through the processes of story account and interview sessions with the participants. It also offered the opportunity for the participants to further express and represent their experiences at school using images they captured with cameras. This enabled a better understanding of the participants' schooling experiences in South Africa.

## **6.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **6.3.1 Qualitative research approach**

This study is located within the stricture of the qualitative research approach which allowed an in-depth understanding of the migrant learner schooling experience in South Africa. This study also employed narrative inquiry methodology. According to Nieuwenhuis (2007), qualitative research studies people and/or systems by interacting with and observing the participants in their natural environment. Qualitative research is an interpretive technique which seeks to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning of naturally occurring phenomena in the social world (Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, Creswell (2014) notes that the qualitative research approach seeks to provide detailed understanding of a central phenomenon. The strength of this qualitative research approach, especially as it relates to this study, is its ability to understand and bring interpretive clarity to complex descriptions of how people experience a given situation or phenomenon (in this case, how migrant learners experience schooling in South Africa). Again, qualitative research has as its strength in this study the characteristics of seeking answers to a question by systematically using a predefined set of procedures (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005).

Furthermore, qualitative research enabled a better understanding of the phenomena under study; how migrant learners from the DRC and Zimbabwe in three schools in Durban experience

schooling in South Africa (Mack et al., 2005). Again, the strength of qualitative research as it relates to this study is in its effectiveness in identifying intangible factors, such as social norms, social and economic status, ethnicity and nationality, and religion, the role of which in the research issue may not be readily apparent (Malahlela, 2012). Therefore, by employing the qualitative research approach in this study, I was able to interpret and better understand the complex reality of how migrant learners in the three schools in Durban, South Africa experience schooling and the implications of these experiences on their schooling in South Africa (Chowdbury, 2015), and way these experiences impact on their understanding of the schools' social and cultural landscape as space and place. In locating this study within the qualitative research approach, I had enough room to spend a lot of time within the research site and with the participants. This enabled me to get closer to their lived reality (Zhao & Ji, 2014) and new questions and information gathered in the process of research shaped the questions as the research was being done.

#### **6.3.1.1 Why qualitative research approach in this study?**

This study adopted a qualitative research approach because of its concern with understanding the courses and the socio-cultural contexts which bring about different behavioural patterns (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). The use of qualitative research in this study gave room for more flexibility by allowing greater spontaneity and adaptation of the interaction with study participants. Again, locating this study within the qualitative research approach enabled the use of open-ended questions which allowed participants to respond to questions in their own words. These responses have more depth of meaning than simply 'yes' or 'no' answers.

Also, this research approach enabled my relationship with participants to be less formal as participants had the opportunity to respond more elaborately and in greater detail. This offered me the opportunity for immediate response to what they said by my tailoring subsequent questions to prod further on the information that they provided. One remarkable advantage in locating this study within qualitative approach is the flexibility it provides in probing initial participants' responses by asking and emphasizing on 'why' and 'how' of every of their responses (Chowdbury, 2015). Here, careful attention was paid to what participants said. I was able to further engage with the participants according to their individual personalities and styles. I was also able to use probes to encourage participants to elaborate on their responses. In this way, I gained better understanding of the participants' schooling experiences, how they navigate the social and cultural spaces of their schools and how they conceptualise and make meanings of their positioning in school space and place.

### **6.3.1.2 Limitations of qualitative research approach in this study**

A major limitation of employing qualitative research in this study is my presence during data collection, which in most cases was unavoidable due to the data collection methods and instruments employed in this study, to some extent affected the participants' responses. This was as a result of the power imbalance between me as the researcher and the participants, and given that participants are children and their social position as migrants with vulnerability attached to their positioning both as children and as migrants. Inasmuch as the participants as described earlier were free in giving their responses, there were also some elements of reservation in the way the

participants responded to some of the questions asked in the interview section. However, this was taken care of by employing other method of data collection (i.e. photo voice), which didn't require my presence in the data collecting process. The participants were freer using this method to express their feelings and experiences.

### **6.3.2 Narrative inquiry methodology**

This study made use of narrative inquiry methodology. This enabled better understanding of the schooling experiences of the study participants through their narratives. Narrative inquiry is the study of people's experiences understood narratively (Clandinin, Steeves, & Caine, 2013). It is a way of thinking about and studying people's experiences. Narrative inquiry has been influenced by philosophers, anthropologists, and psychotherapists such as Dewey, Johnson, Geertz, Bateson, Cole, etc. The theoretical underpinning of narrative inquiry is the belief that telling a story about oneself involves telling a story about choice and action, which has integrally moral and ethical dimensions (Hunter, 2009). The process of telling the narrative is believed to have the potential to transform the participant's experience (Bezzina & Cassar, 2015; Hunter, 2009). Although narrative inquiry has a long intellectual history both in and out of education, it is increasingly used in studies of educational experience.

The main claim for the use of narrative in educational research is that humans are storytelling organisms who individually and socially, lead storied lives (White, 2015). The study of narrative therefore, is the study of the ways humans experience the world, and this general notion translates into the view that education is the construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories

(Jacobsen, Drake, Keohane, & Peterson, 2014; Kim, 2015). Narrative inquiry is set in human stories of experience which provides the means that can be used to investigate the ways humans experience the world, providing access to the experiences that are depicted through their stories (Reese, 2012). Carr (1986) argues that narrative is not about short-term elementary experience and actions, but it has to do with long-term or large-scale sequences of actions, experiences and human events. Thus, action, life and historical existence are themselves structured narratively, and the concept of narrative is our way of experiencing, acting and living, both as individuals and as communities (Bamberg, 2010; Carr, 1986). Narrative in this sense is our way of being and dealing with time; a way of thinking about, and studying experience, and a way of thinking narratively about experience throughout inquiry.

#### **6.3.2.1 Why narrative methodology in this study?**

I employed narrative inquiry in this study to gain better and deeper understanding of the ways the study participants constructed their stories and why, as well as the cultural and social discourses drawn upon. Narrative inquiry in this way enabled me to find the meanings that ascribe schooling experiences of the participants. I was therefore able to gain insight into the complexity of the participants' lives and experiences, the tensions, contradictions, dilemmas the participants face. Furthermore, narrative inquiry foregrounds narrative as both the method and the phenomena of study (Nieuwenhuis, 2007), and as a method of inquiry in this study. It enabled an assessment and understanding of participants' social construction of reality from the stories they tell.



By employing narrative inquiry methodology in this study, I was able to recognise how the study participants' stories are useful in order to draw insights about their lived experiences (Kramp, 2010; Sikes & Gale, 2006). Furthermore, it was possible to engage the research questions in ways that enabled an insight not just into how the migrant learners experience schooling, but into how they come to know their experiences (Bland, 2006). Such insight enabled an understanding of how they make sense of school as space and place, and what their expectations of schooling are. The narrative inquiry method equally permitted a narrative analysis of data obtained in this study. And through the process of generating, interpreting and representing the participants' stories in narrative form from the different data generating methods, the narrative inquiry method as employed in this study was useful in transforming actual experiences of the participants into communicable representation of these experiences.

#### **6.3.2.2 Limitations of narrative methodology in this study**

In using narrative inquiry in this study, I was confronted with two major challenges. First was the questions of the validity of the narratives told by the participants, including questions of whether or not they represent true facts. In this regard, the study employed a variety of data collecting methods to ensure consistency in the participant's narratives and to ensure the validity of data collected in the study. Secondly, I was confronted with the challenges of having to manage/work with the large volume of data collected through various methods of data collection employed in this study. This made data analysis and interpretation difficult and time consuming. Also, narrative inquiry as a methodology employed in this study required some methods of data collection which

necessitated my presence during some of the data collection processes. As already stated above, my presence to a certain extent influenced the participants' responses as a result of the unequal power balance between me the research and the study participants.

## **6.4 RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **6.4.1 Study site**

The site for this research is comprised of three different secondary schools in suburban areas of Durban in Kwazulu-Natal Province of South Africa. These schools have teachers and learners from diverse nationalities including, of particular interest for this study, learners from the DRC and Zimbabwe. Two of the three schools are situated not far from Durban city centre, while the third school is situated in the black suburbs, known as townships in the local context. The schools are regarded as semi-resourced schools, which mean that they are not up-to those schools that are well resourced; the ex-model C schools as they are called or simply former white schools. Some of the learners in the schools live around where the schools are located, and some of the migrant learners live in the city centre of Durban. One of the three schools used in this study is a multiracial school with learners from diverse cultures, which present diverse cultural beliefs, traditions, myths and experiences, and the other two schools are only made up of black learners, though diverse in culture and religion as a result of the presence of migrant learners from other African countries in the schools.

The presence of migrant learners in these schools, with their cultural experiences and beliefs different from the already existing cultures and traditions in South Africa, add more flavour to the schools' socio-cultural environment. The diversity should in this case be a socio-cultural advantage because it is a pool of cultural experiences which can be good for teaching and learning. Potentially the diversity of teacher and learner backgrounds should facilitate and promote the ideals of inclusive education in the schools, where all learners are treated equally and given equal opportunities to participate in all processes of teaching and learning and in other school activities, irrespective of the learner's race, cultural background, beliefs and nationality. Given that three schools were used, and for the purpose of anonymity and clarity, I tagged the first school as '*school A*' and the second and third schools as '*school B* and *school C*' respectively.

*School A* is a government school, which implies that teachers in the school are employed and paid by the Department of Education. In this case, the school management is accountable to the Department of Education and takes directives from the Department of Education as well. The school is open to learners from different racial, religious and cultural backgrounds; this explains why there are many migrant learners in the school. Learner enrolment as at the time this study was conducted stood about 1054, out of which 3% are African migrant learners, with Congolese migrant learners greater in number than other migrants, followed by migrant learners from Zimbabwe. The school offers a wide range of science and commerce subjects. The school doesn't provide facilities to enable migrant learners to learn in their languages. Also, there is no support system provided by the school or the Department of Education to cater for the learning needs of

increasing number of migrant learners in regards to language barrier experienced by these learners in the school.

*School B* is also a government owned secondary school. Unlike school A, it is not a multiracial school, but it has migrant learners from other Southern African countries. Learner enrolment at the time this study was conducted was 980, out of which about 0.98% are migrant learners, mainly from DRC and Zimbabwe. As it is a government secondary school, the Department of Education employs and pays the teachers in the school. Learner enrolment is quite high and the school has a full strength of staff. School B offers a wide range of commerce and science subjects. Like school A, school B doesn't offer subjects in the migrants' languages and doesn't provide any form of support system to cater for the learning needs of migrant learners in the school.

*School C* is an independent school, meaning that teachers and other staff in the school are not employed by the Department of Education. When I conducted this study, learner population was 574. About 1.2% of the learner population are learners from other African countries. School C, though a private school, is not very well resourced. The Department of Education does not provide any funding for the school, and as a result, learners pay school fees and provide their own learning materials such as exercise and text books. School C has a good number of migrant learners who are mostly from Zimbabwe and the DRC. Teachers and other staff in the school are blacks and locals. Unlike schools A and B, school C only has black/African learners in it. This means that school C is not racially diverse as schools A and B. Learners in the school come from diverse cultural, religious and language backgrounds, making the school socially and religiously diverse.

The diversity in the learner population is as a result of the presence of migrant learners in the school who come from different cultural, religious and language backgrounds.

I decided on the three schools for my study because of the availability and population of migrant learners from the DRC and Zimbabwe in the schools. The schools also represent typical South African school contexts with considerable diversity as a result of the presence of migrant children in these three schools.

#### **6.4.2 Study participants**

The participants in this study are made up of migrant learners from the DRC and Zimbabwe in three high schools in Durban, South Africa. Twelve participants participated in the study. Five of which are females, and 7 are males. The study consists of nine Congolese and three Zimbabweans migrant learners in the three school. One of the 12 participants was in grade 12, five were in grade 11, and three were in grade 10, one in grade 9 and two in 8. The participants in the study were within 14 to 18 years of age. The participants came to South Africa in different years; between 2006 and 2013. Eleven of the 12 participants in the study were schooling in their home countries before they came to South Africa. One of participants said he started school in South Africa. All the 12 participants in the study said they are living with adult family members. I used the table below to represent the study participants. The participants' real names are not used in this study for the purpose of anonymity.

Table 1: *Background information of participants in this study*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Country of origin</b>	<b>Year arrived in South Africa</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Date/year started schooling in South Africa</b>	<b>Living with family member in South Africa</b>
<b>Kabedi</b>	Male	17	DRC	2013	11	2013	Yes (uncle, aunty, brothers and sisters)
<b>Disanka</b>	Female	17	DRC	2007	12	2008	Yes (parents,, brother, uncles and aunties)
<b>Bakome</b>	Male	16	DRC	2011	10	2010	Yes (parents, uncle, aunty, brother, sister and cousins).
<b>Tshamala</b>	Female	15	DRC	2011	9	2012	Yes (two uncles, two aunties, a brother and a cousin)
<b>Ndaya</b>	Female	17	DRC	2013	10	2013	Yes (parents, brothers, sisters, uncles and aunties)
<b>Munia</b>	Female	18	DRC	2011	11	2011	Yes (parents, uncle, brothers and sisters)
<b>Kazadi</b>	Male	16	DRC	2013	8	2013	Yes ( parents, brother and sisters)
<b>Dingani</b>	Male	16	Zimbabwe	2011	8	2012	Yes (parents, brother, sisters and an aunty in Cape Town)
<b>Akhumzi</b>	Male	17	Zimbabwe	2010	11	2011	Yes (brothers and sisters)
<b>Wemba</b>	Male	18	DRC	2010	11	2012	Yes (uncle, aunty and cousins)

<b>Luboya</b>	Male	17	DRC	2006	10	2007	Yes (father, mother, uncle, four brothers and three cousins)
<b>Sande</b>	Female	17	Zimbabwe	2011	11	2012	Yes (brother, uncle and his family)

### 6.4.3 Sample and sampling

This study employed both convenient and purposive sampling techniques to select three schools and 12 participants from the three schools across Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa for the purpose of this study. Sampling is an aspect of qualitative research.

I employed *convenient sampling* in this study to select three schools with Congolese and Zimbabwean migrant learners. The three schools were selected based on their accessibility and the willingness of their school managements to allow their schools and learners participate in the study. Convenient sampling is a sample taken from a group based on their accessibility (Teddie, 2007). Convenient sampling is a type of nonprobability sampling in which people are sampled because they form a convenient source of data (Teddie, 2007). The fundamental quality that defines convenient samples is the lack of an underlying probability-based selection method (Tongco, 2007). In other words, convenient samples rely on data that is selected by those who provide or observe it, such information from individuals or participants who chose to tell their stories.

*Purposive sampling* technique was later used to select 12 learners from three schools across Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, for the study. The study engaged 12 learners from the three selected schools across Durban, five from school A, four from school B and three from school C. Seven male and five female learners were selected from the three schools. Purposive sampling can be described as choosing specific people within the population to use for a particular study (Banerjee & Chaudbury, 2010). The idea behind purposive sampling is to concentrate on people with the particular characteristics that will enable the researcher elicit relevant information for the research (Tongo, 2007). The main goal of purposive sampling is to focus on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest, which will best enable answers to research questions. It gives the researcher the opportunity to select the cases to be included in the sample based on whether the cases selected possess particular characteristics being sought (Cohen et al, 2011). By doing this, satisfactory sample for precise needs is selected. This means that the sample has basically been chosen for a specific purpose. Purposive sampling was therefore employed in this study to select participants who are considered to be best suited to provide depth of information required as data for the research purposes.

#### **6.4.4 Methods of data collection in this study**

This study employed three methods of data collection for in-depth data. The following methods of data collection were employed in this study: story account, open-ended interview and photo voice. These three methods were used to collect in-depth information on the participants schooling experiences in South Africa. A look at these methods separately will help explain in more detailed



way each of these methods, and throw more light on how they were used in this study and their limitations as related to their use in this study.

#### **6.4.4.1 Story account method**

Story account is essentially an interactive and co-operative technique directly involving the researcher and the participants to produce detailed/in-depth information of the participants' life experiences through guided narrative account by the participants (Cohen et al., 2011). In using this method, the participants were asked to give detailed accounts of their schooling experiences in South Africa. Their story accounts were guided so as to enable participants to provide the relevant information needed for data production and collection. This took the form of an oral story account. This method of data collection afforded me the opportunity of getting in-depth accounts of the participants' schooling experiences in South Africa. It further unveiled important information relevant to my study which were hidden and were not extracted through the formal interview processes/sessions. It enriched the data collected and strengthened the validity and trustworthiness of the study.

The story account as used in this study gave the participants the opportunity to pour out their minds as they were not subjected to questioning or the usual interview environment, which could have an impact on the extent to which interviewees respond to questions. Secondly, it enabled them to have enough time to think and reflect on what they would say during the interview sections. This approach also enabled the participants to be more active in their responses and participation during the interview section. I considered this approach as a form of triangulation. A tape recorder was

used in this method. This is to enable accurate and clear recording of the participants' account without any mistake of omission and misinterpretation or misunderstanding. However, one major limitation encountered in using this method was time as the method required and demanded more time from me and the participants than I had originally allocated to it. This initially hindered the full utilization of this method in getting as much data as would have been possible, due to lack of time. However, I managed to take care of this by extending the number of visits and meetings I had with the participants which provided more time for them to tell their stories in full.

#### **6.4.4.2 Interview method**

Open-ended interview was another method used in data collection in this study. Research interviews give participants (interviewers and interviewees) the opportunity to discuss or air their views about the world in which they live and operate, and deeply express their individual and collective situation from both a collective and individual perspective (Cohen et al 2011). An interview in this regard can be regarded as a deep and detailed expression of an individual's or a group of individuals' view about what life and the situation around them mean to them.

In this study interviews were conducted in a manner that enabled the participants to express in full detail their schooling experiences in South Africa. Congolese and Zimbabwean migrant learners in the three selected schools were interviewed on different occasions after giving a story account of their schooling experiences in South Africa. Participants were interviewed individually. Individual interviews with the participants took different length of time over a period of six weeks. Open-ended interview as a form of exploratory interview was used in this study to achieve candor,

richness, depth, authenticity and honesty about participants' experiences (Cohen et al., 2011). This served to follow up on ideas that came up during the critical story account section, and created an avenue for further probing of respondents' ideas. Detailed and comprehensive data were generated through this process. This was achieved by asking the participants questions during interview section.

Interviews were also used to get views from individual learners. Similar questions were asked and there were responses from the participants. Interview was advantageous in the process of data collection as interactions with the participants yielded the best information and deepened the data collected through the story account section. Topics and aspects covered were specified in advance. The sequence and working of questions in the course of the interviews were decided and guided. The essence of this was to make sure that each interview was guided towards the relevant topics on the areas of interest, though there was room for flexibility. Having allowed flexibility in my conversation with the participants, I was mindful of things to be considered when conducting interviews.

The following were guarded against while conducting interviews with the participants; first, the possibility of the participants trying to present themselves and their conduct in a positive light, and secondly, as the interviewer, the importance of paying attention instead of talking when the participants were narrating their account and making a response. This boosted among participants the impression of concern, interest and full attention. There was flexibility during the interview sections with the participants, and I tried to make sure that the participants never derailed from the main focus of the study.

I made use of a tape recorder during the interview sessions of this study. This offered the opportunity to record clear and accurate responses of the participants or interviewees. A major limitation encountered in employing this method was time limitation. Because there were many questions to answer, and very limited time given, participants struggled in trying to give adequate responses to the question within the limited time given. This also initially hindered some useful information the participants would have provided through this method. This was however taken care of by visiting the participants at home in the weekends to provide them extra time for further interview sessions. This provided the participants more time to respond more adequately to questions that were not adequately answered in the previous sessions.

#### **6.4.4.3 Photo voice method**

This study also employed the photo voice method of data collection. Photo voice was developed by Wang and Burris (1997), to describe their work with the Yunnan Women's Reproductive Health and Development Program in China. Its theoretical basis brings together Paulo Freire's theories on participatory education, feminist theory focusing on giving voice to the disadvantaged, and documentary photography techniques representing societal realities (Wang & Burris, 1997). Photo voice is a participatory action research method in which individuals take photographs of their everyday realities (Baker & Wang, 2006). It allows research participants to take photographs and compose written narrative based on their daily experiences, enhancing the understanding of participants' situation (Baker & Wang, 2006). This method involves giving cameras to the research participants to take pictures that highlight issues in their lives that capture the phenomenon being

studied as the process of information sharing is not limited to verbal and textual word (Simmonds, 2015). Photo voice therefore empowers participants to engage more deeply in the research process by being in control of the images used in the study.

In employing this method in this study, I provided the participants with cameras to take photos that touch and express their emotions and their experiences at school. I also provided the participants with guidelines on how to use the cameras responsibly and what to cover in the process of capturing images. One of the advantages of employing this method in my study was that it facilitated greater involvement of the participants compared to the other methods used in this study to generate data. Not only that the participants provided data, but through their selection of photographs and discussions of themes and issues, they were also involved in part in the data analysis. The increased participants' participation also added to validity of data generated through this process.

The use of photo voice in this study also offered the opportunity to understand more fully and identify the dimensions of participants' daily experiences and situations that were not captured through other methods of data collection employed. Photo voice in this study therefore helped to strengthen data collected through the processes of story account and interview with the participants. It offered the opportunity for the participants to further express and represent their experiences at school using images they captured with cameras. This enabled me to better understand the participants' experiences and how they make meaning of school space and place.

In using this method of data collection, I encountered some limitations. First, there was resistance from school authorities and learners in using cameras to capture images in school. This initially to some extent hindered the participants from using the cameras to capture events and places at school as much and freely as they would have wanted. I however managed to take care of this limitations by first seeking further permission from the school authorities and learners in school by way of providing more explanations for taking the photographs. I also reassured the school managements that the photos will only be used for the purposes of this study, and that the identity of individuals in the photos will be concealed. As a result, the participants were granted full permission to take photos freely by both the schools authorities and fellow learners in school.

Secondly, the high costs both in time and funding this method prevented its optimal use in this study as there was a limited number of cameras provided for the participants. This resulted in some of the participants waiting for others to finish using the cameras before they were able to get turns to use them. And given, that they were given limited time, some of the participants initially could not take as much photographs as they would have wanted to take. This hindered the amount of data I had initially planned and hoped to collect using this method.

#### **6.4.5 Data analysis**

In this study, I used narrative analysis as my method of data analysis. Narrative analysis is a qualitative method of analysis which focuses on how respondents impose order on the flow of experience in their lives (Given, 2008). It makes sense of events and actions in which they have

participated and experienced (Given, 2008). In narrative analysis, texts are analysed within their social, cultural, and historical context from many different perspectives (Hunter, 2009). Narrative analysis is usually involve large units of texts or stories, and requires exploring the moral and transformational dimensions of storytelling (Hunter, 2009). Thus, it recognises the extent to which the stories we tell provide insights about our lived experiences (Cohen et al., 2011). And through analytic process that help detect the main narrative themes within the accounts people give about their lives, we discover how they understand and make sense of their lives (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006). According to May (2012), narrative analysis focuses on the analysis of narrative materials such as oral life stories and written narratives. Narrative analysis technique involves identifying the different and flexible ways language is used in ordinary interaction, to elucidate the narrative and discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias, and how these sources start and are maintained, reproduced and transformed within definite social, economic and political contexts (Nieuwenhuis, 2007).

In making use of narrative analysis in this study, data collected through story accounts, interview and photo voice processes were transcribed and coded to give specific meanings to different information gathered. Through reflecting on the data collected, specific gaps were filled by collecting additional data. Codes were assigned to interesting bits and pieces of data to break down data into pieces based on reflections around different topics or themes that made up my study. This was to interpret and make sense of what was in the data. The sorted data were read over and over again, and the meanings emerging from the data were coded. From these coded data, findings were drawn and conclusions made.

Furthermore, through the lens of the theoretical framework of this study, the concepts of ‘space’ and ‘place’ are seen as critical to children’s active social and physical participation. As a result, special attention was given in the data analysis to the participants’ narratives of their understanding of their positioning within the school space and place and the impact this has on their schooling experiences in South Africa. In this case, narrative data analysis technique was employed to properly analyse data by focusing on the meanings of words and expressions used by the participants to express or make meaning of their schooling experiences in South Africa and why they decided to use such words and expressions.

## **6.5 TRUSTWORTHINESS AND VALIDITY ISSUES**

Trustworthiness and validity in research allows a researcher to describe the virtues of a study outside the parameters that are usually applied in research (Jeanfreau & Jack, 2010). In this study, steps were taken to ensure the validity and trustworthiness by way of using multiple data collection methods (triangulation). The methods include story account, open-ended interview, and photo voice.

In the interview session, additional questions were asked at the end of the interview to cross-check the information obtained in the course of the interview with the participants. This was done by listening to the tape and reviewing the notes taken immediately after the interview process. Also, participants were also allowed to listen to the tape recorded during story accounts and interview sessions. They were given time to go through the notes taken during these processes to make sure



that what is recorded is exactly what they said and what is in their minds. The participants were given the opportunity to make corrections where necessary.

Furthermore, in this study, other important measures were taken to ensure validity, trustworthiness/credibility. Such measure include keeping field journals, maintaining consistency in the data production/collecting methods and conducting a pilot/pre-test of the research instruments to ascertain their workability before going into the main study. To further enhance credibility, participants were allowed to comment on the research findings. In addition, the study not only engaged different methods of data collection as a form of triangulation, it also engaged both boys and girls from the three selected schools across Durban. The idea of engaging both genders was to ensure that data would not be one-sided gender wise. Moreover, engaging both boys and girls in the study created the opportunity of understanding migrant learner schooling experiences in South Africa in a much holistic approach. I also decided to engage learners who are between 12 and 18 years of age; learners who are doing grades 8 to 12 are within this age bracket. I considered learners in this age bracket most suitable to provide the depth of information required as data for the study because of their ability at this age to communicate their ideas and express themselves in the English language.

## **6.6 LIMITATIONS**

Working with the participants demanded a lot of time. As a result, the issue of time was one of the limitations I encountered while conducting this study. The study participants as learners have limited number of hours a day to spend at schools and they are always busy with their lessons

during the normal school hours. The interview process and discussions on the other hand, required a good number of hours for a reasonable result to be achieved. To this effect, special permission was requested from the parents and heads of schools involved to make the participants available during the weekends and after school hours. It was really difficult to secure permission from those involved and participants on the other hand had other programmes to attend during the weekends. It took a lot of pleading for those who took part in the study to agree to reschedule the weekend programmes and to obtain full permission from their parents and heads of schools for them to be available during the weekends and after school hours. The issue of time narrowed down the number of participants that were initially willing to take part in the study and the number I wanted to engage in the study. I had the intention of engaging more participants in the study but ended up engaging 12 participants.

Finally, the limited number of female migrant learners in the schools selected for this study and unwillingness of most of the female learners available to participate in the study is another major limitation encountered in this study. I intended to engage equal number of male and female migrant learners from the DRC and Zimbabwe to participate in the study.

## **6.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethical clearance for this study was sought and obtained from the University of KwaZulu Natal Research Ethical Clearance Committee in accordance with the requirement and guideline for conducting research in the College of Humanities of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Likewise, informed consent letters were delivered by hand to the heads of the three schools used in this study,

seeking their permission to use their schools and engage their learners in the study. Before the participants took part in the study, they were made to fully understand the aim and purpose of the study. Also, the aim of the study was properly explained to the parents of the participants and the school principals before the schools and participants were engaged in the study. Consent letters were also sent to parents of participants through the participants to obtain their permission for their children/wards to take part in the study. In the same way, consent letters were given to the participants, also seeking their permission to participate in the study. In the consent letters, heads of the three schools, parents of participants and the participants themselves were made to understand the nature and purpose of the study.

Access was granted by the principals of the three schools, and consent was given by parents of the participants and the participants themselves by way of putting their signatures on the declaration forms. Participation on the side of the participants was based on the willingness to participate. Participants were given the liberty to withdraw at any stage, point and time of the study. The anonymity and confidentiality of the participants and schools were strictly kept to. In this case, a coding system is used to represent names of school used in this study. The same way, real names of the study participants are not used. Also, given that the study engaged photo voice as one of the methods of data collection, faces of the participants in the photos are deliberately not revealed to ensure confidentiality. Only authorized persons from the University of KwaZulu-Natal will have access to review the research records that contains the participants' information. Data collected in this study are only for the purpose of this study, and will be stored in the School of Education and Development storeroom for the period of five years, after which the data will be destroyed. The

interview schedules will be shredded. Information from the digital recorders and cameras will be erased.

## **6.8 CONCLUSION**

This chapter presented an in-depth description of the research process. The type of study and the methods of data collection were discussed. The size, characteristics and techniques used in choosing the participants were explained. The procedure for data analysis and limitation of the study were also provided. The following chapter provides findings on the early experiences of migrant learners in South Africa.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **A BEGINNER FOREIGNER: EARLY EXPERIENCES OF MIGRANT LEARNERS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

#### **7.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter focuses on themes around early challenges/limitations the study participants encountered on their arrival in South Africa, the benefits they derive from schooling in South Africa and their performance at school. This study employed narrative data analysis. Themes discussed in this chapter were developed by reflecting on the findings through the story account, interview and photo voice methods. All the ideas discussed in this chapter emerged from findings from this study. Upon analysing the transcripts, I picked out and organised themes that are in line with the focus of this chapter from common themes that emerged frequently from the findings for discussion under this chapter. This chapter therefore presents discussions around the early challenges and limitations the study participants encountered on their arrival in South Africa, the benefits they derive as migrants and how these impact on their performance at school. According to Byron and Condon (2008), migration poses enormous challenges to migrants in their host countries and communities. One of the major challenges migrants face is leaving their social and cultural environment to a new environment which sometimes is not so welcoming (Byron & Condon, 2008; Fukuyama, 2007). It is naturally difficult getting integrated into a new social and cultural environment especially when the environment is not so welcoming (Fukuyama, 2007).

Prominent in this case is the feeling of ‘foreignness’. I see the concept ‘foreigner’ as meaning not being part of a place, and not being familiar with the prevailing system in place.

Through the lens of the theoretical framework of this study, the concepts of ‘space’ and ‘place’ are seen as critical to children’s active social and physical participation. The status of a foreigner in itself suggests a form of limitation for migrants in space and place (in this case, in their communities/countries of destination). ‘Limitation’ here indicates lack of proper participation or even non-participation in social and physical space and place. Being foreigner exposes migrants to different forms and levels of social exclusion based on their identity as foreigners/migrants (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995). On the other hand, one would argue, based on findings from this study that being a foreigner also exposes foreigners to opportunities and cultures in a foreign land. Therefore, inasmuch as being a foreigner exposes migrants to different forms of social exclusion in their destinations as highlighted above, migrants also benefit from living in foreign land as they get exposed to knowledge derived from living and interacting with people from different backgrounds, and learning new ways of living and doing things.

Before presenting and discussing the themes on the participants’ early challenges on arrival in South Africa, it will be important to briefly look at the factors that necessitated the participants’ emigration from their home countries, and how and with whom they arrived in South Africa, as indicated in the participants’ narratives.

This chapter presents discussions on the following themes from the findings in this study; Early challenges on arrival in South Africa, "...Resources in school here are better than in my country" School access resources here and at home, "Independent and focused" Migrant learners responses to improved South Africa schooling resources.

## **7.1 PARTICIPANTS' EMIGRATION FROM HOME COUNTRIES TO SOUTH AFRICA**

This section of the chapter presents an account of why and how the participants in this study emigrated from their home countries to South Africa. An overview of the participants' country backgrounds has earlier been presented above which throws light on the factors that may have necessitated the participants' emigration from home countries to South Africa. While this is not part of the research question, it is important also to provide this information as it serves as a prelude to understanding the participants' backgrounds.

### **7.1.1 Participants' accounts on why they emigrated from home countries to South Africa**

The participants in their narratives gave reasons for coming to South Africa. Participants from both countries said they came to South Africa as a result of economic and social problems in their home countries and for the better opportunities that South Africa would offer them. In line with

this, Harris (2002) highlights that one of the reasons for child migration in Africa is that the home countries are no longer economically and socially conducive for them to live and function as children. Also, Levitt (2004) maintains that high unemployment, poverty, war and natural disasters are among the main reasons children embark on migration to other countries. These are true in the reasons the participants gave for coming to South Africa.

*Luboya (boy aged 17): My parents told me that things were good in my country before the war started and, since the war started, many people have died and things are difficult there. Many people started leaving my country to other countries. My parents decided to take me and my other siblings to come to South Africa. So it was the war that made us to come here.*

*Dingani (boy aged 16): I was young when my father said that we must come to South Africa because in my country, police were arresting people and beating them up. I can remember we didn't go to school for some time because teachers were not paid salaries. Things were so hard; no school, no food some times, and my father would tell us that there was no money to buy things we needed in the house. In 2009 my father came to South Africa and after three years my mum, myself and two of my other brothers came to join my father here.*

*Munia (girl aged 18): We came here because of the war in my country that destroyed everything there. The schools, the hospitals and in fact everything was destroyed by the war. My parents decided to take me, my sister and my brother to come to South Africa.*



The data excerpts above illustrate the reasons the participants left their home countries for South Africa. The reasons they gave in their narratives are in line with the major motivating factors for child migration in Africa and other parts of the world as highlighted by Harris (2002) and Levitt (2004) above. From the findings, we learn that most child migration especially in Africa are propelled by harsh socio-economic conditions in home countries of migrants. In the case of the participants in this study, coming from the DRC and Zimbabwe with social and economic problems, their reasons for leaving their home countries are similar to factors that propel child migration in Africa as already mentioned above. The participants highlighted in their narratives that they are in South Africa to stay away from harsh social and economic problems in their home countries, for better education, and also for their parents to get better job opportunities. In this sense, coming to South Africa provides the participants and their families needed social and economic safety their home countries failed to provide for them as illustrated in the data excerpts above. In line with this, Levitt (2004) also maintains that family members migrate with their children to other countries with better economic stability, better job opportunities and greater safety.

Similarly, Muniz (undated) maintains that social and economic problems in home countries of migrants account for the rise in the number of people, adults and children, leaving their countries for other countries with the hope of getting better jobs and better education for children, receiving better wages and staying in a safer environment. The data excerpts above also support the arguments of the new economics of migration theory. The central argument in this theory is that

migration decisions are made not by isolated individual actors but typically by families or households, and decisions of migration are influenced by a comprehensive set of factors which are shaped by conditions in the home country (Kurekova, 2011). The participants in their narratives highlighted that their families' decision to come to South Africa was for better conditions and opportunities in South Africa which were not present in their home countries and to stay away from harsh social and economic conditions in their home countries.

Furthermore, all the 12 participants in this study said the decision to come to South Africa was made by their parents. The participants in their narratives said that their parents considered South Africa safer and better for their education and provide more other opportunities than in their home countries.

*Disanka (girl aged 17): It was my parents who brought me and other sister and brother here. They told us that South Africa is better than staying in Congo and that they want us to get good education in South Africa.*

*Luboya (boy aged 17): I came here with my parents and my other siblings. My parents called us for a meeting and told us that we are joining my uncle and his family in South Africa. I was happy when they said that because people were suffering and dying in my country because of no food and no good hospitals. The schools were not opening all the time because of strikes by teachers.*

Ndaya (girl aged 17): *I liked my country because I had good friends at school in my country. So when my parents told me that we are coming here, I didn't like it, though things were very hard in my country and people were suffering. My father told me that there is good education in South Africa and he would get a good job to take good care of us. So we came here to join my other uncle who was here with his family before we came. We stayed with them for some months and then got our own place in town.*

The data excerpts above also support the assumptions of the human capital theory of migration. According to this theory, individuals migrate with the goal of maximizing benefits and gains in their destination countries. Also, in line with this theory, the participants' motivation for coming to South Africa is the hope for the better opportunities South Africa would offer them and the gain they would derive from such opportunities.

In addition, from the findings we learn that the participants' decision to choose South Africa as country of destination is influenced by the networks they already had in South Africa before their arrival. This is in line with the central argument of the network theory of migration. This theory holds that the existence of a diaspora or networks is likely to influence the decisions of migrants when they choose their destinations (Kurekova, 2011). The participants claimed they had relatives who were staying in South Africa before they arrived. One would argue here that the existence of family network of participants in South Africa not only influenced their choice of South Africa as

a destination country but also contributed to the ability of the participants to adapt and settle more quickly on their arrival in South Africa. This is evident in the participants' narratives.

Munia (girl aged 18): *My uncle and his family came to South Africa first. My father told us that he is going to South Africa because my uncle said he will help him to find a job in South Africa. He came first and got a job and decided to bring my mother, myself and my two sister here. We first arrived in Johannesburg and spent some weeks there with my uncle before we came to Durban to stay with my other uncle here. We now have our own house because my father and mother are working.*

### **7.1.2 Participants' accounts of their journey from home countries to South Africa**

The participants narrated how they came to South Africa and some aspects of their experiences in their journey to South Africa. The participants' narratives indicate two separate experiences, as some of the participants claimed they had a smooth and pleasant journey from their home countries to South Africa, while some others claimed they had ugly experiences on their way to South Africa. In their narratives, six out of the 12 participants said they came to South Africa in the company of an adult family member (parent, uncle or aunt) and five said that they came in the company of their parents' friends with the permission of their parents. One of the 12 participants said he was brought to South Africa by someone who promised to get him a job and help him find his uncle on arrival in South Africa. In their narratives, some of the participants said their journey to South Africa was smooth as they never had any ugly experience on the way.

One participant said that his journey to South Africa was quite pleasant as he flew from his country to South Africa in company of his parents and other siblings and they were received on arrival by his uncle and family.

*Kobedi (boy aged 17): I came here first on holidays two years before I came to start school in South Africa. I came with my parents and my brothers and sister. We took flight from Congo to South Africa. We first stayed with my uncle and his family. We have our own house where we are staying with my other uncle and my aunty. My uncle is working here and my aunty is a university student here. My parents are still in Congo, they are working there.*

The remaining participants said their journey to South Africa was by road. They narrated their experiences on their way. Nine of the 12 participants indicated in their narratives that their journey was smooth.

*Dingani (boy aged 16): I came here with my parents, and we took a bus from my country to the border. At the border they asked for our papers and we showed them and they left us to pass. We first arrived in Johannesburg before coming to Durban... We didn't have any problem on our way. My uncle told my father everything we must have so that we do not get into trouble with the police people at the border...*

Tshamala (girl aged 15): *My journey to South Africa was a good one. First of all, I was happy coming to South Africa. My uncle prepared well and we left home early. We stayed three days on our way before we got here. We had no problem on the way only that it was a very long journey.*

Bakome (boy aged 16): *We spent a long time on the road but I enjoyed it because we passed many cities and countries. We stayed like two days in the bus... I came with my mother and my other two brothers. It was a good experience because I saw many exciting things on the way. We stayed for a day in Johannesburg and my father came to Johannesburg from Durban to bring us here.*

On the other hand, two of the participants said that they had ugly experiences on their journey to South Africa. One of them in her narrative said her journey to South Africa was rough. She narrated the ugly experience she had on her way to South Africa.

Munia (girl aged 18): *My father came here first, and after I think two years he asked his friend to bring us to South Africa. Our journey to South Africa was too long and rough. We took different buses and passed many countries from Congo before we got to South Africa. We spent many days on the way before getting here. At some of the borders the security people didn't allow us to pass. They asked us to give them some money...we followed other ways to avoid security people, and this made our journey too long.*

Similarly, the other participant narrated how he was brought to South Africa by someone who promised him a job in South Africa and promised to help him locate his uncle in South Africa. He narrated the ugly experiences he had on his journey to South Africa.

Wemba (boy aged 18): *There was this man who came to my parents and told them that he will take me to South Africa to join my uncle and to work. He said that my parents should give him some money for my transportation, feeding and for taking me to South Africa. One month after, my parents gave him the money and we left my country to come to South Africa. We spent I think three weeks on the road before getting here because the man said we must not pass through the borders because I had no papers. We passed through some countries, and many bad things happened on the way. One of them I can remember now is that the truck we took was attacked by armed robbers... We were stranded with no money and no food for days. I don't even know how we managed to get here because I was thinking that we won't get here again. I think the man called someone who sent him money and we found ourselves in Johannesburg. When we got to Johannesburg, he told me that he has done his job and that he doesn't have money again to take me to my uncle. He took me to a place where they sell food and asked me to wait for him there and he never came back to check on me again. The owner of the place is also from my country. I stayed with him and worked there for some months before he helped me to find my uncle. I came to Durban with my uncle and we stayed with another Congolese, and my uncle said that I must start school.*

In line with the data excerpt above, Palmary (2009) notes that there are a good number of migrant children without their parents in South Africa from different African countries and many of these migrant children migrated for employment. The above data excerpt suggests that many of unaccompanied migrant children are voluntary migrants who migrated to South Africa for employment. Also, Kanics et al. (2010) maintain that child migration in Africa, as in many other parts of the world, mostly involves children who embark on migration as part of their household strategies for economic survival, or independently, particularly when households are no longer considered to be economically viable or able to take care of the children's basic needs. The participants in this study, coming as they did from countries with severe economic hardships, even though of them came to South Africa in the company of an adult family member, may have initially come to South Africa with the intention of working to make money as indicated in the data excerpts above.

Furthermore, the findings reveal the risks unaccompanied migrant children are exposed to in trying to reach their destinations and when they get to their destinations. Prominent of these is the risk of falling prey to child traffickers who cash in on their vulnerability to use them in making money. Ebigbo (2003) highlights that in many African countries, many children are victims of child trafficking and abduction where some of them have been taken from their homes to work as domestic workers, hawkers, vendors, mine, agricultural, manufacturing and industry workers. Many also are forced or lured to work as prostitutes in big cities. This is in line with the participant's narrative above on how he came to South Africa with the promises of a paid job, and his narrative of his experiences on arrival in South Africa.



## **7.2 EARLY CHALLENGES ON ARRIVAL IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The findings reveal that the participants in this study encountered a number of challenges on their arrival in South Africa as a result of their social identity as migrants, particularly regarding enrolment and acceptance in school. All 12 participants in this study claimed that they experienced challenges especially in enrolling in schools and adjusting to their new school environment on their arrival in South Africa. Findings reveal the challenges and limitations participants in this study encountered on arrival in South Africa, and are still encountering. Prominent among the challenges as the findings indicate are issues of immigration documentation, language barrier and cultural alienation in school.

### **7.2.1 Immigration documentation**

The study found that immigration documentation is among the major challenges that limits migrants from easy access to schooling and participation in school in South Africa. All 12 participants in this study claimed that immigration documentation was among major limitations in their easy access to schooling on their arrival in South Africa.

Dingani (boy aged 16) *“The first problem I had when I came to South Africa was that my mother found it difficult to get a school for me because schools wanted a permit not only a passport, and I didn’t have a permit.”*

Different democratic governments in South Africa since after apartheid regime in 1994 have been committed to the practices of international refugee protection (Crush & McDonald, 2001). This required South Africa to put in place an immigration system and policies that would accommodate the needs of increasing number of refugees coming into the country (Crush & McDonald, 2001). This suggest more liberal immigration policies and practices different from those of apartheid era South Africa. Furthermore, the idea of building an inclusive society suggests that everyone should be given more opportunities to function and take part in the economic, social, as well as cultural development of the country and self-actualization of individuals living in it. This goes to suggest that refugee and migrants should be offered immigration assistance on their arrival in South Africa to enable them to function and participate in the inclusive South African society. It therefore implies that issues of immigration documentation should cease to be an impediment for migrants/refugees in accessing education and other opportunities in South Africa CoRMSA (2008). Participants in this study, being migrant children, should benefit from this social inclusion.

Contrary to the above, the findings indicate that immigration challenges still remains one of the major difficulties/challenges that make the South African environment unwelcoming for migrant children. Participants in this study expressed their experiences of discriminations, exclusion and limitations on arrival in South Africa as a result of immigration documentation which denied them easy access to education and other social welfare.

Munia (girl aged 18) *“The time I came it was really hard for me to find school because I had no documents first of all. So my father had to search for documents for our status. I had to wait until I got a document. I went to look for a school but most of the schools I went to didn’t take me because I am a foreigner; I didn’t have ID document, a green ID or passport.”*

Also, the study found that even after enrolment in school, migrant learners in South Africa experience exclusion in extramural activities such as participating in sports competition as they are not allowed to represent their schools because of not possessing a South African Identity Document.

Wemba (boy aged 18) *“I have been refused to play for my school in some competitions outside my school because I am a foreigner; I do not have South African ID book.”*

Luboya (boy aged 17) *“There places you cannot participate because you do not have South African Identity Document (ID). I play soccer only in my school, and I am not allowed to play in competitions outside my school because I do not have South African ID.”*

In line with the above data excerpts, CoRMSA (2008) maintains that immigration laws and policies put migrants in South Africa in difficult situations by denying them basic rights and opportunities. Crush et al. (2005) maintain that immigration laws and policies are used to further perpetuate migrants’ exclusion and denial of vital opportunities. It is important that migrant children have access to education irrespective of their status. Without such access, they will likely spend time on

the street and are at risk of child labour Glind (2010). Furthermore, the international and domestic laws of most nations today, of which South Africa is one, endorse the right of children to basic education. The rights of the child as stipulated by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child clearly state that all children have the right to education (Adams, 2008). It therefore becomes important to offer children, local and migrants alike, opportunities to good education and training. This will enable them fit into the scope of things in the future as adults and contribute meaningfully to global economy (Adams, 2008; CoRMSA, 2008; Glind, 2010). On the contrary, the study found that migrant children in South Africa experience discrimination and limitation in the way they access education on arrival in the country. On the other hand, Adams (2008) highlights the need for host countries to come up with policies which would ensure the enrolment of migrant children into schools, but should as well include explicit provision for practical issues such as assistance with learning the language of the host countries, appropriate assessment of the migrant children's needs and protection from any form of discrimination. By this, migrant children's needs will be accommodated to enable their active social participation in South Africa, as well access opportunities such as education in the country.

### **7.2.2 Language barrier**

Furthermore, the findings reveal that language limitation is among the major challenges and limitations encountered by the study participants on their arrival in South Africa, especially participants from the DRC. Harris (2002) maintains that the inability of migrants to speak or communicate in the local language limits migrants' social participation in their new environment.

The findings indicate that the language barrier is a major limitation and challenge for migrants, especially newly arrived migrants in their countries/communities of destination. From the findings we learn that language barrier does hinder active participation of children in social space. In line with this, participants in this study claimed they still face limitations to proper participation in school and in South African communities due to their inability to communicate in local languages in school and in the communities where they live.

*Disanka (girl aged 17) “My problem when I first arrived in South Africa was that I couldn’t communicate with people around me especially at school because I didn’t learn English in primary school in my country. I started grade 3 here in South Africa, so it was difficult for me to communicate with people at school because I didn’t know English and Zulu.”*

The findings reveal that language posed another major challenge/limitation in enrolment of migrant learners in school in South Africa as participants in their narratives described how difficult it was to get enrolled in school as a result of their inability to communicate in IsiZulu, and in English (for participants from the DRC).

*Tshamala (girl aged 15) “It wasn’t easy for me to find and get into school when I first arrived in South Africa for studies. They didn’t accept me because I couldn’t speak English. I first went for interviews and they didn’t accept me. I was told to go and learn English before I can start school. It wasn’t really easy for me; it was very difficult. So I had to wait till the next year because I had to learn to speak English.”*

Also, findings reveal that the study participants encounter language barriers in school which hinders them from active social and academic participation in school.

Bakome (boy aged 16) *“Exam period used to be one of the most frightening times for me in school. I didn’t know how to write a word in English.... I used to know the answers but couldn’t write correctly in English.... I used to fail exams because of language.”*



**Picture 1:** Bakoma (boy aged 16) *“Photo of me and my classmates writing one of our term exams”*

Bakoma’s photo voice and narrative above show how language barriers put migrant learners at a disadvantaged position within the school geography. The participants’ inability to communicate in the local languages/languages of teaching and learning in school and their inability to properly participate in school as a result of language limitations all point to negative positioning of migrant learners within the school geographies (space and place) in South Africa. The participants in this sense see themselves as not inclusively positioned within the school. This goes further to highlight

that for the participants, their construction and conceptualization (meaning making) of the school space and place is influenced by the extent to which they experience inclusion or exclusion within the school's social, cultural and physical space. Thus, the absence of experiences of inclusion in the way they participate and relate with individuals in the school forms part of their negative positioning in school in South Africa.

Furthermore, the study found that the participants' inability to speak Zulu language is among the reasons the participants experience discrimination and ill-treatment from their local counterparts and their vulnerability to social exclusion within the school space and place. In this sense, they are not adequately captured within the school geography as their presence, social and academic participation in school become limited and sometimes hindered as a result of language limitations, as illustrated in Bakoma's photo voice above. The participants' social participation within the school space is partly determined by their ability or inability to communicate in the local languages. In other words, ability or inability to communicate in the local languages determines the level of acceptance they get from their local counterparts, as language in this sense is a vital tool for social participation and inclusion in the school social and physical space.

Furthermore, from the findings we learn that lack of proficiency in local languages still continues to be a major limitation to learning and participation of migrant learners who are still not proficient in the use of the languages of teaching and learning in schools in South Africa. In line with the findings in this study, a study on the newly arrived migrant and refugee children in British educational system by Ryan, D'Angelo, Sales, Rodriguez (2010), shows that language is the most obvious obstacle facing newly arrived learners. They argue that while migrant learners may pick

up spoken English relatively quickly, development of higher order fluency and advance level of understanding may take some time and require on-going language support.

*Tshamala (girl aged 15) “I’m still experiencing language problems in school somehow because there are words in English which I still do not know their meanings, and we use them in learning in class.”*

*Bakome (boy aged 16) “Some of the difficulties I encounter at school are like in the subjects we do, and also the language; Zulu and Afrikaans... also because of language, I couldn’t understand EMS because sometimes you write and sometimes you deal with numbers, so...it was just like confusing me. It is very difficult for me because of the language. Sometimes I know the correct answers if someone explains the questions for me but to write the answers down in English is another difficult thing to do because I do not know English.”*

The above data excerpts indicate that the Department of Education and schools in South Africa are not yet prepared enough to accommodate and to take care of the growing number of migrants in schools and classrooms in South Africa. This suggests that migrant learners’ positioning within the school social, cultural and academic spaces in South Africa will continue to be at the margin of school geography. This is more evident in the difficulties and challenges migrant learners encounter in school as a result of limited access, or even non-access, to languages of communication/teaching and learning in school as evident in the Bakoma’s photo voice above and in the participants’ narrative. According to CoRMSA (2008) language difficulty is one of the major challenges most migrant children face in their education in South Africa. In line with this, the study



found that there are no adequate resources in place to help migrant learners deal with limitations caused by the language barrier which limits or even hinders migrant learners' inclusive positioning in the school. This hinders migrant learners in school in South Africa from benefiting from the ideas and ideals of inclusion in the South African education system. On the other hand, a study on the Polish migrant children's experiences of schooling in Scotland by Moskal (2010), reveals that while language barrier is among the major challenges Polish migrant children face at schools in Scotland, schools have different strategies for addressing the integration of migrant children: some have developed specific language support while others tend to rely on their teachers' abilities to cope and on the Polish-speaking children. One would argue based on the findings in this study that South African schools are lacking in providing necessary support systems to enable migrant children cope with challenges they encounter at school.

Also, Parker et al. (2001) maintain that schools and classrooms in South Africa are expected to be inclusive where opportunities are given for proper and active participation of all learners from diverse backgrounds. This goes to suggest that every learner should be properly captured and positioned within the school geography in order to ensure an inclusive learning environment for diverse learners in school. It is important to note here that migrant learners in schools and classrooms in South Africa form part of this diversity. Therefore, their learning needs should as well be accommodated in line with the idea and ideals of the policy of inclusive system of education in South Africa. This can only be achieved where, as children and as social active participants, migrant learners' positioning within the school geography is positively and inclusively captured irrespective of their social backgrounds and identity. For this to happen, schools should provide support systems to assist migrant learners, especially those from non-

English speaking countries such as the DRC, to overcome barriers to learning and participation caused by lack of proficiency in the use of languages of communication/teaching and learning in school and in facing other challenges they face in school with the aim of ensuring proper participation in a socially just education system and school environment.

### **7.2.3 Cultural alienation in school**

The findings reveal that participants experience cultural alienation in school. All 12 participants in the study expressed experiencing cultural shock and alienation in school environment in South Africa.

Wemba (boy aged 18) *“One of the things that really made me to know that I am now in a different place and in a different school was... in the assembly the learners did not sing the national anthem. In Congo we sing the national anthem every morning after prayers. This made me feel so strange because those are the things I was used to at home which I didn't find...in school here.*

Culture forms a fundamental part of a person's life. Migrants face a major challenge of existing outside their cultural background as Fukuyama (2007) notes. Jegede and Aikenhead (1999) maintain that a people's culture is tied with their common and individual identities. Migrants, especially migrant children, feel disturbed by dealing with cultural alienation in their new social and cultural environment. This is evident in the findings. Adjusting to life in a new social and cultural environment is among the challenges migrant children face in their new environment

among other limitations. In line with this, Byron and Condon (2008) and Fukuyama (2007) observe that migrants undergo many challenging experiences particularly upon arrival in their destination. One of such challenges as identified by Fukuyama (2007) is adjusting to the culture in their new environment. Participants in this study face similar challenges as findings indicate that the participants experience cultural alienation in school. The participants in this sense understand the school space and place as strange and culturally complex and difficult to navigate.

All the 12 participants in the study claimed that they were overwhelmed by the huge cultural divide between how things are done in schools in their home countries and how things are done in schools in South Africa in terms of dressing, curriculum and programmes followed in schools, how people relate to one another in school etc.

Bakome (boy aged 16) *“My first day in school here was kind of difficult; I felt strange and I was afraid. It was so difficult... like back home we don't have two breaks; we only got one break but here we have two breaks, so it was difficult for me to manage time. The time table also confused me because.... back home when the bell rings, teachers have to follow us to our classes but here is the opposite.”*

According to Fukuyama (2007) migrants feel distanced from their roots as a result of a sense of cultural alienation which brings a feeling of isolation. Reconciling what is morally obtainable or not obtainable in their culture with their new culture becomes a big challenge. This is evident in the participants' narratives. All 12 participants in the study claimed that they experienced cultural

shock and battled to adjust to the schools' cultural and social environment in South Africa. Among the things they find strange include unfamiliar subjects and teaching methods as the findings indicate that among other things, the participants embrace the challenges of coping with new subjects and teaching methods which they see as strange and difficult to them.

Tshamala (girl aged 15) “...*there are some subjects we do here which I didn't do when I was in school at home; subjects like EMS, Life Orientation. But what I like was the movement around the activities.*”

Kazadi (boy aged 16) “...*there are differences between schooling in my country and schooling here. The teaching method is one of the differences...*”

The participants being children and active social participants, cultural alienation in school space and place may suggest non-active social participation in school cultural and social space. In line with this, Jenks (2005) argues that childhood is a social rather than a biological phenomenon which varies between social groups, societies and historical periods. This assumption by Jenks is evident in the participants' experiences of cultural alienation in school in South Africa. As children and migrants, their ability and or inability to negotiate and navigate an unfamiliar social setting determines how active or inactive they become in the schools' social and cultural space and place. It also has influences how the participants construct their positioning within the school in South Africa as inclusive or exclusive – how they feel in or out of the school social and cultural landscape. Therefore, the participants' experiences of cultural alienation in school gives rise to

their sense of exclusion and of being positioned outside the school geography both in curriculum and in practices in school.

Furthermore, Jegede and Aikenhead (1999) maintain that migrants are faced with many different challenges and limitations in the host countries, especially when they newly arrive in their destinations. The challenges, as already discussed above form part of limitations migrant learners face in their schooling in South Africa which places them at the margin of the school geography. CoRMSA (2011) highlights that access to basic education is a positive right guaranteed by Section 29 of the South African Constitution. CoRMSA (2011) goes further to highlight that basic education is a right accorded to all children without any discrimination – irrespective of availability/unavailability of resources or other constraints. It envisages a level of access in line with the recommendation of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in its 2006 report on the Rights of Noncitizens, that “educational institutions must be accessible to everyone without discrimination, within the jurisdiction of a State party.”

However, despite these provisions, the findings reveal that migrant children in South Africa often find it difficult or perhaps unable to access the public education system in the country due to immigration documentation and their inability to speak local languages. These are as a result of their social position as migrants. To ensure that the principle of diversity and social integration are in place in schools, and for schools to be spaces and places for promoting social diversity, migrant children should be allowed to access school without any hindrance based on immigration status, language proficiency or their social identity as migrants. Equal opportunities should be given to all learners in school regardless of identity backgrounds. This can only be achieved where learners

are inclusively and positively positioned within the school space and place and where they construct their positioning in the same light.

### **7.3 “...RESOURCES IN SCHOOL HERE ARE BETTER THAN IN MY COUNTRY”**

#### **School access resources here and at home**

One of the driving forces behind migration is access to resources and better life. Thus, there is a natural tendency for people to move to places or destinations with promises of better opportunities and better standard (Cohen, 2006). People therefore move where they think have more to offer them in terms of access to economic opportunities and where facilities are available and standard. This is in line with the assumptions of the neoclassical theory of migration. According to this theory, migration is stimulated by rational economic considerations or relative benefits and costs, mostly financial but also psychological (Kurekova, 2011). The theory goes further to assume that migration is motivated by the desire for individual maximization, based on rational comparison of relative costs and benefits of remaining at home (Castles, 2010). In this sense, migrants consider and compare opportunities and facilities in their home countries to opportunities and facilities available in their countries of destination. Facilities such as health and education are most considered in this case, even where they are not the main reason for migration (Muniz et al., 2010). The participants in this study compared the standard of education in South Africa to what they were used to in their home countries.

Furthermore, according to the new economics of migration theory, migration decisions are made not by isolated individual actors but typically by families or households, and decisions of migration

are influenced by a comprehensive set of factors which are shaped by conditions in the home country (Kurekova, 2011). This is true in most cases of child migration as this is evident in the reasons some of the participants in this study gave for coming to South Africa. In line with this, one of the participants in his narrative said that the decision for coming to South Africa was made by his parents, and they considered the standard of education in South Africa better than standard of education in his home country. Similarly, other participants highlighted in their narratives and photo voice on the huge difference that exists between their countries and South Africa in terms of facilities available in schools.

Disanka (girl aged 17) *“...back home, we do not have the same facilities like we have in the school I attend here in South Africa; the resources, the equipment. Here we have these facilities and I am able to work with them and they help me in my studies. We have teachers who are specialists in different subjects and there are also facilities in terms of resources to help in studies.”*



**Pictures 2 and 3:** Kazadi (boy aged 16) *“The photos show our classroom and our school computer lab. I am getting quality education here because my school has everything for*

*good education. We have good classrooms and good computer lab, science lab and library and projectors in our classes. We do not have these in my country.”*

Kazadi’s photo voice above suggest that participants, apart from having access to better standard of living in South Africa, they have also had the opportunity to experience a better standard of education than what they were used to in their home countries.. Kazadi used her photo voice above to illustrate how education in South Africa is better than education in her home country. In comparing facilities and resources available in schools in South Africa and in the DRC, all participants from the DRC agreed that schools in South Africa have more facilities than schools in their home country.

Luboya (boy aged 17) “*...high school learners here in South Africa have access to computers but there in Congo we did not have access to technology.”*

Ndaya (girl aged 17) “*In schools here there are many clubs that are interesting to belong to and participate in. In terms of building, South African schools are more constructed than schools in my home country. They have nice schools to go to; they have nice classrooms, chalkboards and chairs but in my country everything is poor.”*

Munisa (girl aged 18) “*One thing in South Africa is that even learners in schools have access to library where they can go and read. So I can say that the resources here are better than in my country.”*





**Picture 4:** Disanka (girl aged 17) *“In this photo we are doing science practical in our science laboratory”*

Disanka (girl aged 17) *“My school has a lot of resources that help us in our studies.... My school here has more resources than the school I used to attend in my country.”*

Kazadi and Disanka’s photo voice above highlight the aspects of the participants’ schooling experiences that are positive. The participants’ experiences of quality and better education in South Africa is an indication that inasmuch as they encounter some challenges in school as migrants, schooling in South Africa offers them the opportunity to better education. One would argue here that experiences of better education is an indication that the participants enjoy inclusion in the school space and place, contrary to their narratives of experiences of exclusion. Again, experiences of better and quality education does also suggest that the participants’ enjoy inclusive and positive positioning within the school geography. In other words, they feel in in certain aspects of their schooling experiences. This also goes to suggest that the participants do not totally feel not out or at the margin of the school space and place as portrayed in their narratives of experiences

of social exclusion within the school space. Again, one would also that there are elements of both inclusion and exclusion in the way they experience the school space and place in South Africa.

Moreover, participants from the DRC in their narratives compared schooling in South Africa to schooling in their home country not only in terms of facilities and resources available in the schools in South Africa which are not available in schools in their home country, they also compared the standard of education in terms of teaching and learning and opportunities schooling in South Africa has offered them.

Ndaya (girl aged 17) *“Here in South Africa, we learn theory and practical together.*

Tshamala (girl aged 15) *“...there are extra activities that help encourage the students and increase our marks; like we have sports, and we had camping this year. Also do school drama and debate. These activities help keep people focused and help increase their marks.”*

On the other hand, all participants from Zimbabwe claimed that apart from the infrastructure and resources available in South African schools, the standard of education in their home country is better in terms of academics and extramural activities such as sports.

Sande (girl aged 17) *“I was expecting to learn many things when I come to school in South Africa but there are a lot of things that the teachers do not teach us especially things about my country and other countries. In Zimbabwe we used to do a lot of sports at school and we do other things like cultural events... I was expecting to do more of such things here but we*

*do not have many sports here to do at school... the school I go to do not have sports ground. The school I was attending in Zimbabwe has big sports ground and we do many different sports at school.”*

Akhumzi (boy aged 17) *“In my country they teach us many things in school and when I came here to South Africa I did not find it difficult to adapt in subjects like Maths, Biology and in Geography. In South Africa, grades 10 and 11 are like grade 9 in my country. In my country we are ahead of South African schools in the subjects.”*

Dingani (boy aged 16) *“Some of the subjects we are doing in grade 8 here are what I did when I was in grade 5 in my country, and the standard at home is more than the standard here.”*

However, the participants are divided in their opinion on the standard of education they get in South Africa to what they were used to in their home countries. Participants from the DRC claimed they receive better standard of education in South Africa, while those from Zimbabwe maintained that, though schools in South Africa have more resources, the standard in Zimbabwe in terms of academics and extramural activities is better. On the other hand, all the 12 participants in the study agreed that schools in their countries are better in terms of discipline. The participants' narratives showed that learners in their home countries have respect for teachers and school authorities. They highlighted in their narratives that this is not the same with learners in South African schools. Participants from the DRC in their narratives described the level of respect learners in DRC have

for teachers. They stated that learners respect and fear teachers in the same way they respect their parents at home. They added that learners in South Africa do not have such respect for teachers.

Luboya (boy aged 17) *“In Congo learners, no matter what grade they may be have respect for their teachers and fear them. No learner dares a teacher or disrespects a teacher. We respect teachers like we respect our parents at home but here in South Africa learners do not regard their teachers and do not have any respect for them.”*

Similarly, all participants from Zimbabwe claimed in their narratives that learners in Zimbabwe have more respect and regards for teachers than learners in South Africa.

Dingani (boy aged 16) *“Learners in Zimbabwe are respectful and responsible. Learners do not talk to teachers with disrespect, and do not fail to listen to them. South African learners are different, they do not have respect for teachers even the principal. They do whatever they want in school.”*

The above data excerpts indicate the extent of difference between these South African school contexts and school contexts in home countries of the study participants. In this sense, the study participants feel strange in the way they experience the schooling space and place in South Africa in this respect. Being children, values and behaviours the participants consider unfamiliar and unacceptable do impact on their construction (meanings making) of the school social and cultural space, and their active participation and integration in school social and cultural geography which

in turn impact on their schooling experience. Prout and James (1979) argue that children's lives will be markedly different in differing times and places and in differing circumstances.

In addition, the participants claimed they are not given the opportunity in school to learn about their countries and cultures. The participants claimed that teachers only teach them things about South Africa. All the 12 participants also claimed that they are not provided with the platform to exhibit their cultures/cultural heritage and identity in school. The participants further expressed that teachers teach them only things about South Africa, about Europe and America and do not teach them about their home countries. This also indicates that the participants may not be properly included in some aspects of the school geography especially in what the teachers teach in class and probably in some other aspects of their schooling in South Africa.

*Tshamala (girl aged 15) "Here, our teachers only teach things about South Africa, Europe and America. They do not even mention DRC because they don't like DRC, and I feel so bad about this because they feel that in DRC there is only war but in DRC, war is not everywhere."*

*Dingani (boy aged 16) "...we do not learn much about Zimbabwe. Sometimes in History and Geography they teach us little about other countries and talk a little about Zimbabwe; how the white people came and took over the land."*

*Disanka (girl aged 17) "I do not learn anything about where I come from in school, and I am not given the opportunity to show my cultures and let other learners know a little bit of*

*my culture and tradition. It is like I am being forced to be Zulu by learning only things about South Africa and Zulu people and life.... I feel somehow neglected because I like to learn and know more about my country, culture and people not minding that I am in a foreign land."*

The participants in their narratives claimed that in their countries they learn things about other countries in Africa and about the world, unlike schools here in South Africa. Participants from Zimbabwe claimed that in schools in Zimbabwe learners do not only learn things about Zimbabwe they also learn things about other countries in African. Similarly, participants from the DRC said that in Congo they do not only learn things about their country, teachers teach them things about other countries in Africa and in the world. Therefore, by not being taught about their countries and not being given the opportunity to exhibit their cultural heritage in school, the participants feel left out. This is an indication that the participants do not only see themselves in the school social and cultural space, they also do not see themselves in some aspects of the curriculum through what they learn in class and extracurricular activities in school.

Narratives of the participants from the DRC in comparing schooling in South Africa to schooling in their home country showed that they gain a lot by schooling in South Africa given that the standard of education in South Africa is better than the standard in their country. Secondly, from the findings we learn that schooling here offered them the opportunity and exposure to diverse cultures and people from within and outside South Africa which they claimed have made their schooling experience rich and fulfilling in this respect. Though participants from Zimbabwe claimed they had better standard of education in Zimbabwe in terms of academics, they as well

agreed that they benefit a lot from schooling in South Africa because of the availability of resources and infrastructure present in South African schools which are not the same in schools in Zimbabwe. They also claimed that they have benefitted from the exposure they get from meeting and interacting with people from diverse cultural and racial backgrounds.

#### **7.4 “INDEPENDENT AND FOCUSED”: Migrant learners’ responses to improved South African schooling resources**

Migration brings about mobility of cultures from one cultural location to another (Dobrowolsky & Tastsoglou, 2006). By this, people of different cultures become aware of other cultures in existence which they might not have known (Castles, 2004). All 12 participants in this study claimed to have acquired knowledge about different peoples and their cultures. Inasmuch as the participants may have found South African cultural expression strange, the findings indicate that they certainly have learnt and are still learning from them. The participants claimed to be in the position to live and relate better with people of different cultures and ideologies.

Kazadi (boy aged 16) *“Being a migrant means that I have travelled, and have seen many things and I have met many people and experienced a lot in life more than many of my mates who have not travelled outside their homes, so I have better understanding of things and how to live with people from different places more than many of my mates in school. I think this has helped me in the achievements I have made in school.”*

The participants also claimed that they find it nice learning and doing things in a totally new way different from what they were used to in their home countries.

Bakome (boy aged 16) *“I find it nice to experience different ways of learning and doing things and I try my best to fit into this new ways of doing things and learning which I am not used to, like getting used to a curriculum that is different from what I was used to in Congo. So I work so hard to fit into the new environment here.”*

Wemba (boy aged 18) *“My experiences in school are quite good. I enjoy the subjects that I do and the teaching methods. They keep me focused and encourage me to work hard...”*

The findings also reveal that the participants developed to become more self-reliant as a result of their social positioning and challenges they face as migrants. In line with this, Suarez-Orozco, Rhodes and Milburn (2009) are of the view that a key factor in enhancing the academic performance of students is what they refer to as academic self-efficacy. This is a belief that one is competent and in control of his learning. Suarez-Orozco, Rhodes and Milburn (2009) further maintain that higher academic self-efficacy and relational academic engagement in turn leads to higher academic performance. This is true in the way the participants capitalized on their positioning in school to develop resilience in the midst of the challenges they encounter. The participants in this sense, work hard and able to develop positive spirit and attitude towards their learning and participation in school as evident in their narratives. Again, the study found that the participants realised that they need to put more efforts in order to overcome the challenges and limitations they encounter as migrants, and this has helped them to achieve high performances



both in their academics and extracurricular activities in school. The participants in their narratives described how being migrant learners has helped them to work very hard so as to be the best in school.

Kasadi (boy aged 16) *“...knowing that I am a foreigner in my school makes me to work too hard so that I can shine more than other learners in my class, and I am always among the best in class.”*

Disanka (girl aged 17) *“My experiences in school here is that I have learnt to survive and I have learnt through struggles which has encouraged me into growing more and more every day and learning new things.”*

Munia (girl aged 18) *“Schooling in South Africa has offered me quite a lot because of facilities and opportunities here. I do many things in school not just academics alone but in many other things that require the use of skills and other abilities to do...like I learn computer at school and I have become very good in computer. These skills and abilities I have developed will help me in whatever career I may find myself in the future.”*

Luboya (girl aged 17) *“What I like most in schooling here is that schools here have facilities that help and encourage learners to read and perform well in school. I have gained a lot from the facilities in school, they help me to improve in Maths and in Sciences... another thing is that there are other activities that help us remain focused and they increase the way we communicate with others...I can communicate better with people now than before”*

The above data excerpts indicate in the participants' perspective that being migrants has stimulated them to work hard and excel in school both in academics and in extracurricular activities. As a result, they perform outstandingly in school.

Luboya (boy 17) *"I do well in sports and in my subjects and the whole school know me for that. They say that foreigner is good in everything...I am proud of myself for that."*

Akhumzi (boy aged 17) *"I have won several trophies for myself and for my school. I feel proud for this."*

The data above illustrate that despite the challenges the participants face as migrant learners in school they continue to record and maintain remarkable achievements. One thing significant is their ability to navigate the school landscape in the midst of the challenges they encounter in school as migrants. In line with this, Heckmann (2008) highlights that migrant children of Asian and Indian origin in the United Kingdom tend to be overachievers in school and perform better than their local counterparts. This goes to suggest that social and economic contexts and situation do contribute in the way migrant children perform in their countries of destination. Also, the educational systems, policies, curriculum, teaching methods and resources available do also contribute to academic performance of migrant learners. These are evident in the participants' account of their academic performance in school as indicated in their narratives and photo voice above. One would argue that better educational infrastructure, curriculum, resources and teaching methods in South African schools may have contributed to the participants' academic performance

in school. The participants in their narratives and photo voice above illustrated the benefits they gain from having access to better infrastructure, teaching and learning resources in school which they were not used to in their home countries. One would agree at this point that available resources and infrastructure in South African schools is among the factors that enhance the participants' academic performance in school. We learn from the findings that they are motivated by their social positioning as migrants, and they also draw encouragement from one another and from their parents.

Luboya (boy aged 17) *"...my parents told me that I must work hard to do well in my studies and every other thing that I do so that I can get opportunities like South Africans do because I am not from here. My parents encourage me a lot and that is why I do well in sports and in my subjects."*

Disanka (girl aged 17) *"I have won trophies for academic achievements and for sports. I do well in my studies and in sports.... My parents motivate me a lot..."*

As the participants face similar experiences, challenges and limitations as a social group in school they also work together strongly as a group to overcome these challenges and limitations by helping and encouraging each other, and by maintaining a positive personal and social image both as individual learner and a social group in school. This explains why the participants are able to navigate the social space in school in the midst of the challenges and limitations they encounter as migrant learners. The participants' sense of interdependence as individuals and as a social group

in school, and the encouragement and assistance drawn from such relationships, is evident in their narratives.

Kazadi (boy aged 16) *“I try to help other learners who foreigners are in school with English... foreigners who are new in school and in this country...I got help from other learners from Congo when I was new here. They helped me with English and in subjects that were strange to me. I can say that we help ourselves and that is why we do well in school”*

Disanka (girl aged 17) *“We prove to them that being a foreigner is not a limitation, it makes us work too hard and to put more energy in what we can do and do it well because we help ourselves to compete with South Africans to get a place here.”*

Furthermore, the findings reveal that the participants have gained a lot from living and schooling in South Africa. One of the major benefits they have gained from schooling in South Africa is the opportunity and exposure to various cultures and ways of life of different peoples as already mentioned above. From the findings we learn that migration exposes migrants to different cultures and ways of life of different peoples especially those of the host communities/countries.

Ndaya (girl aged 17) *“What I like about South Arica and schooling in South Africa is that there are many people here of different colours and from different places. I learn a lot from staying and interacting from people who are not from the same place as me. This is one thing that I did not have in Congo.*

The data above illustrates that the participants are able to move beyond limitations/challenges they encounter to actively navigate school space and place to learn and adjust to different cultures in school. This they do by maintaining a positive social identity as a group and by integrating themselves into the school social space.

From the findings we learn that migrants gain knowledge and experiences from interacting with people from diverse backgrounds. By this, they learn new languages and new cultures/ways of life, and get informed about many other different aspects of diversity such as different belief systems. In this sense, Migration in this sense is a form of education, where knowledge is acquired through social interaction with people from diverse backgrounds. In line with this, Pries (2006) maintains that migrants benefit from the exposure they get from migration as it develops their minds and widens their horizons. In the case of the participants in this study, the findings reveal that despite the challenges the participants encounter at school and in the wider South African society as migrants, they still find it rewarding to live and school in South Africa as they learn and do things in a totally new way. The participants also have the opportunity to learn new languages, which form part of their schooling experiences in South Africa.

On the other hand, study on the impact of migrant children in Glasgow schools by Dillon (2013), shows that not only migrant learners benefit from interaction and exposure to different cultures and languages in their countries of destination. The study reveals that local/native learners do also benefit from the presence of migrant learners in their schools and classrooms. This is because cultural awareness increase amongst local/native learners as a result of having migrant classmates

and schoolmates who in effect impart an alternative world view on their peers and increase awareness of languages and cultures. Dillon (2013) maintains that migrant children are uniquely positioned to educate their peers and teachers about the world. Drawing on the above, one would argue that the presence of participants in their schools has positive impacts as their teachers and local counterparts are equally exposed to the cultures and languages the participants bring to school, thereby creating a more culturally diverse school environment.

## **7.5 CONCLUSION**

The themes from the findings discussed above reveal that migrant learners experience different forms of challenges and limitations on their arrival in South Africa. Issues of immigration documentation, language barrier and cultural alienation are identified in this study as being among major challenges that limit migrant children's access to schooling and proper participation in school in South Africa. These suggest that migrant learners in schools in South Africa are not properly and inclusively positioned within the school geography in South Africa, which entails negative schooling experiences for the migrant learners in South Africa. On the other hand, from the findings we learn that there are aspects of the participants' positioning within the school space and place that are positive. These are that they are exposed to better facilities in schools and a better standard of education in South Africa than what they were used to in their home countries. Secondly, they have opportunities of learning from interacting with people from different cultural, religious and racial backgrounds. This also suggests their positive and inclusive positioning with the school space and place. This type of exposure, I see as a form of education; the participants not only learn about other peoples' cultures and ways of life, they also learn new languages by

living and interacting with diverse groups in school and in communities where they live in South Africa.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **“A ‘KWERE-KWERE’ IN MY SCHOOL”: MIGRANT LEARNERS’ SCHOOLING EXPERIENCES IN SOUTH AFRICA**

#### **8.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter further presents emerging themes from the findings in this study with focus on the participants’ social experiences in school in South Africa. This study employed narrative data analysis as indicated in chapter seven above. In making use of narrative analysis in this study, data collected through story accounts, interview and photo voice processes were transcribed and coded to give specific meanings to different information gathered. The study is designed in a way that enabled active and full participation of the study participants. And I carefully decided on the methodological approach and research design employed in this study in order to achieve an objective analysis of the data collected.

Through reflecting on the data collected, specific gaps were filled by collecting additional data. Codes were assigned to interesting bits and pieces of data to break down data into pieces based on reflections around different topics or themes that make up my study. This is to interpret and make sense of what is in the data. It is important to mention here that this process was also employed in arriving on the themes that were discussed in chapter seven above.



Also, consistent with thematic analysis of data, all the ideas discussed in this chapter emerged from the findings in this study. Various themes emerged as I worked with the statements of the participants on their schooling experiences in South Africa with regards to the critical questions of the study. Transcripts were developed from each step in the process of data collection. In the analysis of the transcripts, common themes emerged frequently in relation to the study focus and the critical questions of the study. This chapter therefore presents themes and discussions on the social aspects of the participants' schooling experiences in South Africa which define their positioning within the school geography.

Schools sometimes could be power-laden places of oppression and discrimination based on differences in learner identities, where various power dynamics play out – where power is contested and negotiated among learners in school. In this sense, school geographies (spaces and places) can be safe or unsafe, inclusive or exclusive for learners, thus forming the geographies of learners within the schooling context. The question here becomes what constitutes safe or unsafe, and inclusive or exclusive school space and place. I understand a safe and inclusive school space and place to be where learners feel protected from any form of abuse; physically, emotionally and psychologically in the way they are positioned, and where they construct their positioning within the school space and place irrespective of identities and abilities. In other words, positive positioning in the school space and place. On the other hand, I understand an unsafe school space and place to mean where learners experiences psychological abuse and physical attack as a result of their positioning in the school. The findings in this study unveils aspects of the participants'

schooling experiences that make the school space and place either safe and inclusive or unsafe and exclusive.

Under this chapter, discussions on the following themes are presented: “They” think...’We’ are not clever...” (Stereotypical constructions of African migrants in the school; “About how I feel... A kwere-kwere in the school” (migrant learners’ experiences of xenophobia in the school; “I hate it when learners call me kwere-kwere” \*the negative effects of xenophobia on migrant learners’ education); “Some teachers and learners treat me nicely...other hate seeing and reject foreigners” (dynamics of support and rejection of migrant learners in the school); “We know we are different from them” (sense of inclusion and exclusion in the school – the ‘them’ and the ‘us’ dynamics).

### **8.1 “THEY THINK... ‘WE’ ARE NOT CLEVER...” Stereotypical constructions of African migrants in the school**

The findings reveal the impact of stereotypes on the participants’ schooling experiences in South Africa. The impact of stereotyping on the participants’ schooling experiences may influence the way the participants’ understanding of the school as space and place laden with experiences of exclusion and hostility. In this sense, school may be unsafe for them as migrants as a result of negative ideas about migrants in school in South Africa. All 12 participants in this study claimed that they suffer negative experiences from the stereotyping and negative ideas about African migrants in school.

Sande (girl aged 17) *“They think foreigners are the ones doing the stealing in their country. They tell us that we steal their things.”*

Disanka (girl aged 17) *“Teachers in my school look down on foreigners and because we cannot speak English and Zulu they think we are not clever and we cannot do well in class”.*

In line with the above data excerpts, Harris (2002), maintains that migrants often encounter the challenges of negative experiences of stereotyping in their host countries/communities. This is true of the participants' experiences of stereotyping in school and in the larger South African communities. We learn from the findings that locals of host communities/countries of migrants have certain rigid ideas about migrants in their communities/countries. These ideas may sometimes be positive or negative. According to Harris (2002) stereotyping can cause and have actually caused migrants great affliction in the host communities and countries. This is evident in the findings as many of the participants claimed they are hated, intimidated, physically and verbally abused by their local counterparts in school as a result of what they think or even heard about migrants in their communities. The findings reveal that the participants suffer mistreatment at school which have negative psychological impact on their wellbeing. This is as a result of the ideas that South African teachers and learners have about migrant learners in school in South Africa. Negative ideas about migrants in school make the school's social and physical space and place psychologically and physically hostile and unsafe for migrants learners as already mentioned above. As a result, the participants see their positioning within the school space and place as the

most vulnerable group in the school. They construct their positioning within the school space and place as negative in this respect.

The findings indicate that the participants may as well suffer the negative impact of stereotyping in the larger South African society as African migrants. Furthermore, from the findings we learn that negative stereotypes about migrants in their host communities/countries certainly make them feel physically unsafe and psychologically depressed. Harris (2002) argues that discrimination, violence and xenophobic tendencies targeted against migrants in many of their host countries limit their freedom socially and psychologically.

Dingani (boy aged 16) *“People of South Africa say that foreigners in their country are here to steal and to take their jobs and wives. They think that foreigners are the cause of crime here; they are here to increase crime which is not a good thing.”*

According to Adams (2008) many African migrant families in South Africa encounter varying degrees of bias, racism, rejection, and stereotypes from locals. This treatment affects the emotional and psychological well-being of these migrants. In line with this, the findings indicate that the participants in this study consistently experience negative stereotyping in school as migrants. The participants in their narratives expressed the type of stereotyping they experience in school as a result of their identity as migrants and the negative effects such stereotypes have on their performance in class.

Ndaya (girl aged 17) *“....when something happens and they make you guilty when you are not guilty, and you will say to yourself that they don't believe in me, I was not guilty but they made me guilty. You will be thinking like this teacher doesn't like me, doesn't like foreigners. So, every time the teacher comes to teach I won't understand properly what the teacher will be teaching because I don't like the teacher. So, it has been affecting my schooling.”*

The above data excerpts indicate negative schooling experience in the way participants are positioned in schools in South Africa as a result of their social position in school as migrant learners. Negative and false ideas about migrant learners in schools in South Africa by teachers and learners at individual level reduce their self-confidence/esteem thereby impacting negatively on their understanding of the school space and place in South Africa and participation in school.

Disanka (girl aged 17) *“At first being a foreigner in this country didn't bother me much but it did bother when they started to judge me and started to say bad things about us, and that affected and really lowered my confidence; my self-esteem being here in South Africa. There is still stereotype around being a foreigner in my school ... I think what causes these experiences is the stories that people hear on TV.”*

Kabedi (boy aged 17) *“What I dislike most is what South African learners think and say about us because we are foreigners. They think we are different from them, and say that we are not clever because we do not speak their language, and we cannot do well in school. The teachers also have failed to understand us. They think we like to always fight and do not do*

*well in studies. So, any time there is any problem in school they will say it is caused by foreigners.”*

In line with the above, CoRMSA (2008) notes that negative treatment such as stereotype and resulting prejudice towards migrants by South Africans makes it difficult for migrant children to develop a positive personal identity. The study found that the impact of negative stereotyping about migrant learners in school in South Africa not only affects the way migrant learners relate with others as well as their performance in school but also limits or even erodes migrant learners' social space within the school geography. It also makes them vulnerable to psychological abuse and physical attack, creating physically unsafe and psychologically unhealthy schooling space and place for migrants in school. As a result, the participants in their narratives claimed that they are hardly or even wrongly understood by teachers and fellow learners who already have rigid ideas about them and hate them as a result of false ideas they have about migrants.

Wemba (boy aged 18) *“There are teachers, who think that foreigners have come to disturb them in their school, and there are so many things I remember and I think of going back to my country, things like hatred South Africans have for us because we come from African countries, and what they think about us...”*

Disanka (girl aged 17) *“Some teachers in my school think foreigners cannot do well in anything...”*

According to Children's Geographies children are active social participants who through their active participation and engagement with the social space and place are able to make meanings of their new environment. Thus, the meanings children make from their environment is determined by how inclusive or exclusive they see themselves participate in the environment. This accounts for their daily experiences as active social participants and meanings making agents in the environment. In the case of the participants in this study, being children who make meanings of their environment (school space and place), negative experiences of school social and physical spaces as a result of negative ideas about them indicates lack of proper participation or even nonparticipation in school space and place. Furthermore, experiences of mistreatment from the locals make migrant learners to perceive themselves as being positioned as the 'other' and vulnerable within the school social and physical space and place. Thus, the participants' construct their positioning in school as the 'other', both physically and psychologically within the school space and place.

## **8.2 “ABOUT HOW I FEEL... A KWERE-KWERE IN MY SCHOOL”: Migrant learners’ experiences of xenophobia in the school**

### **8.2.1 School-based experiences of xenophobia**

The findings reveal that all 12 participants in this study experience xenophobia and sense of isolation and exclusion from their local counterparts in school who see them as different. Adjai and Lazaridis (2013), see xenophobia as attitudes, prejudices and behaviour that reject, exclude and often vilify persons, based on the perception that they are outsiders or foreigners to the community, society or national identity. In the case of South Africa, Marcos (2010) maintains that xenophobia in South African context is not just an attitude, it is an activity; a violent practice that results in bodily harm and damage. This is true in the way the participants experience xenophobia in school and in communities in South Africa. The findings reveal that the participants experience both physical assaults and verbal abuse from their local counterparts in school who see and treat them differently because of their social identity and position as migrants. This influences how the participants understand the school space and place as an unsafe social and physical environment with experiences of exclusion and mistreatment.



Wemba (boy aged 18) “...at school they always like to make trouble with foreigners in school. The learners from here take our things without our permission and if we try to resist them, they will show us knife and we become defenceless and speechless.”

Tshamala (girl aged 15) “Even at school, you can just hear them when they say that you are Congolese and they start laughing at you, and they don’t want to see you and they start throwing some stuff at you.”

Munia (girl aged 18) “Learners and even teachers at school do not treat me with respect. Learners at school call me names that I do not like, and they treat me like a foreigner, they give me names that I do not like and I do not know the meaning.”



**Picture 5:** Tshamala (girl aged 15) “*Photo of our school tuckshop*”

The photo above illustrates the participants' experiences of hostility in school. The photo reveals how unfriendly the school space and place is for migrant learners resulting in the participants' understanding of the school as a place with experiences of hostility and mistreatment.

Tshamala (girl aged 15) “... *I do not come to our school tuckshop to buy during break... whenever I come here learners call me names and irritate me by the way they behave to me... those who sell things here know that I am a foreigner and they do not talk to me with respect*”

Tshamala's photo voice and narrative above suggests that xenophobic behaviour and attacks towards foreigners in South Africa is not only carried out in the streets and in communities, but also present in schools. The above photo voice goes further to reveal that the participants not only experience isolation and discrimination/exclusion in school, they also experience hostilities and abuse from their local counterparts in school in the form of name calling, physical attack and threat.

Furthermore, the study found that many of the participants experienced physical attacks in school premises by local learners because they are foreigners. This means an unsafe school physical and social space and place for the participants.

Sande (girl aged 17) *”Break time is...a bad time for me, some learners tease me by calling me names and looking for a way to provoke me, and I hardly sit in...open space...because they will come and make trouble with me.”*

Some of the participants in their photo voice also showed places in school where they have been attacked by local learners because they are foreigners.



**Pictures 6 and 7: Munia (girl aged 18) *“These two photos show places I always fear to go because I have been attacked in these places”***

*Munia (girl aged 18) “...learners attacked me once in the toilet and behind our school main building because they said I am a kwere-kwere. I fear being attacked again... they always tell me that they hate seeing me in school because I am a kwere-kwere. They threaten me by always telling me that they will beat me up.”*

Munia in her photo voice illustrates how unhappy and scared she feels coming to school because of the ill-treatment and threats she receives at school for being a foreigner.



**Picture 8:** Munia (girl aged 18) *“This is a photo of a place I hate to come but must come every day to get education.”*

Munia’s photos above reveal the participants’ experiences of hostility and sense of insecurity within the school physical space and place. This results to the participants identifying the school space and place with experiences of physical bullying and psychological abuse from their local counterparts.

Munia (girl aged 18) *“I do not feel happy coming to school because I know some learners and some teachers do not want me in school because I am a foreigner. When I see our school*

*gate and our school buildings I feel scared and unhappy because I know I'm not safe... learners call me names and treat me badly in school."*

Disanka (girl aged 17) *"South African learners do not treat us the same way they treat themselves...I feel rejected, and some learners and teachers are xenophobic in the way they relate to you as a foreigner; a kwere-kwere in school ...what makes me sad is basically rejection."*

From Munia's photo voice and the participants' narratives above, we learn that some physical spaces such as the school toilets and other hidden places in the school are unsafe for migrant learners as participants claimed they have been physically attacked or verbally abused in these places by other learners. The participants in this sense, understand their positioning within the school space and place as vulnerable to physical attack and psychological abuse as a result of xenophobic tendencies towards them by their local counterparts.

Furthermore, in trying to illustrate the dynamics of xenophobia in South Africa, Harris (2002) used the isolation and bio-cultural hypotheses to unpack the causes of xenophobia and the ways in which xenophobia is portrayed in South Africa. Harris' isolation hypothesis can be used to further explain the participants' experiences of xenophobic tendencies and mistreatment in school as a result of the false ideas that teachers and learners have about migrant learners in school. In line with Harris' isolation hypothesis, the participants are misunderstood and misjudged by teachers and learners as a result of their social positioning in school as the 'unknown'. In a similar way, Harris' bio-cultural hypothesis, suggest that the inability of migrant learners to speak local

languages and the differences that exist in their cultures and value systems with that of their local counterparts influence the participants' social positioning in school. In this case, they are constructed as the 'other' by their local counterparts. This because teachers and learners like any other South African, would construct migrants in school as the 'other'.

One of the hypothesis used by Harris is the bio-cultural hypothesis as stated in the literature chapter. According to Harris, the bio-cultural hypothesis explains that African migrants are always targets and victims of xenophobia as a result of the level of visible difference or otherness in terms of physical, biological, cultural and language differences they exhibit.

Akhumzi (boy aged 17) *"...some learners make me sad when I come to school. They call me names and do not want me in their groups because I do not speak Zulu. They tell me that they hate me because I am a foreigner, and they call me kwere-kwere, refugee and all that. So I feel bad because of the way they treat me."*



**Picture 9:** Sande (girl aged 17) *"In class with my classmates."*

Sande (girl aged 17) *“Learners find it difficult to relate with me even in class because they see me as different from them.... I always do my own things alone.”*

Munia (girl aged 18) *“The learners... are not friendly and do not care about how I feel. There are some learners who do not even want to hear that you are from another country.”*

Sande’s photo voice and the narratives above indicate that for the participants what defines unsafe spaces and places in school is not only where they experience physical attacks but also physical spaces where they experience social exclusion such as the classroom. Sande in her photo voice above illustrates how she experiences social exclusion in the classroom from her local counterparts. This makes the classroom a space and place with unequal power play, where migrants being the minority in class suffer/experience exclusion from their local counterparts who are the dominant group in class. This situation makes the classroom an unsafe social and psychological space and place for migrant learners.

The study participants’ experiences of xenophobia, isolation and discrimination in school, as the findings indicate, can be further explained by looking at how both migrant and local learners in school form themselves as distinct groups based on shared identities and experiences. School is a social space and place where people meet and interact in many different ways. Thus, in line with the social constructionist assumption, this form of interaction shapes the social construction of

reality through which knowledge is constructed and social categorizations made (Flick, 2009). Social categorization in this sense leads to formation of social groupings where groups are formed according to differences and similarities in nationality, cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Hogg et al., 1995; Turner, 1982). Social construction of knowledge in this sense suggests social interactions within social spaces and places. In the case of children, their social construction of knowledge equally suggests active social participation and meaning making in a social space through which they make sense of their environment. One would argue that, as children, migrant learners and their local counterparts, part of their construction of knowledge in social space and place (school environment) is their ability to interact and form distinct groups based on marked similarities and difference in identity and shared experiences. In this sense, the participants being socially positioned as a distinct group in school as a result of their social identity. Migrants in constructing their positioning within the school as the ‘other’ form their social group based on their common and shared experiences as migrants. The participants as migrants with shared experiences and identity in the school space and place consider themselves as the ‘in-group’, and on the other hand consider their local counterparts who do not share the same experience with them as migrants as the ‘out-group’. In line with this, the participants in their narratives highlighted the difference that exists between them (migrants in school) and the locals, and stressed that they identify with other migrant learners in school than with their local counterparts.

Kazadi (boy aged 16) *“Being a migrant in my school is not easy because many people see you as different from them. I have some friends at school who are also migrants. I like being with them because we understand ourselves better.”*



Similarly, the participants are seen by their local counterparts as the ‘out-group’ and they form their social group based on shared cultural and linguistic backgrounds different from that of the participants. In this sense, they see themselves as the ‘in-group’. This is in line with the findings as the participants in their narratives described how they are being isolated and discriminated in class by local learners because they are perceived as the ‘other’ and cannot communicate well in Zulu.

Bakome (boy aged 16) *“When we are put in groups for discussions in class, learners speak in Zulu instead of English and I do not understand Zulu. They do not want me to be in their group because I do not speak Zulu and I cannot communicate in Zulu. This makes me feel left out in group activities and discussions in class.”*

In line with the above data excerpts, Harris (2002) maintains that the culture of xenophobia targeted at African migrants is still deeply embedded in school cultural geographies and affects and shapes the schooling experiences and lives of African migrant learners in South African schools and classrooms. The data excerpts above indicate participants’ experiences of xenophobia in school space and place which impacts negatively on the way the participants experience schooling in South Africa as migrants.

### **8.2.2 Community-based experiences of xenophobia**

The findings also indicate that participants in this study experience xenophobia in the larger South African society as African migrants. Katiyatiya (2014) highlights that there have been widespread xenophobic and discriminatory attitudes and practices in the form of identity-based violence by South African towards migrants in South Africa. Adjai and Lazaridis (2013) also highlight that violence towards African nationals in South Africa is nothing new, as there have been consistent attacks on African migrants in South Africa ranging from verbal abuse to physical assaults and murders as a result of perceptions locals have about migrants of African origin in South Africa. This is in line with participants' narratives of their experiences of xenophobia in communities in South Africa. The findings indicate that the participants being African migrants, not only experience xenophobia in school, they also experience xenophobia outside the school environment, in the communities where they live and function. In line with this, Nyamnjoh (2010) highlights that there is strong evidence that African migrants living, working and schooling in South Africa face physical violence from locals. The participants in their stories emphasised on experiences of xenophobic attitudes towards them by the communities in South Africa. Landau et al. (2005) maintain that reasons for xenophobic attitudes towards migrants vary and include fear of economic competition, a belief that foreigners are inherently criminals and a drain on public resources. This is in line with the participants' narratives in what they described South Africans think and say about migrants in South Africa.

Dingani (boy aged 16) *“People of South Africa say that foreigners in their country are here to steal and to take their jobs and wives. They think that foreigners are the cause of crime here; they are here to increase crime which is not a good thing.”*

Akhumzi (boy aged 17) *“They think foreigners are the ones doing the stealing in their country. They tell us that we steal their things.”*

In line with the above data excerpts, Harris (2002) maintains that migrants are misunderstood and hated because of the negative ideas locals of host countries have about them. The findings indicate that the participants are feared, hated, physically assaulted and verbally abused because of their social positioning and identity as African migrants. An instance of this is the recent spate of xenophobic attacks in South Africa in March/April 2015 targeted at African migrants which started in some parts of KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng provinces in which many people were reported killed and many were severely wounded and displaced. This may be linked to stereotypes about African migrants in South Africa. Furthermore, Harris (2002) argues that discrimination, violence and xenophobic tendencies targeted against migrants in many of their host countries limit their freedom socially and psychologically. This is true in the way the participants experience the impact of xenophobia in South Africa. The findings reveal that the participants experience negative impacts of xenophobia in the larger South African society which limits their social participation and integration in communities where they live and function.

Kabedi (girl aged 17) *“I feel bad when I think about the type of life we live here; like I am a Congolese and when people talk about Congolese, they always say bad things. We are looked at as bad, as thieves, as liars and those sorts of things... and we are always attacked on the road and where we live...”*

Dingani (boy aged 16) *“South Africans treat us like animals. We do not feel free living here because we live in fear. My parents do not allow me to go outside the house to mix-up with people because I have been attacked outside our house before because I’m a kwere-kwere.”*

Munia (girl aged 18) *“I was going to the shop with my aunty one day, and we went to the taxi rank to enter a taxi. The taxi driver asked us in Zulu where we were going to... he found out that we are not South Africans because we couldn’t understand and respond to his questions in Zulu, he screamed at us and told us that he doesn’t allow amakwere-kweres to enter his taxi...you kwere-kweres are thieves and you sell drugs... you must go back to your countries. I felt like crying and I became very afraid, and I said to myself that they are going to attack us now....”*

Children’s Geographies sees children as active social participants. In this light, the study participants being children are active social participants who through their active participation and engagement with social space and place are able to make meanings of their environment. Contrary to this assumption, the study found that experiences of xenophobia both in school and in the larger South African society limits the participants’ active social participation and meanings making in the social space and place in South Africa. This could mean negative understandings of the school

space and place in the way they see themselves positioned as the ‘other’ within the school, and in the way they live in South Africa.

### **8.3 “I HATE IT WHEN LEARNERS CALL ME KWERE-KWERE” Negative effects of xenophobia on migrant learner education in South Africa**

#### **8.3.1 Negative effects related to migrant learners’ social lives**

The study found that migrants suffer exclusion from important aspects of social life, as evident in the participants’ narratives. Fukuyama (2007) notes that host communities and countries exclude migrants by constantly limiting the rights of migrants. Harris (2002) also maintains that African migrants in South Africa suffer all degrees of exclusion, discrimination, xenophobic attacks and stereotypes. The findings reveal that discrimination, violence and xenophobic tendencies targeted against the participants in school and in larger South Africa society limit their socio-psychological freedom and negatively affect the way they live and function both in school and in communities in South Africa.

Luboya (boy aged 17) *“I hate it when learners call me kwere-kwere, I feel like going back home. That makes me see myself as different from other learners. So I feel so sad to hear learners call me kwere-kwere and tell me to go back to my country.”*

Akhumzi (boy aged 17) *“I do not feel happy walking to school every morning because I do not feel happy at school.”*

Wemba (boy aged 18) *“I feel intimidated here because of the way people treat us because we are foreigners. No one wants to be your friend because you’re a kwere-kwere.... When I’m walking on the road I feel scared and unhappy... people look at you with hatred, and you see it in their faces... I like soccer but I cannot go to play with South Africans because whenever I go to play with them it ends up in a fight.”*

According to Harris (2002), xenophobia is characterised by negative attitudes towards foreigners. This is evident in the above data excerpts in the way the participants describe they experience negative impacts of xenophobia in their social lives in South Africa. Also, Bangura (2001), argues that prejudice against African migrants in South Africa prevents social unity and the freedom of migrants, as migrants are seen and treated as outcasts by the locals. African migrants in South Africa constantly live their lives under tension, fear and psychological and emotional depression because of hostility, fear and hatred towards them by the locals (Crush et al., 2005). The participants in this study, as African migrants, also experience these negative effects of xenophobia and stereotyping in school and in the larger South African society as the findings indicate. This further goes to suggest that the participants not only construct the school space and places as unsafe, they also construct their positioning within the school space and place as vulnerable to physical attack and psychological abuse, as already stated above. In relation to this, the

participants in their narratives described how unhappy and unsafe they feel in school and in South African communities:

Akhumzi (boy aged 17) *“I do not feel safe walking to school and coming back from school...because I am a foreigner, other learners can attack me on my way.”*

Wemba (boy aged 18) *“I am always afraid staying alone in some places in the school compound...some learners can attack me in such places.”*

All the participants expressed feeling unhappy and unsafe at school as a result of experiences of xenophobia and stereotyping they encounter at school and in communities where they live. This, they said, limits them from active social participation and integration in school and in communities in South Africa. Migrants feel unsafe and psychologically depressed when they are negatively labelled by citizens of their host communities (Ferguson, Undated). This is particularly true of children. The study participants being children means that experiences of xenophobia and stereotyping in school and in South African communities limit and negate their freedom of social participation both in school social and cultural spaces and in South African society at large.

### **8.3.2 Negative effects related to migrant learners’ academic lives**

The findings reveal that migrant learners do not only experience the negative effects of xenophobia in their social lives in communities and in school in South Africa, they also experience negative effects of xenophobia in their academic lives, in the way they perform in class. All 12 participants

expressed that they suffer negative effects of xenophobia in school which impacts on how they understand their positioning within the school as excluded and mistreated by their local counterparts. . The findings indicate that experiences of discrimination and rejection from some teachers and learners impact on how the participants in this study participate in class.

Bakome (boy aged 16) “...*I do not perform well in class because learners do not want me to be in their group for group work...they say I am a kwere-kwere and we do not want a kwere-kwere in our group...*”

Ndaya (girl aged 17) “*Learning in class is stressful for me. When we are put in groups to work, I do not perform the way I should because learners in my group do not want me...they use Zulu to discriminate against me in their group.*”

Luboya (boy aged 17) “...*even some teachers are very xenophobic the way they treat us....In class they use Zulu to teach and will never explain to us in English language, they tell us that they do not care if we understand Zulu or not. I used to fail some of my exams because some of our teachers do not care if we understand what they teach or not.*”

Munia (girl aged 18) “*There are some teachers in school who do not respect me because I’m a foreigner. They talk to me in Zulu and say things that I do not understand to me. Learners laugh at me any time they treat me differently in class, and I feel so bad because of the way I’m treated...because of this, I do not do well in class and I fail my exams*”





**Picture 10 and 11:** Disanka (girl aged 17) *“The photo on the left is me reading alone, and on the right are learners reading in a group”*

Disanka (girl aged 17) *“I do my reading alone, but other learners read together in small groups, and they will never accept me in their group. They call me kwere-kwere. Even when I force myself to be in their small reading groups, they will use their language to exclude me. This effects how I perform in subjects I find difficult because there is no one to share ideas about what we learn in class.”*

Disanka’s photo voice and narrative above reveal different ways in which the participants experience mistreatment and exclusion in school. These negative experiences are contrary to what school as space and place for promoting social diversity should be. Maylor et al. (2007) maintain that promotion of diversity and equality is an important aspect of school social landscape. School is conceived to be a space and place that develop children and young people as individuals who

show respect for others, who understand different beliefs and cultures (Kellett, 2011). This is contrary to Disanka's photo voice and narrative of her experiences in class. Maylor et al. (2007) suggest that schools should through curriculum and practice educate learners to know why discrimination is unacceptable and how to challenge it. In this sense, schools should sensitize learners on the importance of celebrating diversity and promoting equality. This simply means non-discrimination and acceptance of differences in school social and cultural space. The findings reveal that this is contrary to the participants' schooling experiences in South Africa as negative assumptions and stereotypes about migrants mean social exclusion both in the way the participants are positioned in school and the way they live in the larger society in South Africa. This nullifies their chances of living fulfilled social lives and achieving high levels of academic performance at school. It also defeats the aims and objectives of the idea of building an inclusive society through an inclusive schooling agenda.

#### **8.4 “SOME TEACHERS AND LEARNERS TREAT ME NICELY....SOME OTHERS HATE SEEING AND REJECT FOREIGNERS”: Dynamics of support and rejection of migrant learners in the school**

The findings also reveal that teachers and learners are divided between those who give support to migrant learners in school and those who do not. The idea of support or lack of it, for migrant learners in school, contributes to the participants' construction of their positioning within the school space and place as inclusive or exclusive which invariably impacts on their schooling experiences in South Africa. In other words, how included or excluded migrant learners in school in South Africa see themselves in school space and place. Parker et al. (2001), maintain that

schools and classrooms in South Africa are expected to be inclusive and accommodative to give opportunity for proper functioning of learners from diverse backgrounds. Inclusion in this sense suggests the need for supportive schooling environment. Support comes in various forms; psychological, moral, emotional and material. Lack of support can lead to and does indicate some form of social exclusion; non-participation and, or some form of social inactiveness. In line with the assumptions of scholars in the New Sociology of Childhood, active participation of children is based on creating a social environment where children and adult are interdependent which anchors on support. Therefore, where support is not present, active social participation is greatly hindered. In the case of migrant learners' schooling experiences in South Africa, the level of support received from both teachers and learners in school determines their positioning and level of participation in the school space and place. This translates to what extent they enjoy inclusion or suffer exclusion in school cultural and social space.

The participants in their narratives expressed how some learners treat them nicely while others hate and don't accept foreigners. The findings reveal how rejected and isolated the participants see themselves within the school space and place as a result of negative attitudes t some teachers and learners show towards them. Furthermore, the findings also reveal how teachers and learners in school are divided between those who treat the participants nicely and those who hate and reject them because they are foreigners.

#### **8.4.1 Teachers and learners support of migrant learners in the school**

The study participants in their narratives expressed that they experience support from some teachers and some learners in school. The participants' experiences of support from teachers and learners in school indicates aspect of their positive and inclusive positioning and experiences within the school space and place. The participants stressed on the extent of support they receive from some of the teachers in school. Their narratives portray some of their teachers as kind, supportive and understanding who treat all learners the same irrespective of where a learner comes from.

Kazadi (boy aged 16) *“Some teachers in my school are nice to me and always help me when I go to them for something, like when I ask them to explain something that I did not understand well in class. .... They treat me the same way they treat learners from South Africa.”*

Akhumzi (boy aged 17) *“There are teachers in my school who don't treat me like a foreigner; they treat me like a student, as a normal student. They do not have this attitude of calling me a foreigner or saying that you are from Congo. To them I am a student and they know my name and everything. I think this is the first thing I like about them. They also help me every time I have problem and they understand...they have helped me a lot... and they have promoted my education.”*

Bakome (boy aged 16) *“some teachers tell me that I must not be scary of any one; if anyone tries to bully me because I’ not from here, and that I must tell them ... they make me feel that I’m welcomed in the country and they make me feel warm so that I can be active at school.”*

Support in this sense and context suggests giving/rendering assistance to help migrant learners adjust in their new environment/system. The extent of support migrant learners receive from teachers and learners in school impacts on how the participants in this study positively and inclusively locate themselves within the school geography (space and place). This could take the form of moral, psychological or emotional support as already stated above. Teachers in this sense should not only play the role of teachers but should as well be emotional, moral and psychological support providers Parker et al. (2001). Every learner needs individual attention and support. Teachers therefore have the responsibility to give and provide needed attention and support to every learner in school. By doing this, equal opportunity is given to every learner to actively participate in school. In line with this, some of the participants said they draw encouragement from the support they get from some of their teachers.

Luboya (boy aged 17) *“My teachers are like my other parents; they encourage me to do good things. I get assistance from some of my teachers, they inform me what I missed any time I am absent from school. This is the best thing they do for me to assist me.”*

Bakome (boy aged 16) *“I would say that the teachers in my school...some of them are very sympathetic towards foreigners and they take their extra time to teach us even after school because we don’t understand Zulu and English well... if we do not understand in class, they*

*will go over the work again with us. Other teachers are just so ignorant; they just consider us as one of the learners.”*

Similarly, learners must play their part in creating and ensuring healthy learning environment. In this sense, support from fellow learners and sense of inclusion are vital in creating and ensuring healthy learning environment and bringing about sense of belonging among learners. This comes in the form of cooperation, and mutual respect for fellow learners both in classrooms and in the wider school environment. The extent learners give their support or lack of it is important in the way learners construct their positioning within school space and place and how they experience schooling especially migrant learners who face the challenges of socio-cultural change and are battling to cope with language, culture and practices in their new environment. In line with this, the participants in the study claimed they do get support from some learners in school.

Kabedi (boy aged 17) *“I...get help from my friends at school. I had some friends who really understood my background and how difficult it was for me to learn and communicate in another language. So, I really got help from them, though, I didn't learn Zulu fast but I manage to learn English. They really helped me in reading, speaking, pronouncing words correctly and vocabulary”.*

Luboya (boy aged 17) *“My friends make me feel like I am with my real brothers and sisters at home ...and I like to study together with them because you learn a lot when you study with them.”*

The above data excerpts indicate the need for school environment to be conducive to boost learners' morale and motivate their active participation in both academics and extracurricular activities. Furthermore, the findings reveal two sides of experiences in regards to support the participants receive from teachers and learners in school: the participants' understanding of their positioning in school space and place and experience of school as conducive and inclusive on one hand, and unconducive and exclusive on the other hand. Both are determined by the extent of support the participants receive from individuals that make up the school population including the teachers. Therefore, when the school environment is conducive for learners, it boosts their morale and they are encouraged to be more active in class and in other school activities because no learner feels excluded. Giving support to learners means giving them a sense of belonging (inclusion) and space for active social participation.

Furthermore, teachers and learners' support of migrant learners in school do create a sense of a safe space for migrant learners' social and academic participation. Hence, safe place is not only limited to the physical, it also includes the psychological. In the case of the participants in this study, the support they receive from teachers and learners contributes to their sense and construction of the school space and place as psychologically safe for their participation in school.

#### **8.4.2 Teachers and learners rejection of migrant learners in the school**

Also the findings indicate that some teachers and learners reject and discriminate against migrant learners in school. The participants' experiences of rejection and discrimination from teachers and learners in school suggests their lack of positive schooling experiences in the way they are positioned as the 'other' in school. The findings reveal that the participants also experience rejection and lack of support from some teachers and learners in school who hate to see migrants in school. The participants described negative attitudes of some teachers and learners to foreigners in school.

Disanka (girl aged 17) *"...some teachers in my school do not like to help foreigners in school. They think we have come to disturb them, and they treat us differently because we are not from here ...the way they treat us is not the way they treat South African learners"*

Luboya (boy aged 17) *"There has never been a time any teacher has shown interest in assisting me. I go to them for help but some of them feel that I have come to disturb them...some teachers are very rude in the way they talk and behave to foreigners in school. This is one of the main problems I have been facing in my studies."*

Furthermore, the findings reveal that some teachers in school use Zulu to teach in class knowing well that not all learners in class understand Zulu language. The participants in their narratives described how some teachers in school are not helpful as they do not care to explain after teaching in the Zulu language.



Tshamala (girl aged 15) “...some teachers use Zulu to teach in class in subjects that are not Zulu like in Life Orientation, Computer and some others, while I do not understand Zulu... when you tell them that you do not understand Zulu they will tell you to go and learn Zulu. These teachers are not helpful because when I ask them to explain to me what they have taught they will not explain, they tell me to go and learn by myself. This makes me to find it difficult to learn in class.”

Similarly, the study found that the participants do not receive support from some of their local counterparts in school as the participants suffer discrimination and ill-treatment from some learners in school.

Wemba (boy aged 18) “I do not perform the way I should because of discrimination I get from learners.”

Disanka (girl aged 17) “Some teachers and learners treat me nicely, while some others hate seeing and reject foreigners.”

Kazadi (boy aged 16) “The way some learners look at me, the way they behave to me, what they do to me.... I look at them, I want to talk to them and even ask them something, they look at me as if I am an animal or what...I do not know what they think I am.”

*Dingani (boy aged 16) "The greatest of all the challenges is some learners' attitude toward foreigners. There are some learners who hate foreigners in the school especially the Zulu guys. They don't want us to be in the school, and sometimes they bring knives to school and scare us with their knives."*

*Akhumzi (boy aged 17) "...there are some learners who are nice to me and who understand my problems, but many are not nice to me because I'm a foreigner; they call me kwere-kwere."*

From the study we learn that support is an important factor in the participants' construction of their positioning in the school space and place and how they experience schooling in South Africa. The lack, or availability of support from both teachers and learners in school goes a long way to determine migrant learners' positioning within the school space and place as inclusive or exclusive and their experiences in schools and classrooms, as the data excerpts above illustrate. Teachers as major resource for teaching and learning have a major impact on the way learning takes place or happen in class. From the findings we learn also that teachers' support has a huge impact on the way the participants feel included or excluded in school and in the classroom. The academic performance and overall schooling experiences of migrant learners in schools in South Africa are hugely influenced by teachers' support or non-support. Given that the findings reveal that lack of proficiency in the use of language of instruction and cultural alienation are among the challenges migrant learners in schools in South Africa face, there should be support from the school community in helping migrant learners to more easily and quickly overcome these challenges.

Again, from the study we learn that academic performance and participation of migrant learners, especially those from non-English speaking countries are greatly affected by their inability to use the language of instruction in school as already stated above. This can be partly due to lack of adequate support from teachers and learners who should assist migrant learners in school to become proficient in the use of language of instruction in school so as to enhance their participation. Support from the school community in this sense, should serve as part of school resources available for assisting migrant learners in schools in South Africa to overcome barriers created by lack of language proficiency which leads to inactive and, or non-participation, isolation and cultural alienation in the school space and place.

## **8.5 “WE KNOW WE ARE DIFFERENT FROM THEM” Sense of inclusion and exclusion in school (the ‘them’ and the ‘us’ dynamics)**

### **8.5.1 Inclusionary dynamics of migrant learners in the school**

The findings also reveal that the participants experience more of exclusion than inclusion in school, especially from their local counterparts. The participants’ experiences of exclusion in the school puts them at the margins of the school geography. In this sense, the participants see themselves as not belonging or not well positioned within the fabrics of the school’s social geography. The participants’ experiences of exclusion and or inclusion in school can be explained in the light of the ‘Us’ and the ‘Them’ dynamics. The idea of the ‘Us’ and the ‘Them’ is as a result of social categorization and identity formation in a social environment. According to Hogg et al. (1995), in any social space there is always the tendency for social categorization based on marked identities

or similarities. This plays a major role in the isolation/exclusion and inclusion of individuals in a social environment. This is an important factor that defines and differentiates individuals in any social setting. In this sense, the participants experience inclusion in the group of other migrant learners in school, and experience exclusion in the group of their local counterparts. The findings indicate that the participants find difficulty in adapting and accepting local learners' behaviours whose social, moral and cultural backgrounds are different from theirs. In line with this, the participants in their narratives described how they see themselves as different from their local counterparts in school. The participants consider themselves different and unique from the locals probably because of their cultural, moral, religious and social backgrounds and experiences.

Bakome (boy aged 16) *“We are different from South African learners...we do not do the type of things they do, like not having respect for older people...we don't even speak the same language with them...it's clear we are different from the way they behave.”*

Tshamala (girl aged 15) *“I am different from them; am unique and I do not behave like them, I behave like where I come from.”*

The findings also indicate that the participants prefer to identify and relate with other migrants in school as they understand themselves better. In this sense, they feel included when in group of other migrants in school as already stated above.

Disanka (girl aged 17) *“At school, I prefer to hang out with learners from my country because we know each other well. We know we are different from South African learners in the way we behave.”*

Sande (girl aged 17) *“Being a migrant in my school is not easy because many people see you as different from them. I have friends at school who are also migrants. I like to be with them because we understand ourselves better...I feel happy when I’m with them.”*

Wemba (boy aged 18) *“When I’m playing or reading with other learners from Congo or who foreigners like me in school are, I feel happy because nobody will talk with me in a language I will not understand and I will not feel excluded...”*

The data above illustrate the extent to which the participants consider themselves as a group in school and feel and experience a sense of inclusion when in the group of other migrants. The participants in this sense see themselves as belonging to a group as migrant learners as they share the same experiences as migrants in school. According to Hogg, Terry and White (1995), in every society individuals form social groups according to or based on marked similarities or uniqueness in comparison to others in the same society to define and differentiate themselves from others. This could be in the form of shared cultural values, language, and religion/belief system, thus leading to social identity and group formation (Hogg et al., 1995; Turner, 1982), as explained above. Again, those with shared cultural values, language, historical and religious backgrounds, and social experiences see and regard themselves as belonging to one and the same group in the

society and they become and see themselves as the 'Us' (the in-group). Belonging to the 'us' (the in-group) suggests inclusion as the data excerpts above illustrate. On the other hand, other individuals who do not belong to the group of 'Us' become the 'Them' (the out-group) which suggests exclusion from the 'Us' (the in-group). The idea of the 'Us' and the 'Them' dynamics provides an explanation of the participants' experiences of inclusion and exclusion in the school space and place in South Africa. Participants in this sense feel included in the group of other migrants in school as they share similar social and sometimes national identities and experiences as migrants.

### **8.5.2 Exclusionary dynamics of migrant learners in the school**

The findings as well indicate that the participants feel excluded in the group of their local counterparts who treat them differently because of their social identity and positioning as migrants. In line with this, Cross and Omoluabi (2006) maintain that the negative side of migration comes in a situation where migrants experience social exclusion and sometimes harsh treatment in the hands of locals of their host countries which they would not have experienced in their home countries. The findings reveal that the participants experience exclusion and isolation in school as a result of differences in social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds with that of the locals. Experiences of exclusion suggests the negative social positioning of migrant learners in the school space and place in South Africa.

Wemba (boy aged 18) “...being a migrant in school here is difficult because they do not want you. I do not perform in many group activities because I know that I will not be allowed to make my contributions. For example, I like to play soccer and I play soccer very well but because of the way the learners behave to me I decided that I will not play in the same team with them. This kind of thing happens in the class as well because they do not want me to belong to their group in class. So I do not perform the way I should because of discrimination I get from learners.”

Ndaya (girl aged 17) “I do my reading alone, but other learners read together in small groups, and they will never accept me in their group. They call me kwere-kwere. Even when I force myself to be in their small reading groups, they will use their language to exclude me.”

Furthermore, the data excerpts above suggest that migrant learners experience isolation and exclusion in school when they are in the group of the local learners as the migrant learners see themselves as different from their local counterparts. The findings also reveal that the same way, the local learners may also experience the same feelings of exclusion in the group of the migrant learners as they too see themselves as different from the migrant learners. This implies that migrant learners feel included when in group of other migrant learners in school and feel excluded when in group of local learners.

Tshamala (girl aged 15) *“Learners find it difficult to relate with me even in class because they see me as different from them.... I always do my own things alone.”*

The participants’ experiences of exclusion in school are determined by the extent to which they see themselves as different from their local counterparts and also by the extent to which their local counterparts perceive them as different from them, as a result of differences in identities and value system. Because migrants do not share the same culture, and most times religion and language with locals of their host communities, they see themselves as different from their local counterparts. This can be explained in the way the participants construct their positioning in the school space and place, and the way their positioning is constructed by their local participants as the ‘other’. This is so because they do not share the same social positioning as migrants with the locals. Social exclusion is more pronounced where one group dominates the other (Hogg et al., 1995). This is applicable in the case of the participants’ experiences of exclusion in school. In this case, as local learners form the dominant group in school, this suggests that the participants’ experiences of exclusion is more pronounced in school space and place. This is evident in the participants’ narratives.

Wemba (boy aged 18) *“Nobody wants to make friendship with you because you a kwere-kwere. They call me kwere-kwere instead of seeing me as their friend...what makes me feel so sad is a lot of discriminations. People do not like you because of where you come from; we are foreigners and people do not really like us.”*



In line with the data excerpts above, Crush et al. (2005) maintain that migrants experience being isolated and excluded by locals in the host communities/countries as a result of differences in moral, cultural and religious values, as well as in behaviour and attitudes. The feeling of isolation and exclusion experienced by migrants in their host communities can be attributed to difference in the historical background from what they the migrant have (Harris, 2002). All 12 participants in this study claimed they feel isolated and excluded within the school space and place as they feel isolated and excluded in the group of local learners whose language, cultural and moral backgrounds are different from theirs. Again, the participants described how they are being excluded in class by local learners because they cannot communicate well in Zulu.

Bakome (boy aged 16) *“When we are put in groups for discussions in class, learners speak in Zulu instead of English and I do not understand Zulu. They do not want me to be in their group because I do not speak Zulu and I cannot communicate in Zulu. This makes me feel left out in group activities and discussions in class.”*

In line with the above, social categorization limits active social participation of those who unfortunately do not belong to the dominant group in a given social space (Hogg et al., 1995), in this case, the migrant learners in schools in South Africa. This also prompts psychosocial attitudes of exclusion by the in-group towards the out-group. The difference here lies in the ability of one group to exclude and isolate the other as a result of marked differences and similarities. The findings reveal that the participants in this study feel excluded or isolated as a result of social classification, and the fact that the locals are the dominant group in school. This therefore suggests

that part of migrant learners' schooling experience in South Africa is among other things limitation in active social participation in school as a result of social classification/categorization which leads to experiences of exclusion. This has a negative impact on the migrant learners' positioning within the school space and place and on the way they integrate and participate in school. This could also affect their academic performance as exclusion leads to inactive participation and, or non-performance.

## **8.6 CONCLUSION**

This chapter reviewed themes from the findings that focus on the participants' social experiences in school in South Africa from the perspectives of their social identity and positioning as migrants in school, and how this impact on their schooling experiences. This chapter discussed the various forms and ways the study participants experience exclusion and isolation in school as a result of their social identity as migrants in school, and the negative effects of stereotypes and xenophobia on migrant learner schooling experience in South Africa. The next chapter is the conclusion and recommendation chapter which pulled together all the issues and ideas in the study, and recommendations are made based on themes that emerged from data collected in this study.

## **CHAPTER NINE**

### **SUMMARY, REFLECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY**

#### **9.0 INTRODUCTION**

The study examined the schooling experiences of migrant learners in South Africa. It focused on migrant learners from Democratic Republic of Congo and Zimbabwe in three schools in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal South Africa. The study is located within the stricture of Social Constructionism, and employed childhood studies of New Sociology of Childhood and Children's Geographies as the theoretical framework. The overarching questions that informed this study was: How might the migrant learner's narrative of schooling experiences of school space and place be understood as a form of praxis to sustain attentiveness to issues of migrant identity in South African schools? This was further refined to form the following key research questions that guided this study:

1. What stories do migrant learners from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zimbabwe in Durban tell about their schooling experiences in South Africa?
2. What challenges and limitations do migrant learners in schools in South Africa experience, and why?

3. How do social identities of migrant learners in schools in South Africa affect the extent to which they experience inclusion or exclusion in school space and place?

In addressing the above research questions, the study adopted a qualitative research approach, and employed narrative inquiry methodology to enable an understanding and inquiry into the schooling experiences of the migrant learners in South African schools. Data in this study was collected using story account, open-ended interviews and photo voice methods. This chapter presents a summary of the study findings, theoretical and methodological reflections, study limitations, study implications, and conclusion.

## **9.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY FINDINGS**

### **9.1.1 The study participants' narratives of their schooling experiences of school space and place in South Africa**

The participants' narratives and photo voice reveal the impact of stereotypes, xenophobia, exclusion and isolation in the way they make meaning of their positioning in school as the 'other' and the vulnerable group, and in their understanding of the school space and place as unsafe and hostile. These also impact on the participants' schooling experiences in South Africa as migrants. The participants in their narratives expressed that they suffer negative experiences of negative ideas about African migrants. These result to negative schooling experiences for the participants being African migrants themselves. Experiences of discrimination and rejection from some

teachers and learners negatively impacts on the participants' positioning in the school and may impact on how they perform in school as these experiences may reduce their self-confidence. .

On the other hand, the participants expressed that they have gained many opportunities by schooling in South Africa. They expressed being exposed to learning resources like test books, computers, good libraries and science laboratories in school in South Africa which they never had the opportunity to use in their countries of origin. In addition, the participants also expressed being exposed to diverse races and cultures in school and in the communities where they live. The participants said that this has helped them in learning and knowing more about other people, other cultures and languages which they were not aware of before they arrived in South Africa.

### **9.1.2 Being a migrant learner in South Africa: Challenges and limitations**

We learn from the findings that migrants face challenging social positioning in the social and cultural spaces and places in their host countries as a result of differences in social and cultural identities with citizens of their host countries. As a result, they undergo challenging experiences and limitations in their host countries as a result of their positioning as migrants. The participants in this study as migrants share similar challenging social positioning within the social spaces with other migrants in South Africa and in other countries. The findings reveal the challenges and limitations migrant children face on arrival in South Africa. These challenges/limitations include difficulties in getting access to schooling as a result of immigration documentation, language barrier and cultural alienation in school. Coming from the DRC and Zimbabwe means that the participants have different social, cultural and language backgrounds, especially with regard to

isiZulu. The participants experience cultural alienation at school as they find the school cultural landscape in South Africa different from what they were used to in their home countries. The participants also find some of the subjects offered in school in South Africa strange as they were not used to the subjects in their home countries. This also poses some difficulties in the way the participants adapt academically in school. The experiences as highlighted above go to suggest that the participants' positioning within the school social, cultural and academic landscape is not properly captured within the school geographies (space and place) in South Africa.

Again, the participants in this study are faced with the challenges of dealing with the impacts of negative ideas about migrants in schools in South Africa as most South African teachers and learners have prefixed ideas and conceptions about African migrants in South Africa which they picked from the communities where they live. These negative and rigid ideas about African migrants in South Africa are strong and seem to have been internalized by South Africans. It seems that teachers and learners have internalized these negative ideas about African migrants as much as any other South African would and treat migrant learners based on these negative ideas they have about migrants. This happens to inform and affect the way teachers and learners see and relate with the participants in school. This also affects the way the participants are negatively positioned within the school and their understanding of the school space and place in South Africa as unfriendly and hostile. This also form part of the participants' schooling experiences in South Africa.

### **9.1.3 Migrant learners' social identities and experiences of inclusion and exclusion in the school space and place in South Africa**

The findings reveal that exclusion as a result of social categorisation and identity differences is part of the participants' social positioning as the 'other' and their experiences in school in South Africa. This also influence how the participants construct their positioning within the school space and place as such. In this sense, migrant learners are seen and considered as the 'out-group' by the local learners who see themselves as the 'in-group'. This is because local learners do not share the same social identities and value systems with the migrant learners. In a similar way, local learners are seen and considered as the 'out-group' by migrant learners who do not have the same social identities/value systems and do not share the same experiences of being migrants with their local counterparts in school. This form of power relation and social categorisation influences migrant learners' positioning within the school space and place. This also partly accounts for the participants' positioning within the school space and place in the way they feel excluded in the midst of the local learners whose own positioning within the school space and place is different, being the dominant group in school. In this sense, migrant learners only feel included in the group of other migrant learners who share the same social positioning and experiences in school as them. Being excluded suggests that the participants feel isolated in the midst of their local counterparts who are the dominant group in school. This applies also in the ways in which they construct their positioning within the school social space and place. This has a negative impact on the way the participants are positioned within the school and on the ways they experience the school social and leaning environment.

Also, the findings reveal that teachers have failed to make their classrooms and the learning environment conducive for all learners to participate equally in the learning process. Some teachers fail to give migrant learners the necessary support they need from them. They treat migrant learners differently from the way they treat local learners. The participants in this sense ‘feel out’ instead of ‘feeling in’ in the way they are positioned by teachers as the ‘other’ in the classroom. This also influences the participants’ experiences of exclusion in the classroom and the way they experience the classroom as a space and place within the school geography. This denies migrant learners positive schooling experiences.

## **9.2 THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS**

### **9.2.1 Theoretical reflections**

This study employed childhood studies of New Sociology of Childhood and Children’s Geographies as theoretical framework to understand and elucidate how the participants in this study (i.e. migrant learners from the DRC and Zimbabwe) construct and navigate school social and cultural landscape. School space and place cannot be separated from the knowledge and representations which express and repress particular identities (Dei et al., 2003; Gilchrist et al., 2010). It is important that schools achieve such landscapes which in many significant ways reinforce and affirm the lives of learners, presenting both strong identities and distinctions from core-centre values. Therefore, a geographic focus through the lens of the New Sociology of Childhood and Children’s Geographies enabled me to unpack the visual, spatial and ideological



dimensions of schools as they are experienced in the everyday lives of the study participants. This is achieved by highlighting the experiential aspects of the participants' schooling geographies within school, focusing on understanding the concepts of school as a place that gives process and spatial conditions for the construction of migrant schooling geographies as 'others'.

The New Sociology of Childhood and Children's Geographies as theoretical framework underpinning this study enabled me to inquire into how school processes and contents are being revisited to reflect proportionately the cultural values and daily realities of diverse learner populations in schools in South Africa, populations that include migrants. The spatiality of inclusion is assumedly pronounced in self-identity, featured through the social and cultural realities of school both within pedagogy, processes and perspectives and school ethos (Ingen & Halas, 2006). This study employed Children's Geographies in this sense to look into and unpack the ways the geographies of school embodies or leaves the migrant learner feeling 'in' or 'out of place' in school.

### **9.2.2 Methodological reflections**

This study adopted a qualitative research approach. Being a qualitative research enabled the participants to respond to questions in their own words which has more depth and meaning than simply 'yes' and 'no' answers. This approach also enabled my relationship with the study participants to be less formal, which offered the participants the opportunity to respond more elaborately and in greater detail. It also offered me the opportunity for immediate response to what

the participants said by tailoring subsequent questions to explore further the information they provided.

The methodology employed in this study provided me with the needed flexibility in probing initial participants' responses by asking and emphasizing on 'why' and 'how' of every of their responses. Here, careful attention was paid to what participants said. I was able to further engage with the participants according to their individual personalities and styles. I was also able to use probes to encourage participants to elaborate on their responses. In this way, I gained better understanding of the study participants' schooling experiences and how they conceptualise and make meanings of their positioning in school space and place.

Furthermore, the study, being a narrative inquiry as well, enabled me to find the meanings that depict the schooling experiences of the participants. I was able to gain insight into the complexity of the participants' lives and experiences; the tensions, contradictions, dilemmas the participants face. This was possible by understanding the participants' social construction of reality from the stories they tell. Through such insight, I gained understanding of how the participants experience school space and place. The narrative inquiry method permitted a narrative analysis of data obtained in this study. Through the process of generating, interpreting and representing the participants' stories in narrative form from the different methods of generating data, I was able to transform actual experiences of the participants into communicable representation of these experiences.

## **9.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

### **9.3.1 Theoretical limitations**

A limitation of the theoretical framework of this study is in accounting for the role played by differences in social identities and value systems of the participants with that of their local counterparts in maintaining unequal power plays within the school social space and place. From the finding we learn that differences in the social identities and value systems of the participants with that of their local counterparts contribute to the way the participants relate with other learners in school and in the way the participants experience the school space and place coming from different social and cultural backgrounds. The New Sociology of Childhood and Children's Geographies as theoretical framework of this study did not account for this aspect of the participants' experiences. As a result of this limitation, I employed the concepts of social identity and categorization in unpacking how the participants as a social group relate with other learners in school.

### **9.3.2 Methodological limitations**

Working with the participants demanded a lot of time because of the data collection methods employed in this study. The study participants as learners have limited number of hours a day to spend at schools and they are always busy with their lessons during the normal school hours. The interview process, discussions and participatory methods employed in this study, on the other

hand, required a good number of hours for a reasonable result to be achieved. To this effect, special permission was requested from the participants, parents and heads of schools involved for the participants to be available during the weekends and after school hours.

Lastly, my presence during some part of data collection which in most cases unavoidable due to data collection methods and instruments employed in this study to some extent affected the participants' responses. This is as a result of power imbalance between me as the researcher and the participants. Also given that participants are children and their social position as migrants with vulnerability attached to their positioning both as children and as migrants. In as much as the participants, as described earlier were free in giving their responses, there were also some elements of reservation in the way the participants responded to some of the questions asked in the interview section. However, this was taken care of by employing photo voice as additional method of data collection, which did not require my presence in the data collection process. The participants were freer using the photo voice method to express their feelings and experiences.

On the other hand, my presence during some part of the data collection process enabled me to deeply read meanings into the expressions of the participants, not only as contained in their narratives but also in the way they tried to express themselves emotionally. In this way, I gained deeper understanding of the factors that contribute and influence migrant children's experiences both in school and in the larger South Africa society by listening to their voices and drawing from the different patterns the participants employed in expressing their experiences. This was very helpful as language could be a limitation in the participants' ability to fully express themselves.

In addition, conducting research with the participants has also enabled me to gain deeper understanding of how the participants as migrant children in schools in South Africa experience the school space and place. Being migrant myself, the participants' narratives of how they experience the school space and place in South Africa and their experiences in the larger South African society have helped me to further understand how migrant children function and navigate the South African social and cultural landscape, especially in schools.

#### **9.4 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The findings reveal the challenges and limitations the study participants encounter in their schooling in South Africa. Prominent among these are experiences of stereotypes, xenophobia, exclusion, isolation and discrimination. These negative experiences limit the social and academic participation of the participants in school, and this translates to negative schooling experiences in certain aspects of the participants' schooling in South Africa. One would infer at this point that other migrant learners in schools in South Africa could be undergoing similar experiences which have policy implications. The findings indicate that authorities in the Department of Education have not recognised the need to establish programmes to properly integrate and assist migrant learners to overcome the challenges and barriers they encounter in school. These challenges and limitations hinder migrant learner social integration and participation in school. For instance, there is a major barrier to learning and participation in school created by lack of proficiency in the languages of teaching and learning in school experienced by migrant learners from non-English speaking countries such as the DRC. Based on the above, the following recommendations below

are made to ensure positive schooling experiences of migrant learners in schools in South Africa, and to create a more socially just schooling environment where all learners will participate irrespective of abilities and identities.

#### **9.4.1 Implication for policy and practice**

##### **9.4.1.1 Education authorities**

The findings reveal that the participants experience various challenges and limitations in learning and participation in school. Therefore, it is important that authorities in the Department of Education understand the challenges and limitations faced by migrant learners in schools and classrooms in South Africa. Authorities in the Department of Education should:

- Develop programmes that would accommodate the migrant learner learning needs to assist especially non-English speaking migrant learners in their early stages in school in South Africa. This will facilitate their participation in school and in the learning process.
- Design programmes to assist migrant learners to be integrated into school social, cultural and academic landscape. This will ensure the inclusion of migrant learners coming from different social, cultural and language backgrounds.
- Develop programmes to educate teachers and school managers on the importance of creating a supportive and inclusive schooling environment to accommodate the learning

needs of migrant learners in school. This will enhance migrant learners' social and academic participation in school space and place.

#### **9.4.1.2 School managements and teachers**

From the findings we learn that migrants in schools in South Africa experience stereotypes, xenophobia, exclusion and isolation in school which limit their social and academic participation. Therefore, there is need for school managers and teachers to understand the psychological, emotional and academic needs of all learners in school, especially migrant learners who come from different social, cultural and language backgrounds. In this sense, teachers and school managers should:

- Provide migrant learners with needed support for proper integration in the school social and cultural space.
- Ensure conducive and inclusive schooling environment to enhance learners' active social and academic participation in school. This means ensuring that equal opportunities are provided for all learners in school, local and migrants alike.
- Ensure and encourage all forms of social integration and coexistence of diverse cultures and identities in school. This will encourage social inclusion and discourage all forms of exclusion and isolation in school based on identity differences.

- Ensure positive schooling experience for learners in school. In this sense, school authorities should constantly monitor the extent teachers to which practise inclusion in classrooms especially in their teaching methodology, and the extent they provide support for the academically needy learners such as migrant learners. This will enhance their participation and academic performance.
- Educate learners on the need and how to achieve social integration and cohesion. In this sense, teachers should teach learners the need to respect and accommodate people from diverse backgrounds. Teachers should be good examples themselves in the way they treat, respect and support migrant learners in school. This is to ensure that migrant learners have positive schooling experiences.

#### **9.4.1.3 Authorities in government and in charge of social development in South Africa**

The findings reveal that migrants in South Africa suffer experiences of social exclusion and xenophobia from locals as a result of stereotypes and negative ideas South Africans have about migrants, especially African migrants in South Africa. Such experiences make the living and schooling experiences of migrant learners in South Africa negative. Authorities in government and in charge of social development should:

- Initiate programmes aimed at educating South African public on the need to accept and respect migrants in their communities.



- Establish regular mass mobilization programmes aimed at educating the populace on the contributions migrants make to the social and economic development of South Africa. This will change the negative notions South Africans have about migrants in South Africa, especially migrants of African origin. When this is achieved, its impact will diffuse into schools and classrooms in South Africa which will in turn ensure and enhance positive schooling experiences of migrant learners in schools and classrooms in South Africa.

#### **9.4.1.4 Authorities in the Department of Home Affairs**

The study also found that migrant children in South Africa experience difficulties and limitations in accessing education in South Africa as a result of immigration documentation. This denies migrant children in South Africa basic right to education and other social facilities. There is need therefore for authorities in the Department of Home Affairs to be aware of the difficulties and limitations migrant children in South Africa face in accessing and participating in school as a result of not possessing immigration documentation. Therefore, authorities in the Department of Home Affairs should:

- Provide special assistance to minimize and eliminate difficulties and limitations migrant children in South Africa encounter in obtaining the relevant immigration documentation. This will enable their proper integration and participation in the South African social space, easy access to education and other social facilities.

- Educate school heads and managements on the rights of every child to education in South Africa irrespective of the child's identity, nationality or immigration status.

#### **9.4.1.5 South African Human Rights Commission**

The findings reveal the negative effects of stereotypes, xenophobia and ill-treatments of migrants, especially African migrants in South Africa. This has impacts on the way migrant learners experience schooling in South Africa. Therefore, there is need for the South African Human Rights Commission to understand the difficulties and challenges migrants in South Africa experience such as xenophobia and ill-treatments from the locals. The South African Human Rights Commission in this sense, should:

- Adequately address all complaints of ill-treatments of migrants which may result in social violence such as xenophobic attacks and the likes. This is to ensure that migrants are protected against any form of ill-treatment from the locals and to ensure that they enjoy a sense of freedom and belonging in communities in South Africa. This will also ensure migrant learners' positive schooling experiences in schools as issues of stereotypes, xenophobia and ill-treatments will no longer be part of migrant learner experiences in school.

#### **9.4.2 Implications for further research**

Inasmuch as there are existing studies on issues around migrant learners and their experiences in their host countries and communities, there are still very limited studies on how migrant learners in South Africa experience schooling. Findings from the study suggest the need for further research on migrant learners' experiences in schools and classrooms in South Africa given the growing numbers of migrant learners in South African schools. This will be to further understand:

- How factors relating to the social identities of migrant learners define, contribute to and influence their schooling experiences in South Africa given that there are growing numbers of migrant learners from different countries and backgrounds in schools and classrooms.
- How migrant learners from different countries and backgrounds could adapt differently to South African schooling context as migrant learners from different countries have different national identities, cultural and language backgrounds which may suggest differences in the way migrant learners from different countries could adapt to the South African socio-cultural and schooling environments. In this sense, the social and cultural identities as well as language backgrounds of a migrant learner may play an important role in the way he/she may experience schooling in South Africa.

## 9.5 CONCLUSION

Schools are productive places, and should create spaces for self-expression, engagement and development for the learner. However, schools can take a different twist when they are constructed to create a sense of space and place that communicates sterility and despair. Learners need to see themselves in the school when they get there (Ingen and Halas, 2006). Migrant learners in schools in South Africa do not see themselves in school in certain ways, as is evident in the findings. It is important that learners should see themselves reflected in the fabric of the school when they engage in the school spaces, in as many ways as possible (Ingen & Halas, 2006). This might be in the practices of staff, it might be in the artefacts, and it might be in the processes and programmes that are in use in school. It might also be in the way/s social spaces in school impart a sense of belonging etc. Thus, enabling the type of welcoming space for migrant learners in a way is enabling the migrant learners to have greater consciousness and understanding of how, and participating in where, school geographies are constructed.

Furthermore, erasing of migrant learners' identities within the schooling geo-spatial formation necessitates the instilling, maintaining and consolidating forms of segregation. These forms are given functions in name calling, disparaging remarks, verbal and physical threatening, peer isolation and demeaning interjections all within larger social and structural arrangements of the school, as is evident in the findings. The implications of the foregoing are that schools in this case mask and muffle divergent identities which creates the unseen atmosphere of exclusion and 'Otherness'. The silencing of migrant learners' social and cultural identities creates in them a sense

of isolation and exclusion in the social and cultural space of the school. The existence of the gap between the availability of school resources and the integration of migrant learners' perspectives in the classroom, library and physical space within the school significantly impacts on their schooling experiences. The curiosity, values, cultures, and insights migrants learners bring to school places are likely to shape their experiences in school. The pedagogical usefulness of such values and their use as a vehicle for inter-cultural learning and socialisation for all learners may significantly enhance the schooling experiences of migrant learners.

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## APPENDICES

Appendix 1:

### TURNITIN REPORT



Turnitin Originality Report

**PhD dissertation by J. I. Nnadozie**

PhD Dissertations 2016

- Processed on 10-Sep-2016 6:24 PM CAT
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**Appendix 2: ETHICAL CLEARANCE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-  
NATAL**

**Appendix 3:**

**LETTER TO THE PRINCIPALS OF SCHOOLS**

College of Humanities,  
School of Education  
University of KwaZulu-Natal,  
Edgewood Campus  
15<sup>th</sup> April 2014

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Request for your permission to conduct my study in your school**

My name is Jude Ifeanyichukwu Nnadozie. I am a PhD student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, under the supervision of Professor Pholoho Morojele. I intend to conduct a study on the schooling experiences of migrant learners in schools in South Africa. My study is titled **THE GEOGRAPHIES OF MIGRANT LEARNERS IN THREE SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY**. The proposed study will explore the schooling experiences of migrant learners in South Africa, with particular focus on migrant learners from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zimbabwe in three schools in Durban, South Africa. The proposed study is aimed at understanding how migrant learners in schools in South Africa experience schooling. This will help to actualize the idea and ideals of inclusive education in schools and classrooms in South Africa.

I therefore humbly ask for your permission/consent to conduct my study in your school. In line with the data collection methods that will be employed in the study, the study will be carried out in three stages.

**Stage One (Story Account):** This stage will require participants to give an expository account of their schooling experiences. This will take a form of self-expressed oral story account by participants.

**Stage Two (Open-ended interview):** In this stage participants will be asked series of questions on their schooling experiences in South Africa as migrants.

**Stage Three (Photo voice):** This stage will entail giving cameras to participants to take photos that touch and express their emotions/ their experiences at school. Participants will be provided with guidelines on how to use the cameras responsibly and what to cover in their photos.

You are assured that all information gathered in this study will be used for the purposes of this study only. Anonymity of the school and that of the participants will be assured. Participation in this study will be voluntary and subject to informed consent. Should you wish to withdraw your school/learners from the study you are free to do so. Confidentiality will be maintained in storing

and disposing of research findings. The interview schedules will be shredded. Information from the digital recorders cameras will be erased. There is no benefit to your learner participating in this research.

If there is any question you wish to ask concerning the study or the participation of your learner in this study, please contact me using the following number: 083 963 7165 and e-mail: [nnadoziejude@yahoo.com](mailto:nnadoziejude@yahoo.com), my supervisor on the following number: 071 0410 352 and e-mail: [morojele@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:morojele@ukzn.ac.za) or Research Office on the following number 031 260 4557 and e-mail: [mohunp@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:mohunp@ukzn.ac.za)

Please fill in and sign the attached declaration letter indicating your permission for the study to be carried out in your school.

Thanking you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Jude Ifeanyichukwu Nnadozie.



**DECLARATION BY THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL**

I -----

(full name of principal), principal of -----

----- (full name of school)

Hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the study, and I hereby give my consent for my school/learners to participate in the study.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw my school from the study at any time, should I so desire, and any participant is also at liberty to withdraw from the study at any time, should the participant so desires.

-----

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL

-----

DATE

**Appendix 4:**

**LETTER TO THE PARTICIPANTS**

College of Humanities,  
School of Education  
University of KwaZulu-Natal,  
Edgewood Campus  
15<sup>th</sup> April 2014

Dear Participant,

My name is Jude Ifeanyichukwu Nnadozie. I am a Ph.D student under the supervision of Professor P. Morojele in the School of Education Edgewood Campus, University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am conducting a study on the schooling experiences of migrant learners in South Africa.

I am seeking your consent for your participation, which will involve extensive interview and story account sessions. You will be required to take photographs of activities at school over a period of one month.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and subject to informed consent, and continued participation is also by choice. You have the right to choose not to participate and to withdraw from participating at any time. There is no penalty if you choose not to participate in this study or

choose to withdraw from participation at any time. The outcome of this study may be published. In the event of this being the case, your name and identity will not be used.

Anonymity/confidentiality will be ensured through a coding system to avoid the inclusion of personal identities. Confidentiality will be maintained in storing and disposing of research findings. Only authorized persons from the University of KwaZulu-Natal will have access to review the research records that contains your information. There is no benefit to you participating in this study.

If there is any question you wish to ask concerning the study or your participation in this study, please contact me using the following number: 083 963 7165 and e-mail: [nnadoziejude@yahoo.com](mailto:nnadoziejude@yahoo.com), my supervisor on the following number: 071 0410 352 and e-mail: [morojele@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:morojele@ukzn.ac.za) or Research Office on the following number 031 260 4557 and e-mail: [mohunp@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:mohunp@ukzn.ac.za)

Please fill in and sign the attached declaration letter indicating your consent to take part in the study.

Thanking you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Jude I. Nnadozie.

**DECLARATION BY PARTICIPANT**

I..... (full names of participant)

hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

-----

-----

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

**Appendix 5:**

**LETTERS TO THE PARENTS OF THE PARTICIPANTS**

College of Humanities

School of Education

University of KwaZulu-Natal,

Edgewood Campus

15<sup>th</sup> April 2014

Dear Parent,

My name is Jude Ifeanyichukwu Nnadozie. I am a Ph.D student under the supervision of Professor P. Morojele in the School of Education Edgewood Campus, University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am conducting a study on schooling experiences of migrant learners in South African schools.

I am seeking your consent for your child's participation in this study, which will involve extensive interview and story account sessions. Your child will be required to take photographs of activities at school over a period of one month.

Your child's participation in this study is voluntary and subject to informed consent, and continued participation is also by choice. You have the right to choose not to have your child participate, and to withdraw your child from participating at any time.

There is no penalty if your child chooses not to participate in this research or chooses to withdraw from participation at any time. The outcome of this research may be published. In the event of this being the case, your child's name and identity will not be used.

Anonymity/confidentiality will be ensured through coding system to avoid the inclusion of personal identities. Only authorized persons from the University of KwaZulu-Natal will have access to review the study records that contain your child's information. Confidentiality will be maintained in storing and disposing of study findings. There is no benefit to your child participating in this study.

If there is any question you wish to ask concerning the study or your child's participation in this study, please contact me using the following number: 083 963 7165 and e-mail: [nnadoziejude@yahoo.com](mailto:nnadoziejude@yahoo.com), my supervisor on the following number: 071 0410 352 and e-mail: [morojele@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:morojele@ukzn.ac.za) or Research Office on the following number 031 260 4557 and e-mail: [mohunp@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:mohunp@ukzn.ac.za)

Please fill in and sign the attached declaration letter indicating your permission/consent for your child to take part in the study.

Thanking you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Jude I. Nnadozie.

**DECLARATION BY PARENT/S OF PARTICIPANT/S**

I -----

(full name of parent/s), parent/s of -----

----- (full name of learner)

Hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I hereby give my consent for my child/children to participate in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw my child from the research project at any time, should I so desire, and my child is also at liberty to withdraw from the research project at any time, should he/she so desires.

-----

-----

SIGNATURE OF PARENT/S

DATE



## **Appendix 6:                    STORY ACCOUNT GUIDE/SCHEDULE**

The purpose of a story account is to interact freely with the respondents, and get them to give detailed and full account of their schooling experiences in order to understand what they identify school places and spaces with which will serve as a starting point in understanding how they are positioned in space and place in school. The following questions are designed to guide the participants in this process.

### **Personal Details of Participants:**

- What is your name?
- What age are you?
- Where were you born?
- What grade are you doing?
- What year did you arrive in South Africa?
- How old were you and what grade were you when you arrived in South Africa?
- Do you have any family member with you in South Africa?
- What do your family members do in South Africa?
- When did you start schooling in South Africa?

**Facilitating Questions used in guiding Participants' Story Accounts:**

- Can you tell me what you can remember about growing up in your country?
- Can you tell me what happened that brought you to South Africa?
- Can you tell me about your journey to South Africa? What were your experiences on the way?
- Can you tell me what it was like when you first came to South Africa?
- Can you tell me the first problems you had/encountered on your arrival in South Africa?
- How did you manage to overcome these problems? Or are you still facing/experiencing the same problems?
- Can you tell me those things you like most about your home which you do not get in South Africa, if you can remember? How do you cope without them?
- Can you share with me your first day in school, how did you feel like being in school in South Africa for the first time – what were your first experience and feelings?
- Can you share with me the challenges you encounter in school as migrant learner?
- Can you share with me how learners and teachers in your school contribute to your experiences at school?

## **Appendix 7:**

## **OPEN-ENDED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

This interview schedule is geared towards exploring the schooling experiences of the study participants in South Africa by strengthening data collected in the story account session. The following questions are designed to enable the respondents to talk freely and easily.

- What year did you start school in South Africa?
- Were you schooling in your home country before coming to South Africa?
- If yes, can you tell me the differences you have noticed between schooling in your home country and schooling in South Africa?
- Is your present school your first school in South Africa or have you attended other schools in South Africa before this?
- How did you feel like being in school in South Africa for the first time?
- What do you like about being in this school? Why?
- What do you not like about being in this school? Why?
- Tell me about the experiences you have in school; what difficulties you encounter at school - what makes you sad and what makes you happy?
- Tell me about what makes you happy about being a migrant in your school and what makes you sad about being a migrant in your school?
- What do you think causes the experiences you have in school in South Africa?
- Is your schooling what you expected to get here? Why do you say this?

- What do you like most about living and schooling in South Africa?
- What you dislike about living and schooling in South Africa?
- Tell me about how being a migrant affects your performance at school?
- What success do you encounter at school?
- Why do you think you have these successes?
- What difficulties do you encounter at school?
- What do you think causes these difficulties?
- How do you cope with these difficulties?
- What do you like or do not like about the way you get on with South African learners?
- What do you like about learners in your school?
- What do you not like about learners in your school?
- What do you like or do not like about the way you get on with teachers in your school?
- What do you like about teachers in your school?
- What do you not like about teachers in your school?
- Are there things you have gained from living and schooling in South Africa?
- Tell me what things you think make your experiences in school in South Africa nice or bad?

## **Appendix 8: GUIDELINES FOR PHOTO-VOICE**

The purpose of this process is to shift towards more general issues and practical ways in which the participants can express and present their schooling experiences. This involved the participants providing detailed information by taking photos that reflect and represent their experiences at school. The following discussions with the participants are used as guide for participants in achieving effective photo taking/participation in the process.

### **Discussions on Guidelines for Camera Use:**

- Ethics; how and how not to use the camera for the intended research purposes
- Power and Respect; the need for consent and respect for other peoples' wishes and likes and dislikes
- Mechanical aspects of camera use; how to handle the camera, how to effectively capture important moments, profiling and storage of images.

### **Discussions on Guidelines for taking Photos:**

- How do the participants see themselves within the school space and place?

- Picture themselves as part of the school landscape; tell their stories in the photos they take, who do they think others think they are?
- Tell their stories about themselves and their experiences in school in the photos they take.

### **Discussion of the Photos taken and documenting the Stories:**

- Participants to discuss on aspects of photos they have taken they consider significant, not so significant; aspects that capture their stories and their self-identity within the school space and place.
- Participants to reflect on the photos and see/talk how their social realities as migrant learners in school are reflected and represented in the photos.
- Participants to provide own interpretation of the photos they take.

### **Questions for Facilitating Stories Emanating from Photographs:**

- What is life like being a migrant learner in your school?
- What are those things that contribute to how you see and feel about school in South Africa?
- What are those aspects of your schooling experiences that mean much to you?
- What are those aspects of your schooling experiences that mean less to you?
- Can you use the photographs you have taken to tell us a story of where you think you find yourself in school?

**Appendix 9:**

**LETTER FROM LANGUAGE EDITOR**

Crispin Hemson  
15 Morris Place  
Glenwood  
Durban  
South Africa 4001

hemsonc@gmail.com

C: 082 926 5333

H: 031 206 1738

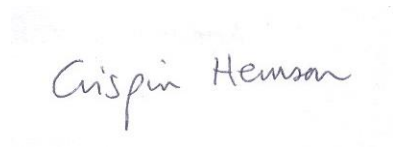
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26<sup>th</sup> September 2016

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to record that I have carried out language editing of the article by Jude Nnadozie entitled **The geographies of migrant learners in three South African schools: A narrative enquiry.**

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Crispin Hemson". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Crispin Hemson

**Appendix 10: GEOGRAPHICAL MAP OF DURBAN, KWAZULU-NATAL**



*Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa*