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## TRAPPED IN A GARDEN OF GREENER PASTURES: THE EXPERIENCES OF ZIMBABWEAN TEACHERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

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**Abstract:** Most immigrants from African countries choose Johannesburg as a migration destination. They all perceive it to be location with many opportunities that would enable them to make a fresh start to a life outside their home country, and Zimbabweans are no exception. In South Africa, Johannesburg has a large percentage of foreigners at any given time, hence its inner city was chosen as a suitable location to investigate the extent and manner in which the experiences of migrant Zimbabwean teachers matched their expectations. Working in Zimbabwe was no longer sustainable for them. Most of them were married and had families whom they needed to support financially. After being in South Africa for a period ranging from under one year to over five years, many had achieved some form of economic improvement, having movable and immovable assets, and saving money. However, the same migrant teachers felt unsafe and unwanted in South Africa because of crime, discrimination, hostility and xenophobia. The results revealed a paradox of economic satisfaction accompanied by fear and social unhappiness in the lives of these Zimbabwean teachers in South Africa. The Zimbabwean migrant teachers have two juxtapositioned problematic situations: wanting the money, their initial reason for migrating and motivation to continue working; and feeling imprisoned, unsafe and unwanted, an incongruous reality, in South Africa. This paper examines the dynamics of these contradictions by presenting the two-pronged dilemma from both an economic and a social point of view. They want to be and not to be in South Africa at the same time – they are trapped in a contradictory existence, in a city and country to which they chose to migrate.

**Keywords:** *Zimbabwean migrant teachers, economic impacts, social impacts, crime, xenophobia, the Geography of Fear.*

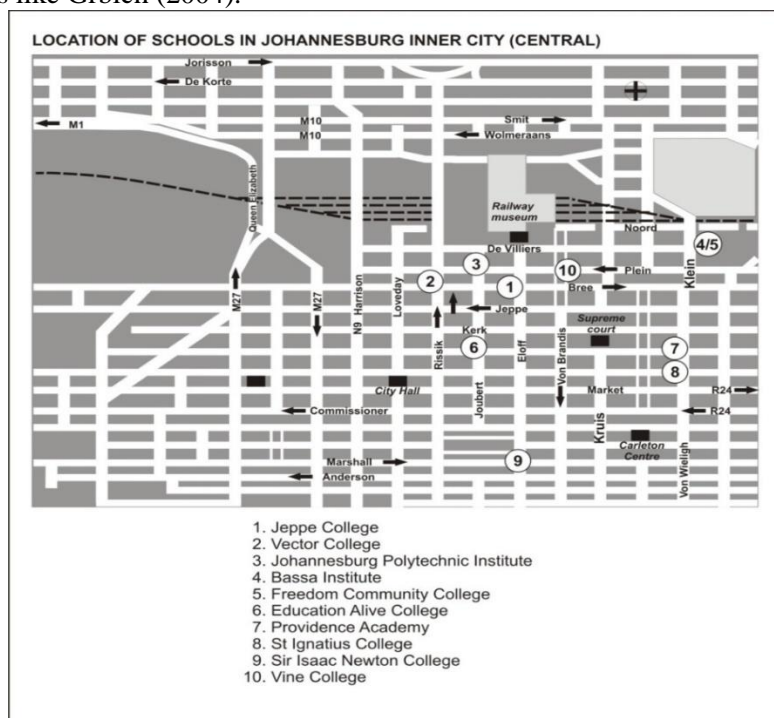
## **I. INTRODUCTION**

South Africa witnessed an unprecedented number of Zimbabweans from about 2000, peaking between 2006 and 2008 to roughly coincide with the period in Zimbabwe when the economy was in smithereens - its collapse and paralysis had reached abysmal levels. Zimbabwean migrant teachers were also part of this mass exodus into South Africa, looking for an economic solution as they could no longer provide for their families in their home country. The salaries that they were getting were inadequate due to the inflation that had penetrated deeply into the Zimbabwean currency rendering it worthless. They came to South Africa with an understanding that its economy was good and strong, its currency was stable, and they chose Johannesburg because they believed they would easily get a job there especially in its inner city. A study of Zimbabwean migrant teachers in Johannesburg inner city by (Moyo 2010) showed that although they were paid better salaries, problems of hostility, discrimination and xenophobia directed at them by the South African citizenry placed them in an intractable dilemma. This paper explores, first, the reasons for their migration and second, the dynamics of this dilemma. In order to achieve this, the paper is organised as follows; a presentation of the methodology and a brief discussion of the conceptual framework, followed by a tabulated summary of the responses from all the nine interviewees (Table 1), which leads to a synthesis of the findings within the context of the socio-economic impact of migration on Zimbabwean migrant teachers in South Africa as found in this case study and finally the conclusion.

## **II. DATA AND METHODS**

This study deployed a qualitative approach by conducting in-depth interviews with nine teachers, one from each of the nine schools in Johannesburg inner city (Figure 1). The interviews were conducted in English and lasted between one and two hours. Considering the level of education of the respondents, communication was not a problem. Even though it is documented that there is no standard way of sampling when doing qualitative interviews (Creswell and Plano Clark 2007; Creswell 2009; Creswell and Plano Clark 2011), in this research one respondent was chosen from each school with the hope that this would be adequately representative. The justification for using qualitative in-depth interviews is that these provide narratives that are important in the study of migration because they represent the individual internal experience of migration (Miles and Crush 1993; Vandsemb 1995; Chimhowu et al. 2005). Deeper meanings are derived from the experiences of the migrants. The researcher can explore and reflect on what people say and do, and how they understand and interpret the world (Burns 2000). Furthermore, the qualitative in-depth interviews are deemed to give

more detail in the context of the daily experiences of people being explored (Cresswell 1994; Dingwall 1997; Bless and Higson-Smith 1995; Bloor 1997). The qualitative data was manually analysed by building classifications, and themes, as well as connecting and explaining these, a method recommended by Creswell (2009). In the presentation of qualitative data, the names of the respondents have not been used so as to maintain their confidentiality as recommended by many scholars like Grbich (2004).



**Fig. 1** The location of schools in Johannesburg inner city

The choice of Johannesburg inner city for an investigation into the situation of Zimbabwean migrant teachers was influenced by the fact that large parts of the inner city have been taken over by foreign migrants. When migrants from different countries come to South Africa, the major attraction is that Johannesburg is perceived as a big city with the potential for opportunity; a big place to make a business work; and the business heart of South Africa, the place where there is action (Rogerson 1997:9). Furthermore, although Zimbabwean teachers live in many different places throughout South Africa, the largest concentration of them, at any given time, is in the inner city of Johannesburg (Moyo 2010).

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### III.1. Conceptual frameworks

We locate this paper on the theories of migration such as neo-classical and pluralist. The main argument of neo-classical theories of migration is that migration is part of economic development (Hagen-Zanker 2008), which is triggered by the individual choice of migrants based on observed employment and income differentials between regions or countries (Ketso 1991). According to neo-classical theories, migration occurs because people make a rational choice to improve their welfare or utility by moving to another place (Mafukidze 2006) where, there is a differential or positive higher income (Hagen-Zanker 2008). If the probability of employment and the expected income is also high in the destination area, migrants will continue to move to the destination area, even if there is unemployment (De Haas 2008:5). In addition, migration is regarded as having a positive impact on the migrants, sending and receiving regions (Mafukidze 2006).

Pluralist theories posit migrants themselves acting within given social, economic and sometimes political situations and the resulting migration tendency; the structure actor interaction (De Haas). Three perspectives can be identified under pluralist theories and these are: new economics of labour migration (NELM); household livelihood strategy; and transnationalism (Mafukidze 2006; De Haas 2008; Hagen-Zanker; 2008). NELM views international migration which can yield remittances as a way of overcoming uncertainties and De Haas (2008:35) observe that according to this perspective, migration aims to diversify household income and also overcome constraints on economic activities and investments in areas from which migrants move. The household livelihood strategy or sustainable livelihood perspective is defined by De Haas (2008:35) '*as a strategic or deliberate choice of a combination of activities by households and their individual members to maintain, secure and improve livelihoods*'. In this migration perspective, migration is seen as a possible option of having a sustainable livelihood through improving or avoiding deterioration of household poverty, wellbeing, capabilities and natural resource base (Adepoju 2003; De Haas et al. 2002 as cited in Hagen- Zanker 2008). The last pluralist perspective on migration is the transnational perspective which posit that international migration is based on the recognition that migrants can and do maintain ties with their families in their countries of origin as well as their host countries (Guarnizo et al. 2003 as cited in De Haas 2008).

This conceptual framework helps to highlight the reasons why the Zimbabwean teachers migrated to South Africa, but this paper provokes further debate by illuminating the differences in the nature of migration experiences and achievements (Mosse et al. 2002; McGregor 2008), in an attempt to expose the

dilemma of these migrants in the host society. In this regard, we seek to show that, beyond the positive gains of income and improvement in the welfare of immigrants and their families, there is a life of migrants that is not captured by migration theories and thus less understood. This paper thus attempts a nuanced understanding of the migration experiences of Zimbabwean teachers in South Africa so as to illuminate the contestation which arise in migration space in host societies. The objective is to reveal how this contestation reduces the migrants to the underclass, which although financially better is not happy, but because of they cannot go back to Zimbabwe are trapped. This contribution thus broadens migration theory in terms of enlarging our understanding not only the motivations and outcomes, but the experiences of migrants in host societies.

#### IV. Socio-economic impacts of migration on Zimbabwean migrant teachers

**Table 1:** Key characteristics of interviewees

Gender	Female = 3	Male = 6
Age	30 - 40 = 5	41 + = 4
Education	Graduates = 6	Diploma = 3
Marital status	Married = 7	Single = 2
Work experience	0 -5 years = 0	5 years + = 9
Reasons for migrating	Economic reasons, looking for a batter life, greener pastures = 9	
Economic improvement due to working in South Africa	Positive economic upliftment, better salaries, can support family and meet the necessities of life = 9	
Discrimination	Yes = 9 Wherever you go for services treatment and care is rough because you are foreign	
Hostility from South African citizenry	Yes = 9, South Africans harass us, the police also harass us	
Xenophobia	Yes = 9 South Africans hate us, police victimize and harass us	
Fear of being in South Africa	Yes = 8, because of crime, police who constantly harass us	
<b>Social unhappiness indicators</b>		
Why continue being in South Africa	The economy is stable, earning a living, cannot be compared to being in Zimbabwe	
Future plans	Want to go back to Zimbabwe, as soon as the political settlement and economic growth is assured and stable, will never go back as long as the economic and political situation	Want to stay permanently in South Africa = 1
Salaries and exploitation	All respondents. Low salaries,	

	exploitation ill treatment, but better than being in Zimbabwe	
Assets	All respondents have bought different types of asses, two bought cars, two are constructing houses	
Family separation	Yes =7, children and other family members are in Zimbabwe, send money and groceries frequently	No = 2 Husband and children stay with me here in South Africa

### III.2. Economic impact

The reasons for the migration of Zimbabwean teachers to South Africa seem to support the neo-classical theories of migration that advance the assumption that labour migration is influenced by economic considerations (De Jong and Fawcett 1981; Jones 1990; Parnwell 1993; Richmond 1994; Mafukidze 2006; De Haas 2008; Hagen-Zanker 2008). The interviewed Zimbabwean migrant teachers came to South Africa for financial reasons. All the respondents emphasised that the salaries that they were getting in Zimbabwe were not adequate to enable them to meet their basic needs of life, and this necessitated a move to South Africa. All the respondents stated that their standing as teachers had suffered severe damage. The teachers could not afford basic necessities and had no status of worth in Zimbabwe - their future seemed bleak and hopeless. This improvement is summarised by one teacher who said; ‘my life has improved tremendously because I can now take care of myself. When I was in Zimbabwe, my salary could not buy a tomato’ (Interview with Joseph Ngwenya, Zimbabwean migrant teacher, November 2009).

The respondents shared that, as a result of coming to South Africa, they had managed to economically uplift themselves as each one of them could afford to buy a variety of different and nutritious foods, something they could not do when living in Zimbabwe. In addition, the salaries they were getting were much better by far, so their quality of life, on the strength of these indicators, had certainly improved as this level is what they had been previously used to in Zimbabwe. This in itself is financial betterment. In addition, most of the Zimbabwean migrant teachers became proud owners of many movable assets. Two owned cars, something that they could not even dream about while in Zimbabwe. In terms of De Jong and Fawcett’s model (1981:50), which states that people migrate because of certain standards and goals that they want to achieve, Zimbabwean migrant teachers had achieved some of the things which had motivated their coming to South Africa, hence ‘my life has improved, because I have bought a car, which was a dream when I was in Zimbabwe. Next year I want to buy a house and every three months I send money to my family in Zimbabwe to supplement the food which I send them and to meet other needs. Life is good; it is back to normal for me’ (Interview with David Mwiyo, Zimbabwean migrant teacher, October 2009).

All the nine respondents stated that it was a family decision for them to migrate to South Africa due to the need to improve their livelihood base given the deteriorating economic conditions in Zimbabwe. The views of Zimbabwean migrant teachers regarding the migration decision to South Africa is adequately captured; 'I came to South Africa because we realised as a family that life was getting tough in Zimbabwe. I was the only one working and because I could not meet all the needs of my family, it was decided that I must migrate to South Africa' (Interview with Mkami, Zimbabwean migrant teacher, September 2009). This emphasises that pluralist theories of migration do explain the migration decisions of Zimbabwean teachers in terms of the need to secure the livelihood of the families and protect them from food and other shortages and this has been achieved through regular remittances to Zimbabwe. This clearly shows the explanatory power of the pluralist theories of migration, in this case, new economics of labour migration (NELM) and household livelihood strategy.

It is worth mentioning that while these teachers claim to have achieved economic and social gains such as relatively higher incomes and being able to take care of their families, it had not come easily. Most of teachers said that their salaries were less than what South African nationals working in public schools were paid. Perhaps this situation could be seen as the misfortune all migrant workers might face, especially those who lack legal documentation of which seven out of nine did not have work permits. However, an interesting observation was that these same exploited teachers were happy to be in South Africa from an economic point of view. They would prefer to stay on and suffer exploitation rather than go back to Zimbabwe; hence 'at the moment I cannot go back to Zimbabwe because, the little which I get in South Africa is so much for me as a Zimbabwean. It is better than being in Zimbabwe' (Interview with Nombuleleo, Zimbabwean migrant teacher, November 2009). On the basis of this evidence, in terms of this study, it is no exaggeration to say that the Zimbabwean teachers had no option but to stay in the schools where they had found employment, even though they were getting low salaries, since they neither had the correct documentation nor could they go back to Zimbabwe where they would be paid much less. Over and above this, the salaries that they were receiving enabled the migrant teachers in South Africa to lay claim to a decent life, which is why they had migrated in the first place.

The migrant teachers came to South Africa to rescue themselves and their families economically from the threat of starvation and deprivation. The frequent remittances to Zimbabwe also emphasise the transnational contribution in which the migrant teachers engage. As such it can be said that the effect of this is that these migrant teachers not only maintain themselves economically in South Africa but also, and at the same time, maintain their families in Zimbabwe.

### III.3. Regarding the dilemma facing Zimbabwean migrant teachers

One common effect in all the nine cases was that they had suffered family separation as a result of coming to South Africa. A pertinent issue is that some of the migrant teachers do not have work permits and this fosters a sense of insecurity. For most of the migrant teachers 'home is best' and there is no substitute for it. This implies that they miss Zimbabwe. Their only contact with home is by telephone and the remittances they send. Only two out of nine of the migrant teachers have their children with them in South Africa - all the others left their children in Zimbabwe. The migrant teachers stated that they had already started families and would have loved to have had time to spend time with them. One respondent is a fifty-two year-old woman who left a sixty year-old husband in Zimbabwe and 'no matter how much I want, I cannot go back to Zimbabwe now, I need the money, no matter how little it is, the South African Rand is a world of a difference for me and my family' (Interview with Dorcas, a Zimbabwean migrant teacher, November 2009).

The geography of fear also came out strongly in this research. The geography of fear is defined as identifying areas or places that people "*indicate and understand as fearful or dangerous*" (Modly 2009:115). This exposition suggests that fear is a spatial phenomenon. The results of this research demonstrate that the geography of fear in Johannesburg inner city does conform to this interpretation. However, it is not limited to the one-dimensional model of the fear of crime only, whether actual or potential, but is associated with the specific cases within the Johannesburg inner city. This paper initially highlights the very simplistic spatial manifestation of fear by Zimbabwean teachers in Johannesburg inner city arising from actual or potential incidents of crime, hostility and xenophobia to a deeper exposition of other factors on which the geography of fear is based as understood from the interviews with the Zimbabwean teachers. Their fears are expressed through language, the duration of their stay in South Africa and their current ownership of a car.

All the migrant teachers emphasised that they felt unsafe in South Africa because of crime, potential or actual. Smith (1986) has shown that the perception of being unsafe is as strong as the actual crime itself. As a result of this fear the Zimbabwean migrant teachers generally dread going to certain places where they are afraid they could be easily identified as foreigners. The effect of this is that there is self-imposed isolation (Davis 2008) because of the fear of hostility, xenophobia and/or crime. The migrant teachers emphasised that they do not like going to certain areas like taxi ranks such as the Bree Street, MTN, Noord and Faraday taxi ranks, where the drivers are South Africans, especially Zulus who are mostly in these positions, as they insult and harass foreigners ever so easily. The



immigrant teachers continue to use taxis because it is the only form of transport that is convenient and affordable. They frequent taxi ranks whenever they go to work because they have no alternative. They have to endure the insults and the harassment. The results of this research highlight that this is a very general and simplistic dimension of the geography of fear, because when the respondents were asked to explain further what the source of fear was, it became clear that it was more than the fear of going to certain places, associated with actual or potential incidents of crime, hostility against foreigners.

The first factor that emerged as a source of fear was language use. Some Zimbabwean migrant teachers, especially those who came from the eastern parts of their country such as Harare, Masvingo and Mutare, speak Chi Shona and generally cannot and do not speak local South African languages. Hence their use of English easily identifies them as foreigners. This situation makes life difficult for them as they are accused of despising South Africans by speaking in English. These Zimbabwean migrant teachers are afraid whenever they go to work or places where they may have to use English, as the fact that they cannot speak a local language exposes them as foreigners. Some mentioned that they are afraid of ever going to Soweto (South Western Township), a residential area made up of many townships that was created during the apartheid regime for South African black people. Today the area is predominantly inhabited by black South Africans. The Zimbabwean teachers are afraid of being identified as foreigners based on their inability to speak a South African language like isiZulu, Sesotho, Sepedi or Tshivenda, among others, and are then afraid of being attacked. As a consequence they prefer to limit their interactions to places like Hillbrow, Berea, Yeoville, Bertrams, Kensington and Rosettenville where there is a high percentage of foreigners, as is the case in among other places in Johannesburg inner city. Furthermore it was noteworthy that those Zimbabwean migrant teachers, who come from the western parts of their country, generally spoke isiNdebele, a dialect of isiZulu, and some could speak Sesotho, Tshivenda or all three. These teachers can easily mingle and communicate with the South African population as it is difficult to identify them as foreigners on the strength of the language they speak. These Zimbabwean teachers explained that they are not afraid of visiting places where there are large numbers of South Africans, but are only afraid of the possibility of random criminal activities. What was evident in this case study is that fear cannot be easily linked to certain spatial locations for those Zimbabwean teachers who are able to blend easily with the local South African population.

The second factor that emerged was the duration of stay in Johannesburg inner city and South Africa generally. Those Zimbabwean migrant teachers who had been in the country for over five years, whether Chi Shona- or isiNdebele-speaking, seemed to be quite accustomed to the culture and everyday life as found

in Johannesburg inner city, and could visit places where there were a large number of South Africans. Having said this, it is important to highlight that the Zimbabwean migrant teachers also asserted that they were not as socially free as they would have been if they were in Zimbabwe. They claimed that they negotiated their everyday existence in that their safety was neither guaranteed nor certain, in spite of them having stayed in Johannesburg for a long time.

The third factor, car ownership, was spatially clearly evident. Those Zimbabwean migrant teachers who owned cars claimed that they visited all places in Johannesburg inner city quite freely and as they desired, because using private cars reduced active interaction with the xenophobic taxi drivers and the general South African population. However, a pattern emerged that demonstrated that even if the Zimbabwean teachers had cars, they avoided places like Soweto believing that their cars might be stolen, hijacked and or vandalised because they were foreigners. This phenomenon emphasises that spatiality is significant in an interpretation of the geography of fear in Johannesburg inner city, over and above other variations based on mediating factors like language, duration of stay and car ownership in the daily lives of these migrant teachers.

In spite of these fears, whether justified or not, one would expect that these Zimbabwean migrant teachers would return to their home country, but they have not. They stay on because they have nowhere else to go, especially now that the political impasse in Zimbabwe is taking longer to resolve than originally hoped. It should also be said that the geography of fear does not only apply to the Zimbabwean immigrant teachers. The results imply that those South Africans who are hostile and xenophobic too are, to a certain degree, afraid since they claim that these foreigners take away their jobs as they flood their country and bring problems. When such comments come from ordinary citizens who are neither teachers nor have the capacity and training to be teachers, claim that teachers are taking away their jobs is clear evidence that fear is behind their assumptions. There was no proof in this research that the Zimbabwean immigrant teachers prejudiced South Africans or deprived them of employment as the positions that they filled were vacant posts at the time of their appointment. If anything, these immigrant teachers are helping out in relieving the documented shortages of teachers in South Africa (Govender 2008). In the schools studied, the only subjects that were taught by South Africans were the local South Africans languages and the rest, including Mathematics and Science were being taught by the Zimbabwean migrant teachers. Mathematics and Science is a learning area in which there is a particularly critical lack of supply (Mda and Erasmus 2008:9).

From the results of this research the notion is put forward that in Johannesburg inner city there is a collision of fears, one by and from the immigrant teachers and the other from the South African citizens. When these collide there is

xenophobia. In the space between there is negotiation of boundaries and a polarisation of people, some of whom are afraid to go to certain areas and some who want to drive others out of certain areas or even the whole country. That South Africans are afraid of people, who in this example, help out in their country, demonstrates geography of fear. This is because the South African citizenry fears, and consequently acts xenophobically against black African immigrants and yet tolerates immigrants from other regions or countries (Mamdani 1996; Nyamnjoh 2006, 2007, 2010 Neocosmos 2006, 2008; Muzondidya 2010). The black African immigrants, as illustrated in this study of the Zimbabwean migrant teachers, are continuously afraid due to the anticipated or actual events of crime and xenophobia. Therefore the geography of fear in contemporary South Africa is a potential area for research in geography and migration, especially how this geography of fear plays out on contested terrain.

There were also suggestions that in some schools, the Zimbabwean teachers were not treated well. They were called names. Some schoolchildren disrespected them because they are immigrants. Consequently the Zimbabwean teachers sometimes felt worthless because they seemed to be working just to get money and were not enjoying their jobs. They stayed on because they found themselves at a crossroad - going back to Zimbabwe was not an option. Staying on at their jobs and enduring the painful experience of being disrespected by young children and ill-treated by employers, was the only alternative. Some of the teachers claimed that outside of work they suffered harassment from the police, the result of which was that they were deprived of social freedom. 'I want to be and not to be in South Africa all at the same time. The money although not enough is very attractive, but the lack of freedom and harassment from the police and the contestant feeling of being unsafe keeps me on the edge, but I cannot go anywhere especially Zimbabwe, I just have to stay and soldier on' (Interview with Patience Dube, Zimbabwean immigrant teacher, October 2009). The teachers were tied between home and school hoping that between these two geographic spaces no violence or any criminal assault or harassment befell them. Clearly the Zimbabwean migrant teachers were always negotiating social boundaries so that they did not expose themselves to attacks or crime just because they are foreigners.

In spite of these very trying times and fears, real and perceived, there were indications that some of the teachers were indeed socio-economically better off. Two respondents had bought cars, something which they could not do in Zimbabwe. This they claimed had elevated their socio-economic status. Of these two respondents, one had recruited a new member to the family because he had the money to look after two children. This particular respondent predicted a bright future, a viewpoint that clearly did not apply to all Zimbabwean teachers in this survey. However, it does show that there are exceptions and that there are some

Zimbabwean migrant teachers who escape the disappointment of not being accepted and treated well in South Africa.

Several studies have established that xenophobia against black African immigrants is widespread in South Africa (McDonald et al. 1998, 1999; Human Rights Watch 1998; Crush 1998; Comaroff and Comaroff 2001; Crush 2000, Crush 2001; Crush and Pendleton 2004; Crush et al. 2005; Crush 2008; Landau 2009). This paper adds that xenophobia whether actual or potential is a real issue in the lives of the Zimbabwean migrant teachers. As many as 77 per cent of the respondents had been exposed to incidents of xenophobia in which South African teachers, who were of firm opinion that the Zimbabweans were taking away their jobs, were involved. One respondent commented that the South Africans viewed them as mercenaries - this could be a strong word, but it nevertheless captures how the concerned teacher had undergone xenophobic altercation. Students also call the Zimbabwean teachers names on account of the fact that they are foreigners. They view them as destitute refugees who are not qualified to teach them. Therefore the Zimbabwean teachers face the challenge of overcoming such stereotypes and continue to persevere and prove that they are trained and qualified to teach.

It is imperative to state that these Zimbabwean migrant teachers endured xenophobia at different levels. In the schools surveyed there were some South African teachers who welcomed the Zimbabweans, while others were intolerant and so were the students. Outside of the school environment, the public generally tended to be decidedly xenophobic, claiming that the foreign teachers take jobs away from the local people. The interesting part is that the same members of the public who make these claims are neither trained nor have the skills for the post requirements filled by the Zimbabwean migrant teachers so their presence is not competition at all. Perhaps they are xenophobic because of information from the print and other media (Danso and McDonald 2001; Nyamnjoh 2006). For all migrant teachers xenophobia is a daily struggle and, because of the 2008 xenophobic attacks, it has become even more real. Even though this paper, through the tenets of the geography of fear, illuminates the different factors that give rise to fear, what cannot be ignored is the fact that the Zimbabwean migrant teachers are always afraid of the violent expressions of crime, hostility and xenophobia, and it is for this reason that they will not to stay in South Africa permanently, an observation also made by McDonald (1999) about foreign nationals in South Africa. However, for as long as the problems that forced the Zimbabwean teachers to come to South Africa in the first place persist, they will continue to be in South Africa. This surely suggests that they are stuck and/or trapped, but for them 'the pastures' remain 'green'.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

This paper has established the economic motives for the migration of Zimbabwean teachers to South Africa and shown that all the migrant teachers achieved different levels of economic betterment. However, the migrant teachers do experience the consequences of prevalent xenophobia and associated perceptions of violence against them. The picture that emerges in the final analysis is that of Zimbabwean migrant teachers who are financially happy because of the money they earn and what it can buy or has bought, but are socially unhappy because of crime, actual and potential and victimization by the police and local South Africans with whom they come into contact, professionally and socially. It can be posited that crimes against the Zimbabweans are based on the fact that they are foreigners, and harassment by the police enhances the dimensions of xenophobia. As a consequence, over 85 per cent of the Zimbabwean migrant teachers in this study did not want to stay in South Africa permanently. They pray for a speedy resolution to the political impasse in their native land so that when the new political dispensation attains the promise of peace and prosperity, they will be the first on the bus back to Zimbabwe. For now they have to soldier on. They must negotiate their professional and social space. They remain trapped in the garden of not completely greener pastures that simmer within a geography of fear affecting both the citizens and the immigrants. The geography of fear has potential for further research, especially to understand what feeds into the fear of being a foreign migrant and how this fear plays out in a spatio-temporal setting, transforms and is transformed by citizen and foreign national relations in Johannesburg's inner city.

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