

THE PLIGHT OF ILLEGAL MIGRANTS IN SOUTH AFRICA: A CASE STUDY OF ZIMBABWEANS IN SOSHANGUVE EXTENSION 4 AND 5

Smart Dumba & Innocent Chirisa

ABSTRACT

This article maps the challenges experienced by illegal migrants as well as those which they pose to municipal authorities where they go. It is a case study of illegal Zimbabwean migrants that are based in Soshanguve in South Africa. The study reveals the many facets of challenges including unemployment, non-payment of labour capitalising on the illegal status of the migrants; accommodation challenges and elements of mistrust and stigma of the illicit migrants. To harness the information constituting this paper, a qualitative paradigm was adopted. Respondents were found using the snowballing technique. Although there might have been a lot of methodological challenges, the information here presented is a reflection of the realities experienced by most migrants with illegal status in a foreign country. Municipal authorities have a grand assignment in creating space for engaging and peradventure ‘regularising’ illegal migrants so that they can enjoy city benefits par excellence with every other citizen within their jurisdiction.

INTRODUCTORY OVERVIEW

The aim of this article, based on an exploratory study of illegal migrants in Soshanguve in South Africa is to assess challenges faced and brought by illegal immigrants in the receiving region. In particular, it seeks to establish major illegal emigration trends from Zimbabwe into South Africa in the period 2006-2009; to examine the effects of social exclusion on illegal immigrants’ citizenship participation; and to map a possible policy direction in reducing illegality status-driven challenges faced by migrants as well as those posed unto them as local authorities or as national government. By way of description of the study area, Soshanguve is one of the biggest, rapidly growing high to medium density residential areas in Pretoria North. Established in the early years of the free South Africa in 1994, Soshanguve grew as a response to the housing needs of major racial and ethnic groups in South Africa. The name **SOSHANGUVE** itself is an

acronym which stands for **SO**tho, **SH**Angane, **NG**Uni, and **VE**nda. From this it can be deduced that indeed Soshanguve was created to cater for diversified socio-cultural groups of South Africa. Geographically, Soshanguve is bounded by yet another high density area of Mabopane to the north, Haakdoornboom Plots to the east, Rosslyn to the south and Medunsa to the west. In terms of areal coverage Soshanguve covers approximately 76 square kilometres. This huge spatial coverage caused it to be divided into units for easy administration purposes. Thus Soshanguve is dissected into Soshanguve east, south and central where all municipal administration and government offices are found. There are also extensions of the area these are Soshanguve extension G, GG, H, I and extension 4 and 5, where most non-locals reside in squatter settlements. Although Soshanguve from the outset was meant for the multi-ethnic groups in South Africa, it has become one of the major harbours for regional (Southern African) nationals, specifically those in the bracket of illicit migration. According to the Soshanguve Municipality, Population Services Department, Soshanguve has a population of 1.8million inhabitants. This figure however did not include the 'ghost citizens' from Zimbabwe, Malawi, DRC and Mozambique. Information pertaining to the number of illegal immigrants was not known, however they suggested that an estimate figure could be arrived at using the number of squatter settlements mushrooming in Soshanguve Extension 4 and 5 where many foreigners reside, and Zimbabwe was the main contributor among other countries. The authorities suggested that Soshanguve Extension 4 and 5 had approximately 150-250 squatter units. From this figure the researcher assumed that each unit is inhabited by a minimum of two Zimbabweans. Taking the average figure 200units multiply by 2 people we have 400 Zimbabwean immigrants alone.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGICAL UNDERPINNINGS

The study largely adopted the qualitative approach. In this paradigm, data gathering was mainly exploratory given that information on illegal migration is largely not documented and official and reliable statistics to rely upon were on dearth. The more covert and exploratory approach involving complete participation was thus favoured in association with informal group discussions with illegal Zimbabwean migrants in Soshanguve. It was quite feasible for the

researcher to share experiences with the respondents in the Zimbabwean vernacular of Shona and Ndebele. Bell and Roberts. (eds) (1984) found out that survey through story telling was effective when dealing with issues such as prostitution, witchcraft and illegal migration. This study was largely unstructured flanked by experience surveys from the researcher himself who actively participated in illegal migration. To neutralize the concentration of pure qualitative data, existing documents and journals from various organisations were also used. Since illegal immigrants are difficult to identify and know where they 'harbour', the snowball sampling technique was used at the shacks in Soshanguve extension 4 and 5. This technique helped the researcher unearth more and more respondents. At the so called 'labour markets' where illegal migrants search for employment, the random stratified sampling technique was used to gather information on issues such as job availability, wages, work safety etc. Convenience sampling was mainly applied at the vendors market as well as 'on street' interviews, so as to minimize inconveniences to the usual business of the day. From the estimated figure of 400 Zimbabwean illegal immigrants in Soshanguve, a 15% sample which gives sixty (60) participants took part in the whole research process. On a second note, by the time the researcher had interviewed and observed 60 migrants, repetitive suggestions came about and as such no new issues were raised. Therefore it was to the convenience of the researcher to assume that the figure was representative enough to shed light on issues affecting fellow illegal immigrants. Under the Focus Group Interviews (FGIs) technique adopted by the researcher, a total of seventeen (17) interviewees took part in the research process. The FGIs were done in a multi stage approach which involved 3 phases. The first FGI was done at a 'green house'- a phrase loosely referring to the big dome shaped structures partitioned into several rooms for multi habitation. Here the researcher stayed with six illegal immigrants with whom he had his first interviews. The second phase was done in the other room with seven young aged men who shared that room. The third group of four interviewees also shared their sentiments. Information elicited here included date of arrival, point of entry, mode of transport used, availability of jobs social segregation and general remittances repatriation issues. The moderator (researcher) had a pre- prepared checklist of guideline questions to remind him of the main subtopics to be covered in line with objectives set. At one hand participants were willing to share feelings, emotions and concerns in a group which they were reluctant to do so in private settings. They find a sense of security in the group, which was undoubtedly an important consideration on sensitive issue such as illegal migration. On the other

hand, interviewee bias in the form of exaggerations was prominent among respondents. Semi structured interviews were done at four areas, the first at labour markets, secondly at market stalls, thirdly 'on street', and lastly to the Soshanguve Municipality and South African Police Services (SAPS-Soshanguve Station). Interview guides allowed the respondents to give as much information as possible since the style did not restrict him or her to the questions asked but also allowed room for expansion. From the Soshanguve Municipality data gathered covered on their view and challenges brought by non local citizens with regard to public services provision. The SAPS were interviewed on the legal stance of the state with regard to illegal immigrants, number of cases received as well as efforts by the state to reduce non- local based violence and harassment.

The study also employed the participant observation technique. In this aspect, the researcher had an opportunity to be employed at three various sites doing different manual jobs. The first was in Pretoria where he was employed as a security officer carrying out patrols at various xenophobia rehabilitation camps around Johannesburg during the October- November months, 2008. The second was when he was employed as an advertising agent issuing out pamphlets to motorists at road junctions. Thirdly he was employed at a farm called Tshabalala where he participated in picking green beans together with estimated 40-50 women and 20 men. Activities of concern for the day were later recorded in a note book during the night.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Emigration Trends from Zimbabwe to South Africa

In a bid to establish the major illegal emigration trends from Zimbabwe to South Africa, from 2006-2009, a sample population of 60 illegal immigrants staying in Soshanguve Extension 4 and 5 was interviewed. Information sought included aspects like their dates of arrival in Soshanguve, their preferred transport mode, port of entry (whether or not via the border) and associated problems *en route* up to Soshanguve. Table 1 and Figure 1 are snapshots of the results found. The general trend as noted in the two presentations is that Zimbabweans destined to South Africa's Soshanguve suburb have been on the increase from 2006. The figure however might have started to level out as the political and economic environment has been stabilising in

Zimbabwe. It must also be noted that in the same period (2006-2009), the relative number of travellers from the SADC region has been increasing with Zimbabweans topping the list (see Figure 2 which is a representation of statistics compiled by the Department of Statistics, South Africa. Although it is not well established of who among the travellers decided to stay after arrival, it is highly presumable that quite a significant number of the arrivals decided to stay in South Africa some of whom might have infiltrated into places like Soshanguve.

A primer of explanations for the migration trends (Zimbabwe to South Africa)

There are many factors to explaining the trends noted in Table 1 and Figure 1 (cf. Solomon, 2005). The period 2006 – 2007 saw a steady increase in the influx of Zimbabwean illegal immigrant into South Africa, Soshanguve in particular. Driving forces around such a steady increase include the tense hyperinflationary environment that bedevilled Zimbabwe during that time. The constant change of charges for travelling document such as passports and visas contributed to such an increase. Relative to the other periods from 2008 to 2009 these were somewhat fewer illegal immigrants (10% of sample population) who were still in the study area who had arrived during this period. Respondents during the interviews cited that illegal migrants normally do not stay at one place for a period of more than three years without returning home either through deportation or by voluntary means. Put differently, since illegal immigrant do not usually engage in formal employment which guarantees return to that same area, they turned to be highly mobile and frequently move from one place to another.

A steep gradient is for the period 2007 – 2008 in Figure 2 might stipulate a sharp increase in illegal migration into South Africa. This implies that there was a general increase in the number of SADC travellers into South Africa from 95033 to 136023 (2007 – 2008 respectively) , of these figures 124885 used the road as the mode of transport which is about 91.8% (Department of Statistics) It is this mode of transport that illegal migrants use. The general political instability that characterized Zimbabwe during the period in the form of violent elections contributed much to the illegal emigration pattern – indeed it was a “push” factor. Secondly a general drought spell pushed many to migrate illegally into South Africa. Lastly the continued economic melt down of the country, manifesting itself in the decrease of employment opportunities further strengthened the increasing trend.

Table.1: Zimbabwean illegal immigrants pattern of travel into South Africa

YE AR	NO.O F ARRI VALS	MONTH OF ARRIVAL												MODAL CHOICE				POINT OF ENTRY	
		J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Haulage	Train	Bus	Omalayi	Boarder	Off-Boarder
2006	6							•	•	•	•			xx	x	x	x	Δ	Δ Δ
									•	•				x					Δ Δ
2007	12					•	•	•	•	•	•			xx	xx		xx	ΔΔ Δ	Δ Δ
						•			•	•	•			xx			xx		Δ Δ
									•		•			xx					Δ Δ
																			Δ Δ
																			Δ
2008	23			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	xx	xx	x	xx	Δ Δ	Δ Δ
						•		•	•	•	•	•		xx	x	x	xx	Δ Δ	Δ Δ
						•			•	•				xx			xx	Δ Δ	Δ Δ
									•	•				xx			xx	Δ Δ	Δ Δ
									•	•				xx					Δ Δ
																			Δ
2009	19	•	•	•	•									xx	x	x	xx	Δ Δ	Δ Δ
		•	•	•	•									xx			x	Δ	Δ Δ
	N = 60	•	•	•	•									xx			xx	Δ Δ	Δ
			•	•	•									xx			x	Δ	Δ Δ
				•										xx				Δ Δ	Δ Δ

Figure 1: A trend showing Zimbabwean illegal immigrants into Soshanguve from 2006-2009



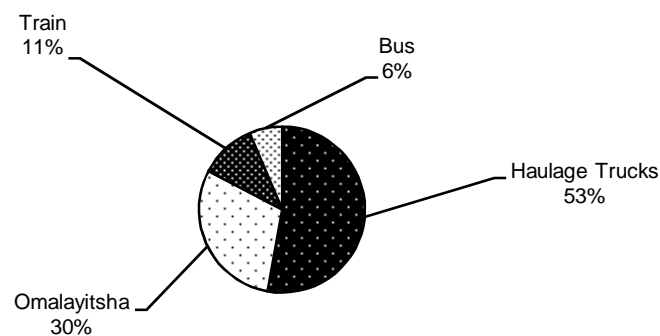
The years 2008 – 2009 indicate a steady decline in the numbers of illegal immigrants from Zimbabwe into South Africa. This can be directly linked to the general improvements in the economy of the sending region (Zimbabwe). The formation of the transitional government sometimes referred to as the Government of National Unity (GNU) on the 11th February 2009 saw a general improvement in the economic politico spheres. A sense of hope was created and this reversed the normal rising trend before. The multi-currency system which was introduced soon after the formation of the (GNU) involved the official use of the South African Rand, the Botswana Pula, and USD among other currencies. Thus the “pull” factor of the rand which lured many migrants was reduced to an insignificant factor in fuelling this cross border migration pattern from Zimbabwe into South Africa. It must also be noted that the 2008 – 2009 period coincided with global financial crisis that witnessed massive loss of jobs, given the general poor performance of the world economies, South Africa was no exception. A deduction can be made here, that the information filtered to potential migrants in Zimbabwe that all roads were not paved with gold in South Africa, thus the massive decrease in the number of illegal immigrants. Lastly, the issue of illegal migrants was put into central governments debate of the two countries and an agreement was reached to scrap the visa requirements in July 2009, copied with a reduction in the passport fees. This carrot approach indeed pushed many to be legal given the enabling environment created.

TRAVEL CONDITIONS FOR ILLEGAL MIGRANTS (EN ROUTE TO SOUTH AFRICA FROM ZIMBABWE)

Modal choice by the illegal migrants into South Africa was noted to be diverse and varied. The road transport mode categorized into four main categories, that is the haulage trucks Omalayitsha, Train and Bus. These play a greater role in the easy movement of illegal migrants. Of popular interest were the haulage trucks which of the total sample contributed to 53% as shown Figure 3. These average a cost of R100 – R120 from Musina to Pretoria as compared to buses which cost R150 – R200 average to Pretoria from Musina. Secondly the haulage truck drivers are experienced in hiding illegal migrants from the police and they are usually unstopped

at road blocks. The general increase of the “on-boarder” passage over the past four years is a direct indication of corruption by border officials. It is alleged that the immigration officers, Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) and the SAPS are paid between R50 – R100 per person for passage. For the illegal migrants who are “cowards” of the border, these continue to go via the off border routes by Omalayitshas during the dry months. Respondents mentioned that months of April to October were the most conducive to cross the dry Limpopo river bed into South Africa.

Figure 3: Modal Choice by illegal migrants



Source: Fieldwork, 2009

THE CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION OF ILLEGAL MIGRANTS

The study established that social exclusion of Zimbabwean illegal immigrants in Soshanguve manifests itself in two main dimensions. These dimensions are segregation and marginalization. The two place various groups of illegal migrants at differing degrees of risk. On one hand segregation here refers to the spatial processes and the manner in which the illegal immigrants are by virtue of segregation by locals find themselves living and working in a particular area, and the special challenges they face. On the other hand marginalization in this context refers to a set of inter-related processes which are creating new forms of poverty for the long term unemployed illegal migrants women and so on. Table 2 dimensions of challenges illegal immigrants in Soshanguve faced.

Table 2: Ranking and scoring Exercise showing challenges faced by illegal immigrants

Challenge	Score	Rank	Percentage %
Unemployment	24	1	40
Unpaid labour	13	2	21.7
Accommodation	9	3	15
Xenophobic attacks	8	4	13.3
Remittance repatriation	6	5	10
N=60			100

Source: Fieldwork, 2009

The unemployment challenge manifests it seriously among the immigrants. According to them it was the most pressing problem faced by illegal immigrants, which scored 40%. This clearly paints a gloomy picture in the sense that studies carried out by Markina (2007) produced some

important pointers that 92% of illegal immigrants studied from 2000 to 2007 cited unemployment as the main driver or push from the sending region. Unfortunately the purported “push” still remains a “push” and not a “pull” in South Africa. Unemployment in this study was evidenced by indicators such as the unemployment rate, the increasing number of discouraged job-seekers and the longer lag time between the times of searching employment for one to get one. The general lag time spanned between two to three weeks and in some extreme cases one month. Those immigrants not in employment resorted to starting small business operations. In short cases of discouraged work seekers were quite prevalent. And, those who would have got a “piece job” at the labour market would only work for two to three days or even a week, get paid or not paid and returned to the market to queue again with the other hungry job seekers. A pattern of the vicious circle continued.

At the time of the study the labour market was quite suppressed, being saturated with both locals and non-locals (illegal) competing for jobs. Often priority was given to locals; only when the locals lacked the necessary skills required would the next option be given to Mozambicans or Malawians. Zimbabwean illegal immigrants would be the third option. An element of exclusion comes into play here, with the potential employer citing disobedience and untrustworthy nature of Zimbabweans. Analyzed from another angle, the xenophobic mentality that had mounted on South Africans particularly towards Zimbabweans because of their knowledge and skills which enabled them to perform better than locals caused such stigmatic practices in the labour markets. The majority of employers were the whites (Afrikaans) who from a study carried out by Solomon (2000) proved to be hostile especially towards Zimbabweans by 93%.

Skills deficiency among many illegal migrants was noted as a problematic area. Jobs such as painting, bricklaying, plumbing, motor mechanics and welding proved to require certain proficiencies of an artisan tending towards technical. Employers demanded traceable references together with valid work permits or even asylum papers from the prospective employees. From this study approximately 60% of illegal immigrants had no professional qualification despite being literate up to the Ordinary Level. In such a challenging scenario, the issue of social capital emerged as an effective hedge against such prolonged unemployment. Those illegal immigrants

who had relatives and friends established in the study area for a long time had higher chances of getting employed earlier. Information through social networking plays a crucial role to know where and what kind of job has arisen as key to get unemployed. The social capital was not limited to the relationship and interaction between non-locals but also between locals and non-locals.

Exploitation: ‘sweating but for nothing’

Closely linked to the unemployment challenge the study revealed the issue of exploitation and unpaid labour, which ranked second with 21.7%. The South African Police Service (SAPS, Soshanguve), and the lawyers for human rights in Pretoria cited that about 50% of cases reported by courageous undocumented workers are directly linked to non-payment or below market wages most of which were verbally agreed. Some ‘bad’ employers were reported in the habit of hiring illegal immigrants with no formal contracts, offered them work and after a certain period towards the completion of that particular work, the unscrupulous employer call the police and the migrants get arrested for lacking proper documents. In some extreme cases employees are not asked for their names; also some hired employees never asked for the details of their employer. This grey spot implied that those hired illegal immigrants were “soft target” for exploitation, harassment, working for longer working hours and at the end of that period – non payment. Most of the cruel and ruthless employers took advantage of illegal immigrants’ weak bargaining power. This has been suggested by Reitzes (1997:12) in Solomon (2000), where she asserts that “...knowing that illegal aliens are unwilling to report them (employers) as a result of their fear of being deported, there is increasing evidence that they have become victims of choice.” To amplify the horribleness of such cases of unpaid labour forthcoming are some two anecdotes by some of the respondents in the study (Box 1).

Box 1: Anecdotes of experiences by Illegal Migrants

Story 1

During the October – November 2007 period Tafi got an opportunity to be employed as a security officer by a company known as Mnaka Security Services based in Pretoria Central. The employer drove to the labour market at Mabopane and Soshanguve highway junction and persuaded Tafi and 18 other young men to join his newly formed company. He told them that his company had secured a tender from the government of South Africa, to keep an eye at the four rehabilitation camps created for victims of xenophobia. These camps were in Midrand, Germistone, Springs and Boksburg North.

A lucrative salary of R1800 per fortnight was promised. The nineteen began work that day. A minibus would come to the agreed pickup points, a mini inspection carried out and driven to the various centres. Neither did new recruits know the name of the employer nor did he dare ask them their names and details. The recruits came to recognise their employer by his BMW vehicle. The recruits were split into two groups: one to carryout day shifts and the other to do night patrols. Tafi was placed in the group to carry out night patrols at the Boksburg Camp near Boksburg Airport. There he worked tirelessly for two weeks in anticipation of the promised R1800. When the fortnight elapsed, the employer was nowhere to be found, it was alleged that he had gone to Johannesburg to withdraw the salaries. The security officer had to wait for 2 days and he finally returned, and briefed the recruits that the Government had not yet paid him so they were to be paid given R400 per officer. Of the total 20 non-locals and 15 locals, 6 non-locals and 13 locals were paid the R400. The rest were accused of underperforming and lacked the qualifications.

An element of stigma surfaced; locals were paid an additional undisclosed figure to the rest of Zimbabweans. This was coupled by a language barrier, no one amongst us understood the Sotho language and what really was taking place. The other 10 officers from Zimbabwe who had not received payments were told to report to the company's offices in Pretoria Central at a given address that latter turned out to be counterfeit. When

they came to the place it was just vacant and empty. Efforts to notify the Human Lawyers Association in Pretoria were fruitless and demonstrations invited the police and arrests were made to all unregistered immigrants, the majority being Zimbabweans. These were detained and deported back home. Tafi survived in that he had an asylum paper. The patrol security officers had worked tirelessly for two weeks only to be rewarded of blue uniforms, button sticks and pairs of black safety shoes or some R400.

Story 2

Ganizani, a qualified bricklayer got employed by one affluent old man who stayed in Soshanguve East. The terms of agreement were that Ganizani would be paid a total sum of R4500 after the completion of a 4 roomed cottage in Mobapane. Half the amount was to be paid when he had completed the window level. Ganizani sub-contracted two labourers whom he promised to pay after the employer had paid him. The young man in his early twenties worked whole heartedly and speedily to reach the window level so as to get paid. The owner frequently visited Ganizani at the construction site and bought him food as well as some second hand clothing. Towards the completion of the first phase i.e. of the window level, Ganizani found that the employer's contact number was no longer reachable and was nowhere to be found.

Tracing efforts were to no avail. Ganizani as someone without a work permit also feared being arrested. He also did not have the physical nor any contact address of his employer who purported to be staying in Soshanguve East. The contract was based on trust which did not turn out to be. Ganizani had planned to remit some of the R4500 back home to his wife and children but this worked the other way round.

Source: Fieldwork (2009)

Accommodation challenges

Without a residential port of call one has no legal identity, is hidden, forgotten, and untraceable.

It must be stressed that the former two challenges of unemployment and unpaid labour in the foregoing paragraphs give birth to the accommodation *problematique*. As was observed by Solomon (2000) that most illegal immigrants contribute to unlawful squatting in SA and since most aliens arrive in SA destitute, jobless and homeless, the result is that they find their way to squatter areas. The observation is supported by this study in that in Soshanguve Extension 4 and 5 approximately 90% illegal immigrants reside in shacks in this area. This is a segregated social enclave arising from an element of self segregation. The voice of the illegal immigrants is also quite strong. Challenges common to them tended to produce a kind of social capital which can see the distributive mechanism of costs among especially those sharing rooms were in a favourable position to 'defy and resist' exorbitant rentals by landlords. Illegal immigrants facing the problems of getting employed have some kind of joint spending decisions pertaining to sourcing of food and other household goods as well as bearing the routine and monthly rental costs. The absence of the 'state' in providing the much needed services was noted to ushering attempts by the slum dwellers in Soshanguve to self-provide utilities such as water and electricity. These were achieved through illegal connections which in turn posed risk of electrocution or prosecution of the culprits.

Xenophobia or assimilation?

The study revealed that though formal housing was available, the challenge with illegal migrants to produce the requisite identity cards, work permits or asylum documentation prevented one to be granted such accommodation. Rentals in formal housing were noted as ranging between R150 to R250 per month. On the other hand, informal housing was also available at an unfixed price; it varied depending on verbal agreement between the long established illegal immigrant and to 'new comers'. However, the general range was R50 to R100 per month. The problem with such "cheap" accommodation was the occupancy ratio which was generally one to six meaning one room for every six people. The result was overcrowding which had, though difficult to measure a loss of dignity and other psychological overtones. The overall outcome of

this negative development was slum conditions in habitats; outsiders treated them with stigma and repulsion.

The study also found out that the dynamics of social relationships among migrants and the host society are complex, and the overriding challenge for the local citizens is to integrate illegal immigrants into the local society. Assimilation implies that immigrants adopted the language, culture, values, and beliefs of the host society. In Soshanguve, it was found out that much as they tried to ‘assume’ these traits of the locals, the illegal migrants remained discoverable and known to be foreigners (cf. McDonald, Gay, Zinyama, Mattes, and de Vletter, 1998). A simple question that was borrowed from Solomon (2000) that sought to find out the views of the Soshanguve community on illegal immigrants indicated that the migrants were welcome (44%), and very welcome (21%) with the rest not quite accepting them (See Table 3).

Table 3: Local Citizen’s Views on Illegal Immigrants from Zimbabwe

	Percentage
Very Welcome	20.6
Welcome	44
Neither	12
Unwelcome	15
Very Unwelcome	6
Don’t know	2.4
N = 30	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2009.

It was noted, for instance that the Venda, who come from the place bordering with Zimbabwe regarded Zimbabweans as geographically neighbours; the Zulus, in the similar tone took Zimbabweans as brothers and sisters particularly the Ndebele because of their language similarities. Also the Ndebele migrated from Zululand in the early nineteenth century during the time referred to in Zulu as time of *mfecane* (time of trouble). This fraternal affinity, though

historical and geographical contributed so much as to the kind treatment some of the illegal migrants purported to have received from the locals in Soshanguve. But a gap and wedge for full-fledged assimilation remained as locals wanted to retain their cultural and values' base. Also some non-locals showed unwillingness to co-operate and adapt to the local languages, culture and values. For the illegal immigrants who are well versed in the local culture, these are very welcome in Soshanguve and 'felt at home'. Respondents indicated that a language barrier which mainly caused misunderstandings with the locals were if one attempted to communicate in English. This, they said was connoted to be a means of showing that one was being showy and trying to show how much despise he had for the local language and the 'owners of the land'. To ride over the communication barrier by learning the local languages was the best strategy towards better acceptance and integration among locals in Soshanguve.

Remittances and Repatriation Modalities

According to this study 90% of illegal immigrants mentioned that they send remittances through close relatives whom they will be staying with. The social groups in Soshanguve are usually based on kinship (including some which are fictive) relationships. Thus when one is going back home (to Zimbabwe), small parcels in the form of groceries and money these relations are maximised upon as transferring agents. Some of the respondents highlighted cases where some of those entrusted with the remittances never transmitted these to recipients back home. Explanations for transmission failure were in the form of wilful misuse or robbery along the way. Due to the lack of the failure of the kinship channel some illegal immigrants transferred their remittances with bus drivers. The drivers were noted to have found a lucrative business in this arrangement; they charged some form of tax to make the transfer. One case noted at the Bossman Station in Tswane revealed that a bus driver charged an extra R100 for every R500 remitted.

CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

At the time of the study, of concern to the Soshanguve Municipality was the general increase in the squatter areas. The authority complained that these informal settlements were becoming an eyesore in space. As well as they were proving to be very costly in terms of illegal water and electricity connections. Furthermore, the municipality claimed that the illegal immigrants were

enjoying free-riding at the expense of South African tax payers. This has strained the capacity of the local authority in the provision of such utilities and had started rationing water in some parts of Soshanguve due to an unforeseen demand arising from illegal immigrants. The SAPS also noted with concern that the criminal activities in Extension 4 and 5 were complex and difficult to trace, a dilemma has been created whether illegal immigrants were victims or perpetrators of crime. Thus raids were often carried out to bring sanity to the overcrowded illegal settlements. It is noteworthy that the power to recognize illegal immigrants and refugees is entirely delegated to the Department of Home Affairs. The Soshanguve Municipality town planner stated that it was beyond their mandate as a local government entity to deal with illegal immigrants neither was it within their ambit to even consider them as citizens. But one legal provision embedded in the South African Refugees Act of 1998 stipulates that “...the Department’s status determination officers: may consult with and invite a UNHCR representative to furnish information on specified matters”. Overall, there is no standing and compulsive provision for legal representation by asylum seekers at a local government level. Efforts to legalize illegal immigrants or raise awareness campaigns are the preserve of mainly the Department of Home Affairs. Yet, with due respect to this department of all its endeavour, mainstreaming issues of immigrants into the local government sector would help in a great way in not only improving the lives of these minorities but also in shaping their habitats and eventually the whole city into better moulds. Municipalising the whole illegal immigrants agenda would be germane and critical for local economic development. But, again, the first step should be admitting that the Department of Home Affairs cannot go it alone. It would be helpful in looking into juridical and legal aspects but the local authorities are usually mandated with the powers for creating opportunities and better living environments. In this vein, it can be concluded that municipal authorities have an upper hand in creating space for engaging and peradventure ‘regularising’ illegal migrants so that they can enjoy city benefits par excellence with every other citizen within their jurisdiction. This at least would give hope and comfort to Zimbabwean and other countries’ refugees in South Africa. That way some doors of unnecessary exploitation of the already pulverised and macerated victims are closed. Inclusive environment for refugees are achieved.

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