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AHMR is an interdisciplinary peer-reviewed journal created to encourage and facilitate the study of all aspects of human mobility in Africa, including socio-economic, political, legal, developmental, educational and cultural aspects.
Through the publication of original research, policy discussions and evidence-based research papers, AHMR provides a comprehensive forum devoted exclusively to the analysis of current migration trends, migration patterns and some of the most important migration-related issues.

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Editorial

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We are delighted to present Volume 11, Number 1, 2025 of the African Human Mobility Review (AHMR). This issue features up-to-date, high-quality, and original contributions, including research papers, reviews, syntheses, and a book review, all focused on various aspects of human mobility in Africa. AHMR is supported by a highly skilled Editorial Board and a global network of scholars from diverse interdisciplinary fields, ensuring that the contributions are of exceptional quality, originality, and relevance. These contributions aim to inform evidence-based policymaking and advance the understanding of human mobility across the continent.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all contributors (authors, editorial board, publisher) of AHMR, as well as the anonymous referees who reviewed the submitted papers. Our mission is to continuously enhance the quality of the journal and achieve new milestones, positioning it more prominently within the international scientific community. This issue features five articles and a book review that foster original research, promote policy discussions, and offer a comprehensive forum dedicated to analyzing current trends, migration patterns, and key migration-related issues in Africa.

The first section of this issue features a book review by Daniel Tevera on "Xenophobia in the Media: Critical Global Perspectives." The reviewer offers a critical evaluation, highlighting how the book compiles research essays that explore the challenges faced by international migrants while also demonstrating their ability to act within limiting structures. He emphasizes the importance of ongoing research to inform policy and practice. According to Tevera, the book addresses gaps in the literature by analyzing the role of media in perpetuating xenophobia, examining the sociopolitical and economic consequences, and using fieldwork with refugees to shed light on the media's influence on public perceptions and policymaking. The reviewer further indicates that the book critically analyzes media-driven xenophobia but lacks justification and deeper exploration of migration implications. In conclusion, he asserts that the book, with its valuable ethnographic research on migrants and refugees, is crucial for researchers in social policy and migration studies.

The first article by Peter Mudungwe is entitled "Migration Governance in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities." Using secondary data analysis, including published research, policy documents, and evaluations on the subject, the study

found that migration governance in Africa presents significant challenges, affecting the continent's capacity to manage migration effectively. The findings emphasize the difficulties African countries face in developing coherent policies and institutions to address migration flows. The review also stresses the importance of enhanced regional cooperation, capacity building, and improved coordination among governments to manage migration and mitigate its social, economic, and security impacts. The study concludes that weak migration governance limits Africa's ability to leverage migration's positive impact and negotiate favorable migration compacts. It recommends that Africa increase investments in the migration sector to effectively manage its migration agenda.

The second article by Dereje Feyissa Dori, titled "Migration as Prophecy Fulfilled: A Case Study of Hadiya Migration from Southern Ethiopia to South Africa," employs a qualitative methodology, providing an ethnographic perspective on the role of religion in migration. This study not only contributes to the literature on migration but also addresses the often overlooked intangible factors in migration processes, which have traditionally been overshadowed by economic analyses. The research highlights the significant influence of evangelical Christianity in shaping the Hadiya community's migration journey. It underscores how spiritual beliefs have guided Hadiya migrants through various stages of migration, helping them navigate regional inequalities in Ethiopia. By situating the migration within a broader historical context, the article reveals how spiritually motivated migratory agency has influenced their decisions. Ultimately, the article calls for migration studies to better account for the importance of intangible factors, especially religion, in understanding migration dynamics.

The third article by Jean Pierre Misago, titled "From Deprivation to Mobilization: Towards a Multideterminant Model of Xenophobic Violence in South Africa," uses a qualitative research design, drawing insights from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The central argument of the paper is that existing explanatory models are deficient due to two main analytical blind spots: (i) many lack empirical support, and (ii) others are overly simplistic in their reductionist approach. In addition to its academic contributions, the article holds practical and policy relevance. By clearly outlining the key elements of the causal chain, the research highlights critical areas where intervention could help halt ongoing xenophobic violence and prevent future occurrences in South Africa. Ultimately, the paper provides stakeholders with varying mandates and capacities a clear understanding of where their efforts can be most impactful in addressing xenophobia, enabling more targeted and effective interventions.

The fourth article, authored by Tamuka Chekero, Johannes Bhanye, Rufaro Hamish Mushonga, and Owen Nyamwanza, titled "Navigating Passports and Borders: The Complex Realities of Zimbabwean Migrants in South Africa," employs a qualitative methodology, gathering data through interviews and focus group discussions in four South African cities: Bloemfontein, Cape Town, Johannesburg,

and Pretoria. The study acknowledges the resourcefulness of Zimbabwean migrants but argues that admiration alone is insufficient. Their adaptive strategies reveal vulnerabilities within the current system. To create policies that reflect migrant realities, it' is essential to understand their resilience and adaptability. The study recommends several practical measures to improve the migrant experience, including streamlining passport appointment processes, increasing resources at passport offices, and regulating intermediaries to prevent exploitation. It also emphasizes strengthening anti-corruption measures and enhancing transparency in consular services. Additionally, lowering passport fees, training officials to treat migrants with respect, and offering legal and social support services would foster a more inclusive society. Further research is needed to drive reforms.

The fifth article by Edmore Chingwe, Sipelile Munhumayenga, Sibonokuhle Ndlovu, and Webster Mudzingwa, titled "Curate's Egg: Effects of Parental Migration on the Well-Being of Zimbabwean Children Left Behind," employs a systematic literature review (SLR) approach. SLR follows a clear research question, identifies relevant studies, assesses their quality, and summarizes the findings using a structured methodology. The study's results categorize the effects of parental migration into four domains: health, education, economics, and psychology. The review identified significant negative impacts, particularly in psychological, educational, and economic outcomes, while positive effects were minimal, especially in education and economics. Consequently, parental migration is described as "a curate's egg." The study also classifies research by location, rural-urban divide, and children's age and gender, providing a useful framework for future studies on the topic.

Lastly, I encourage more researchers, academics, and students to connect with us and explore new areas of impactful research with growing social and practical relevance across various disciplines. I also look forward to seeing them contribute original and valuable research ideas to this journal.

A sincere thank you to our editing team and all the authors who submitted their work to the Journal of African Human Mobility Review.

Scalabrini Network

SIHMA is part of the **Scalabrini International Migration Network** (SIMN), and joins an existing **Network of Scalabrini Study Centres** around the globe:

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www.cser.it

CIEMI (Centre d'Information et Études sur les Migrations Internationales), established in 1971 in Paris (France)
Journal: Migrations Société
www.ciemi.org

CMS (Center for Migration Studies of New York), established in 1969 in New York (USA)
Journal: International Migration Review (IMR)
and Journal on Migration and Human Security (JMHS)
www.cmsny.org

SMC (Scalabrini Migration Center), established in 1987 in Manila (Philippines)
Journal: Asian and Pacific Migration Journal (APMJ)
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Book review

Selvarajah, Senthan, Kenar, Nesrin, Seaga Shaw, Ibrahim, and Dhakal, Pradeep (eds.), 2024

Xenophobia in the Media: Critical Global Perspectives

London: Routledge, 266 pages
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Xenophobia represents a pervasive attitudinal orientation characterized by negative perceptions and discriminatory practices against non-citizen groups, rooted primarily in their foreignness. This form of discrimination encompasses cultural, racial, ethnic, and class-based aspects, often resulting in hostile attitudes toward migrant populations. In extreme cases, skewed perceptions can escalate into violence and aggression, revealing the dangerous implications of xenophobia. The complexities surrounding immigration, alongside its mixed outcomes for host populations, render xenophobia a particularly sensitive and challenging subject. As migration increasingly intersects with development, it exposes the vulnerabilities faced by migrant populations, especially regarding exploitation and violations of rights.

Despite the evident tensions xenophobia generates, it has not been subjected to the rigorous scrutiny it deserves, especially in developing countries that host significant migrant populations. Empirical studies and anecdotal evidence indicate high levels of discrimination and hostility directed toward these groups, who are often unjustly scapegoated for broader societal issues. Integrating the issue of xenophobia into migration discourse is essential for policymakers seeking to harness the positive impacts of international migration on human development. Xenophobic attitudes exacerbate the exploitation of migrants and perpetuate long-term inequalities between migrant and non-migrant communities, fundamentally undermining principles of human equality, social justice, and societal cohesion.

Moreover, research illustrates that negative media coverage significantly shapes societal attitudes toward migrants, often heightening xenophobic sentiments and anti-immigrant feelings, particularly concerning nationals from specific countries. As a primary source of information, the media profoundly influences public perception. However, its portrayal of migrants can often be biased, perpetuating xenophobic attitudes. Studies consistently reveal a correlation between exposure to anti-immigrant media representations and increased prejudice toward immigrant

populations. This context is vital for exploring the themes presented in this book, which delves into the complex landscape of xenophobia and its implications for migration and societal dynamics.

While an increasing body of literature addresses the media's impact on xenophobic attitudes in migrant-receiving countries, significant gaps remain in understanding these impacts on anti-immigrant sentiments. This gap underscores the relevance of the newly edited book by Senthan Selvarajah, Nesrin Kenar, Ibrahim Seaga Shaw, and Pradeep Dhakal. *Xenophobia in the Media* provides fresh insights into the lives of international migrants across various countries. Employing an interdisciplinary approach, this book situates research within an international context, offering theoretical, policy, and empirical analyses. The authors argue that the greater threat stems not from immigration itself but from immigration control – defined not merely as restricting movement across borders but as regulating what migrants can do within society, including their ability to work, reside, study, establish businesses, and engage socially.

The book presents a collection of research essays that articulate the myriad challenges faced by international migrants across various countries while simultaneously illustrating how these individuals can exert agency within prevailing status constraints. This perspective underscores the necessity for continual research and the potential for informing policy and practice effectively. A crucial aspect of the volume is its comprehensive examination of xenophobia as portrayed in media narratives, integrating global insights with critical theoretical frameworks to provide readers with valuable perspectives and practical tools. Using qualitative data sourced from personal interviews with local South Africans, political speeches, and print media articles, the authors investigate the influence of public discourse on the perception of foreigners and the recurring violence against African migrants. They conceptualize xenophobia as a sociopolitical struggle predicated on the notion that foreigners pose a threat to the rights of native citizens, highlighting how discourse perpetuates this ideology.

The authors critically analyze the role of public rhetoric in stigmatizing and vilifying migrant groups, framing them as scapegoats for societal issues. This investigation acknowledges the interconnectedness of media representation, political discourse, activist initiatives, and academic research, all of which contribute to the reinforcement of xenophobic attitudes. The volume advocates for a critical engagement with these narratives to cultivate positive societal change. Notably, while much existing research focuses on the media's function in disseminating xenophobic portrayals of immigrants and refugees, this collection uniquely examines the media's own representation of xenophobia. The analysis spans various manifestations of xenophobia across diverse socioeconomic and political contexts, reflecting on its implications for both immigrant and host communities.

In the introductory chapter, Senthan Selvarajah et al. address the portrayal of immigrants and refugees within the framework of threat narratives. By adopting a

global perspective, the authors propose innovative strategies grounded in the concept of "journalism of tolerance." They explore multiple forms of xenophobia, including Islamophobia, Afrophobia, and anti-Semitism, offering a nuanced understanding of their specific impacts on immigrant and refugee populations. Employing systematic methodologies, the authors anchor their analysis within theoretical frameworks and empirical research, thereby enriching the reader's comprehension of the complex factors that contribute to xenophobic attitudes and practices in countries such as South Africa, Syria, and India. As xenophobic rhetoric has proliferated in global media – particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic – the book critically evaluates how mainstream media often perpetuates negative stereotypes that frame immigrants as threats to national economic stability, thereby influencing societal attitudes and intergroup relations across various contexts. The presence of foreign migrants is frequently depicted as an invasion, leading to their demonization for a range of societal ailments.

Part 1 of the book comprises three chapters that focus on journalism principles and practices that prioritize tolerance. This section specifically examines the interplay between misinformation, disinformation, and widespread misconceptions regarding Syrian refugees in Turkey. These misconceptions frequently paint refugees as criminals and exploiters of resources. In Chapter 2, authors Ibrahim Seaga Shaw and Nesrin Kenar contrast prevailing myths with the realities that shape media representations of Syrian refugees. They contend that human rights journalism (HRJ) plays a vital role in contesting xenophobic narratives and fostering an environment of tolerance and acceptance among diverse national groups. HRJ is presented as both a journalistic methodology and an ethical framework aimed at mitigating the harmful effects of xenophobia in media portrayals. In Chapter 3, Senthan Selvarajah and Tabeenah Anjum explore the ethical considerations and best practices that journalists must adopt to ensure responsible reporting, thereby upholding the dignity of marginalized groups, including migrants. They assert that ethical journalism is essential not merely as a professional obligation but also as a societal necessity for fostering inclusive narratives that recognize the inherent humanity of all individuals. Chapter 4, authored by Maheen Farhat Raza and Muhammad Ali Raza, applies neoclassical realist theory to assess Turkish media discourse regarding Syrian refugees. This chapter demonstrates how media framing often unjustly portrays Afghan and Ukrainian refugees as criminal elements, thereby exacerbating societal tensions and xenophobic attitudes. This analysis enhances our understanding of the structural dynamics that shape these discriminatory narratives in relation to broader sociopolitical and economic contexts.

Part 2 of the book shifts its focus to the intricate media stereotyping of marginalized communities, particularly minorities and women. It comprises four chapters that critically examine the interconnections between media representation, gender dynamics, and xenophobia across diverse cultural and regional contexts. Collectively, these chapters underscore the media's significant, yet frequently

underestimated role in shaping societal perceptions and identities of marginalized groups. In Chapter 5, Rahime Özgün Kehya conducts a nuanced analysis of the discourses surrounding migration and misogyny in Turkish media. This examination illuminates the historical and geographical intersections that inform these narratives, revealing how xenophobia often intersects with misogynistic attitudes directed toward migrant women. By providing a critical lens on prevailing societal narratives, Kehya's work underscores the need for a more comprehensive understanding of these intertwined discourses.

Fidan Cheikosman, in Chapter 6, critiques the media's role in perpetuating xenophobia through its representations of Syrian female refugees in Turkey. Using content analysis, Cheikosman identifies the linguistic choices that contribute to negative public perceptions and further entrench xenophobic attitudes. Her findings advocate for enhanced media literacy and ethical journalism practices as essential measures to combat these pervasive challenges. Chapter 7, authored by Devanjan Khuntia, explores the experiences of the Paroja ethnic group in Assam, India, emphasizing their social exclusion and the influence of media narratives on the discourse surrounding citizenship. Through qualitative research with displaced individuals, Khuntia illustrates the media's significant role in shaping identity, marginalization, and the complex realities of belonging within varied sociopolitical landscapes. In Chapter 8, Venencia Paidamoyo Nyambuya examines the lived experiences of African migrant women in Durban, South Africa, highlighting the interconnectedness of xenophobia and gender-based violence (GBV). Nyambuya's analysis critiques the mainstream media's portrayal of GBV and migration, advocating for more extensive research into the sociocultural factors that perpetuate these intertwined phenomena. Together, these chapters contribute to a deeper understanding of how media representations perpetuate stereotypes and shape societal attitudes toward marginalized groups. They emphasize the urgent need for ethical and responsible journalism that can counteract these harmful narratives and promote social equity.

The three chapters in Part 3 of this work provide a critical examination of the complex relationship between media narratives and the emergence of xenophobia. In Chapter 9, Sergio Luiz Cruz Aguilar conducts a thorough analysis of media representations of Venezuelan migrants in neighboring South American countries, specifically Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. Through methodical content and discourse analysis, Aguilar identifies significant variations in how immigrants are framed in these nations, revealing a troubling trend of negative portrayals that significantly influence public perceptions of Venezuelan migrants. Chapter 10 features Bhekinkosi Jakobe Ncube's exploration of the impact of media headlines on societal attitudes toward migrants in South Africa. Ncube's discourse analysis of selected headlines from the years 2008 and 2015 demonstrates that these headlines act as dual instruments – they function as emotional triggers while simultaneously shaping and reinforcing prevailing societal attitudes regarding migration. This examination

underscores the media's crucial role in molding public sentiment and highlights the dynamics through which media narratives contribute to societal perceptions of migrants. In Chapter 11, Dele Ogunmola investigates the prevalence of hate media in Côte d'Ivoire and South Africa, elucidating its significant role in exacerbating xenophobia and promoting hate speech. Using qualitative methodologies, Ogunmola critically unpacks the intricate relationship between media representations and xenophobic sentiments while also addressing pertinent legal frameworks that seek to mitigate the effects of hate speech. These three chapters collectively underscore the substantial influence of media narratives in shaping xenophobic attitudes and the portrayal of marginalized groups, illustrating the media's critical role in the social construction of migration and the subsequent impact on societal attitudes.

Part 4 examines the intricate relationship between social media and xenophobia across four chapters. Chapter 12 by Hasan Ali Yilmaz focuses on the perceptions faced by Syrian migrants in Turkey, emphasizing the underexplored influence of religious identity on social exclusion. Yilmaz's research reveals that religious affiliations significantly intensify negative sentiments against this demographic, highlighting critical gaps in the existing migration discourse. In Chapter 13, Kingsley L. Ngange, Brain Binebunwi, and Stephen N. Ndode analyze the role of Facebook activists in propelling hate speech in Cameroon. Through qualitative content analysis and survey methodologies, the authors demonstrate how these activists exploit the platform to circulate prejudicial narratives, resulting in societal rifts. They advocate for collaborative measures between governmental entities and Internet service providers to develop monitoring systems to curtail online hate speech. Lungisani Moyo and Oluyinka Osunkunle, in Chapter 14, contextualize the rise of xenophobic violence in South Africa, particularly during Operations Dudula and Fiela, through the lens of social media's influence. Their thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews reveals key factors exacerbating xenophobia, including unemployment, exploitation, and political motivations. They urge regional leadership to promote collaborative initiatives to prevent violence and scapegoating. Finally, Chapter 15 by Arta Xhelili and Nita Beluli Luma extends the discussion to migration narratives in the digital age, analyzing how social media influences public perceptions of migrants. Their analytical framework unpacks the complexities within digital discourse, illustrating its significant impact on societal attitudes toward migration. These chapters highlight the necessity for a nuanced understanding of social media's role in fostering xenophobia and the potential pathways to fostering societal solidarity.

To conclude, this book addresses significant gaps in the existing literature by examining the dynamics of xenophobia within media discourse and its socioeconomic and political implications. It draws on empirical evidence gathered through fieldwork involving refugees and asylum seekers to provide perspectives on how media narratives perpetuate negative stereotypes of migrants and refugees, shape public perceptions, and influence xenophobic policymaking. By adopting an interdisciplinary approach, it situates its research findings within an international

context while at the same time providing valuable theoretical, policy, and empirical insights. Also, by weaving together personal narratives, governmental reports, statistics, and academic literature, the authors carefully depict the experiences of migrants navigating precarity in the study countries. While the book critically evaluates the media's role in fueling xenophobic sentiments, it, however, has some shortcomings. For example, the lack of justification for selecting study countries may leave readers wondering about their significance as case study sites. Additionally, the book could have further explored the implications of xenophobia on transnational migration and the integration of immigrants in those countries. However, despite these limitations, the book fills a critical research gap. It provides valuable empirical insights beneficial for various stakeholders, including policymakers, journalists, and activists involved in discussions about human rights, immigration, and refugee issues. Also, with its valuable ethnographic studies of migrants and refugees, the book is essential for researchers interested in social policy and migration studies.

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Migration Governance in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities

Peter Mudungwe[1]

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Abstract

This article postulates that, despite its magnitude and positive impact in Africa, the attention accorded to migration, especially migration governance, which is fundamental to the management of migration, is not commensurate with its relative importance. To this end, the study uses qualitative methods to gather and analyze data from published research, policy documents, and evaluations conducted on the subject matter. Based on a literature review on the state of migration governance in Africa and its implications on African countries' capacity to manage migration, the analysis observes that migration governance is relatively weak. The study attributes this mainly to inadequate resource allocation toward migration management. It unravels the reasons for this modest investment within the framework of public budgeting theories to explain how governments determine resource allocation across different needs. Furthermore, the article documents the substantial contribution of migration toward development in Africa against the relatively meager investments toward migration management. It also documents the substantial donor investments in the migration sector and decries this state of affairs with regard to the continent's ability to set its migration agenda. The study concludes that the manifestations of weak migration governance are the reduced capacity of Africa to nurture and capitalize on the positive impact of migration, as well as the limitations on its ability to negotiate migration compacts. It recommends that Africa increases its investment in the migration sector as a prerequisite for taking charge of its migration agenda.

Keywords: Africa, migration governance, challenges, opportunities

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INTRODUCTION

Migration is defined in terms of time and space, that is, the movement of people that involves a change in their usual place of residence to another administrative boundary within a country or the movement of people from one political boundary to another over a period of time (Tsegay, 2023). The former phenomenon is internal migration, while the latter is international migration. The subjects in question are called migrants. In this regard, international migration is a situation whereby migrants move to, and live outside of their country of birth or usual residence for at least one year (Tsegay, 2023). The International Organization for Migration (IOM) defines a migrant as:

> A person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. The term includes a number of well-defined legal categories of people, such as migrant workers; persons whose particular types of movements are legally defined, such as smuggled migrants; as well as those whose status or means of movement are not specifically defined under international law, such as international students (IOM, 2019).

The IOM definition is arguably more comprehensive, as it includes the diffent types of migration and migrants, that is, internal or international; regular or irregular; voluntarily or involuntarily, and temporary or permanent. Therefore, for the purposes of this paper, the author adopts the IOM definition of migration.

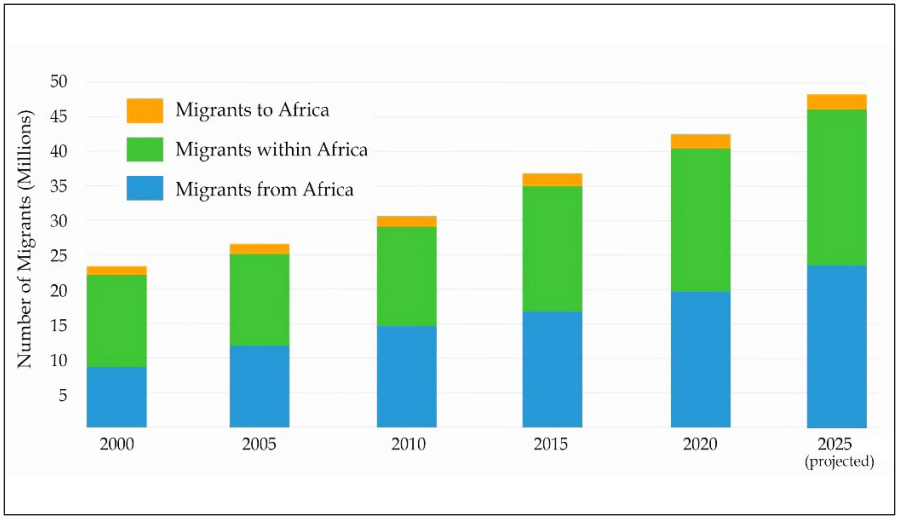
The magnitude of migration in Africa

Historically, Africans have migrated. Before European colonization in the late nineteenth century, Africa was the scene of great movements (Amin, 1995), including the movement of Homo sapiens from Africa spreading throughout the rest of the world some 80,000 years ago (Gugliotta, 2008); the forced migration of Africans during the slave trade between 1500 and the 1860s when at least 12 million Africans were shipped to the Americas (Gates Jr., 2013); the *Guruuswa* – the movement of the pastoralist Shona people from the Great Lakes region to present-day Zimbabwe (Shoko, 2007); and the *Mfecane* – the violent wars over land and resources that tore apart several ethnic groups between 1820 and 1835 and led to forced migrations in the southern and central African regions (Mensah, 2016). After colonization by Europeans in the late nineteenth century, the continent has experienced vast movements of labor, both within and from the continent (Amin, 1995).

Recent trends point to a continuation of migration in Africa, characterized by cross-border, mixed-migratory movements, including refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants, unaccompanied minors, environmental migrants, smuggled persons, victims of trafficking, and stranded migrants (Mixed Migration Hub, n.d.). International migration within and from Africa has experienced steady growth in

recent times, increasing from approximately 31 million in 2010 to 42.5 million in 2020, and to an estimated 47.5 million in 2025 (UNDESA, 2016).

Figure 1: Migration within and from Africa



Source: UNDESA (2016)

Further, a sizable proportion of African migration is intra-continental. Those who migrate from the continent move mainly to Europe, the Gulf States, Asia, and North America. It is also noteworthy that a characteristic of African migration is that it is mainly intra-regional and inter-regional, a phenomenon that has a long history (UNCTAD, 2018). As Table 1 depicts, West, East, Southern and Central Africa exhibit the strongest examples of intra-regional migration flows on the continent (Shimeles, 2010).

Table 1: Inter-regional and intra-regional migration in Africa (percentages)

ORIGIN	**DESTINATION**				
	East Africa	Central Africa	North Africa	Southern Africa	West Africa
East Africa	60.51	5.30	16.73	17.38	0.08
Central Africa	37.90	47.59	4.38	5.68	4.44
North Africa	46.00	26.70	23.02	0.80	4.12
Southern Africa	15.12	1.66	0.27	82.47	0.48
West Africa	0.24	7.32	0.61	0.74	91.10

Source: AUC (2021)

Inter-regional migration is prevalent mainly from West Africa to Southern Africa, from East/Horn of Africa to Southern Africa and from Central Africa to Southern and West Africa (UNDESA, 2016). The bulk of the migrants from North Africa move to Europe (predominantly to France, Spain and Italy) and to the Gulf States (mainly to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) (UNCTAD, 2018).

Intra-regional movements within the eight Regional Economic Communities (RECs) of the African Union (AU)[2] are also pronounced (see Table 2). This trend has been on the increase, notably between 2000 and 2010, and is mainly attributable to proximity and the easing of barriers to travel for citizens of the RECs within their respective regions.

Table 2: Shares of international migrant stock within and between RECs, 2017 (Percentages)

ORIGIN	DESTINATION							
	AMU	CEN-SAD	COMESA	EAC	ECCAS	ECOWAS	IGAD	SADC
AMU	16.8	45.2	5.8	0.0	1.4	29.2	0.5	0.9
CEN-SAD	1.6	33.4	14.3	3.5	7.3	25.8	11.9	2.2
COMESA	0.4	8.8	30.5	16.7	8.1	0.1	22.8	12.7
EAC	0.0	7.7	29.4	23.4	9.3	0.1	15.9	14.3
ECCAS	0.1	5.7	22.4	16.0	26.0	2.1	7.8	20.0
ECOWAS	1.2	46.7	0.3	0.0	3.6	47.1	0.2	1.0
IGAD	1.0	15.0	33.7	15.0	2.7	0.0	31.7	1.0
SADC	0.0	1.0	22.0	13.0	12.3	0.0	6.2	45.5

Source: UNCTAD (2018)

Evidence suggests that despite a substantial increase in emigration from Africa to Europe over the past decades, the number of Africans migrating irregularly to Europe represents a small percentage as compared to regular arrivals (IOM, 2017). This is despite the rather disproportionate emphasis by researchers and the media on irregular migration from Africa to Europe in recent years.

IMPACT OF MIGRATION IN AFRICA

Migration has both positive and negative effects in Africa. The advantages of migration in Africa include the money that migrants send home (remittances), the reduced pressure on jobs and resources in migrant-sending countries, and the diasporic investments and new skills that migrants can return with to their home

[2] The eight RECs of the African Union include the following: the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU); the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD); the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA); the East African Community (EAC); the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS); the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD); and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

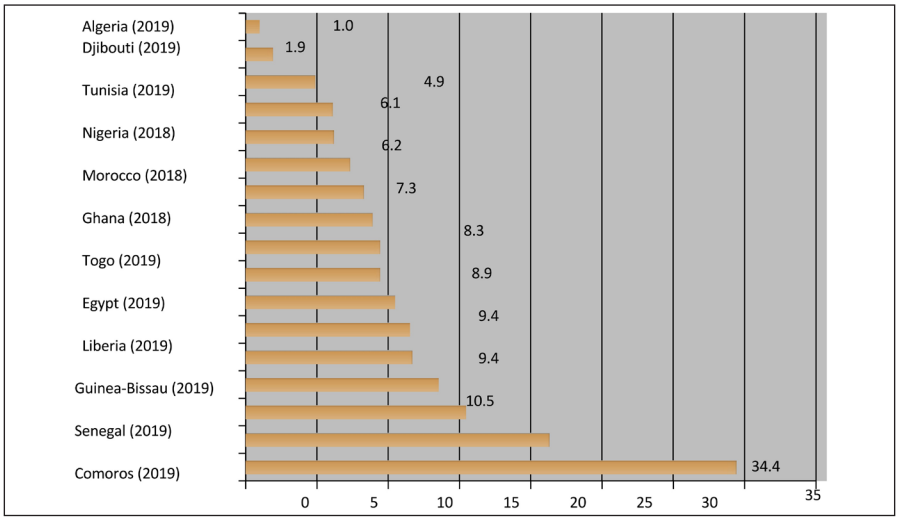
countries. The disadvantages include the brain and brawn drain (a depletion in people of working age who migrate from the continent), which reduces the size of the potential workforce; de-skilling; and the potential for remittance-induced inflation in migrant-sending countries.

Positive impacts of migration

Remittances

Remittances constitute a vital source of income for developing countries. They help families to access food, education, health care, and other basic needs (World Bank, 2020b). According to the World Bank, remittance flows to Africa amounted to US$17 billion in 2004, and this figure rose to US$61 billion in 2013, which constituted 19% of Africa's GDP in that year (World Bank, 2017). In 2022, remittances to sub-Saharan Africa amounted to US$53 billion, which was a 6.1% increase from the previous year. Further, remittances to the region were projected to rise by 1.3% and 3.7% in 2023 and 2024, respectively. It is noteworthy that remittance flows to sub-Saharan Africa in 2022 were nearly twice the size of foreign direct investment (FDI), were relatively more stable, and supported the current accounts of several African countries dealing with food insecurity, severe droughts and floods, and had debt-servicing difficulties (World Bank, 2023).

Figure 2: Remittances as a percentage of GDP in selected African countries, 2018 and 2019



Source: World Bank (2019; 2020a; 2020b)

The example of Lesotho brings into sharp focus the import of remittances in some African countries. In 2018, Basotho migrants sent home US$438 million, a figure that

surpassed official development assistance (ODA), which stood at US$146,7 million, and FDI, which amounted to US$39,5 million (IOM, n.d.) (Lesotho).

After FDI, remittances are Africa's largest source of foreign inflows (Ratha et al., 2011).[3] In 2024, remittance flows to low- and middle-income countries are expected to reach $685 billion, larger than FDI and ODA combined (Ratha et al., 2024). Further, large and stable remittance flows can improve a country's creditworthiness and, on the basis of future inflows, can be used by both governments and commercial banks in recipient countries as collateral for raising bond financing from international markets (Mudungwe, 2017).

However, while remittances to Africa have been substantial and more stable and countercyclical than other financial inflows (and thus sustaining consumption and investment during recessions), remittance flows to sub-Saharan Africa had been expected to decline by 23.1% to $37 billion in 2020 mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, while a recovery of 4% was expected post-COVID-19 (Ratha et al., 2024).

Diaspora participation in development

There is abundant evidence of the impact of diasporas in the development of their countries of origin. Apart from remittances, diaspora contributions also include philanthropic activities, knowledge exchange and skills/technology transfers, enhanced trade links between host and recipient countries, and better access to foreign capital markets through diaspora bonds (Ratha et al., 2024). Through the IOM's Migration and Development in Africa (MIDA) and the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN), some countries on the continent have benefited from temporary return programs of their professionals abroad to alleviate skill shortages at home (Mudungwe, 2017).

Enhanced labor market efficiencies

Wage differentials notwithstanding, the laws of supply and demand dictate that labor will move from areas where it is abundant, to areas of labor shortage. In some cases, such movements have been regimented, as in the case of South Africa where, from the latter half of the nineteenth century, labor was sourced from other southern African countries, mainly Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana, and Namibia, to work in gold and diamond mines (Kok et al., 2006). In recent times, and through bilateral agreements, some African countries have effected the movement of skills from countries with abundance, to countries with shortage. In 2021, the governments of Rwanda and Zimbabwe signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU), which paved the way for the former to recruit teachers from the latter. The MoU also paved the way for Rwanda to recruit Zimbabwean lecturers to teach

[3] These figures account for only officially recorded remittances and do not include data from about half of the continent's countries that do not report remittance data regularly. When one adds the inflows to these countries and the unrecorded flows to the rest of Africa through informal channels, the size of remittance flows will be substantially higher.

medicine and health sciences at its universities (Nyathi, 2021). Zimbabwe is expected to have exported 477 teachers to Rwanda by September 2024 (Chigoche, 2022).

Besides the Rwanda/Zimbabwe case, there are also examples of bilateral labor agreements in two specific Southern African Development Community (SADC) corridors: between Lesotho and South Africa, and between Zimbabwe and South Africa (IOM, 2021).

Through bilateral labor agreements, as chronicled above, Africa has the potential to rationalize its labor. This would not only promote safe pathways for labor migration, but also regional integration, social cohesion, and cultural exchange.

Economic and social integration

Migration has the potential to play an integral role in the integration (and overall development) of the African continent with regard to economic, social, cultural and knowledge transfer aspects. Economically, migrant networks and diaspora communities play a crucial role in facilitating trade and investment between origin and destination countries on the continent, fostering economic integration and cross-border collaboration (Gumede et al., 2020).

In 2018, the AU adopted two ground-breaking protocols that have the potential to integrate the African continent: The agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and the protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment (the Free Movement Protocol). The AfCFTA seeks to increase intra-African trade and investment, while the Free Movement Protocol seeks to progressively facilitate the free movement of persons, right of residence, and right of establishment. The successful implementation of these protocols would not only enhance economic growth, job creation, and poverty reduction across the continent, but would also provide opportunities for intra-continental labor migration and remittance flows, thereby bringing the economies and people of the African continent into a single integrated regional block (Brunow et al., 2015).

Over the years, migration has facilitated the exchange of ideas, traditions, language, and cultural practices among different African communities, enriching the continent's cultural fabric and promoting a sense of shared identity. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) provides key insights into the substance of cultural exchange, highlighting the pivotal role of cultural kinships and mutual languages cementing relations of cross-border communities within the context of trade and human relations. Further, cross-border trading has promoted social cohesion and economic inclusion across the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), East African Community (EAC), and SADC regions, as languages and cultures are learned and shared during the interaction between buyers and sellers, resulting in lasting people-to-people integration and socioeconomic and cultural relationships across borders. Migrant populations often maintain strong ties

with their home countries while integrating into their host communities, creating networks, and fostering social cohesion across national borders (AUC, 2024).

Knowledge transfer

Through migration, the continent stands to benefit immensely as migrants move between countries transferring knowledge, best practices, and technology, promoting the exchange of ideas, and fostering regional collaboration in various sectors. This exchange of human capital can promote economic growth, entrepreneurship, and innovation. Various African and regional blocks have collaborated to ease restrictions on human mobility in order to facilitate movement of highly skilled professionals for purposes of skills transfer and filling critical skills gaps. For example, the Kenya-Rwanda relationship, in which Rwanda offers residence permits to skilled workers and work permits to semi-skilled workers from Kenya, is a good example of collaboration (AUC, 2024). As noted above, another example is the Rwanda-Zimbabwe bilateral agreement that has seen Rwanda importing almost 500 teachers from Zimbabwe.

Negative impacts of migration

Brain drain

Perhaps the most significant externality of migration on the African continent is the loss of skills to other regions. An estimated 70,000 skilled professionals emigrate from Africa each year, resulting in a huge skills gap on the continent (Sima, 2024). Consequent to this brain drain, the continent spends approximately US$4 billion annually to employ about 100,000 expatriates. This amount translated to 35% of ODA to Africa, and is considered to be a significant contributor to the further weakening of already fragile health systems in low-income migrant-sending countries (AfDB, 2011). The real cost of the loss of skilled human resources from the continent is brought into sharp focus when superimposed upon the cost borne by migrant-sending countries in educating and training the professionals. For example, a 2005 report by the IOM (quoted in Landau and Vigneswaran, 2007) revealed that South Africa spends US$1 billion in training health-care workers who migrated. It is debatable if the remittances that the departed health workers send back home can surpass the direct and indirect public resources invested in training them (Landau and Vigneswaran, 2007). In his paper on the brain drain of medical professionals from Zimbabwe, Chibango (2013) highlights that Africa might have lost approximately US$1.2 billion from the 60,000 professionals that the continent lost between 1985 and 1990.

More specifically, the international migration of health-care workers contributes to a crisis in human resources for health in many African countries. The movement of health professionals from low-income to high-income countries has received much attention over the past few decades, and researchers consider migration to be a significant contributor to the further weakening of already fragile health systems in the sending countries. The 2006 World Health Report estimated

a global shortfall of almost 4.3 million health personnel, with 57 countries (most in Africa and Asia) facing severe shortages. Currently, nearly all African countries show increasing outflows of health-care workers (WHO, 2006). It is anticipated that the international migration of health workers from Africa is expected to continue rising post the COVID-19 pandemic period (AUC, 2020). Concomitant with the brain drain is the cost borne by migrant-sending countries in educating and training the human resources, to the benefit of receiving countries.

Another aspect of the brain drain is brain waste, or the de-skilling of qualified professionals. This phenomenon refers to occupational change among highly skilled migrants to low-skilled jobs that are unrelated to their educational and occupational backgrounds. This may be due to barriers to participating in the labor market related to work permits, lack of recognition of qualifications obtained abroad, low value given to professional experience acquired in the sending country prior to migration, lack of demand for their specific skills, or discrimination based on gender and ethnicity (IOM, 2012). Such is the prevalence of this phenomenon, that a study published in 2016 estimated that nearly two million immigrants from all nations and with college degrees in the United States are unemployed or are employed in low-skilled jobs (Soto et al., 2016). De-skilling has implications for the sending country when the affected migrants return home, as they may require re-training.

Remittance-induced inflation, impact on exchange rates, and dependency

Evidence suggests that remittances can induce inflation in developing countries. The conversion of large inflows of remittances into domestic currency raises the money supply. If these inflows are not absorbed into productive sectors or capital investment, they go into consumption expenditure, which fuels inflation. The rising level of remittances can have a spending effect that can trigger a rise in the price level of non-tradable goods (Sachs and Larrain, 1993). These are goods that can only be consumed in the economy in which they are produced and cannot be exported or imported. Since the goods cannot be imported, an increase in demand for those goods will result in price increases. Examples of non-tradables include water supply, all public services, hotel accommodation, real estate, construction, and local transportation. Further, an increase in remittances can cause an appreciation in the real exchange rate through rising domestic prices. There is also evidence that the overvaluation of the real exchange rate, as a result of an increase in remittances, causes an under-estimation of long-term economic growth and, as a result, the production of tradable goods suffers from weak institutions and market failures, which can lead to an increase in inflation (Narayan et al., 2011).

While for many developing countries remittances constitute a lifeline for development and help alleviate poverty among recipients, it has been argued that if remittances are substantial, the real exchange rate in the recipient country could appreciate, thereby making its goods less competitive on the international market.

Studies also show that remittances can create dependency, thus weakening the recipients' incentive to work and slowing economic growth (Ratha, n.d.).

Social consequences of migration

While there has been notable focus on the positive economic impact of migration on development, there is a need to similarly investigate its negative social implications, which include its impact on the family unit and xenophobia. Migration may have significant undesirable by-products due to family separation. A study by Kufakurinani et al. (2014) chronicles a range of psycho-social problems encountered by children and youths – "diaspora orphans" – in Zimbabwe, who have one or both parents living abroad, and the resultant delinquency and dysfunctional teenage behavior.

While Africa envisions regional integration as one of it goals under Agenda 2063, such integration should, of necessity, be both economic and social. Critical to social integration is the social cohesion of Africans across the continent, the shared values, sense of belonging, inter-connectedness, and solidarity among communites from different nationalities. Yet the competition over limited resources and the perception by communities in migrant receiving countries that foreigners take advantage of the labor market and welfare services without contributing to the country, can influence policies and public attitudes towards them and stoke the flames of xenophobia (Mudungwe, 2014). Therefore, it can be argued that, to a certain extent, xenophobia stands in the way of the African dream of an integrated continent.

MIGRATION GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGING MIGRATION

Given the magnitude of migration in Africa and the opportunities and challenges that migration presents, it is pertinent that the continent engages in the migration and development debate. Migration and development is defined as "a conscious effort to harness the positive aspects of migration for the benefit of development while simultaneously mitigating its negative impact" (Mudungwe, 2014). Going by this definition, for the continent to harness the full potential of migration and mitigate its negative impact on development outcomes presupposes the presence of robust migration governance regimes in African countries. The IOM (2022) defines migration governance as,

> The combined frameworks of legal norms, laws and regulations, policies and traditions as well as organizational structures (sub-national, national, regional and international) and the relevant processes that shape and regulate States' approaches with regard to migration in all its forms, addressing rights and responsibilities and promoting international cooperation.

Therefore, efforts to manage migration in a coherent manner and reap the positive impact of migration on development outcomes require the presence of harmonized

migration policies and legal frameworks that are integrated in a country's national development strategies, and well-coordinated and inclusive institutional structures for managing migration. Integrating or mainstreaming migration is the assessment of how migration will impact planned actions and instituting strategies to mitigate the expected negative consequences and enhancing the positive impacts on the outcomes of the planned actions at all stages of national development planning, including design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. Stand-alone migration policies have limited impact on development outcomes and are not sustainable; they should therefore be integrated in the broader national development frameworks for sustainability and far-reaching impact. In this regard, migration policies should be an integral part of the national development planning discourse and process, thereby having a direct impact on national development and benefiting from the national fiscus. However, the presence of migration policies, legal frameworks, and institutional mechanisms is premised on the availability of up-to-date data on the magnitude, nature, and impact of migratory patterns. Further, it is imperative that the migration policies and legal frameworks are implemented consistently and are subjected to regular monitoring and evaluation.

While the foregoing is the ideal, the evidence suggests that the majority of African countries lack robust migration governance regimes. Landau and Vigneswaran (2007) point to the scarcity of migration data on which African countries can make informed predictions (and, therefore, evidence-based policies) for managing migration and capitalizing on its potential benefits. A recent African Union Commission (AUC) study corroborates this observation, and revealed that except for data on immigration/emigration and labor migration, there are gaps in the collection of data on other critical aspects of migration, including data on remittances, the diaspora, human trafficking, and migrant smuggling. The report also revealed that while most countries collect data on refugees and asylum seekers regularly, it is debatable as to whether the countries could achieve this regularity without the support of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which has an obvious interest in up-to-date data on refugees and asylum seekers (AUC, 2018a). The AUC study also revealed that except for border governance strategies and policies, most countries lack national policies on migration, labor migration, and diaspora matters.

Further, of those countries that have national policies governing migration, labor migration, and diaspora matters, a significant number of these frameworks do not have implementation plans, nor do they have monitoring and evaluation mechanisms with progress and impact indicators. The policy frameworks of most countries are also not integrated into their national development plans (AUC, 2018a).

With regard to institutional mechanisms for managing migration, the AUC study further revealed that very few countries have ministries, units, or agencies dedicated to managing migration, and equally few countries have national coordinating mechanisms, that is, national forums for coordinating migration.

A national coordinating mechanism is typically a government-led inter-agency platform in charge of facilitating cooperation and coordination of migration issues among stakeholders with migration-related functions and responsibilities. It is an integral part of a country's migration governance system and brings together all relevant government institutions, civil society organizations, and international partners involved in managing migration. Of those countries that have national coordinating mechanisms, just over half of the mechanisms are established by statute, and can, therefore, enjoy budgetary support from the national fiscus (AUC, 2018a).

With weak migration governance regimes in Africa, indications are that the continent is not harnessing the full potential that migration can potentially bestow toward development outcomes. As a corollary, the continent is also not poised to minimize the negative impact of migration on development to the extent possible. Much as they are aware of the migration issues facing them, there is a gap between African countries' commitment and actual technical capacity to handle migration (AUC, 2017). Given the foregoing, it is imperative to explore the reasons that could explain why few African countries have invested in their migration governance systems.

A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYZING THE STATUS OF MIGRATION GOVERNANCE AND BUDGETARY PRACTICES IN AFRICA

Mogues (2012) reviews theories and empirical inquiries into the governance conditions that determine how governments prioritize the allocation of public resources across different needs. This section discusses these theories to ascertain how these factors determine the status of migration governance in Africa. It is also possible to use the frameworks to unravel how migration governance issues in Africa affect investments in the migration sector.

The garbage can budgeting model

This model postulates that budget processes are independent from systematic influences; hence, budget decisions are the random outcomes of a large set of independent events. Thus, most often solutions arise before problems, and many unnecessary solutions may exist before a problem is realized (Denomme, 2023). The garbage can model symbolizes a meeting where ideas are discussed and decided on, as a "garbage can" that participants are chaotically dumping problems and solutions into as they are being generated. The term "garbage can" portrays the manner in which items in a trash can are organized – a messy, chaotic mix. It portrays problems, solutions, and participants/decision-makers as three independent "streams" that are each generated separately and are disconnected from each other. These three streams only meet when the fourth stream of choice opportunity arises, as a garbage can, for the streams to flow into (Mogues, 2012).

Thus, budgets are the result of an organized anarchy that has four streams: (i) the actors; (ii) the problems as perceived by the actors; (iii) the solutions proffered

by the actors; and (iv) the actions they take in the form of initiatives. The framework suggests that the allocation of public resources is basically a simple random walk process in which public spending in one year is equal to the previous year's spending plus a random amount that could be negative or positive. The inference is that given a problem, policymakers with limited time and resources, and a choice among competing needs, there is an equal chance that any of the alternative expenditures will be chosen. As a result, the policymakers' decision is not influenced in a systematic way by actors (Mogues, 2012).

The incremental budget model

This model suggests that in making budgets, policymakers tend to consider historical expenditure patterns, and that changes in budget allocation are incremental, increasing or decreasing by the same proportion each year. The basic assumption of "incrementalism" is growth in expenditure, and budgeting is characterized by limited budgetary review and non-rational forms of analysis. Therefore, since the current budget allocation is tied to the previous year's budget, there is little room for actors to influence the budget through lobbying (Mogues, 2012; Greenwood et al., 2022).

The status quo bias

This is a phenomenon whereby policies or budget items are continued, even though they may have outlived their usefulness. Those who stand to benefit from the current state are usually the ones with the power to have lobbied policy enactment or budget allocation in the first place, and likely to be more influential to have the policy or budget allocation maintained, than the constituency that prefers an alternative. The beneficiaries' lobbying power increases after the policy or budget allocation is instituted, and the process becomes self-perpetuating (Mogues, 2012). Thus, under the status quo bias, decision-makers avoid changes and maintain the current situation. However, in a dynamic world with rapid technological advances, change is constant and the status quo bias can hinder progress (Godefroid et al., 2023).

The veto-players theory

Veto-players are influential actors and institutions that can effectively block budgets. These include groups like political parties in government and presidents. Thus, budget composition is, to a large extent, a function of changes in ideology within government and between governments over time. The greater the ideological distance between alternating governments, the greater the change in budget composition reflecting the political outlook of the alternating governments (Mogues, 2012).

Budgetary trade-offs

As they prepare budgets, policymakers are faced with an array of competing demands, while at the same time restricted by national income. Therefore, in the absence of a

budget expansion, an increase in one budget item is accompanied by a decrease in another, or other budget items (a budgetary trade-off). In this context, ministries or departments that have relatively limited clout may fare badly in budget trade-offs (Mogues, 2012). For example, an increase in the defense budget may be accompanied by a corresponding decrease in the expenditure for the ministry of cultural affairs.

Interest groups and collective action

Interest groups, or groups of people who seek to influence public policy on the basis of a shared interest or concern, have the ability to lobby for public policies, expenditures, or investments that are favorable to them. Interest groups include farmers' organizations, diaspora associations, women's groups, youth associations, etc. Because of the power they wield, interest groups can exert pressure on political agents whose objective is the retention of political office. However, the extent to which interest groups can influence political agents is determined by:

(i) Physical proximity of group members and access to transportation and communication infrastructure, which facilitate coordination and mutual monitoring of actions and intra- group coordination and organization.

(ii) Group size: Controlling for spatial concentration and access to transport and communication infrastructure, larger groups are more difficult to coordinate than smaller ones. However, larger groups can wield more political clout through their greater aggregate income resources and greater combined voting power.

(iii) Education and information: The role of the level of education of group members and access to information can play a critical role in lobbying. A group that is well educated and has greater access to information is in a better position to accurately assess the consequences and merits of different policies and investments, and discern their outcomes, and is therefore in a better position to provide knowledge to policymakers and argue its case (Mogues, 2012).

Providers of international development aid

Government partners that provide development aid can exert a strong influence on a country's policy and public expenditure. Partners include multilateral agencies and governments from the developed world and natural-resource-rich countries. For small economies or countries in or emerging from conflict, donor aid can be overwhelming, and so can the influence of the donor on the recipient country's policies and spending. Historically, the evolution of development paradigms influences the sectors where donor funds go. In recent years, the advent of budget support and structural adjustment loans has seen the emergence of underwriting plans on overall budget allocation, usually a negotiation process between governments and donors. In some cases, donors may use their financial or political leverage on the governments to ensure that a government does not deviate from using both aid and domestic public resources as per plan. Implicit in these mechanisms is that donors can sway policies and resource allocation in developing countries (Mogues, 2012).

There are long-standing concerns in the development community over donor preferences and conditionalities and the limited impact that donor aid has in recipient countries. There are also growing concerns that in aid-dependent countries, aid can lead to divergence and inconsistencies between recipient governments' priorities and resource allocation (Mogues, 2012). For example, there has been a proliferation of national migration policies in Africa at the behest of donors.

However, the ownership, and consequently implementation of the policies is weak, or non-existent. In this regard, a historical analysis of donor involvement in the migration space in Africa is instructive. Prior to 2006, when the AU adopted its first comprehensive migration policy and adopted a common position on migration, migration was a low priority for most African governments (AUC, 2018b). However, the issue has since gained traction as a strategic policy area on the continent, partly stemming from a growing realization that managed migration can be a driver of development if managed in a comprehensive manner. Le Coz and Pietropolli (2020) argue that this shift could, in part, be due to the increase in European Union (EU) migration-related investments on the continent, especially since 2015. Consequently a number of African countries have formulated migration policies, although their implementation has been patchy (AUC, 2018a). This raises the question whether this could be as a result of donor-driven imperatives – in this case the EU – that focus more on curbing migration flows from Africa (Le Coz and Pietropolli, 2020), particularly from certain regions of the continent than the more broader developmental aspects of migration. Additionally, it begs the question whether the budgetary allocations of African countries toward migration would be more considerable if programming in the area of migration were organic. This argument is developed further in the next section.

THE AFRICAN CONTEXT

To a large extent, the descriptions and theories of public spending presented above explain the weak migration governance systems in Africa. This section, therefore, analyses the migration governance situation in Africa within the context of the descriptions and theories of public spending, as outlined above.

First, the migration and development debate is a relatively new concept and generated considerable interest among development policymakers and academics at the turn of the millennium, giving rise to what is known as the migration–development nexus (Bastia, 2013).

Second, there is a lack of migration data in Africa, as the 2018 AUC (2018a) study revealed. Therefore, while policymakers may acknowledge migration as an important parameter for consideration in development plans, without adequate data, policymakers do not know what aspects of migration to include in development plans and can therefore not make informed predictions on the potential benefits of migration.

Third, very few countries in Africa have government ministries or departments dedicated to migration. Additionally, few countries have institutional mechanisms for coordinating migration. Of those countries that do have them, the institutional mechanisms are not statutory bodies (AUC, 2018a). The African Development Bank (AfDB) also notes that some African countries established specialized units or departments to manage support from their diaspora; however, it makes the observation that these units are weak and unable to significantly tap the benefit of their diaspora (AfDB, 2010).

Fourth, the diaspora constitutes a major interest group in the migration sector in Africa, but they are seldom consulted in policy dialogues in their countries of origin. This is mainly because they do not hold official recognition as a constituency in their countries of origin, nor is there evidence of the diaspora's high organization and coordination efforts. In some cases, citizens in the diaspora left their home countries due to political differences with their governments and have some involvement in conflicts that are raging in their home countries. Therefore, governments in their home countries view them with suspicion (Féron and Lefort, 2019).

In view of the foregoing, it would seem that a combination of the theories discussed earlier are at play in explaining the weak migration governance regimes in Africa. The "garbage can," incremental budget, and status quo bias models have a common thread that runs through them – conservatism. Since the migration and development debate is a relatively new phenomenon, spending on migration would be a departure from the norm. This, coupled with the lack of migration data (that could demonstrate the potential benefits of migration and could therefore persuade policymakers to prioritize migration in national development planning) is detrimental to the case for including the migration sector in public spending.

The budgetary trade-offs model presupposes the existence of ministries or institutions that would haggle in favor of their sector. However, as noted above, very few countries on the continent have dedicated ministries or departments responsible for migration. Further, institutional mechanisms for coordinating migration are either weak or non-existent, thereby weakening the ability of migration interest groups to lobby effectively for their sector. Similarly, the diaspora, as an important constituency that could play a significant role in lobbying for the migration sector, receives no formal recognition, has yet to organize itself well and, in some cases, labor under suspicion of the home governments.

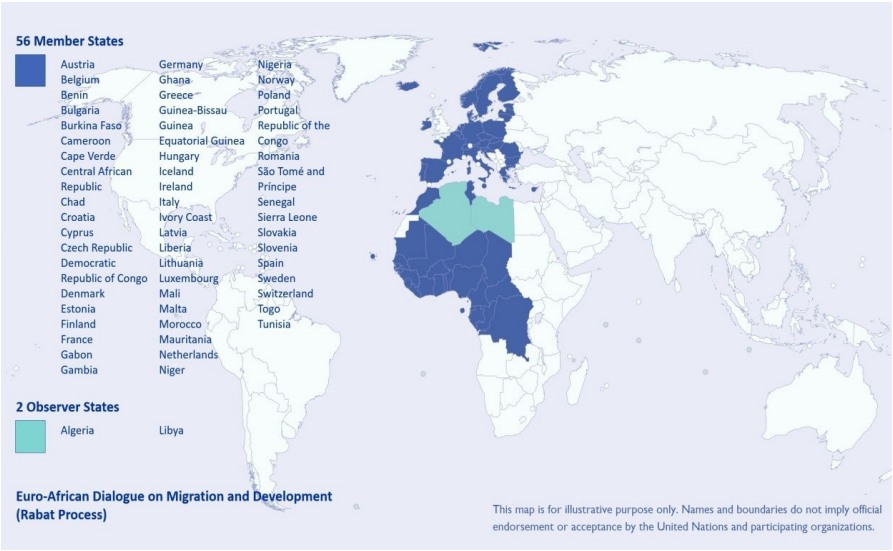
Donor funding for migration activities, primarily from the EU and European countries, increased tremendously in Africa in the past two decades. The paradox, however, is why migration governance is weak amid the increased donor funding for migration activities. Assessments of EU funding of migration in Africa make the observation that the funding focuses heavily on tightening border controls and preventing migration into Europe (Deutsche Welle, 2016) and combating human trafficking and migrant smuggling (Landau and Vigneswaran, 2007) instead of addressing the root causes of flight in the countries of origin. The past

decade witnessed a proliferation of donor-funded migration policies in Africa. A significant proportion of these policies have no action plans, no monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and are not integrated into the national development plans of the recipient countries. Further, as Landau and Vigneswaran (2007) observe, even countries that have good migration policies lack trained personnel and the requisite systems and technology to implement them effectively and consistently (Landau and Vigneswaran, 2007).

Despite the fact that the bulk of migration in Africa is intra-continental, EU funding for migration activities and research skews in favor of countries and regions on the continent from which migrants moving to Europe originate. Hence, the EU established the Rabat Process and the Khartoum Process, through which EU-funded initiatives seek to address irregular migration on the northern migratory route from Africa to Europe. It is noteworthy that there are no similar initiatives in southern and parts of east Africa, presumably because countries in these parts of the continent are not major source countries of irregular migrants to Europe.

Established in July 2006 in Rabat, Morocco, the Rabat Process (also known as the Euro-African Dialogue on Migration and Development) is a platform that brings together 58 African and European countries to discuss migration issues. In Africa, the Rabat Process covers West and parts of Central and North Africa (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Map of the Rabat Process countries

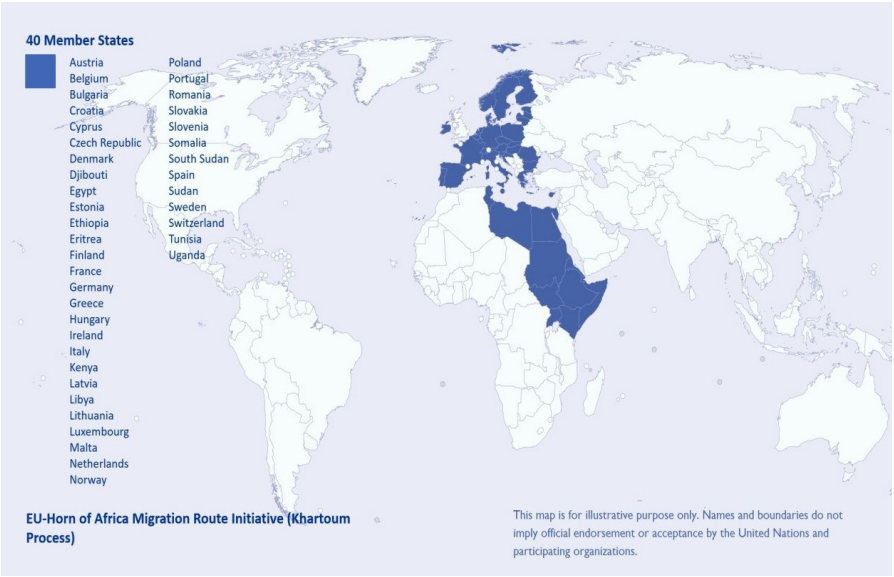


Source: IOM (n.d.) (Rabat Process)

Another EU-led initiative is the Khartoum Process, also known as the EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative. Established through the Rome Declaration in 2014,

the initiative focuses on addressing human trafficking and migrant smuggling from and through the Horn of Africa and East and North Africa to Europe (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Map of the Khartoum Process countries



Source: IOM (n.d.) (Khartoum Process)

The skewed nature of EU support to Africa in the area of migration is also evident in the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF), which was established in 2016 after the 2015 Valetta Summit on Migration to address the root causes of irregular migration and displacement of persons in Africa. The EUTF is a €4.7 billion initiative that is operational in 26 of the 55 African countries across three regions, including the Sahel and Lake Chad, the Horn of Africa, and North Africa. Another example is the Regional Operational Centre in Khartoum, Sudan, that is funded by the EUTF in the amount of €5 million. The center is a platform for sharing information on irregular migration and associated criminal networks among countries of the Khartoum Process, and is managed by CIVIPOL, the technical cooperation operator of the French Ministry of the Interior.

With weak migration governance regimes on the continent, one can argue that the aid that goes into the migration sector could have more impact if African countries had robust migration governance systems with the capacity to utilize the aid effectively. That a big portion of the EUTF is implemented by European organizations, the Better Migration Management Programme and CIVIPOL is instructive in this regard.

CONCLUSIONS

This article shows that there has been an increase in migration in Africa in recent years, and that the bulk of migration is intra-continental, intra-regional, and inter-regional within and between the eight AU Regional Economic Communities. Despite the alarmist media reports about the migration "crisis" from Africa to Europe, evidence suggests that the number of Africans migrating irregularly to Europe in recent years represents a small percentage as compared to regular arrivals.

The article also shows that migration has both positive and negative effects in Africa. The positive impacts include remittances, reduced pressure on jobs and resources, and the diasporic contributions to development and philanthropic activities in their home countries. The negative impacts include the brain and brawn drain and de-skilling, while overreliance on remittances has the potential to induce inflation in remittance-receiving countries and exert upward pressure on the exchange rate. Further, it argues that remittances can create dependency among recipents, thus weakening their incentive to work and slowing economic growth. On the social front, migration may result in family separation, which could have adverse consequences on the psycho-social development and behavior of children and youths.

However, despite the magnitude of migration in Africa, and the fact that the bulk of migration is intra-continental, in general, migration governance regimes and the capacity of African governments to manage migration are weak. Weak migration governance systems could be the result of several factors, namely: (i) the limited or lack of resources allocated toward the migration sector by African governments; (ii) the paucity of migration data that demonstrates the potential benefits of migration and could therefore persuade policymakers to prioritize migration in national development planning; (iii) migration interest groups and institutional mechanisms for managing or coordinating migration that are either weak or non-existent, thereby weakening their ability to articulate and lobby effectively for their sector; and (iv) a "fire-fighting" approach by major donors that are supporting the migration sector in Africa.

Donor funding for migration is skewed in favor of managing certain aspects of migration (specifically irregular migration on the northern migratory route) at the expense of a holistic approach that recognizes that the bulk of migration is intra-continental. To a certain extent, this approach also largely ignores capacitating African governments to manage migration, preferring organizations from donor countries to implement migration projects in Africa.

The manifestations of weak migration governance systems are the reduced capacity of African governments to (i) nurture and fully capitalize on the positives that migration can bestow to national development; (ii) mitigate the negative impact of migration on development outcomes; and (iii) effectively negotiate migration compacts with other regions that are destinations of African migrants.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

From the foregoing presentation and analysis, four recommendations emerge: (i) Defining an African migration agenda; (ii) Mainstreaming migration into development strategies;[4] (iii) Establishing robust institutional mechanisms for managing migration; and (iv) Strengthening migration data systems.

Defining an African migration agenda

That donor funding for migration in Africa is to a large extent skewed toward the priorities of the donors, could partly be symptomatic of the absence of an evidence-based, well-defined continental vision and agenda on migration that all Member States, RECs, and stakeholders subscribe to. However, in the AU Migration Policy Framework for Africa, the Common African Position on Migration, and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, Africa has the basic frameworks on which to synthesize a continental agenda on migration. The point of departure for the frameworks is that that well-managed migration can benefit both migrant-sending and migrant-receiving countries. Further, the frameworks identify good migration governance as a prerequisite for the coherent management of migration.
In this regard, the AUC, in conjunction with its RECs, Member States, and civil society are urged to formulate an evidence-based continental vision (and agenda) on migration. The vision and agenda would form the basis for migration programs on the continent, and donor partners would be urged to support activities within the context of the programs thus identified. The research on migration would be conducted periodically, and would inform the continued relevance (or otherwise) of the vision, agenda, and programs.

Political ownership of the continental vision and agenda at the highest level is a critical success factor for achieving the programs. It is imperative, therefore, that parliamentarians and senior policymakers at national, regional, and continental levels be sensitized and buy into the vision and agenda.

Mainstreaming migration into development strategies

Besides ownership and limited information on migration and its potential impact on development outcomes, perhaps one of the reasons why the migration sector is inadequately funded is because in general, migration policies are formulated and implemented outside the broader national development strategies, and do not, therefore, enjoy funding from the national fiscus. Migration policies that are conceived and implemented outside the ambit of the national development strategies

[4] Mainstreaming migration is the assessment of how migration will affect planned actions, and instituting strategies to mitigate the expected negative consequences and enhancing the positive impacts on the outcomes of the planned actions at all stages of national development planning, including design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. Stand-alone migration policies have a limited impact on development outcomes, and are not sustainable, and should be integrated in the broader national development frameworks for sustainability and far-reaching impact. In this regard, migration policies should be an integral part of the national development planning discourse and process, thereby having a direct impact on national development, and benefiting from the national fiscus.

tend to be funded by donors, and when donor funding dries up, implementation is discontinued or jeopardized. Further, it is difficult to discern the impact of policies implemented in this manner on national development outcomes.

Pursuant to this observation, AU Member States and RECs are urged to mainstream migration into national and regional development strategies respectively as a matter of course. This not only ensures funding for migration programs, and therefore sustainability, but also ensures that the impact of migration is monitored and evaluated at national and regional levels. Perhaps the most critical aspect of mainstreaming migration into national and regional development strategies, is that it enables a country or region to factor in the negative impact of migration on development outcomes. For example, to counter-balance the loss of skills through brain drain, a country may want to consider a forward-looking policy mix that encourages the export of labor in some professions, while at the same time retaining skills in essential or shortage areas, or produce more of the skills that are in demand abroad while satisfying the needs at home. Such a policy mix would ensure a balance between satisfying labor needs at home while addressing unemployment through the export of "excess" labor requirements. This could be achieved through deliberate policies in the education sector and the introduction of appropriate remuneration regimes for skills that are deemed essential. A policy of this nature could also include strategies to maximize benefits from migrant labor, that is, deliberate, pro-active policies that court and facilitate diaspora participation in the national discourse on national development (Mudungwe, 2009).

Establishing robust institutional mechanisms for managing migration

One would assume that a sector that contributes significantly to the gross domestic product (GDP) and reduces unemployment at home, among other positive impacts, would deserve to be nurtured. Hypothetically, a country for which remittances constitute a significant proportion of GDP can establish a fully-fledged ministry or department dedicated to the migration sector and fund that ministry or department from remittance income – nurturing the goose that lays the golden eggs. Establishing a ministry, department, or at least a national or regional mechanism that has the sole responsibility of managing or coordinating migration activities ensures that migration issues are brought to the fore on the national and regional agenda. Ideally, a coordinating mechanism should be established by statute. This ensures that its mandate is anchored in law, and can therefore enjoy funding from the national fiscus, thereby enhancing sustainability of tenure.

In order for their investment in the migration sector to be sustainable and have meaningful impact, donor partners are urged to invest in building the capacities of migration governance systems of African countries.

Strengthening migration data systems

As noted above, the paucity of data on migration, and most importantly, up-to-date data on how migration impacts development in Africa, are perhaps the Achilles heel of migration governance on the continent. The need to establish and invest in more systematic migration data collection and analysis mechanisms is central to achieving the other pre-conditions for establishing an effective migration governance system, as discussed above.

By its cross-border nature, international migration requires cooperation between and among countries. In this regard, if it is to be managed successfully, there should be consistency between not only the migration policies and legislation of various countries and regions, but also reliable migration data that is comparable. This calls for efforts to harmonize definitions of migration data variables and collection systems across the continent and beyond so that data are comparable across jurisdictions and regions (Mudungwe, 2014). The United Nations Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration provide guidance in this respect (AUC, 2018b).

While data collection comes at a considerable cost, countries may want to consider collecting migration data during ongoing, regular censuses and surveys. This could be achieved through including questions on migration on the survey tool and can reduce the cost of data collection considerably. However, to discern more detailed trends, it would be necessary to commission dedicated surveys and research (Mudungwe, 2014).

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Migration as Prophecy Fulfilled: A Case Study of Hadiya Migration from Southern Ethiopia to South Africa

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Abstract

This article examines the role religion has played in the process of Hadiya migration from southern Ethiopia to South Africa—from decision-making to processes of settlement at destination. Religion, specifically evangelical Christianity, has played a key role in the various phases of the migration process: from imagination of a sacred destination, signification of migration as a gift of God, risk perception and negotiation through to place making and spiritual engagements to overcome specific challenges of the new migration habitus. The article situates migration processes within a broader historical context and explains how spiritually animated migratory agency has helped Hadiya migrants negotiate the historically shaped regional inequality within Ethiopia. It concludes with an emphasis on how the Hadiya migration story ethnographically demonstrates the crucial role religion plays in migration processes, with a call for migration studies to take seriously intangible factors in migration.

Keywords: religion, migration, Ethiopia-South Africa corridor, Hadiya

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INTRODUCTION

As one of the richest countries on the African continent, South Africa is a major destination country for migrants moving within Africa. Close to three million migrants resided in South Africa in 2020 (UN DESA, 2021). Ethiopians are among the most significant of these migrant populations, with estimates varying between 200,000 and 300,000 (Cooper and Esser, 2018; Estifanos and Zack, 2019; IOM, 2022). According to a report by the South African Department of Home Affairs (2015), Ethiopia was ranked second in the top 15 migrant-sending countries. This is remarkable, given that Ethiopian migration to South Africa is a recent phenomenon; its history is barely three decades old and is entirely located in post-apartheid South Africa, but with a profound impact on places of origin.

The journey of Ethiopian migrants to South Africa is perilous, involving crossing state borders of up to six countries and covering close to 5,000 km. The journey follows different routes and modes of transport: by air, water and land. The few migrants who can afford it take a direct flight from Addis Ababa to Johannesburg or countries that border South Africa, but most combine bus, boat and foot travel. Typically, the land route from Ethiopia to South Africa starts in Kenya and passes through Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique/Zimbabwe to South Africa (IOM, 2022). Most Ethiopian migrants are engaged in the informal retail trade, running shops predominantly in Jeppe, the Ethiopian commercial enclave in Johannesburg, and in nearby townships, known as "locations" (Zack and Estifanos, 2016). Most Ethiopian migrants in South Africa come from southern Ethiopia, with the highest concentration being from the Hadiya-Kembata area (Feyissa 2022; IOM, 2022).

This article examines the role religion has played in the process of Hadiya migration to South Africa—from decision-making to processes of settlement at destination. Religion, specifically evangelical Christianity, has played a key role in the various phases of the migration process: from imagination of a sacred destination, signification of migration as a gift of God, risk perception and negotiation through to placemaking and spiritual engagements to overcome specific challenges of the new migration habitus. Spirituality is also invoked as an overarching scheme of interpretation, even when migration is recast as a "liability" with a diminishing return, evident in the increasing risks of the journey and the spiralling migrant-on-migrant violence in South Africa. Migration studies have been dominated by objective economic factors, especially in decision-making processes (Kuhnt, 2019).

The conceptual framework of the article is informed by the role of intangible factors in migration processes. Migration is often analyzed primarily in economic terms, focusing on tangible factors such as livelihood opportunities and maximizing material well-being more broadly. This emphasis on economic explanations stems from the relative ease of measuring factors such as income disparities, access to resources, and employment prospects. Economic theories of migration often suggest that people move in response to absolute or relative deprivation, with migration choices determined by an individual's ability to afford the associated costs. While

economic factors undeniably play a central role in shaping migration patterns, the case of Hadiya migration to South Africa highlights the limitations of solely focusing on material conditions.

For the Hadiya, increasing pressure on agricultural land is a key economic driver of migration. With one of the highest population densities in Ethiopia, the Hadiya Zone faces severe land constraints, which lead to fragmentation of land tenure and declining productivity. In addition, recurrent droughts, worsened by climate change, make farming a precarious livelihood. However, these economic challenges are not unique to the Hadiya; neighboring regions also contend with high population densities and similar land pressures, some even more severe. If migration were driven solely by economic factors, we would also expect to see greater migration from these other regions, which are economically better off due to cash crop cultivation. This is not the case, highlighting that economic conditions alone do not fully explain the scale or direction of migration. Policy shifts have also played a crucial role in the onset of Hadiya migration to South Africa. The more liberal immigration policies in post-apartheid South Africa, which allowed for greater freedom of movement and access, coincided with the political and economic changes in Ethiopia after the fall of the Derg regime in 1991. This period saw the relaxation of restrictions on internal and international migration, offering new opportunities for Ethiopians, including the Hadiya, to seek better prospects abroad. The convergence of these policy shifts created a more favorable environment for migration, facilitating the movement of people from Ethiopia to South Africa.

While tangible economic factors and policy shifts are clearly important, the focus on them has often overshadowed the role of intangible, non-economic factors in migration. Migration is not merely a response to material deprivation or economic opportunity; it is also shaped by social, cultural, spiritual, and emotional influences. Factors such as religious beliefs, cultural norms, social networks, emotions, and personal aspirations play a critical role in migration decisions, yet these intangible factors are frequently overlooked in traditional economic and policy analyses. This article seeks to address this gap by placing intangible factors at the core of migration decision-making, alongside the more conventional economic drivers.

Among the subjective factors in migration processes, beliefs and values remain the least studied (Docquier et al., 2020). Various studies have demonstrated that religion *does impact* on migration decision-making. Belief could provide spiritual resources for some migrants in their decision to migrate and may have a psychological effect on their commitment to endure the hardship of migration and assist with sense-making in places of destination. This article examines how Hadiya migrants draw on the spiritual resources of evangelical Christianity in the decision-making process, including in the geographic imaginary, risk perception, and negotiation of the perilous journey to South Africa, as well as spiritual guidance and protection during the process of travel to and settlement in South Africa. Belief also plays an important role in the decision to stay. Spiritual resources in decision-

making processes in Hadiya migration to South Africa include prophecies, prayers with migration content and gospel songs, which all shape aspiration and animate migratory agency. Throughout the migration process, there is a strong collective component in the way Hadiya migrants use religion as a space of agency from which they build capability.

However, the article argues against an opposition between tangible and intangible factors, suggesting instead that they inform and reinforce each other in shaping migration processes. Drawing on a growing body of literature on the role of subjective and intangible factors in migration (e.g., Zanker et al., 2023), this work explores the spiritual dimensions embedded in the Ethiopia–South Africa migration corridor. Specifically, it examines how belief systems and spirituality influence various stages of the migration process—from the initial decision to migrate, through the journey itself, to settlement at the destination.

The article argues that by recognizing the complex interplay between tangible and intangible factors, we can develop a more nuanced understanding of migration processes. This broader perspective allows for a more comprehensive view of the motivations behind migration, capturing not only the material conditions that drive people to move but also the spiritual, emotional, and cultural forces that shape their decisions. Such an approach helps illuminate the full complexity of migration, especially in contexts where intangible factors are as crucial as economic ones.

The article draws on findings from a study conducted by the author as part of the *Migration for Development and Equality* (MIDEQ) project, a UKRI/GCRF-funded comparative research initiative that spans five years (2019–2024) and covers 12 countries across six migration corridors. The author coordinated the Ethiopia–South Africa migration corridor within this broader project. Initially, the Ethiopia–South Africa corridor was not included in MIDEQ's focus on migration decision-making. Instead, it concentrated on resource flows, children left behind, and income inequality. However, as research participants began sharing their migration experiences, questions related to decision-making emerged organically, often beginning with inquiries into the motivations behind migration. It was during these discussions that the theme of spirituality as a significant factor in migration decisions consistently surfaced across the 100 interviews the author conducted, with support from the MIDEQ Ethiopian research team. This led the author to explore the role of subjective, non-economic factors in migration in greater depth.

The 30 informants featured in this article are all male, as migration patterns in the Hadiya community are highly gendered. While Hadiya men predominantly migrate to South Africa, women tend to migrate to Gulf countries. The sample represents a range of age groups: 75% of participants were between the ages of 25 and 35, 20% were between 36 and 50, and 5% were over 50 years of age. The religious demographic of the participants mirrors that of the Hadiya community at large, with more than 90% identifying as evangelical Christians, in line with the census data that shows that 70% of the Hadiya population follows evangelical Christianity.

At the time of the interviews, over 90% of participants had lived in South Africa for 10 years or more, with 7% having been there between 11 and 15 years, and 3% for less than 10 years. To address potential limitations of retrospective narratives and to mitigate what Jerolmack and Khan (2014) call the "attitudinal fallacy"—the tendency to conflate self-reported oral accounts with actual behavior—the study cross-referenced life history interviews with data from in-depth interviews conducted with those aspiring to migrate and other stakeholders. This triangulation provided a more comprehensive picture of the role of spirituality in migration, a theme consistently affirmed by all participants, including those who expressed skepticism about the foundational prophecy.

Additional data was also gathered from brief fieldwork in South Africa among Hadiya migrants in Johannesburg and Cape Town in November 2023. Ethnographic observations also contributed to the study, as the author attended Hadiya religious events such as sermons, preaching, and gospel songs with migration-related themes. These observations offered further insights into the Hadiya community's self-understanding as leaders of evangelical Christianity and their receptivity to prophetic messages regarding migration.

The majority of the interviews were conducted in Amharic, the national language of Ethiopia and the author's native tongue, which most Hadiya participants were fluent in. In rural Hadiya, some interviews were conducted in Hadiyissa by a Hadiya-speaking research assistant. All interviews were transcribed and translated into English for analysis. Following ethical research protocols, the names of participants were anonymized, and sensitive issues were handled with care to ensure that no harm was done to the participants or the broader Hadiya community.

The discussion is organized in five sections. Following this introductory section one, section two embeds Hadiya migration to South Africa in a historical context in the longue durée, that is, how Hadiya have been transformed from a glorious past under a powerful sultanate into peripheral subjects during the process of state formation, and their mode of incorporation into the Ethiopian polity. It situates migration processes within this broader historical context and explains how spiritually animated migratory agency has helped Hadiya migrants negotiate the historically shaped regional inequality within Ethiopia. Section three discusses how religion plays out in Hadiya migration decision-making—from a sacred imagination of South Africa fuelling aspiration to risk negotiation during a perilous journey. Section four discusses spiritual practices of Hadiya migrants in South Africa that ease the process of settlement and building up their businesses. Section five examines the changing contours of the Hadiya migration project from a collectivist to individualist orientation, and the implication of this for the viability of the Hadiya migration project. It analyzes how the Hadiya are recasting migration from being a blessing into a curse, as ever-increasing migrant-on-migrant violence and other criminal practices are believed to have brought the wrath of God. The last section concludes with an emphasis on how the Hadiya migration story ethnographically demonstrates

the crucial role religion plays in migration processes, with a call for migration studies to take seriously intangible factors in migration.

HADIYA SOCIO-CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUNDS: AN ISLAMIC PAST AND A CHRISTIAN PRESENT

Located in southern Ethiopia with a population of 1.2 million, the Hadiya society forms part of the broader southern periphery of the Ethiopian state. Previously, it was part of the medieval Hadiya Sultanate dating back to the 13th century (Braukamper, 2012), itself part of the wider Islamic political communities in the Horn of Africa in competition with the Orthodox Christian empire of the Ethiopian northern highlands, also called Abyssinia, which evolved into the modern Ethiopian state at the end of the 19th century (Taddesse, 1972). The incorporation of Hadiya into the Ethiopian state resulted in their political marginalization, social discrimination and economic exploitation. Subsequently, they lost autonomy and the local economy became dominated by people from the north, and partly by neighbors such as the Gurage, who managed to attain greater socio-economic mobility within the Ethiopian empire through internal migration, mainly to Addis Ababa (LeBell, 2011).

Located 230 kilometers south of Addis Ababa and established in the early 20th century, Hosanna is the capital of Hadiya Administrative Zone. Notwithstanding its being one of the oldest towns in Ethiopia, Hosanna was the center of imperial rule in Hadiya. In fact, most inhabitants of Hosanna towns were people who came from the north, especially members of the dominant Amhara ruling class. The long-term impact of imperial rule in the southern periphery is structural inequality, marked by ethnic stratification. This has undermined the capacity of Hadiya citizens to aspire to a better life with the requisite capabilities. As research participants mentioned, this is expressed in the form of self-doubt or lack of self-confidence.

The Hadiya population, like most of their southern neighbors, were excluded from the politics of the Ethiopian empire and were subjected to social discrimination. They were turned from a once proud and great nation into a mistreated ethnic group. The Hadiya people were referred to with a pejorative term, *gudela*, in line with similar debasing names used to disparage other people of the periphery (Braukamper, 2012; Grenstedt, 2000). Although some Hadiya members managed to achieve individual socio-economic mobility within the Ethiopian polity, most were left behind and, over time, incorporated the external negative definition of who they are. Since the 1950s, the only opportunity the Ethiopian empire provided for the Hadiya people was labor migration to the budding sugar estates in the Awash valley, especially to sugar plantations in Wenji. Although this wage labor contributed to modest household well-being for migrant families, it did not lead to Hadiya's meaningful economic participation at local and national levels. Nor has the stigma associated with their ethnic identity changed. If anything, it added a new pejorative layer, as they were referred to as *shenkora korach* (people who slash sugar canes). Imperial rule came to an end in 1974. Despite promises made by the 1974 revolution to redress ethnic

inequalities and promote greater inclusion of peoples of the periphery into national affairs, Hadiya people continued to occupy a marginal status throughout the Derg period (1974–1991). In fact, whatever was in the local economy was extracted to fund Derg's endless wars, while military conscription brought a heavy toll on Hadiya youth (Feyissa, 2022).

When the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) came to power (1991–2018) and developed its constitutional structures of ethnic federalism, this kindled yet another hope for social transformation and democratic transition. However, the self-rule that the constitution granted to ethnic groups (nations and nationalities in the Ethiopian parlance) has not led to real political and economic empowerment (Turton, 2005). True, change is visible in local political leadership. Members of the Hadiya elite rule the newly created Hadiya Zone as one of the administrative zones within the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (SNNPR), now replaced by the Central Ethiopia Regional State. Hadiya are also given the right to use their language as a language of local government. However, EPRDF's self-rule has not translated into the kind of socio-economic transformation expected. Political legitimacy continues to comprise extroverted local elites, operating under the centralizing logic of EPRDF whose interest they primarily serve.

A Hadiya opposition party, the Hadiya National Democratic Organisation (HNDO), put up a strong resistance against EPRDF rule through peaceful means. In fact, HNDO won the seats for the 2001 parliamentary election in Hadiya Zone, but the result was later declared to be flawed and EPRDF became the winner through a repeat election (Tronvoll, 2001). Meanwhile, the economic situation in Hadiya Zone worsened with the politicization of internal labor migration. Thousands of Hadiya labor migrants from Wenji (now in Oromia regional state) left the area after three decades of residence, as wage laborers went back to Hadiya Zone when ethnic federalism turned them into "outsiders" overnight. Hadiya Zone was already suffering from land shortage because it has one of the highest population densities in Ethiopia, so it could not absorb returnee internal migrants, which created a social crisis. Nor was there a single factory which could have provided a modicum of employment opportunity for the Hadiya youth and the returnee migrant population. In 2019, political reform replaced EPRDF with the Prosperity Party (PP). This was an attempt to distance the country's politics from ethnic federalism. However, six years on, Ethiopia has not yet made that transition to democracy. In fact, the country has been plunged into civil war and communal violence, though the South has been relatively calm.

The Hadiya population found the engine of socio-economic transformation and their aspiration to catch up with members of Ethiopia's dominant population groups in religious salvation, to which the onset of migration to South Africa is intimately connected. Despite its Islamic past, contemporary Hadiya are predominantly Protestant Christians. According to the latest 2007 census, Protestants constitute 75.3% and Muslims 11.3% of the population of Hadiya Zone. Orthodox Christians,

most of whom are non-Hadiya, constitute 8.45% (CSA, 2008). By the turn of the 20th century, Western Protestant missionaries were active in southern Ethiopia, including among the Hadiya. This sharply contrasts with peoples of the northern highlands, the core of the Ethiopian state, who are predominantly Orthodox Christians. Protestant Christianity was brought to southern Ethiopia through missionary societies in the early 20th century. There is an aspect of resistance ideology in the manner with which the Hadiya, and southern Ethiopians more broadly, embraced Protestant Christianity as a counterpart to the Orthodox Christianity of the northern highlands (the core of the Ethiopian state identified with Orthodox Christianity). But it seems the high receptivity to Protestant Christianity was also influenced by the lure of modernity that it promised. As early as the 1930s, the missionaries opened schools and clinics among the Hadiya, and in 1949 Hosanna hosted a Bible conference (Grenstedt, 2000).

Contemporary Hadiya society recounts a "rebellious" pre-Christian past, with protracted conflicts between the Christian empire and its various tribes. This past was fundamentally transformed into a "God-fearing" and "God-loving" people. A pastor thus surmised: "God has a tendency to choose people or individuals who are rebellious and change their identity. As Paulos' rebellious spirit was changed by God, so was the history of Hadiya changed with our conversion to Christianity." The first generation of Hadiya converts is associated with three names: Shigute Dada, Sebro Wasaro and Aba Gole. They are affectionately referred to as Yenwengel Aribegnoch (Patriots of the Gospel) and they played a critical role in spreading the new faith, not just among the Hadiya but also among neighboring societies.

Data gleaned from interviews with research participants suggest that contemporary self-understanding of Hadiya society is a vanguard of Protestant Christianity. They are being rewarded for this, not least by the new opportunity structure that migration to South Africa has provided. The Hadiya have tapped into evangelical religious resources, such as prophecies and prayers, to build their migratory agency and enhance socio-economic mobility. As discussion in the following sections shows, there is a strong spiritual component in Hadiya migration to South Africa, evident in the various phases of the migration process: from decision-making before the journey to during the journey and settlement at destination. Echoing a global trend and spurred on by transnational networks, Protestantism among the Hadiya has also witnessed a charismatic turn, with a greater emphasis on prophesy and the power of faith. The Hadiya have used this brand of Protestantism as a space of agency, extracting religious resources and building migratory capabilities. This contrasts with the tenets of Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity (EOC) whose sacred narratives present Ethiopia as the promised land (Malara, 2022).

At the heart of religion and migration among the Hadiya, we find a foundational prophecy delivered by a Canadian pastor in Hosanna in 2001, declaring that God has opened a "southern door" for the Hadiya through which prosperity would come. Following in the footsteps of the Canadian pastor, local prophets have proliferated divining the future of prospective migrants, advising some to migrate and others to

stay behind and invest in the local future. In this process of social change, we find the Hadiya negotiating a historically shaped regional inequality within Ethiopia, through transnational flow of finance, ideas and goods. Both the process of migration and its outcome have collective dimensions. In this scheme of things, migration features as a divine script expressed in collective terms: it is South Africa, not the Ethiopian state, which promises transformation through remittance and investment by migrants. Indeed, for Hadiya Protestants, the promised land is South Africa, not Ethiopia. But this is a temporary exit, with an end game of going back home to improve the life of themselves and their families, as well as the Hadiya collectively.

In recent years, as Hadiya migration has become less idealist and more materialist, criticism of the changing role of migration is also framed in religious language, that is, the failure to manage God's blessing is fast turning into a curse. As greed kicks in, collective redemption is replaced by God's wrath. This is expressed in the form of rising homicide and other forms of crime among Hadiya migrants in South Africa. This is considered a negative remittance, as some migrants have brought the culture of violence home with them. The following section expands on the role of religion in Hadiya's migration decision-making.

RELIGION, MIGRATION, AND DECISION-MAKING

Hadiya migration to South Africa—the 2001 foundational prophecy

In 2001, Peter Youngren, a Canadian pastor and founder of World Impact Ministries, came to Hosanna and delivered a prophecy that constitutes a critical part of the history of Hadiya migration to South Africa. Pastor Youngren and his World Impact Ministries have outreaches in more than 100 countries. He is considered one of the most influential evangelical pastors. Youngren's international events are called Friendship Festivals, with attendances ranging from 10,000 to 600,000 in a single service, often in big public spaces.[2] Hadiya who participated in the Hosanna Friendship Festival mentioned that hundreds of thousands of people attended the event at *gofer meda*, Hadiya's main public square. Although healing the sick and gospel teaching were part of his mission, Youngren's key message (or so the Hadiya thought) was a prophecy that promised socio-economic transformation of the Hadiya through international migration; God has opened a "southern door" for the Hadiya through which prosperity will come.

This is an extract of Youngren's prophecy, reconstructed from stories recounted by participants of the Hosanna Friendship Festival:

> I have a message from God to deliver to you. I saw God opening a new southern door for Hosanna [meant to refer to Hadiya]. From now onwards you will see a constant flow of people (*ye mayiqon ye hizb jiret*); that people will migrate (*yifelisalu)*; they work hard and they prosper; that they will bring blessing to

[2] Editor. "Passion for People." Celebrate. 2013. Pages 14-15.

> Hosanna and to Ethiopia more broadly. Hosanna town will be transformed beyond recognition. The time will come when three-wheeler cars [the Indian-made Bajaj] will fill the streets of Hosanna and a country where people go to without a visa. There will also be rain and abundant crops. God will allow movement of people; one which will bring prosperity. You will soon see signs of the prophecy working.[3]

Youngren did not directly refer to South Africa but to a "southern door opened by God," a door through which God will redeem the Hadiya from their deprivation. Hadiya believe God used Youngren as a conduit to bless them. Otherwise, they claim the blessing as a fruit of their collective effort, not least the heroic acts of Hadiya "Patriots of the Gospel" and devout prayers of elders to help their people overcome the social and economic deprivations they were facing at the time of the prophecy. This prophecy was also perceived as an affirmation of God's favoring the Hadiya as "committed" Christians, as elaborated by Feyissa (2022).

While the prophecy never mentioned South Africa as a specific destination, the Hadiya themselves interpreted the "southern door" as leading to South Africa. This destination looked profitable in economic terms, so intangible factors have been entangled with tangible ones right from the beginning. It was also not an entirely unknown destination, as some Hadiya had already migrated to South Africa via Kenya in the late 1990s. After all, South Africa is south of Ethiopia and Moyale, the first Kenyan border crossing point en route to South Africa, is the nearest "south" to the Hadiya.

This prophecy has since informed the decision of many Hadiya to migrate and was often given as the specific reason in the life stories of research participants. The following account by Pastor Birhanu, a Hadiya migrant from Johannesburg who was interviewed in Hosanna during a family visit, indicates how the prophecy informed his decision to migrate to South Africa:

> Youngren's prophecy made the journey a lot easier than one would have expected. I migrated to South Africa in 2004, three years after Peter came to Hosanna. I was a student at that time. I talked to my friends about the idea of going to South Africa. They all readily agreed. When we decided to travel, it felt as if we were already in South Africa. I remember the enthusiasm and confidence we had while deciding to migrate. We never thought of the risks we might encounter during the journey and the language difficulties we might encounter. It felt like we were moving from one house to another within Hadiya. (Pastor Birhanu, interviewed in Hosanna, November 12, 2020)

[3] Interviews with participants of the Hosanna Friendship Festival, January 2020–2022, Hosanna and other parts of Hadiya Zone, southern Ethiopia.

Pastor Birhanu's statement "When we decided to travel, it felt as if we were already in South Africa" echoes what Cangia and Zittoun (2020: 5) call "mental journey" and "imagined mobilities": "Imagination, as a form of symbolic mobility, represents the mental journey people can embark upon to escape the here-and-now of the present, independently from real opportunities and capacity to move." In Pastor Birhanu's words, we also learn how important imagination is in migration decision-making, as a condition for aspiration as well as belief, instilling confidence without caution. Religious people find moral strength and perseverance in their beliefs, which makes them arguably better placed to cope with adversities experienced during migration.

The Hadiya retrospectively view the large numbers of their community migrating to South Africa as an indication that the prophecy has been fulfilled. Additional signs that the prophecy is working include the relative business success of Hadiya migrants in South Africa, despite multiple obstacles, and the consequent economic transformation of Hadiya through remittances and investments, both in places of origin and in South Africa. Returnee migrants mentioned that they could not recognize the Hosanna they had left behind, because it had changed so much to now include high-rise buildings and several commercial banks. This change has occurred in the last two decades and was contributed to by the transnational flow of finance, goods and ideas/knowledge coming from those who had migrated to South Africa.

A common saying in Hosanna is, "Whichever way you turn in Hosanna, there is South African money." Other signs of the prophecy working include a bumper harvest. As noted by many research participants: "The same year Youngren came to Hosanna there was a lot of rain; so much so that 100-birr wheat was sold for 40 birr. Unlike the years before the prophecy, everyone had much more than for subsistence."

The prophecy was indeed a message of hope that was well received by the Hadiya due to the political and economic context of the time. Politically, this was a time of great upheaval in Hadiya Zone. There was political instability related to the contested 2000 election: Hadiya was the only region where an election was won by an opposition party (HNDO) throughout the EPRDF period. This was followed by a severe government crackdown. The post-election repression ended in "a bloodbath of the Hadiya" (Tronvoll, 2001). As mentioned earlier, the return of Hadiya migrants from Wenji further compounded the situation in the early 1990s creating a deepening sense of social crisis, as the returnees put a claim over family land already in scarce supply. This was also a time of increased poverty because of a drought that resulted in crop failure. Political insecurity, grinding poverty, and the strong roots laid down by evangelical Christianity among the Hadiya seem to have created a high receptivity to Youngren's prophecy.

The Hadiya even went further in embedding the spirituality of their migration to South Africa due to the historically shaped regional inequality. Migration to South Africa is seen as a way of renegotiating the inequality between the "core North" and the "peripheral South." Hadiya attributes a spiritually mediated "inherent link"

between peoples of the periphery and their greater representation among migrants in South Africa, as the following commentary by a returned migrant suggests:

> How come Amharas, Tigres, and Oromos [people of the core regions] are not migrating to South Africa as much as the Hadiya and other Southerners [people of the periphery]? Their oversight is not accidental. God has blinded them of this opportunity protecting it for us. Had they known about the opportunities in South Africa, these people would have dominated South Africa as much as they have done elsewhere. They are everywhere. Many Ethiopians in Europe, the US, and Canada are Amharas, Tigreans, and Oromos. They have money, knowledge, and wider social networks. And yet we [the Hadiya and other peoples from southern Ethiopia] managed to make it to South Africa despite our apparent lack of skills and political networks. This is because God awakened us (*aberalin*). (Interviewed in Hosanna, 2021)

The word *aberalin* used here refers to a collective self, explaining that God has been engaging Hadiya as a people, not individually, by opening a southern route through which prosperity flows. In this sacred narrative, Hadiya migration to South Africa features as a quintessential spiritually animated future-making project, which at the same time guarantees tangible socio-economic mobility.

Prophecy goes local

Reflecting a global pattern, there has been a charismatic shift in Ethiopian Protestantism, with a greater emphasis on the power of faith and prayer. There has also been a boom in self-proclaimed prophets, increasingly involved in divining the future for people as they engage with the uncertainties and vagaries of life. Among the Hadiya, these new prophets are playing a crucial role in migration decision-making. Churches contribute to migration facilitation through their prayer programs, and institutionally by arranging exchange programs with churches in southern African countries. For instance, priests/pastors usually pray for potential migrants to succeed in their aspiration to migrate to South Africa; they make prophecies on behalf of individual aspirants that their future will be great in South Africa. This gives hope and courage to potential migrants, encouraging them to take risks. When potential migrants are about to start their journey, fellow Christians gather and pray for their success.

A returnee migrant recounted how his decision to migrate to South Africa was a direct result of an unexpected "revelation" by a pastor during a Sunday service:

> The idea of migrating to South Africa was suggested by my brother who went there earlier. He told me to come to South Africa, which I did with the money that he sent me. But why I decided to go to South Africa was not because my brother sent me money but rather after I realized it was God's will. On a

> Sunday service, a pastor came straight to me, put his hands on my head, and prayed. He then mentioned that God wanted me to go to South Africa and that unlike other migrants nothing bad would happen to me throughout the journey. I had my doubts when my brother advised me to join him. As you can see, I am not as young as the other migrants, and I feared I might not be able to withstand the challenges. All my doubts disappeared after the revelation by the pastor who said, "your journey has already been made." God has been with me during my journey and throughout my stay in South Africa. While many of the people who went with me were imprisoned either in Tanzania or Malawi, my journey to South Africa was faster and safer. Although I was robbed several times in South Africa, I was not once physically hurt throughout my ten-year stay, unlike the experience of nearly all Ethiopian migrants. (Interviewed in Jajura, July 5, 2021)

Spirituality not only plays an important role in mobility, but also in immobility. Immobility is involuntary for some but desirable for many others (Schewel, 2019). In some instances, Hadiya prophets and pastors who de facto act as migration counselors advise prospective migrants to drop their plans to migrate. The following story sheds further light on how decision-making, including the decision to stay and invest in a local future, is shaped by a prophetic tradition:

> There was a spiritual father called Aba Gole in Anlemmo [one of the Patriots of the Gospel], where I was born and grew up. He was a well-known religious leader who extensively traveled throughout Ethiopia. One day he visited my parents before I was conceived. He prayed and told my mother that she would have a baby boy and that boy would continue his legacy of preaching. So, I am a result of that prayer that shaped my purpose in life, serving God and His people. However, my mother's family who are Gurage [least connected to migration to South Africa] wanted to send me to South Africa and proposed to pay for my flight, so that the life of the family would be changed. But I refused. Then in 2009, when I finished high school, I wanted to join university, but my mother told me if I became a civil servant the government would be my master and I couldn't give all my time to serve God. She also said that Aba Gole's sweat is in our house, so I have to carry his legacy. I prayed the whole night and got my answer that said "I will join theology college." It turned out that I scored one point less in the national school leaving examination than the required grade to join a university. Thus, I ended up studying theology and I became a pastor, as prophesied by Aba Gole. (Pastor Samuel, 2021)

In this story, the preference to stay relates to a life project already shaped by belief, even before birth. The Church has a vested interest in endorsing migration projects, as successful migrant believers remit money to the churches as a form of thanksgiving.

Churches publicly recognize money received from migrants, taking credit for migrants' success enabled by their prayer. Some migrants send money to the church as a gift, while others remit in the form of a tithe (*asirat*). According to Protestant tradition (also taught by pastors), one pays a tithe to the original church one belongs to, often in places of origin. From the remittances they get from migrants, most local churches in Hadiya have bought a keyboard, sound system, and generator. These are essential goods to enhance public visibility in the increasingly competitive Ethiopian religious landscape, adding to Hadiya's already distinctively Protestant public space. Most churches in Hadiya are financed by migrants through their philanthropic efforts. For some migrants, spirituality has quite a functional role.

Besides pastors and prophets of mainline Protestant churches, local spiritual entrepreneurs have proliferated, claiming the power to divine an individual's future, including whether to migrate, when, and how, functioning as de facto migration counselors. They call themselves *miriit agelgayoch* (sent by God to convey His messages to specific individuals), although their detractors call them *festal agelgayoch* (amateur door-to-door spiritual service providers) and liken them to *festal hakim* ("plastic bag doctors," village-based amateur health professionals). Some of the *festal/mirit agelgayoch* are seen as predatory, but even those skeptical of their service consider their prophecy and migration counseling largely accurate. People interested in migrating often seek these specific migration services from *festal/mirit agelgayoch*, although advice is also received spontaneously. They go to the parents of prospective migrants and tell them which specific family member has better prospects of success, convincing them that it is worth investing in sponsoring a particular person whose migration project is ordained by God, thus ensuring "value for money"—a safe return of the money invested in the migration project. In some instances, the *mirit agelgayoch* advises prospective migrants to drop their plan to migrate.

Capability and resilience built through blessing, prayer, and gospel songs

The previous accounts by migrants, returnee migrants, and stayees evidence how belief plays an important role in decision-making regarding mobility and immobility. The prophecies and prayers of evangelical Christianity as spaces of migratory agency draw on the traditional beliefs of Hadiya society. In traditional Hadiya society, fate is understood as something that is not fixed but amenable to elders' authority, either in the form of *masso* (blessing) or *duunchcha* (cursing). Heads of lineages are believed to have greater power over blessing or cursing by their proximity to ancesstors (Worku, 2019). Some elders have the power of blessing and cursing not just for members of a lineage but also for the whole local community. They are called *ayanto*. Elders/*ayanto* use *kitfa* (a mixture of honey and water used as a spiritual ointment) which they sprinkle onto people who seek blessing for good fortune in life. Elders have extended this spiritual power to the realm of migration.

How the spirituality of evangelical Christianity operates in the migration realm is similar to traditional spirituality, with the only caveat being the switch of a register from elders to pastors and prophets, and the replacement of *kitfa* with anointing oils, also called miracle oil. Compared to Hadiya's traditional belief, evangelical Christianity puts a higher premium on the transformational agency of prayer. When asked about why they decided to migrate to South Africa despite the risks involved in the journey, many prospective and returnee migrants mentioned, "I want(ed) to check my fate. If I die during the journey or in South Africa, it is because I am meant to," and they would add, "Who knows when and how I die anyway, even if I do not migrate?" In this risk regime, prayers feature as a badge of confidence that downplays the risks of migration, a belief that simultaneously shapes aspiration and builds migratory agency.

Prospective migrants often respond *atseliyebetalehu* when asked what preparations they have made for the journey, meaning "I got my plan prayed upon." In some prayers, pastors even include specific information about the risky spots in the migration journey, such as the Tete bridge over the Zambezi River at the border between Mozambique and Malawi where, in 2021, 60 Ethiopian migrants perished in a suffocating container while trying to cross the border (Feyissa, 2022). A prayer with migration content is couched in the saying *amen yale teteqeme yalale temelese* (those who said "amen" benefited [made it to South Africa] but those who did not came back [died] or were deported).

Beside prophecy and prayers, gospel songs are important aspects of belief that shape the decision-making processes of prospective Hadiya migrants. One is by Yoseph Samuel and is called *Chaltoto*, which in Hadiya language means "overcoming the challenges of the journey." The song originally referred to the spiritual sense of the term "journey to heaven" but is increasingly imbued with migration content. Lyrics of the song include: "We will go, pass the hurdle, and inherit the kingdom regardless of the storm of the sea." This is the most favored gospel song played when prospective migrants and their planned journeys are blessed by a pastor, during the farewell parties, and it is the most listened to during the journey. On all these occasions, the meaning decoded is "you will make it to South Africa despite all the challenges."

Others use specific gospel songs to build their resilience during their repatriation from detention centers in transit countries. Watching a joyful video clip posted by a group of returnee Hadiya migrants brought by IOM en route from the Tanzanian detention center to Ethiopia gives the impression that this is a celebration, rather than coming to terms with a failed migration project. But the message of their chosen song was loud and clear: it is not *if* but *when* they go back because there is nothing impossible for the omnipotent God that they counted on. A follow-up of these returnee migrants discovered that most of them went back to Moyale to restart the journey to South Africa. After all, God would not fail, it is only that people might get it wrong sometimes if their hearts are not upright.

SPIRITUALITY AT DESTINATION PLACES

Not only is spirituality a significant factor in their decision-making and a powerful force during the journey, Hadiya migrants continue their religious practices at their destination in South Africa. They continue to refer to the Youngren prophecy while reflecting on and sense-making their experience, not least from their perspective, in the unprecedented success of their small businesses in South Africa's informal economy, despite entry barriers. They sought spiritual support from Youngren, invited high-profile pastors and prophets from Ethiopia to bless their finances, and initiated a spiritually imbued de facto vigilante group to overcome the rising violence and criminality among migrants.

In what appears to be seeking a spiritual boost, the religious leaders of Hadiya migrants in South Africa reached out to Youngren to come to South Africa and bless the land. While expressing his delight at seeing the prophecy fulfilled, Youngren nevertheless declined the invitation mentioning that prophecy does not work on demand. So, the largely Protestant Hadiya congregations reached out to high-profile pastors and prophets in Ethiopia to come and bless South Africa. Subsequently, many Ethiopian pastors, mostly from southern Ethiopia, went to South Africa and blessed its land. They prayed that South Africa share its bounty with Ethiopian migrant groups, blessed their businesses, and prayed that migrants would overcome the challenges they faced there, including the increasing homicide rate among Hadiya migrants in South Africa, which is a cause for alarm for Hadiya society at large.[4]

In doing so, the Ethiopian pastors and prophets draw on the teaching of the Prosperity Gospel with a stronger focus on the power of faith, not just salvation for life after death, but more importantly in the here-and-now. Prosperity Gospel, also called seed faith, is "a religious belief among some Protestant Christians that financial blessing and physical well-being are always the will of God for them, and that faith, positive speech, and donations to religious causes will increase one's health and material wealth. Material and, especially, financial success are seen as a sign of divine favour" (Hill, 2019). A Prosperity Gospel-inspired Ethiopian pastor who frequently travels to South Africa is Yonatan Aklilu, one of the most trending pastors in Ethiopia. The following is a summary of one of his preachings in South Africa in 2022 among Ethiopian migrants , with a focus on *moges* (spirit of God's favor):

> What you should seek is *moges*, the spirit of favor. No matter how deep [remote] location or township your businesses might be, the spirit of favor helps you attract customers like a metal is attracted by a magnet. I now call upon you to summon the spirit of favor. If you get the spirit of favor, documentation becomes a lot easier. Next year we meet, your business will be ten times bigger than it is now. Mark my word! A case which they [South African immigration authorities] have closed in council, I will not only unlock but dismantle it with the power of God. The prosperity spirit is hovering on you! You might feel that

[4] Focus group discussion with Hadiya migrant people in Johannesburg, November 15, 2023.

> you are in another country but I say the whole universe belongs to God. You will walk in and out with the spirit of favor. As Aster is favored by God as a wife of the king Hage despite her disadvantages among prospective wives, so will you be the Asters of South Africa!

Key messages to migrants by Pastor Yonatan are "belonging" and "agency." Pastor Yonatan's message regarding the path to prosperity contrasts with the previously more work-based transformation project inscribed into Pastor Youngren's prophecy. The first generation of Hadiya migrants was self-made, though their aspiration and the migration project had been God-sanctioned. They used religion as a space for agency. Now Prosperity Gospel is promising shortcuts to material prosperity. What is interesting about Pastor Yonatan's offer is a new sense of belonging to South Africa, despite or because of the exclusionist and increasingly xenophobic South Africa. This is because ultimately the "whole universe belongs to God." Pastor Yonatan offered agency to migrants, couched in the language of "the spirit of favor" that blesses their businesses and finances.

RECASTING HADIYA'S MIGRATION TO SOUTH AFRICA FROM A BLESSING TO A CURSE

Hadiya society is going through a reflexive moment regarding the pros and cons of migration being a quintessential part of future-making. The risk during the journey has increased and the homicide rate is increasing in South Africa. This is as often committed by migrants on migrants as it is part of South Africa's broader crime and violence that targets migrants.[5] Even church leaders have become skeptical about the mass migration of Hadiya to South Africa.

Many research participants expressed concern that unless Hadiya use the gift of migration in a responsible manner, a *bereket* (blessing) could be turned into a *merigemt* (curse). In the context of rising criminality, migrants and their families, and Hadiya society more broadly, are now reimagining South Africa from "a promised land" to "a land of death." A returnee migrant surmised that "more Hadiya are killed in South Africa than in the numerous battlefields they participated in Ethiopia during the war with Somalia and Eritrea." The rise of robbery, abduction, and homicide against migrants in which fellow migrants are implicated has generated a public outrage. In January 2023, Ethiopian migrants in Johannesburg demonstrated against this rising violence among Ethiopian migrants. Two of the six suspected criminals were Hadiya migrants.[6]

Migration to South Africa was initially welcomed because it was understood as God creating a new field of possibility for the Hadiya to change their peripheral existence, which reflects the historically shaped regional inequality within Ethiopia. Yet, migration is messing up life, both in places of origin and destination, leading to a

[5] Key informant interview with Hadiya migrants in Cape Town, November 4, 2023.
[6] Interview with a participant of the demonstration, Johannesburg, November 17, 2023.

new signification of migration. This situation urged a Hadiya migrant to write a book entitled *Metshafe Hosanna: Egna ena Debub Africa* (The Book of Hosanna: Us and South Africa, 2018). The term "Hosanna" is used in this book in the biblical sense of "cry for help." Mamushet's cry for help relates to what he considers the process of spiritual and moral decay generated by the acquisitive drive and the greed connected to that. He considers that this has cut deep into Hadiya migrant peoples' social fabric and that of Ethiopian migrants in South Africa more broadly (Mamushet, 2018: 154).

CONCLUSION

The ethnography presented in this article amply demonstrates the role religion has played in the process of Hadiya's migration to South Africa. This is not just a case study but contributes to the literature on the role of intangible factors in migration processes, a subject matter that has had a lack of emphasis in migration studies long dominated by analysis of tangible factors, especially of an economic nature.

We have seen how evangelical Christianity generated a sacred imagination of a destination in which South Africa emerged as the promised land for Hadiya migrants. This has fuelled migration aspiration, further boosted by the practice of prayer and gospel songs, to negotiate the risks of the perilous journey to South Africa. This sense of belonging has been reinforced by transnational religious practices in which pastors and prophets from Ethiopia encourage migrants to claim South Africa, despite or because of exclusionary practices and increasing xenophobia in that country. Here we find a situation where religion generates aspiration and helps build migratory agency, as well as a sense of belonging to South Africa, because ultimate ownership and sovereignty, as it were, belong to God.

However, in recent years, Hadiya migration has taken an individualist turn. This is expressed in various forms that include the commodification of faith, both in places of origin and in South Africa, and the rise of crime and violence among Hadiya migrants in South Africa. Hadiya migrants and Hadiya society more broadly call this spiritual and moral decay, related to migrants' new material conditions of life, that is, a massive increase in migrant numbers and stiff competition over business turf, further compounded by their exposure to and immersion in South Africa's culture of violence. On the face of it, the Hadiya migration project is endangered, casting doubt over its viability. Contemporary Hadiya society is going through a reflexive moment, redefining migration from being an asset to a liability. But they take responsibility for their new predicament. Once again, we see an overarching spiritual interpretation at play, including in sense-making. As God cannot be wrong, their trouble must have been related to "the wrath of God," as fellow Hadiya migrants have "abused" the blessing (the migration gift) along the way, harming not only the wrongdoers but also Hadiya society at large.

In this shift from a collective to an individualist direction, migration is now considered less feasible and desirable. Hadiya parents are less happy and cooperative about sending their children to South Africa. Migration is now reimagined as a

problem and danger, rather than as a blessing and resource. The previous societal consensus on migration has unraveled. There is now a feeling that the misuse of the gift of migration has turned a *bereket* (blessing) into a *merigemt* (curse). However, reflecting a generational tension and fuelled by a more materialist imagination of migration, an increasing number of Hadiya youth are on the move, notwithstanding the growing risks during the journey in transit countries and at destination.

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From Deprivation to Mobilization: Towards a Multideterminant Model of Xenophobic Violence in South Africa

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Abstract

Drawing on extensive and comparative qualitative data from a nearly two-decade long and ongoing research, this article responds to inadequacies and limitations of current causal explanations for xenophobic violence in South Africa. The article argues that existing explanations are inadequate as many lack empirical backing and others are incomplete due to their reductionist approach. To address these shortcomings, this article proposes an empirically based and theoretically informed multideterminant (explanatory) model, which identifies and analyses the roles of—and interconnections between—six key determinants, namely: i) socio-economic and political deprivation, ii) xenophobic beliefs, iii) collective discontent, iv) political economy, v) mobilization, and vi) governance. I argue that i) these determinants and their interconnections in a value-added process constitute the necessary and sufficient conditions for the occurrence of xenophobic violence, and ii) this multideterminant model consequently provides an adequate and comprehensive explanation of the xenophobic violence in South Africa. In addition to its scholarly contribution, this article has potential policy implications. By clearly identifying the key elements in the causal chain, the study implicitly points to critical areas where intervention efforts could be targeted to effectively address the ongoing xenophobic violence in South Africa.

Keywords: xenophobia, collective violence, migrants, foreign nationals, governance

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INTRODUCTION

Xenophobic violence generally refers to any acts of violence targeted at foreign nationals or "outsiders" because of their being foreign or strangers. It is an explicit targeting of foreign nationals for violent attacks despite other material, political, cultural or social forces that might be at play (Dodson, 2010). As Gordon (2024:1) notes, "xenophobic violence has become an increasingly commonplace occurrence in democratic South Africa" (see also Misago and Landau, 2022). Indeed, "foreign nationals are routinely attacked in their residences, workplaces, business premises, private and public transport, or just walking on the streets" (Misago et al., 2021). As Misago et al. (2021: 4) observe, xenophobic violence in South Africa is generally a collective violent act or "a type of collective violence carried out by groups (large or small) of ordinary members of the public, often mobilised by local leaders (formal or informal) and influential groups or individuals to further their own political and economic interests." Target groups and individuals are regularly killed, assaulted, injured, displaced and their property and livelihood assets looted, destroyed, or appropriated (Misago et al., 2021; Gordon, 2024).

Since 2008, this ongoing violence has attracted considerable and increasing scholarly attention, as academics, researchers and other analysts attempt to explain its causal factors and recommend preventive measures. Scholarly analysis continues to provide different and competing empirical and theoretical explanations. As Misago (2019a) notes, most explanations emphasize broad and structural socio-economic, historical and psychosocial factors, as well as micro-level, local socio-economic and political dynamics. These explanations are valuable in analysing the conditions under which xenophobic violence takes place. However, by implicitly claiming that the causal factors they put forward are necessary and sufficient conditions for the occurrence of xenophobic violence, they "falter when faced with empirical or logical interrogation" (Landau, 2011: 3).

This article argues that existing explanations are inadequate, and their shortcomings lie in a twofold repertoire of analytical blind spots. First, they lack empirical backing as they do not (even attempt to) establish a direct empirical link between common and longstanding conditions and the occurrence of violence in specific communities, at specific times. Second, they are incomplete as most offer reductionist, one-factor explanations for such a complex social phenomenon and, as such, can be at best partial or incomplete. To address these shortcomings, this article proposes an empirically based and theoretically informed multideterminant (explanatory) model, which identifies and analyses the roles of—and interconnections between—six key causal factors (hereafter "determinants"). The six key determinants include i) socio-economic and political deprivation, ii) xenophobic beliefs, iii) collective discontent, iv) political economy, v) mobilization, and vi) governance. I argue that i) these determinants and their interconnections in a value-added process constitute the necessary and sufficient conditions for the occurrence of xenophobic

violence, and ii) this multideterminant model consequently provides an adequate and comprehensive explanation of the xenophobic violence in South Africa.

After briefly introducing its data sources and methodological approach, the article provides an overview and shortcomings of existing theoretical and empirical explanations of xenophobic violence in South Africa. It then proceeds to present the multideterminant model it proposes. The final section or conclusion summarises the article's key argument and briefly reflects on scholarly and policy implications.

METHODOLOGY

This article draws on extensive and comparative qualitative data from ongoing research (hereafter "the study") on xenophobic violence in South Africa beginning from 2006. Conducted by the African Centre for Migration & Society at the University of the Witwatersrand, the study involves a systematic investigation into the nature, causal factors, and implications of xenophobic violence in the country. To achieve this goal, the study adopted the "most similar systems" approach by selecting research sites affected by the violence and sites that did not experience violence despite having similar socio-economic dynamics as the neighbouring violence-affected communities. The approach was informed by the understanding that "no enquiry into riots [in this case xenophobic violence] should fail to account for their absence" (Horowitz, 2001: xiv). This "most similar systems" approach allows the study to identify the most significant distinguishing factors that account for the presence of the violence in certain places, and its absence in others.

The study consisted primarily of in-depth qualitative interviews and focus group discussions with local citizens, foreign nationals, perpetrators and victims of the violence, relevant government officials, the police and other local law enforcement bodies such as community policing forums (CPFs), formal and informal community leaders, and other key informants including representatives of different civil society, faith-based, community-based organizations and self-help groups operating in those areas. The study comprised 47 case studies (conducted mainly in the provinces most affected by xenophobic violence, namely Gauteng, Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and Limpopo) and more than 1130 participants. The study was approved by the University of the Witwatersrand's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC Non-Medical). Ethics clearance certificate number: H22/08/18.

OVERVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF CURRENT THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL EXPLANATIONS

Theoretical approaches to xenophobic violence

Despite its global and growing dimensions, xenophobic violence does not seem to have attracted as much "targeted" theoretical attention as have other types of collective violence. Attempts at theoretical explanations for xenophobic violence in South Africa often borrow from "generic" mainstream theories of collective violence

particularly because, as indicated earlier, xenophobic violence in South Africa is often collective. While there appears to be as many theoretical approaches to collective violence as there are academic disciplines (see DeKeseredy and Barbara, 2006), two lines of theorizing—deprivation and mobilization models—have received much more attention than most (Horowitz, 2001) and currently dominate the literature on collective violence causal factors (Snyder, 1978).

However, I argue that despite their popularity and contribution these models and their imbedded theories are still not adequate explanations for the occurrence of collective violence and, by extension, xenophobic violence. Their limitations lie in their reductionist or isolationist approach, that is, their claims that one factor can fully explain collective violence in isolation of other societal conditions and processes. I argue that, when applied as sufficient explanations, these approaches are ultimately inadequate and in need of supplementation. As Sen (2008) rightly notes, the causal mechanisms of collective violence are more complex than reductionist approaches are capable of accounting for. The following section outlines the key tenets of these models and assesses their explanatory value.

The deprivation model

The central argument of theories in the deprivation model, also known as the "discontent model" (Snyder, 1978), is that generalised real or perceived deprivation in political, social or economic welfare leads to collective discontent or mass anger that eventually erupts in collective violence. There are many different theories in this model, but the two most commonly used include realistic group conflict theory and relative deprivation theory.

The realistic group conflict theory focusses on social-structural sources of group difference and stipulates that violent conflict between groups is rooted in a clash of competing group interests, be they economic or claims to social status and privileges (Brief et al., 2005). The theory suggests that group competition over resources and opportunities can lead to group tensions and ultimately violent group conflict or collective violence (Sniderman et al., 2004).

The relative deprivation theory stipulates that perceptions of deprivation, and concomitant feelings of frustration and alienation, arise when there is a discrepancy between value expectations and value capabilities, as reflected in the social and physical environment (Gurr, 1970). Where deprivation is widespread and extreme, the possibility for violence is greater (Conteh-Morgan, 2004). The scope and intensity of the relative deprivation produces variations in collective discontent which, according to the theory, leads to collective violence (Snyder, 1978; Aya, 1979). In Gurr's (1970: 13) own terms: "discontent arising from the perception of relative deprivation is the basic, instigating condition for participants in collective violence."

As Aya (1979) notes, despite its popular use, the deprivation model has been heavily criticized on methodological and empirical grounds, particularly for failing to i) address important substantive questions relating to how discontented

individuals come to undertake collective action, and ii) specify the conditions under which expectations may be frustrated without producing violence. "[...] they simply assume a direct connection between frustration and revolt, and thus beg the question they profess to have answered" (Aya, 1979: 57). As discussed further on, despite its obvious limitations, the deprivation model is commonly used to explain xenophobic violence in South Africa.

The mobilization model

For present purposes, mobilization refers broadly to all strategies and activities aimed at recruiting and persuading individuals to participate in collective action/violence. Theories in this model were developed partly as a response to the above-outlined conceptual and empirical limitations of the deprivation theories (Snyder, 1978). The core argument of this approach is that it is the organization or mobilization of discontent that triggers collective violence rather than just discontent or grievances themselves (Snyder, 1978). The most prominent theories in this model include resource mobilization, rationale choice, and elite manipulation theories.

The resource mobilization theory posits that collective action flows from groups vying for political positions and advantages. It "is simply politics by other means" (Useem, 1998: 216). According to this theory, collective violence is not, or at least not only, a response to deprivation, particularly because that deprivation and the resulting discontent are a "constant" that cannot adequately explain the occurrence of collective violence only in certain places and at certain times (Piven and Cloward, 1991). This is not to say that grievances or discontent are not important or invoked but "they want political mobilization via association, formal or informal, to be galvanised into action" (Aya, 1979: 49, see also Zald and McCarthy, 1979).

The rational choice theory conceives of collective violence as an act of collective and rational decision makers that mobilize their followers and promote their causes with the best available strategies informed by cognitive material and socio-political resources at their disposal (Kitschelt, 1986). It stipulates that "an individual will join collective violent action only when he expects the benefits of his participation to exceed the costs; when the net value of doing so is positive, that is when benefits of such activity outweigh costs" (Hechter et al., 1982: 442). The benefits ought not only to be material or economic rewards. Social, political, "identitive" or emotive incentives are equally important (Muller and Opp, 1986).

The central tenet of the elite manipulation theory is that collective violence results from the manipulation of masses by the elites for their economic and political interests. Understanding that "groups rarely organize themselves without some sort of political leader that is able to harness and bring critical issues to the forefront of individual consciousness" (Gerring, 2009: 12), elites often strategically mobilize existing—or purposely created—popular discontent into collective action to maximum political gain (Gerring, 2009). Elites can be elected or self-appointed leaders, political party leaders or representatives of interest groups.

In general, the mobilization model posits that the organization or mobilization of discontent is a central explanatory variable, particularly insofar as it helps to account for how individuals come to participate collectively (at the same place, time, and often for the same purpose) in violent acts (Gerring, 2009). Despite its merits, however, the model is not without its weaknesses. I argue that the model's inability to determine the specific societal conditions upon which successful mobilization depends renders it an equally inadequate explanation for the occurrence of collective violence. For example, while specifically stipulating that it is the mobilization of discontent that triggers collective violence, the model fails to acknowledge collective discontent as a key element in the collective violence causal chain.

In conclusion, the discussion above clearly shows that while dominant theoretical models contribute to the understanding of collective violence, they fall short when applied as sufficient explanations. Their main weakness lies in their reductionist approach that attempts to explain collective violence solely in terms of deprivation or mobilization. The causal factors they put forward are important but neither works on its own, nor can these models provide a complete and adequate explanation for the occurrence of collective violence. I agree with Sen (2008) who opines that approaches to explaining violence should avoid isolationist models because individual factors, no matter how important they are, cannot provide an adequate understanding of the causation of such a complex phenomenon in isolation of other societal conditions and processes. "A solitarist approach is, in general, a very efficient way of misunderstanding nearly everyone [or everything] in the world" (Sen, 2008: 7).

This article shows that both deprivation and mobilization are important determinants of xenophobic violence but are not sufficient explanations when applied individually or even in combination. They need supplementation, that is, they require the effect of other indispensable determinants to produce incidents of xenophobic violence.

Empirical explanations for xenophobic violence in South Africa

Existing causal explanations for xenophobic violence in South Africa can be grouped into three main categories: i) economic and material, ii) historical, political and institutional, and iii) psychosocial. Indeed, as Lau et al. (2010: 1) note, dominant explanations for collective and xenophobic violence in South Africa characterize it "(i) as a manifestation of social inequality and poverty; (ii) as a manifestation of a 'culture of violence' entrenched by a history of militarism; and (iii) as 'symptomatic' of historical trauma cultivated by the legacy of apartheid."

Economic and material explanations

Informed by poor socio-economic conditions and deprivation prevailing in most of affected communities, economic and material explanations for xenophobic violence in South Africa emphasize competition between citizens and immigrants

over scarce resources and opportunities as the main cause of the violence (see for example Dodson, 2010; Sempijja and Tewold, 2020; Misago et al, 2021; Mongale, 2022; Olofinbiyi, 2022). More specific accounts often draw attention to inequality, poverty, unemployment and other particular aspects of material deprivation caused by discriminatory policies and practices of the apartheid regime but also by the new government's service delivery failures (see for example Crush et al., 2008 and Claassen, 2017). Similarly, Sempijja and Mongale (2022: 1) argue that "xenophobic attacks in South Africa were triggered by drivers such as income inequality, inter-group hatred, racism, poverty, unemployment and competition for resources, the quest for social justice emanating from historical socio-economic grievances." Further, Tewold (2020) explains xenophobic violence using the realistic conflict theory and argues that the violence is a result of intergroup competition over scarce resources.

In line with Tilly's observation that "analysts often refer to large-scale causes (poverty, widespread frustration, extremism, resource competition and so on) proposing them as necessary or sufficient conditions for whole episodes of collective violence" (Tilly, 2003: 20), these explanations are evidently informed by the deprivation theoretical model outlined earlier. Echoing the limitations of the model, I agree with Crush et al (2008: 16) that "[W]hile there is an understandable reductionist tendency to view anti-foreign violence as a direct product of the material deprivation and competition amongst poor South Africans, this does not explain why all poor communities did not explode in May 2008"; and with Tshitereke (1999: 4) that "violence is not an inevitable outcome of relative deprivation."

However, despite the lack of definitive empirical backing, economic and material explanations for collective and xenophobic violence persist because the connection between poverty and group violence seems obvious, particularly when violence occurs in poor and unequal societies as it often does. As Sen (2008: 8) puts it:

> […] the connection has appeared to be so obviously credible that the paucity of definitive empirical evidence has not discouraged the frequent invoking of this way of understanding the recurrence of violence in countries with much poverty and inequality.[…] The claim that poverty is responsible for group violence draws on an oversimplification of empirical connections that are far from universal.

I further agree with Sen that "It would be a huge mistake to see economic inequality and poverty as being automatically responsible for violence—indeed, it would be just as serious a mistake as the assumption that inequality and poverty have nothing to do with the possibility of violence" (Sen, 2008: 14). Economic and material deprivation can therefore only be one element among many in the collective violence (or in this case xenophobic violence) causal chain.

Historical, political and institutional explanations

For many analysts, the causes of the xenophobic violence in South Africa lie in factors related to the country's past and current political and institutional configurations, which shaped and continue to shape "the coding of unregulated (and even regulated) human mobility as a threat to insiders' economic and physical well-being and national (or even sub-national) achievement" (Landau, 2011: 5; see also Misago and Landau, 2022). The factors often cited include the legacy of apartheid, the impact of post-apartheid nation-building efforts and "the failure of national rebirth" (Landau, 2011).

Citizen Rights in Africa Initiative (CRAI) (2009), for instance, argues that the legacy of apartheid and isolation created a fertile ground for xenophobic violence in several ways: i) it created radicalized notions of identity, ii) enforced separation among different populations including isolating South Africans from the rest of the continent, and iii) institutionalized violence as a means of communicating grievances and achieving political ends (see also Jaynes, 2008). Further, arguing that African immigrants in South Africa live in "post-apartheid apartheid," Kaziboni (2022: 209) explains the ongoing xenophobic violence in contemporary South Africa as a result of the use and normalisation of violence originating from apartheid's racist past.

Analysts who link xenophobic violence to the post-apartheid nation-building efforts argue, for example, that post-apartheid immigration policies and practices have reinforced "a deep suspicion of those who move" (Landau, 2011: 5) and have constructed the foreigner as the "violable alien" (Misago et al 2009; see also Dodson, 2010: 6) in trying to build a new national identity and protect the new citizenry (Peberdy, 2009; Misago and Landau, 2022). Regarding the failure of national rebirth, analysts argue that the violence against foreign nationals is caused by the government's failure to realise citizens' social and economic rights since 1994, that is, the failure of the government to meet post-apartheid expectations regarding economic conditions and service delivery (CoRMSA, 2008; CRAI, 2009).

In sum, it is only logical to note that, while valuable in providing a relevant context, historical, political and institutional factors alone cannot account for the variations in occurrence and intensity of xenophobic violence. Like economic and material conditions, these factors are longstanding and common in many South African communities or areas that have not experienced a single incident of xenophobic violence to date.

Psychosocial explanations

Analysts also put forward psychosocial factors as explanations for the ongoing xenophobic violence in South Africa. One of these factors is "cultural stereotyping" that results from South Africans' new direct contact with foreign Africans (Dodson, 2010). According to Harris (2002), mutual stereotyping between South Africans and foreigners essentializes and exaggerates cultural differences and thus gives rise to prejudice and conflict. Another factor put forward is the "culture of violence." Some analysts see collective and xenophobic violence in South Africa as a manifestation

of a "culture of violence" entrenched by a history of militarism (Lau et al., 2010). Another related explanation is "historical trauma" cultivated by the apartheid legacy (Seedat, 2010). According to Lau et al. (2010: 7), "xenophobic violence, a peculiar form of 'black-on-black' violence, represents the spill over of repressed trauma, as manifest in the transfer of anger and hatred of the former 'colonial masters' onto an equally or more vulnerable 'other' through physical acts of denigration."

In a similar vein, using Freudian political psychology to explain xenophobic violence in South Africa, Olofinbiyi (2022: 198) argues that " […] a battered psychological mind frame resulting from apartheid dehumanisation is an intriguing causal factor for the violent behaviour of South African xenophobes towards foreign nationals" and that "[…] the painful memory of apartheid is a trigger factor for recurrent xenophobic violence against immigrants in South Africa" (Olofinbiyi, 2022: 199).

Once again, these factors provide a valuable understanding of underlying conditions but are not sufficient explanations because of empirical evidence that shows that the presence of foreign nationals in areas renowned for public violence and violent crime does not necessarily lead to the foreigners' violent exclusion and that xenophobic violence in South Africa is not exclusively a "black-on-black" affair (Tewold, 2020).

As the discussion above clearly indicates, the proposed economic, political and psychosocial explanations are valuable in analysing the conditions under which xenophobic violence takes place. However, by implicitly claiming that the causal factors they put forward are necessary and sufficient conditions for the occurrence of xenophobic violence, they "falter when faced with empirical or logical interrogation" (Landau, 2011: 3). In other words, they are not adequate explanations for the occurrence of xenophobic violence. The reason for this is twofold. First, these explanations maintain only a tenuous relationship with empirical reality. They lack empirical backing as they do not (even attempt to) establish a direct empirical link between common and longstanding conditions and the occurrence of violence in specific communities, at specific times. In other words, they fail to identify and clarify processes through which conditions and motives translate into collective violent attacks. Second, they offer reductionist, one-factor causes to explain such a complex social phenomenon and, as such, can be at best partial or incomplete (Sen, 2008). These explanations ultimately point to general elements of socio-economic and political deprivation that are necessary but not sufficient conditions for the occurrence of xenophobic violence. I attempt to address these shortcomings by proposing the following multideterminant model.

A multideterminant model: Six determinants and their interconnectedness

This study finds that incidents of xenophobic violence are a result of complex interconnections between six key determinants grouped into three layers of causality,

namely underlying conditions, proximate causes and triggers. Underlying conditions include i) socio-economic and political deprivation (hereafter deprivation), ii) xenophobia and negative attitudes towards foreign nationals (hereafter xenophobia), and iii) collective discontent. Proximate causes consist of iv) political economy or politico-economic violence entrepreneurship (hereafter political economy), and v) favourable governance (hereafter governance). Mobilization (vi) acts as a trigger. I argue that i) these determinants and their interconnections in a value-added process constitute the necessary and sufficient conditions for the occurrence of xenophobic violence, and ii) this multideterminant model consequently provides an adequate and comprehensive explanation of the xenophobic violence in South Africa. The following provides a brief explanation of these determinants and their interconnectedness. Readers will be referred to earlier work for detailed discussions on individual determinants.

Socio-economic deprivation

As indicated earlier, xenophobic violence occurs mostly (albeit not exclusively) in poor and economically marginalized informal settlements and townships where citizens (many of whom are themselves internal migrants) and immigrants meet amid poor living conditions and severe socio-economic deprivation. To varying degrees, residents in areas covered in this research face longstanding, severe and worsening severe socio-economic hardships and ills, including high rates of unemployment, poor service delivery, poverty, overcrowding, high crime rates, violence, gangsterism, drug and alcohol abuse, and general lack of livelihood opportunities (Misago et al., 2021).

Perhaps not surprisingly, socio-economic hardships lead to fierce competition for scarce public services, livelihood resources and opportunities that often lead to tensions and conflicts among individuals and groups, particularly between citizens and foreign residents (Misago, 2016a). As this study finds, residents of violence-affected areas perceive this competition as unfair and illegitimate and accuse foreign residents of stealing what is legitimately theirs. A Mamelodi respondent, for example, stated:

> The issue of economy, our people are now saying these people are taking our jobs, our spaza shops are now owned by people from outside the country. Then there is this issue of services because; we are too many, they are using our clinics and hospitals; we don't have access to our facilities like we used to previously. There is also this issue of crime, most of the time I see them on the TV they are pastors and scamming our people and all those things that also contributes to the tension.[2]

As Dodson (2010: 5) suggests, this resented competition produces an "ethnicised political economy in which microeconomic friction is displaced into hate-filled

[2] Interview with a Mamelodi resident, April 7, 2022.

nationalism." As discussed below, when blamed on the presence of outsiders (as often is), widespread socio-economic deprivation provides fertile ground for xenophobic violence as it, together with other factors, leads to collective discontent that often gets mobilized for xenophobic violence.

Xenophobia and negative attitudes towards foreign nationals

In all studies areas, community members and their leaders generally hold strong negative perceptions and attitudes towards foreign nationals whom they blame for most of the socio-economic hardships outlined above. Residents perceive the presence of foreign nationals as a threat to their lives and livelihoods. These sentiments are common not only among residents of our study areas but also among South Africans in general. Indeed, research consistently shows that these sentiments are widespread and cut across race, class, gender, age, ethnic and religious divides (Nyamnjoh, 2006). As an example, a 2020 HSRC survey reveals that 57% of the country's population hold negative attitudes towards immigrants, particularly those of African and Asian origin (HSRC, 2020). A Dunoon respondent confirmed these native attitudes: "Yes, we live with them, but I'm not going to lie, we are pretending [to like] each other. We believe that the crimes that exist here would not exist if they were not here. We have the belief that they are taking our jobs. They are cheap labour. This is the belief we have."[3]

These attitudes and strong resentment result from—and are in turn reinforced by—constant scapegoating by the public, government officials and political leaders who blame foreign nationals for service delivery failures, and for most of the country's socio-economic ills and hardships described above (UNHCR, 2015). Scapegoating is a well-documented source of negative attitudes and resentment towards foreign nationals in South Africa. Indeed, Human Rights Watch (HRW) indicates that many African and Asian foreigners have been targets of xenophobia because they are "often scapegoated for economic insecurity and government failures in delivering basic services to its citizens …" (HRW, 2020: 16; see also Crush et al., 2008). This is a typical case predicted by the scapegoating theory that stipulates that "if a majority group encounters difficult economic conditions, they often feel threatened by minorities, especially if they are foreign" (Muswede and Mpofu, 2020: 276).

A 2018 survey revealed that "More than 1 in 10 adults living in South Africa had not taken part in violent action against foreign nationals—but would be prepared to do so […]. The results of this study show that millions of ordinary South Africans are prepared to engage in anti-immigrant behaviour" (Gordon, 2019: 2). Similarly, a 2023 South African reconciliation barometer report (IJR, 2023: 32) indicates that, in 2023, more than a quarter of South Africans indicated that they were "likely or very likely to take action to prevent African migrants from moving into their neighbourhood, operating a business in their area, or accessing jobs or government services." This clearly indicates that the pervasive xenophobic climate in the country constitutes a "collective mental state" and builds on a psychological "raw material"

[3] Interview with a Dunoon resident, March 14, 2022.

mobilization for xenophobic violence (Bostock, 2010). By definition, xenophobia is inevitably one of the determinants of xenophobic violence.

Collective discontent against foreign nationals

As mentioned above, a combination of severe socio-economic deprivation and xenophobia are used to blame this deprivation on foreign nationals, which leads to collective anger and discontent towards foreign nationals living in affected communities. For purposes of this article, collective discontent refers to a widespread feeling of dissatisfaction, anger shared by a group of people about certain aspects of their lives and, particularly, about similar, longstanding and unresolved societal issues. In this case, the unresolved concern and the object of the collective discontent is the presence of foreign nationals perceived as a real and increasing threat to their lives and livelihoods.

The framing of foreign nationals as a threat to national security and the well-being of the citizenry mainly takes roots in the past and present socio-political imaginaries and actions. Indeed, Misago and Landau (2022: 5) note that, drawing on a rhetorical archive from the country's colonial and apartheid past, the post-apartheid government's words and actions characterize the migrant as a demonised category responsible for lack of national progress, and "an obstacle to addressing the historical inequities and creating true freedom for a deserving citizenry." As indicated earlier, the study finds that these feelings are firmly entrenched in the minds of many members of local communities who believe that foreign nationals undermine their socio-economic development and prosperity by stealing jobs and businesses opportunities, overburdening or depleting public services, and committing most of the crime in their areas. One Khayelitsha respondent, for example, expressed feelings shared my many:

> […] most of our people are unemployed; people who work are foreign nationals. Like the people of Zimbabwe or Lesotho. I would say that the people in charge of the jobs are foreigners. I don't want to hide that fact. That is the problem. That is why we were saying let's minimize these people […] So, they live a comfortable life. These are painful things for people. That can make a mess at any time.

As discussed above, research evidence indicates that collective discontent against foreign nationals is pervasive in many communities in South Africa. Many of these discontented communities have not experienced xenophobic violence. In other words, xenophobic violence occurs in some communities and not in others despite, the shared collective discontent. This is evidence that collective discontent does not always lead to collective violence (see also Postmes, 2019). The question then is, under what conditions does collective discontent lead to collective violence or, more specifically, under what conditions does collective discontent against foreign

nationals translate into xenophobic violence in South Africa? The following section answers this question by discussing how proximate causes and triggers build on this collective discontent to produce incidents of xenophobic violence.

Political economy and micropolitics

Since 2008, this study has consistently shown that micropolitics and localised political economy are a significant element or determinant in the xenophobic violence causal chain. As I argue elsewhere, "xenophobic violence in post-apartheid South Africa is primarily 'politics by other means' as its instrumental motives are located in the localised political economy and micro-political processes at play in affected communities" (Misago, 2017: 42). Indeed, this study finds that xenophobic violence is in most cases organized/instigated by well-known local interest groups, such as formal and informal leadership structures, civic associations, concerned resident associations, local business and development forums, local political movements, gangs and other interest groups, to further their own political and economic interests (Misago, 2017; Misago and Landau, 2022).

These groups, often referred to as "violence entrepreneurs" (Guichaoua, 2013) exploit or use the existing and well-known collective discontent against foreign nationals to mobilize residents for xenophobic attacks for their own political and economic interests. The finding is in line with the "elite manipulation theory" which stipulates that elites often strategically mobilize existing—or purposely created—popular discontent into collective action for maximum political and economic gain. As an example, the case of the Dudula Movement in Alexandra township in Johannesburg illustrates this point.

In March and May 2022, the Dudula Movement organized and led xenophobic attacks that drove foreign nationals out of their houses and trading stalls in Alexandra. Several people were injured, and foreign-owned trading stalls were destroyed (Simelane, 2022). Despite the Movement's claims that the attacks to remove foreignness were meant to help local South Africans, there was evidence that this was effectively a strategy of self-economic empowerment by its members. Respondents indicated, for example, that Dudula Movement members forcefully evicted foreign nationals from houses only to sell the houses back to the same people later or rent them to other people. They evicted foreign nationals from trading stalls to give the stalls to South Africans for a fee. While a former leader dismissed the idea that the Dudula Movement received financial support from political parties, he confirmed that it benefited economically by collecting money from residents. In his own words: "No, we never received any money. The last time we got money from the traders was when we removed all the illegal foreigners. After we removed them, we put South Africans. I think for the period of six months those South Africans were giving us R30 to trade"[4] (see Misago, 2017; Misago and Landau, 2022 for a detailed discussion on the political economy as a driver of xenophobic violence in South Africa).

[4] Interview with a former Dudula Movement leader, December 2022.

Mobilization as a trigger of xenophobic violence

As indicated above, "violence entrepreneurs" build on collective discontent to mobilize community members for xenophobic attacks. Indeed, the study identifies mobilization as an immediate trigger of xenophobic violence. For purposes of this article, mobilization broadly refers to all activities, interactions and processes aimed at recruiting and persuading individuals and groups to participate in collective action. It refers to a process of bringing potential participants into action. It focuses on instigators of the violence or "violence entrepreneurs" and their ability to assemble individuals and get them to participate in collective action for a seemingly common/collective goal (details in Misago, 2019a). Mobilization refers to "the process through which violence entrepreneurs and followers seal temporary loyalties around a violent enterprise" (Guichaoua 2013: 70).

In line with the mobilization theoretical model discussed earlier, this study finds that, while various forms of social, economic and/or political grievances are important elements in heightening tensions and creating collective discontent, anger and resentment towards foreign nationals, it is the mobilization of this discontent—and not the discontent itself—that triggers collective violent attacks on South Africa's foreign residents. Mobilization is the vital connective tissue between discontent and collective violence. As a trigger, mobilization helps explain the pathways from collective discontent and/or instrumental motives to collective violent action. Collective discontent needs mobilization to trigger collective violence action the same way dry grass needs a spark to ignite fire (Gleason, 2011). Instigators of xenophobic violence in South Africa use various mobilization techniques and processes that include "haranguing" and inciting crowds during mass community meetings, mainstream and social media messages, spreading purposely engineered rumours, appeals to community's sense of solidarity and right to self-defence, setting examples and asking community members to join, and hiring unemployed youths to carry out the attacks. For example, in Alexandra (a township in Johannesburg), mobilizing for the May 2008 violence against foreign nationals was the work of the local community leaders who called a mass community meeting where the decision to attack and remove foreign nationals from the area was taken, and after which attacks immediately started. One respondent stated:

> The decision to remove foreigners was taken at a meeting held at the police station. There was also a community leader who issued a statement that people must decide on how they deal with someone who has entered his kraal and taken his cattle. This statement for me started the violence. People agreed with community leaders that foreigners must leave. People said "from this very moment we are going to remove foreigners. We no longer want them here." Then attacks immediately started.[5]

[5] Interview with an Alexandra resident, June 2, 2009.

For a detailed empirical and theoretical analysis of mobilization as a trigger of xenophobic violence in South Africa, see Misago (2019a).

Governance as a political opportunity structure for xenophobic violence

Using the most similar systems methodological approach, this study identified local governance as the most significant distinguishing factor to explain the occurrence or absence of xenophobic violence in communities or locations with similar socio-economic conditions and similar collective discontent against foreign nationals. Here, "local governance" refers "to all formal and informal systems of order in a given locality or polity, i.e. the integration of—or interaction between—all localised systems of controls (social, economic, normative, legal, and political) and leadership, authority and power regimes" (Misago, 2019b: 59).

The study indeed provides evidence that xenophobic violence occurs in places where local governance provides a favourable "micro-political opportunity structure" that facilitates the occurrence of the violence in two ways: i) in many cases, official local authority facilitates and is directly involved in the violence, and ii) in areas where official authority is weak or absent, other violence entrepreneurs are provided with an opportunity to act. The study also finds that, despite the presence of other determinants, particularly collective discontent and mobilization efforts, xenophobic violence does not occur in places where local governance does not provide the needed favourable political opportunity structure (Misago, 2016a; Misago, 2019b; Monson, 2011). As Monson (2011: 189) confirms:

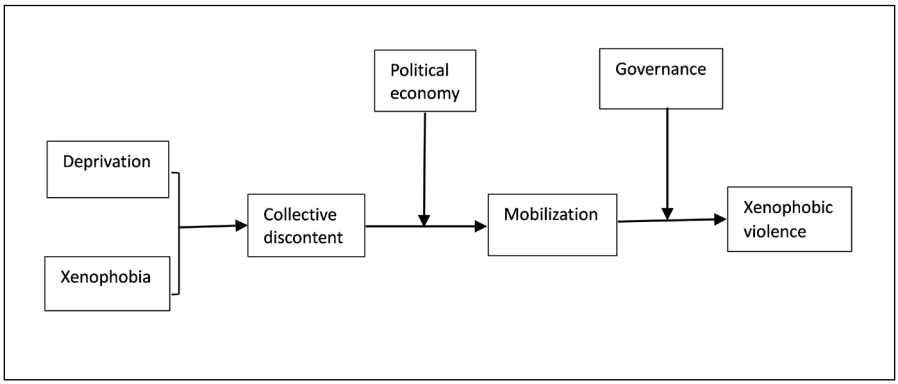
> […] the spread of [xenophobic] violence appeared to depend on the strength of leadership institutions in the surrounding areas. Arguably, more strongly democratic forms of leadership created firebreaks against the conflagration, while adjacent areas of weakly institutionalised leadership or leadership autonomous from the state presented softer boundaries, more easily penetrated both by political instigators and by the depoliticised spread of recidivism.

In these areas, local governance constrains rather than facilitates the occurrence of xenophobic violence. These cases are evidence that mobilization for xenophobic violence does not succeed without a favourable political opportunity structure provided by local governance. Governance is therefore a significant determinant of xenophobic violence in South Africa, as it is a defining intervening variable between mobilization and the occurrence of the violence (see Misago, 2019b for a detailed discussion on this determinant).

To sum up, this section discusses six key determinants (deprivation, xenophobia, collective discontent, political economy, mobilization and governance) that need to be present—and interconnections that need to take place—for xenophobic violence to occur. It is these determinants and their interconnections that I term "the multideterminant model" of xenophobic violence in South Africa.

Figure 1 below presents a graphic display of this model. The display is followed by a brief explanation.

Figure 1 "Multideterminant model" of xenophobic violence in South Africa



Source: Author's own work

Widespread *deprivation* and pervasive *xenophobia* lead to *collective discontent* and strong resentment towards foreign nationals. Regarding *political economy*, local violence entrepreneurs exploit existing and well-known collective discontent against foreign nationals to mobilize residents for xenophobic attacks for their own political and economic interests. Localised political economy—or instrumental motives of violence entrepreneurs—acts as an intervening variable between collective discontent and mobilization. For *mobilization*, violence entrepreneurs use different mobilization techniques to trigger attacks on foreign nationals. They bring aggrieved community members together and stir them into a collective violent act to remove what they perceive to be the source of their discontent. It is the mobilization of discontent that triggers xenophobic violence. In terms of *governance*, favourable local governance provides mobilization with the micro-political opportunity structure it needs to take place, and eventually succeeds in triggering xenophobic violence. Governance acts as a defining intervening variable between mobilization and the occurrence of xenophobic violence as it alters the nature of their relationship depending on whether it acts as a facilitating or a thwarting agent.

The value-added process, as shown in Figure 1, reflects the determinants outlined above and how they interact in a value-added process to lead to the occurrence of xenophobic violence. Each determinant plays an indispensable role and adds its contribution to the contributions of other determinants. Each must be present for the next to assume the status of a determinant (see also Smelser, 1963). I argue that an incident of xenophobic violence would normally not happen if any of these determinants were absent. This means that none of these determinants can explain xenophobic violence on their own, but together, interacting in a value-added

process, they constitute the necessary and sufficient conditions for a xenophobic violence incident to occur. I agree with Sen (2008: 15) that "none of these individual influences, important as they very often are in a fuller picture, can provide an adequate understanding of the causation of widespread violence. […] The interconnections are as important as the elements that have to be connected." I therefore argue that this multideterminant model provides a comprehensive, theoretically informed and empirically based explanation for xenophobic violence in South Africa. By doing so, the model makes its own case by i) highlighting the need for an integrated empirical and theoretical model for xenophobic violence, and ii) making even more evident the poverty or incompleteness of existing, mono-causal empirical explanations and reductionist theoretical models.

CONCLUSION

Drawing on extensive and comparative qualitative data from a nearly two-decade long and ongoing research, this article responds to inadequacies and limitations of current causal explanations for xenophobic violence in South Africa. It argues that the poverty of existing explanatory models lies in a twofold repertoire of analytical blind spots: i) many lack empirical backing; ii) others are incomplete due to their reductionist approach. To address these shortcomings, this article proposes an empirically based and theoretically informed multideterminant (explanatory) model, which identifies and analyses the roles of—and interconnections between—six key determinants, namely: i) socio-economic and political deprivation, ii) xenophobic beliefs, iii) collective discontent, iv) political economy, v) mobilization, and vi) governance. I argue that i) these determinants and their interconnections in a value-added process constitute the necessary and sufficient conditions for the occurrence of xenophobic violence, and ii) this multideterminant model consequently provides an adequate and comprehensive explanation of the xenophobic violence in South Africa.

In addition to its scholarly contributions, this article has potential policy/practical relevance and implications. By clearly identifying the main and critical elements of the causal chain, the study implicitly identifies critical areas where intervention efforts could be targeted in order to stop ongoing, and prevent future, xenophobic violence in South Africa. Empirical evidence from this study indicates that responses and intervention strategies to address xenophobic violence in South Africa have largely been ineffective because they are not evidence-based, that is, they are not informed by a clear understanding of key causal factors or determinants (Misago, 2016b). A clear understanding of the elements of the violence causal chain and their modes of interaction could help relevant stakeholders to design more effective intervention strategies. Stakeholders with different mandates and capacities could easily identify intervention areas where their efforts are most needed and are likely to have an impact.

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Navigating Passports and Borders: The Complex Realities of Zimbabwean Migrants in South Africa

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Abstract

The acquisition and maintenance of valid passports present complex challenges for many migrants. The complexity arises from many factors including political, economic, and administrative. Employing a multi-sited ethnographic approach, this study scrutinizes the hurdles encountered by Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa when obtaining and renewing passports, visas, and permits. Moreover, the study investigates the far-reaching repercussions of passport-related complexities on the daily existence and welfare of these migrants. The socio-political dynamics shaping the passport experiences of Zimbabwean migrants offer valuable insights into fostering more inclusive migration policies and procedures. Consequently, these challenges significantly impact migrants' daily lives and overall well-being, impeding their pursuit of a better life in South Africa. In response, migrants resort to "nimble-footed strategies," such as using ephemeral stamps, to navigate their circumstances. However, these strategies also leave migrants vulnerable to exploitation and a lack of state protection. In essence, this study contributes to understanding the contemporary challenges faced by migrants amid evolving global crises, particularly in the post-COVID-19 era marked by increased regulation and restriction of migrants. This study traverses diverse geographical and political contexts, by shedding light on the ongoing militarization and contraction of borders and the rights of migrants.

Keywords: passports, borders, migrants, conviviality, Zimbabwe, South Africa

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INTRODUCTION

A passport is a vital document that allows people to traverse international boundaries, find work, and access essential social services in foreign territories (Lloyd, 2003). The international migration process has traditionally been fraught with challenges, particularly concerning acquiring, maintaining, and renewing passports, as well as obtaining temporary residence permits, asylum-seeker permits, and student visas (Thebe, 2017). The passport carries symbolic significance, as it establishes identification and citizenship, granting travelers legal permission to reside and work in their destination countries (Dehm, 2017). However, acquiring, maintaining, and renewing passports and other legitimating documents can be difficult and contentious, prompting some to resort to unorthodox strategies to access such vital documentation (Bauböck, 2019). For example, earlier in 2024, the government of Malawi halted the processing of passports claiming a cyberattack on the country's immigration service's computer system. However, the government has also been grappling with a backlog of passport applications since 2021, leading to delays in the issuance of passports (Jengwa and Rukanga, 2024). Likewise, in 2019 *The Guardian* reported that the Zimbabwean government had been experiencing challenges in processing passports, resulting in massive backlogs and applicants having to wait for months to get their passports (Chingono, 2019). More recently, *Pindula* (2024), an online news platform, reported that Zimbabwean residents in South Africa will be required to pay a premium fee of US$270 for passport issuance, as their applications will be processed as "express" or "emergency" cases. Unlike in Zimbabwe, where an ordinary passport takes seven days to process and costs US$150 plus a US$20 application fee, the Zimbabwean Consulate in Johannesburg will not offer this option to residents in South Africa. Instead, they will need to pay US$250 (approximately R4,550) and a US$20 (R364) application fee, equivalent to the cost of an emergency passport in Zimbabwe. Subsequently, these systems frustrate citizens who either become impatient to wait for their passports or fail to afford the application fees, prompting them to acquire counterfeits or to resort to other irregular ways to cross borders (Macheka et al., 2015).

For South Africa, as with other countries globally, a thriving illicit market for immigrant documentation exists. Irregular migrants rely on it to obtain passports and other documents that legitimize their stay and open doors to opportunities and services (Alfaro-Velcamp et al., 2017; Chekero, 2023). Resultantly, as migrants seek to regularize their stay or evade the prying gaze of border control and other international migration regulators, different methods are devised. Working through a web of street-level state bureaucrats and enterprising fake-paper merchants, irregular migrants try to obtain (il)legal documents. They also pay heftily to "service" the documents to secure their residence in a foreign territory. Arguably, these "papers" carry "power and efficiency" in as far as they secure passage or enhance opportunities for undocumented migrants (Alpes, 2017); hence, their omnipotence in migrant lives.

Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa find themselves deeply entrenched in the bureaucratic hurdles and paperwork challenges they must navigate and negotiate. According to the 2022 South African census, over one million Zimbabweans reside in South Africa, comprising approximately 45% of the immigrant population (StatsSA, 2022: 31). However, obtaining accurate data on the population of Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa is challenging because of various factors. These include the government's inadequate record-keeping practices, border porosity, and the fluctuations in migration patterns as socio-economic conditions change in both Zimbabwe and South Africa (Chekero and Ross, 2018; Chekero and Morreira, 2020). Zimbabwean migration has been motivated by diverse political, economic, and social factors, resulting in various experiences and challenges (Crush et al., 2015; Zanker and Moyo, 2020).

This study addresses a crucial gap in the literature by focusing on the complex and often underexplored challenges faced by Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa in acquiring and maintaining valid passports and other essential documents. While existing research has extensively covered the broad issues of irregular migration and bureaucratic obstacles, this paper specifically examines the intersection of passport-related difficulties with daily life and well-being, a niche that remains insufficiently addressed. By employing a multi-sited ethnographic approach, the study not only highlights the empirical realities of passport acquisition but also integrates concepts such as nimble-footedness, conviviality, and *hushamwari* (friendship) to offer a nuanced understanding of how migrants navigate these challenges. This comprehensive exploration is distinct from previous studies, as it focuses on the socio-political dynamics affecting migrants' interactions with the passport system, the impact of evolving global crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, and the resultant adaptive strategies employed by migrants. In doing so, the paper contributes new insights into the lived experiences of migrants, emphasizing the role of informal networks and adaptive strategies in their survival amid increased border control measures and bureaucratic hurdles.

To understand the complexities faced by Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa, this article adopts a multi-layered approach. First, we present a brief overview of Zimbabwean migration patterns to establish the contextual background. We then examine the challenges migrants face in obtaining passports, detailing the bureaucratic obstacles they encounter. Finally, we analyze the coping and adaptive strategies employed by migrants, particularly focusing on how they mobilize conviviality, *hushamwari,* and nimble-footedness to navigate these difficulties.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: NIMBLE-FOOTED NEGOTIATION, CONVIVIAL NETWORKS, AND *HUSHAMWARI*

This paper delves into the intricate realities of irregular migration among Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa, employing three interconnected conceptual frameworks: nimble-footedness, conviviality, and *hushamwari*. By integrating Nyamnjoh's (2013,

2015, 2017, 2019, 2020a, 2020b) concepts of nimble-footedness and conviviality with Chekero and Morreira's (2020) concept of *hushamwari*, we seek to provide a nuanced understanding of how migrants navigate and negotiate their precarious existence within a complex socio-political landscape.

Nimble-footedness, as articulated by Nyamnjoh (2013), captures the agility and adaptability required of migrants to maneuver through the convoluted postcolonial border politics. This framework reflects the migrants' capacity to swiftly and effectively traverse various obstacles, such as bureaucratic barriers and police roadblocks, which shape their daily lives in South Africa. Drawing on Erving Goffman's exploration of social performances, as exemplified in Chekero's (2023) study of refugees in Cape Town, we recognize that migrants strategically employ tactics of visibility and invisibility. These strategies are essential, as they adapt to their shifting environment, allowing them to contest, evade, or circumvent barriers imposed by the state and its representatives. Nimble-footedness underscores the importance of temporal and spatial awareness in the migrants' navigation strategies, illustrating their ability to adapt to the ever-changing dynamics of border control.

Conviviality, as developed by scholars such as Illich (1973), Nyamnjoh (2017), and Nowicka and Heil (2015), refers to the everyday interactions and co-existence that define social life. In the context of Zimbabwean migrants, conviviality encompasses the relationships they forge with fellow migrants, local bus drivers, and even immigration officials. These relationships, built on reciprocity and shared experiences, provide essential support and resources. Conviviality highlights the significance of these networks in offering information, assistance, and opportunities amid the challenges of irregular migration (Bhanye, 2024; Mushonga, 2024). However, conviviality's focus on positive interactions and harmonious co-existence may obscure the underlying tensions and conflicts within these relationships. While conviviality emphasizes cooperation and mutual support, it may overlook the power imbalances, systemic inequalities, and discrimination that have an impact on social interactions. This limitation calls for a more comprehensive understanding that incorporates *hushamwari* and nimble-footedness.

Hushamwari, a Shona concept of "friendship" elaborated by Chekero and Morreira (2020), extends beyond conventional notions of kinship. It embodies a deeper form of mutual aid and belonging, offering a critical extension to the framework of conviviality. The Shona saying "*hushamwari* hunokunda hukama" (friendship surpasses kinship) underscores the profound significance of these relationships in providing social support and stability. For Zimbabwean migrants, *hushamwari* represents the solidarity and mutual assistance that transcends national and ethnic boundaries, fostering a sense of community and safety. In this study, we investigate the disconnect between Zimbabwean migrants' interactions with a bureaucratic state apparatus – characterized by police roadblocks and restrictive visa regulations – and their adaptive strategies based on social relationships, particularly through the lens of *hushamwari*. This endogenous idea, which is profoundly rooted

in the wider framework of Ubuntu, offers a critical viewpoint on how migrants overcome structural constraints.

Chimuka (2001) defines Ubuntu as a belief in community solidarity and humanity's interdependence. It claims that personhood is not an independent trait, but is inextricably tied to the humanity of others, going beyond close communal links. This communal ethos serves as the basis for *hushamwari*, a fundamental idea in our study. *Hushamwari* denotes more than just social connection; it represents a kind of relational solidarity that crosses traditional bounds (Chimuka, 2006). Examining the interaction of *hushamwari* with conviviality and nimble-footedness reveals a framework that goes beyond basic interpretations of Ubuntu. While Ubuntu and conviviality stress peaceful co-existence and social integration, *hushamwari* provides a more nuanced and practical perspective for understanding how migrants navigate the daily hurdles presented by bureaucratic processes.

Despite historical and modern efforts to maintain boundaries along "tribal" and national lines in Southern Africa, a common metaphysical substrate remains across these divides. This similarity offers fertile ground for understanding how *hushamwari* functions as a practical strategy for overcoming systemic barriers. It allows migrants to create and use social networks to get access to resources and paperwork, therefore minimizing the consequences of a restricted bureaucratic environment. Our argument contends that *hushamwari* goes beyond the basic ideals of Ubuntu and conviviality. It offers a tangible framework for examining how migrants negotiate their difficult conditions using a defined system of connections based on mutual help rather than difference. By focusing on *hushamwari*, we emphasize an important aspect of migrant agency and resilience, providing fresh insights into how social interactions may be used to confront and overcome bureaucratic obstacles.

The intersection of nimble-footedness, conviviality, and *hushamwari* offers a holistic view of how Zimbabwean migrants navigate their challenges in South Africa. Nimble-footedness allows migrants to strategically maneuver through bureaucratic and physical barriers, while conviviality facilitates the creation of supportive social networks. *Hushamwari* further enriches this framework by emphasizing the depth of mutual aid and solidarity that can exist within and beyond these networks. This integrated approach reveals that while conviviality provides a foundation for social cohesion and support, it is insufficient on its own to address the full spectrum of migrants' experiences. Nimble-footedness highlights the need for adaptability in navigating obstacles, and *hushamwari* underscores the importance of deeper, reciprocal relationships that enhance social resilience. Together, these frameworks illustrate the dynamic interplay between adaptability, social support, and mutual aid in the lives of Zimbabwean migrants.

By employing this comprehensive conceptual lens, our analysis not only illuminates the lived experiences of Zimbabwean migrants but also provides insights into the broader socio-economic and political dynamics shaping their lives. This

framework challenges conventional views of migration by emphasizing the agency, resilience, and strategic adaptation of migrants amid systemic constraints.

METHODOLOGY AND STUDY APPROACH

This study emerged from four PhD and postdoctoral research projects by the authors, all centered on migration issues. While our academic journey and research were not exclusively focused on Zimbabwe, the challenges surrounding passport acquisition and maintenance consistently arose during our various fieldwork experiences. These recurring issues provided the foundation for this study, drawing insights from our diverse migration research efforts. To unearth the nuanced realities of Zimbabwean migrants' passport experiences in South Africa, we embarked on a multi-sited ethnographic journey, guided by the methodological insights of Marcus (1995). As Marcus (1995: 105) argues,

> Multi-sited ethnography is designed around paths, chains, conjunctions, threads, and juxtapositions of locations in which the ethnographer establishes some kind of literal, physical presence, with an explicit, posit logic of association or connection among sites that define the argument of ethnography.

With the conviction that the interplay between territorial, social, and affective realms shapes migrants' quotidian encounters, we traversed diverse locations to establish a physical presence and forge convivial connections with participants. Navigating the difficult dynamics of access and trust, we grappled with the challenge of engaging study participants amid their suspicion and apprehension. Operating within the nebulous terrain of unresolved citizenship status, we unraveled the lived experiences of young Zimbabwean men and women in their 20s and 30s, emblematic of the gender and age dynamics prevalent in irregular migration to South Africa. Recognizing the inherent mobility and multi-situatedness of the participants, we actively tracked and engaged with them across diverse locations, forging convivial connections to gain deep insights into their lived experiences. To select study participants, we leveraged key contacts to snowball out to the Zimbabwean migrant population in South Africa. Even though we were operating on "home turf," it was difficult to access participants, because of their suspicion that we were linked to the police or the South African Department of Home Affairs (DHA), their reluctance to be interviewed, and their ambiguous status in South Africa in what Bhanye and Dzingirai (2019) term "unresolved citizenship status."

Four cities (Bloemfontein, Cape Town, Johannesburg, and Pretoria) were used for this study, each offering a unique perspective on the complexities of passport usage and mobility. We conducted the research over 12 months. We immersed ourselves in the everyday lives of migrants by engaging with them in informal settings such as salons, Uber or taxis, and long-haul cross-border buses. This approach allowed us to attune to the nuances of their interactions and negotiations. The flexibility of

informal interviews proved invaluable in eliciting detailed insights without disrupting the daily livelihoods of migrants, many of whom work in the informal sector.

Originally, we planned to conduct 20 interviews, but due to the mobile nature of migrants and changing circumstances, we ended up with more. These informal interviews often led to impromptu focus group discussions (FGDs), as formal FGDs were challenging to organize given the migrants' mobility and busy schedules. Conversations frequently emerged spontaneously in crowded places like restaurants, barbershops, and salons, where participants were more at ease. With their consent, we recorded some of these discussions and transcribed the audio recordings verbatim. We then used an inductive approach to identify emerging themes and patterns in the data.

Throughout the research process, ethical considerations were paramount. We navigated the ethical terrain with care and sensitivity, ensuring that informed consent and confidentiality were upheld. Each author obtained ethical clearance from our respective universities, and our supervisors were aware of our pursuit of this study. We prioritized the autonomy and dignity of participants, safeguarding their identities and personal information. As a result, the names of respondents cited in this paper are pseudonyms, used to protect their privacy.

The Beitbridge border post emerged as a focal point of inquiry, where through shared stories, we accompanied migrants on their journeys to and from Zimbabwe, scrutinizing the ephemeral stamps adorning the owner's or proxy-held passports. Through immersive interviews and meticulous observations conducted "on the move," we unraveled the clandestine economies and strategies underpinning border crossings, from the exchange of illicit funds to the covert acquisition of counterfeit stamps. Using semi-structured interviews, we engaged participants in fluid conversations that traversed socio-demographic landscapes, probing into the intricacies of their occupational pursuits, living arrangements, and familial ties. We applied thematic analysis to discern emergent patterns and themes.

Demographic profile of study participants

The profile of study participants included a diverse range of Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa in terms of gender and age distribution, reflecting the gender and age dynamics of irregular migration from Zimbabwe. The duration of stay in South Africa also varied among participants, encompassing both recent arrivals and migrants with longer-term residency. The duration of stay of participants in South Africa ranged from several months to several years, enabling a comprehensive analysis of the experiences and challenges faced by Zimbabwean migrants at different stages of their migration journeys. The duration participants lived in South Africa revealed varying experiences and perspectives between those who had recently arrived compared to those who had been residing in South Africa for longer.

Another key aspect of the profile of study participants was their occupational pursuits in South Africa. The study uncovered a diverse range of occupations and work arrangements engaged in by the migrants. This encompassed formal and

informal sectors, including employment in construction, hospitality, domestic work, agriculture, and informal trading. Understanding the occupational pursuits of the participants provided insights into the economic circumstances and opportunities available to them, as well as the potential impact of passport-related challenges on their employment prospects. The study also explored the living arrangements and familial dynamics of the participants. This aspect revealed whether participants resided in solitary domiciles or cohabited with family members or other individuals. These demographic aspects of study participants (summarized in Table 1) provided a comprehensive foundation for analyzing the passport experiences of Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Study Participants

Participant Name	Gender	Age	Occupation	Location in SA	Duration of stay in SA
Brian	Male	37	Construction	Bloemfontein	5 years
Locadia	Female	34	Domestic worker	Johannesburg	3 years
Ranga	Male	27	Farm worker	Johannesburg	1 year
Ruth	Female	33	Domestic worker	Pretoria	4 years
Tafadzwa	Male	40	Vendor	Johannesburg	10 years
Chipo	Female	36	Vendor	Pretoria	4 years
Tinotenda	Male	28	Taxi driver	Cape Town	1 year
Vuyisile	Male	36	Construction	Bloemfontein	5 years
Mary	Female	29	Hairdresser	Bloemfontein	2 years
Tamia	Female	32	Hairdresser	Bloemfontein	4 years
Obey	Male	35	Cross-border bus owner and passport broker	Cape Town	7 years
Abby	Female	34	Domestic worker	Cape Town	5 years
Fred	Male	28	Self-employed	Cape Town	3 years
Given	Male	36	Dealer	Cape Town	8 years

Source: Authors' own work

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Participants' experiences in acquiring passports from the Zimbabwean authorities

Migrants in South Africa face significant challenges related to passport acquisition and the role of intermediaries, which impact their daily lives and well-being. Key issues include administrative delays, inefficiencies, and corruption within the Zimbabwean embassy system. Many migrants struggle with the online appointment

booking system, which is often inaccessible, and endure long wait times at passport offices, causing frustration. Corruption and exploitation by intermediaries, who promise expedited services for a fee, further complicate the process. While intermediaries can sometimes facilitate faster passport acquisition, they also risk fraud and exploitation, highlighting a dependence on informal networks as a result of bureaucratic inefficiencies.

High passport fees add to the financial burden, making it difficult for many migrants to afford the necessary documentation. This economic strain is compounded by the complex and expensive visa application processes in South Africa, which involve extensive paperwork and high costs, often leading to delays and difficulties in securing work or residence permits. The mistreatment of migrants by South African officials exacerbates their struggles, with reports of hostile and discriminatory behavior from officials, contributing to a hostile environment.

The reliance on intermediaries reflects a broader trend where migrants navigate bureaucratic hurdles through informal channels, sometimes facing both benefits and risks. This system's inefficiencies and the high costs associated with documentation affect migrants' mobility, access to services, and overall quality of life. The constant uncertainty and fear of deportation further strain their mental and emotional well-being. To address these issues, there is a need for a more streamlined, transparent, and equitable system for passport and visa processing, alongside efforts to mitigate the reliance on intermediaries and improve treatment by officials.

Administrative delays and the role of brokers/intermediaries

Migrants in this study shared varied experiences when acquiring passports from the Zimbabwean embassies in Pretoria and Cape Town. Some used brokers, while others followed the formal procedure. Participants lamented that they struggled to access the online application portal. This system, run by the Zimbabwean Consulate in South Africa, allows applicants to book appointment slots to collect passport forms, before submission at the Registrar General offices in Zimbabwe. Bookings are available only on Wednesdays at 4 pm, but many found the system "always" fully booked. Participants highlighted numerous challenges in the application process. These included long waiting times at passport offices, leading to frustration and delays in obtaining the necessary documentation. Ranga, a 27-year-old man working at a farm in Johannesburg, shared his frustration:

> Ugh, getting a passport in Zimbabwe was a total nightmare! Imagine standing in line for long, only to get to the front and they tell you to come back another day? It repeatedly happened, like some bad dream. It felt like I was stuck going in circles and never getting anywhere.

Apart from administrative issues and delays, participants also highlighted significant inefficiencies and instances of corruption in the passport issuance system.

Participants shared experiences of seeking assistance from individuals who claimed to have connections or knowledge of expedited processes. The role of intermediaries and brokers in facilitating passport acquisition was reiterated by the participants. While some found success through these intermediaries, others reported negative experiences, including cases of fraud or exploitation. This highlighted the existence of an informal network surrounding passport acquisition, which could both assist and exploit vulnerable individuals seeking passports. Tinotenda, a 28-year-old taxi driver in Pretoria, highlighted his experience:

> So, I was like, "forget this line" and decided to try this *marunners* (intermediaries) thing everyone was talking about to get my passport faster. Indeed, I got my passport quicker. But man, they charged a lot of money, and the whole time I could not help but worry they might be ripping me off or giving me some fake passport.

Accounts of intermediaries or brokers assisting migrants in obtaining new passports through embassies were frequently shared by participants. This phenomenon is not unique to our research. Scholars such as Jones et al. (2023) and Infantino (2023) note that intermediaries in migration can take various forms, including smugglers, brokers, employment/placement agencies, coyotes, village heads, teachers, and travel agencies. These intermediaries may be companies or individuals, legally registered entities paying taxes (e.g., employment agencies facilitating international recruitment), or they may have no legal standing, being considered "undocumented" under existing legal frameworks (e.g., brokers, smugglers). Migrants in our study often used different terms for these intermediaries depending on the context, such as *madealer* (dealers), *marunner*, making it challenging to develop a clear operational definition of intermediaries. It is also crucial to consider who is using the term and in what context. In this context, nimble-footedness plays a crucial role, enabling Obey – a prominent Zimbabwean runner residing in Cape Town, to forge social networks with embassy officials, thereby fostering conviviality. Subsequently, *hushamwari* enhances these networks by cultivating trust and support essential for migrants to navigate the complexities of acquiring a passport. Fred, a self-employed resident of Kraaifontein in Cape Town, shared his experiences working with Obey. Obey, operates various businesses, including cross-border buses and food trucks, and serves as a runner and dealer. As a dealer, Obey assists individuals in Cape Town to obtain passports without needing to return to Zimbabwe. He has established connections in the Zimbabwean embassy in Cape Town, leveraging these connections to help people bypass the lengthy waiting period typically associated with embassy appointment bookings.

Booking an appointment online to apply for a passport at the Zimbabwean embassy in Cape Town can entail a waiting period of three months or even longer. Obey's expertise lies in facilitating appointment bookings for individuals, allowing them to avoid this prolonged waiting period. During our research, one of the authors

had the opportunity to speak with Fred, who shared his personal experience of being assisted by Obey. Fred narrated:

> I met Obey through my cousin, who knew him through her friend. Obey charged me ZAR800 (approximately US$50) for assistance in getting a passport quickly. He promised to speed up the process and avoid the long wait. After I paid him, he arranged for me to go to the embassy the next day. Upon arrival, I called Obey who told me to meet someone in a BMW car parked a few meters from the consulate. This person asked for my birth certificate and Zimbabwean ID, made copies, and gave them back to me along with a note in Shona saying, "*ndatumwa na Obey*" (Obey sent me). Then, I showed the note to the security guard at the embassy gate, and he let me in. Inside, one employee at the embassy helped me to skip the line and complete my passport application. After the officials signed and stamped my forms, they told me to send them to Zimbabwe for processing. I gave the forms to Obey's contact in the BMW. Two weeks later, Obey told me my documents were on their way, and soon after, I got my new passport.

To corroborate Fred's story, one of our authors went further to ask Fred's cousin whom he said connected him to Obey. His cousin, Abby, echoed the same sentiments about Obey – she went through the same process, as outlined by Fred. Participants sought Obey's assistance because of the recent changes in South African immigration policy, notably the stricter requirements imposed by the Border Management Authority (BMA) Act (Engel, 2024). Enacted in 2020, the BMA centralized all border functions under the DHA, establishing a single authority to manage the entire border environment. This policy shift has heightened the risk of deportation for many Zimbabwean residents, especially since early 2024. As a result, most participants have expressed doubt about the Zimbabwean authorities' ability to meet the year-end deadline for processing passport applications necessary for South African residency permits. Consequently, they turned to Obey as a trusted intermediary to expedite the passport application process. This aligns with Fernandez's (2013) observations on the growing importance of intermediaries in facilitating transnational migration, reflecting their increasing global influence.

A recurring theme emerged in digging deeper: the critical importance of valid Zimbabwean passports. As Vanyoro (2023) observes, obtaining new passports presents a significant hurdle for undocumented Zimbabweans, regardless of their migratory status (labor or asylum seeker). The process is often fraught with delays, creating an atmosphere of uncertainty and precarity that significantly impacts their aspirations and life trajectories (Vanyoro, 2023). Alongside the numerous accounts shared by participants who have benefited from Obey's assistance and other intermediaries, one of the authors interviewed Obey directly. When asked about his passport-related business, he responded:

> I help a lot of people. What Abby and Fred have told you is true: Abby also refers many clients to me. I work with people inside the embassy and also, I have people outside. You will never find me near the embassy. I work with a team; it is a company, if I may put it that way. I also have a cross-border bus. It also carries both documented and undocumented passengers. I help them acquire passports and the bus also helps in transporting not only immigrant passengers but also passport application documents and processed passports from Zimbabwe.

Several participants in this study confirmed receiving help from Obey and other similar intermediaries. This growing reliance on intermediaries can be attributed to the increasingly complex issue of immigration regulations and persistent delays in the Zimbabwean passport and South African visa issuing systems. These bureaucratic hurdles make it exceptionally difficult for migrants to navigate the process and acquire essential documents efficiently. In this context, Jones et al. (2023) argue that in many societies, migration without the assistance of intermediaries – including friends, family, recruiters, travel agents, and "smugglers" – is virtually impossible. Here, we observe the nimble-footed strategies of migrants, paralleling the concept elucidated by Nyamnjoh (2013) in his discussion of the Mbororo Fulani. Nyamnjoh (2013) introduces the concept of "nimble-footedness" through his study of the Mbororo Fulani in the Western Grassfields of Cameroon. These communities navigate complex postcolonial politics involving borders and boundaries, where juridico-political citizenship is often contested by local and regional claims of autochthony. In our study, we adapt this concept to describe how migrants develop the ability and agility to navigate and negotiate the challenges and opportunities involved in acquiring and maintaining passports. Just as the Mbororo Fulani adeptly maneuver through political dynamics and citizenship issues, migrants learn to engage with intermediaries effectively. They skillfully leverage relationships and negotiations to overcome bureaucratic hurdles, ensuring their ability to obtain passports or visas and secure their ongoing survival.

Brokerage is thus viewed as a normalized and entirely legitimate practice for navigating many aspects of everyday life. Although the involvement of intermediaries in migration is not new, the nature of their roles has dramatically transformed over the past 50 years (Fernandez, 2013; Jones et al., 2023). Currently, intermediaries are significant actors, influencing how migration occurs, shaping migrants' experiences, and affecting developmental outcomes. From migrants' perspectives, intermediaries make mobility possible in a world where immobility is often the norm. Fernandez's (2013) analysis – employing a decentered approach to regulation – elucidates the role of intermediaries in the migration process. This perspective challenges the notion of exclusive governmental control over regulation, highlighting the interconnectedness of various social actors in shaping regulatory realities.

While many participants recounted positive experiences with intermediaries at embassies, a contrasting perspective emerged from Locadia, a 34-year-old domestic worker in Johannesburg. She traveled to the Beitbridge border post solely for a passport stamp renewal. She recounted using connections, or intermediaries, to expedite the process. She expressed frustration with the inherent inequality in the system, where access to such assistance appears contingent on personal connections. As Locadia stated, "It bothered me that not everyone had equal access to such assistance. It should be a fair and transparent process for everyone." Locadia's experience reveals the potential for exploitation within the system, highlighting the ethical considerations surrounding the reliance on intermediaries. Further research is needed to explore the broader dynamics of this phenomenon, including the potential impact on vulnerable populations in the migrant community.

Within the framework of Zimbabwean migration, as exemplified by the narratives and experiences shared by the participating migrants in this study, intermediaries can be categorized into two main groups: unlicensed brokers and individuals in the social networks of potential migrants, such as relatives or friends. The various strategies and approaches employed by these intermediaries, as demonstrated earlier, highlight the crucial interconnections among the participants in these networks (Jones and Sha, 2020). Additionally, these observations emphasize the inherent challenges in regulating these intermediaries, given that a significant portion of their activities often bypasses or directly challenges the established Zimbabwean regulatory framework, rather than adhering to it.

In addition to the challenges and delays associated with booking appointments for visa applications at embassies, there was also significant concern among most study participants regarding the steep fees for obtaining a Zimbabwean passport. They expressed deep dissatisfaction with the high costs associated with passport applications. The Government of Zimbabwe implemented a passport fee increase, resulting in the standard passport fee rising from US$60 for a three-day passport to US$150 plus $20 application fee, while an emergency 24-hour passport remained priced at US$250 plus $20 application fee. Many participants voiced their desire for the Zimbabwean government to reconsider these passport prices. They lamented that the amount is a financial burden not easily manageable for many Zimbabweans who aspire to cross the border, as many were struggling to raise the required US$170. Mary, a 29-year-old hairdresser from Bloemfontein, shared her experience:

> As someone with limited financial resources, it was an enormous challenge to afford such a high amount. I had to make significant sacrifices and save money for months just to be able to pay for the passport.

Adding to the formidable challenges associated with obtaining passports, participants in the study highlighted significant difficulties in securing work or resident permits (officially known as visas). They outlined a comprehensive array of obstacles

encountered in fulfilling the stringent criteria established by the South African DHA. These authorities encompass the Visa Facilitation Services (VFS) – a private entity appointed by the South African embassy to process visa applications through the DHA. Notably, participants emphasized the onerous paperwork requirements, expressing dismay over the convoluted process of submitting the necessary documents.

Furthermore, the exorbitant fees levied by the visa authorities emerged as a substantial financial burden. These costs compelled participants to prioritize visa application expenses over other essential expenditures. Vuyisile, a 36-year-old construction worker residing in Bloemfontein, exemplifies this challenge. He described the process of obtaining a visa as a "long, winding, and arduous" experience. The sheer volume of paperwork required for the application was overwhelming. He elaborated on the various prerequisites, including birth certificates, proof of residency, and letters of recommendation, highlighting the impossibility of securing a visa without all these documents. Collecting all necessary documents took Vuyisile several weeks. Additionally, processing delays compounded the frustration, as the VFS office reportedly handled many applications. His case exemplifies the months-long wait often endured by applicants. This arduous process showcases the "horrendous journey" migrants traverse to legitimize their stay in South Africa. Such bureaucratic complexities often drive individuals toward irregular migration strategies, potentially resorting to illegitimate methods to secure residency. The research suggests a need for a more streamlined and accessible visa application process in South Africa, addressing the financial burdens and bureaucratic hurdles faced by Zimbabwean migrants.

Getting to grips with officialdom

Beyond the stringent eligibility requirements and financial burdens of visa applications, participants highlighted the harsh treatment by South African officials at the DHA and VFS offices. Chabal (2009) describes this as "calculated violence," where government and state officials deliberately neglect their duties. Tawodzera (2014) likens these officials to "frontier guards" whose mission is to keep migrants out, violating constitutional rights and professional ethics. Ruth, a 33-year-old domestic worker in Pretoria, shared her upsetting experience with rude and dismissive visa officials during her passport renewal in Zimbabwe. She recalled, "the visa officials were disrespectful and made derogatory remarks toward applicants, adding to the distress of an already difficult process." Similarly, Tamia, a 32-year-old hairdresser in Bloemfontein, faced significant bureaucratic obstacles in gathering the necessary documentation for her visa application. She noted, "Each submission was met with more requirements, causing frustration and exhaustion. The repeated bureaucratic hurdles were both vexing and draining." Moreover, many participants expressed frustration over repeated failures to obtain passports, severely limiting their mobility and opportunities for advancement.

In response to the challenges and predicaments faced by migrants when trying to obtain work and residence permits, many have resorted to using ephemeral stamps to remain in South Africa. This approach aligns with what Mutendi and Chekero (2023) describe as the "nimble-footed migrant" in their study on migrant mobility during the COVID-19 lockdown. Another participant, Brian, exemplifies this concept, relying on ephemeral stamps to extend his stay in South Africa after being unable to secure a work visa. He recounted:

> I've been able to survive because of these temporary stamps. Every time my stay is about to expire, I get another stamp that lets me stay a bit longer. I know it's not a permanent solution, but it's what keeps me going for now. Without these stamps, I wouldn't be able to stay here or take care of my family. They're the only thing that's allowing me to keep everything together.

The process of obtaining passports and visas for Zimbabwean migrants is complex and multifaceted. Challenges such as lengthy waiting periods, extensive paperwork, and high fees create significant barriers that impede migrants' mobility and access to essential services. Scalabrini (2024) echoes these challenges, highlighting societal tensions surrounding migration. The report suggests unsupported claims, such as migrants harming the South African economy and taking jobs from citizens. These sentiments reflect the perceived insufficiency of resources in South Africa to accommodate non-citizens. See also, Kariithi (2017), Banda and Mawadza (2015), Mawadza (2012), Danso and McDonald (2001) for a detailed characterization of migrants by the state and other actors in South Africa) Migrants in our study corroborated these claims, noting that such societal tensions and economic fears often result in prolonged delays in the visa application process. This has led many to turn to intermediaries and brokers for assistance. The involvement of these intermediaries yields two distinct outcomes. First, intermediaries can effectively assist individuals in obtaining passports, leading to success stories. Second, their involvement can complicate the process, resulting in mixed outcomes reported by participants. The disparities in success rates among participants in securing passports and visas highlight the unequal impact of administrative procedures on migration experiences.

Intermediaries, often organized through informal social networks, play a crucial role in facilitating the acquisition of passports for many Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa. As Jones et al. (2023) note, contemporary international migration patterns would not occur without migration intermediaries. As noted by Spener (2009), in Mexico, migrants seek help from coyotes to start the migration process; in Eritrea, from *delaloch* (Ayalew, 2018); in West Africa, would-be migrants speak of lines, connections, and *dokimen* (Alpes 2017); in Asia, Syrians may refer to *muharrib* and *hajj* (Achilli, 2018); in Bangladesh and Nepal, to *dalals* (Rahman, 2012). In all these places, engaging with one or more intermediaries to assist with migration projects is a highly normalized and entirely legitimate practice (Jones et

al., 2023). The dependence of migrants on intermediaries is not new. Friends and kinship networks have long been recognized as pivotal in helping migrants organize their journeys, find jobs and homes, and establish friendships and civic structures (Jones et al., 2023). As exemplified by several migrants interviewed, expediting the passport acquisition process often relies on intermediaries with established connections to family members and friends who have prior experience navigating this complex process.

Zimbabwean migrants navigating precarious mobility through nimble-footedness and conviviality

Our ethnographic exploration reveals the complex interplay between migrants' passport experiences, border dynamics, and regulatory frameworks, providing nuanced insights into the complexities of mobility and legal status at the Beitbridge border post. In understanding such a multifaceted interplay, we embraced the concepts of nimble-footedness and conviviality. As we have shown, nimble-footedness encompasses migrants' ability to interpret and respond to the actions and expectations of border officials and intermediaries as well as to adjust their strategies based on the prevailing legal framework. Migrants must possess an understanding of when, where, and how to move, or conversely, when not to move (Mbembe, 2017; Mutendi and Chekero, 2023). They employ intermediaries and engage in bribes to ensure their continued crossings into South Africa.

As the study has demonstrated, they also establish networks with fellow migrants, immigration officials, border patrol agents, and residents (Nyamnjoh, 2013) to facilitate these crossings. However, it is not a matter of indiscriminately forming connections or networks; migrants must exhibit a sharp sense of discernment in these interactions (Morreira, 2020) lest they get arrested. To evade the risks of arrest, detention, or deportation, they must make informed decisions about whom to form relationships with – they must display nimble-footedness. In this context, cultivating appropriate social networks becomes imperative for facilitating successful border crossings.

The findings also revealed that regardless of the challenging passport experiences faced by Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa, they engage in various nimble-footed ways to secure their way in South Africa. One notable example is that a migrant can have their passport stamped at the exit when departing. For example, an enterprising woman, Abby, learned strategies that enabled her to avoid having to cross the border monthly to renew her status as a visitor to South Africa. In conversations with other women at the border gate who were also traveling to South Africa, she learned that she should first have her passport stamped at the exit as departing the country, only to sneak back in before actually crossing South Africa's borders, thus without any visa. The bustling activity and restlessness at the border post would assist her in doing this. Migrants used different ways and means of entering South Africa: some used work and residence visas, others bribed immigration officers,

and yet others entered unnoticed, "cloaked" in the same way as Abby. Once Abby's passport was stamped with "Departure," the South African system recorded that she had returned to Zimbabwe, while she was in fact in South Africa. In this manner, she became an undocumented migrant with a passport but an invalid presence in South Africa according to the 2004 Immigration Act of South Africa.

The recent amendments to the Immigration Act, 2002 (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 2024), reflect a judicial response to procedural shortcomings in the detention and deportation of illegal foreigners, as previously critiqued by the Constitutional Court. These revisions mandate that detainees be presented before a court within 48 hours of arrest, where the court must evaluate whether continued detention aligns with the principles of justice, and ensures that detainees are informed of their rights and afforded the chance to make representations. However, a recent pronouncement by the newly appointed Minister of Home Affairs, Dr Leon Schreiber MP, which imposes a six-month sentence and subsequent deportation for those found without proper documentation, introduces a new layer of complexity to migrants' experiences. This pronouncement, regardless of its constitutional validity, significantly impacts how migrants perceive and navigate their legal status and daily lives, particularly concerning the acquisition of passports and visas.

The case of Abby, who is documented but deemed unlawfully present due to procedural constraints, exemplifies the broader vulnerabilities faced by Zimbabwean migrants. Our study explores the adaptive strategies employed by migrants like Abby, who, under increasing pressure to obtain valid documentation, engage in various forms of improvisation to avoid harsh penalties and exclusion from the immigration system. The amendments thus exacerbate the urgency for migrants to secure passports to avoid punitive measures, highlighting the intersection of legal reforms and everyday survival strategies in migration contexts.

Migrants without work or residence visas often rely on temporary visitor visas, usually valid for 90 days. However, these rights to cross borders and enter host countries, as highlighted by Mbembe (2017), are increasingly regulated, subject to suspension or revocation at the whim of authorities, contributing to a tightening of immigration control measures. Despite the increasing movement of migrants, South Africa's migration policies have persistently excluded Zimbabwean migrants, leaving them with limited livelihood opportunities (Northcote, 2015). This trend toward stricter policies is evident in South Africa, despite its history of facilitating immigration. For instance, migrants often receive entry visas for shorter durations than the entitlement of 90 days, posing challenges in securing employment and supporting families back home. In response, migrants demonstrate nimbleness, adapting to these restrictive regulations.

Drawing on Nyamnjoh's (2013, 2015, 2019) insights into nimble-footedness, migrants quickly learn to navigate bureaucratic hurdles by engaging with brokers, immigration officials, police, and bus operators. For example, when seeking to extend their stay, migrants may strategically choose border posts like Beitbridge, known

for granting longer durations compared to others. Brian, residing in Bloemfontein, recounted his journey to Beitbridge after receiving only a seven-day extension at the Lesotho–Maseru border. Mary similarly relied on informal convivial networks to obtain passport stamps, highlighting the necessity of intermediaries in ensuring safety in South Africa.

Ranga's experience revealed the dependence on informal arrangements, such as paying bus drivers for visa extensions, a practice observed by Chekero (2023) as part of the "Vaya Vaya" culture—moving swiftly and adaptively amid legal constraints. Despite the risks, migrants prioritize livelihood sustenance over legal documentation because of the disruptive impact of enforcement measures, as observed by Moyo (2022). Our findings demonstrate the imperative for migrants to cultivate convivial networks, as articulated by Chekero (2023), which enable survival amid passport-related challenges. This resilience reflects a broader phenomenon of adaptability, where individuals maneuver within abnormal environments to normalize their circumstances.

The Beitbridge border post, cushioned between Zimbabwe and South Africa, emerges as a pivotal junction for Zimbabwean migrants embarking on journeys to and from South Africa. Our ethnographic engagement with migrants during their border crossings provided rich insights into passport-related practices and interactions with border officials. Through keen observation and in-depth interviews, we uncovered intriguing dynamics surrounding passport usage, the issuance of ephemeral stamps, and attempts to circumvent border regulations. A notable observation at the border was the announcement by bus conductors, delineating different categories of passport holders: those needing stamps, overstayers, holders of phased-out passports, and those without passports. This categorization reflected the diverse passport-related scenarios encountered by migrants navigating the border crossing.

This study sheds light on the significance of ephemeral stamps, and temporary endorsements granted to individuals for limited stays – typically three months – in the host country. These stamps serve as a provisional measure for migrants lacking valid passports or facing renewal challenges. While offering temporary relief, they also amplify the precariousness of migrants' legal status, necessitating prompt departure before expiration to avoid legal complications. Brian's account exemplified this, as he received a three-month ephemeral stamp but had to plan his exit before expiry to maintain legal compliance. Ephemeral stamps entail specific requirements for temporary stays, obliging migrants to adhere to stipulated durations and depart within the allotted timeframe. Chipo's narrative revealed the consequences of exceeding the three-month limit, which could entail penalties such as passport damage, bribery, or deportation orders. Tinotenda's testimony highlighted the complexities and risks associated with navigating the passport system through informal channels, emphasizing the punitive measures imposed on non-compliant migrants.

The stories of migrants shared above showcase the ingenuity, resourcefulness, and nimble-footedness of individuals in navigating the complex system. They also

highlight the vulnerabilities and risks associated with such practices. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that borders are experienced differently by migrants seeking to enter and exit South Africa. Convivial social networks play a pivotal role in shaping how individuals encounter these borders, and *hushamwari* in deepening our understanding of migrants' strategic navigation of life in South Africa through their responses, practices, and social encounters. They give rise to disparities in the enjoyment of rights and access to basic services, often excluding migrants from full participation in society, complete with responsibilities and proportionate liabilities in the event of any wrongdoing (Landau, 2014; Landau and Wanjiku, 2018; Landau, 2020; Misago and Landau, 2022). Even something as basic as using public spaces or simply moving about can be a challenging experience for migrants, particularly when they lack work or residence visas and have limited days on their entry visa. In response to these constraints, migrants devise strategies to challenge borders, hence the concept of nimble-footedness. According to Erving Goffman (1959), migrants' actions result in practices where visibility and invisibility become strategic choices they must adopt to adapt to the South African reality. These strategies may also enable them to exploit the state's ambivalence toward migration. Drawing on the insights of French philosopher Michel de Certeau (1984), in such situations, migrants develop tactics that are contingent on time, necessitating constant vigilance for opportunities that must be seized. Consequently, these tactics and methods for challenging borders assume a fundamental role in the lives of migrants. By integrating the concepts of nimble-footedness, conviviality, and *hushamwari*, we provide a comprehensive analysis of Zimbabwean migrants' experiences in obtaining passports in South Africa. Through their adept strategies and convivial practices, these migrants exhibit resilience and agency in the face of precarious conditions and irregular migration.

CONCLUSION

This ethnographic foray into the liminal space of the South African border post exposes a complex social choreography. Here, passport experiences, imbued with frustration and precarity, intertwine with the dynamics of the border itself, heavily influenced by restrictive immigration policies. We move beyond documentation of these experiences to analyze the interplay between passports and the embodied realities of Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa. Formal application processes for passports transform into complex obstacles, particularly for those lacking digital literacy or Internet access. This paves the way for a shadow economy, with intermediaries and brokers acting as both facilitators and potential exploiters. This highlights the urgent need for streamlined accessible passport issuance systems alongside robust anti-corruption measures.

At the heart of migrants' negotiation of this sophisticated landscape lie two pivotal strategies: nimble-footedness and conviviality. Nimble-footedness extends beyond mere physical agility, emerging as a defining characteristic for these migrants. They adeptly navigate the bureaucratic terrain, decoding the actions and

expectations of border officials. This array of strategies encompasses a spectrum of actions, from forging social networks with diverse actors within the border space (Nyamnjoh, 2013) to resorting to "illegal" pathways and bribery (Mutendi and Chekero, 2023). This continual negotiation with the boundaries of legality highlights the precariousness of their existence. The concept of precarity equates to what Nyamnjoh (2022) terms incompleteness, becomes salient in this context. According to Nyamnjoh (2015), the human condition is characterized by "incompleteness." He argues that conviviality serves as a more effective strategy for "frontier Africans" to enhance themselves and foster better relationships and sociality (Nyamnjoh, 2015: 1) than emphasizing differences. Nyamnjoh's core argument posits that everything in the world and life possesses a degree of incompleteness: nature, the supernatural, humans, and human action and achievement. Recognizing and embracing this inherent incompleteness constitutes a crucial aspect of conviviality. As advocated by Nyamnjoh (2017), Nowicka and Heil (2015), and Nowicka and Vertovec (2014), conviviality – the cultivation of supportive social networks – emerges as a survival strategy. Abby's narrative exemplifies this concept, as her manipulation of passport stamps demonstrates the resourcefulness and vulnerability intrinsic to such tactics. These informal networks serve as a lifeline within a system structured to exclude.

Our research lays bare the exclusionary nature of South African immigration policies (Lefko-Everett, 2007). Limited access to work visas forces dependence on temporary visas, with authorities tightening control measures (Mbembe, 2017). This translates to shorter visa durations, hindering employment opportunities. Migrants then navigate this landscape by strategically choosing border posts known for leniency, using informal networks for acquiring passport stamps, and relying on practices like "Vaya Vaya" extensions (Chekero, 2023) – all testaments to their "swift and adaptive" responses to legal constraints.

Despite the inherent risks, securing a livelihood often takes precedence over legal documentation. This prioritization demonstrates the migrants' agency and their constant challenge of the borders that seek to constrain them (Landau, 2014). However, these experiences are far from uniform. Social networks significantly shape encounters with the border, leading to disparities in access to basic rights and services (Misago and Landau, 2022). Those lacking visas face constant hurdles in navigating public spaces and basic movement. While this study hails the ingenuity and resourcefulness of Zimbabwean migrants, it is crucial to move beyond mere admiration. Their strategies expose the vulnerabilities inherent in the current system. Understanding nimble-footedness and conviviality is a critical step toward crafting policies that acknowledge the realities of migrant experiences. Only then can we move toward a more just and inclusive society at the border and beyond.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To improve the experiences of Zimbabwean migrants, it is crucial to streamline administrative processes by enhancing the efficiency of online passport appointment

systems and increasing staff and resources at passport offices to ensure timely application processing. Additionally, implementing regulations to oversee intermediaries and brokers can prevent exploitation and fraud, while educating migrants about legitimate application channels will help reduce reliance on these intermediaries. Strengthening anti-corruption measures within embassy and consular services, and ensuring transparency in passport and visa processes, are essential for addressing inefficiencies and unethical practices. Advocating for reduced passport fees will alleviate financial burdens, and training officials to handle migrants respectfully, alongside establishing robust complaint mechanisms, will improve treatment. Developing support services to assist with bureaucratic challenges and fostering community networks for guidance will aid in migrants' legal and social integration. Further research on intermediary use and policy advocacy will inform necessary reforms, moving us toward a more just and inclusive society at the border and beyond.

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Curate's Egg: Effects of Parental Migration on Well-Being of Zimbabwean Children Left Behind

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Abstract

Zimbabwe has a long history of labor migration to Global North nations such as Britain and the United States of America, as well as to several Global South countries like South Africa and Botswana. This migration has seen a surge in remittances, spurring the crafting of policies and strategies to tap into this economic window for national development. While parental migration may be bringing economic relief to the nation and households left behind, it has often been associated with numerous challenges, particularly in the well-being of children left behind. In exploring challenges faced by children whose parents live and work abroad, a growing body of literature has emerged. This study reviews studies carried out in Zimbabwe on the effects of parental migration on the well-being of children left behind. It used a systematic literature review (SLR) methodology for primary studies deposited in three electronic libraries and downloaded by 31 December 2023. The purpose of the SLR is to develop a basis for empirical research, since this is a new study area in the country. It is anticipated that the study will contribute to the discourse on parental migration and its effects on development and nurturance practices of children left behind. Overall, the study asserts that there are both positive and negative effects of parental migration on children left behind; hence, the phenomenon is regarded as a curate's egg.

Keywords: children left behind, parental migration, well-being, positive effects, negative effects

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INTRODUCTION

One of the largest global sources of migrants, Philippines, is estimated to have nearly nine million children growing up without at least one of their parents due to migration (Dominguez and Hall, 2022). Similarly, Indonesia, a significant contributor to the international migrant workforce, is estimated to have more than four million migrants employed in more than 25 countries globally (BPS Indonesia, 2022). This figure is anticipated to rise steadily, given the clear increase in the annual migration of Indonesians rising from 72,624 in 2020 to 200,761 in 2022 and 274,964 in 2023 (BP2MI, 2023). Studies carried out in Latin America and the Caribbean show that about 21% of children are living without one or both parents because of migration to America, Europe, and other countries within the region (Marcus et al., 2023). A study carried out in Venezuela, reveals that 15% of adults migrating in 2020 reported leaving a child behind (Marcus et al., 2023). Studies in Venezuela have also shown that when one or both parents move, they leave their children either with grandparents (51%) or with their mothers (41%), while fewer children remain under the care of uncles and aunts (10%) or older siblings (2%) (Marcus et al., 2023). These figures imply that thousands of children are left behind to be cared for by either one parent or other caregivers.

While it is accepted that migration is a global phenomenon contributing to poverty reduction and economic development (Chamie, 2020), there has been serious concern over its effects on children left behind (Vilar-Compte et al., 2021; Chingwe, 2022; Chingwe and Chakanyuka, 2023a, 2023b; Marcus et al., 2023). Such a worry is reasonable seeing that these migrations usually imply family disintegration, whose effects may be detrimental to the well-being of those left behind. Studies conducted across the globe to ascertain the effects of parental migration on children left behind have produced mixed results with some revealing either negative or positive effects, while others note both negative and positive effects, or in other cases very little or no effects altogether (Cebotari and Bilisuma, 2021; Tesfaw and Minaye, 2022; Marcus et al., 2023; Crawley and Teye, 2024).

Zimbabwe has a long history of migration dating as far back as the 1850s (Crush and Tawodzera, 2016). Political and economic developments such as the Nguni incursions, discovery of diamonds and gold in South Africa in the late-nineteenth century saw a great trek of Zimbabweans into South Africa to work on the newly found mines (Mlambo, 2010). The nature of labor contracts and accommodation given to migrant mine workers in South Africa during this time, restricted them to migrate without families, thus promoting the mushrooming of left-behind households. Furthermore, at the turn of the millennium, Zimbabwe experienced economic deterioration, which sent millions of citizens across the globe (Madebwe and Madebwe, 2017), creating a heightened population of children left behind. Unfortunately, it has been difficult for scholars to establish the exact figures of citizens who have migrated and children who have been left behind, due to lack of

sufficient and credible data; studies on migration have often focused more on adults than on children (Asis and Feranil, 2020).

Although Zimbabwe has had a long history of migration, until recently, little research has been done to uncover its effects on children left behind. Lack of research on this matter implies that few – if any – policies have been developed to manage possible consequences of such movements on children left behind. It is not until recently that interest in this study area has gained momentum. As observed by Auer and Felderer (2018), as a research area matures, it requires researchers to analyze and synthesize findings to draw deeper and more meaningful conclusions. One way of doing this is through systematic literature reviews. It is the purpose of this paper to analyze and synthesize studies conducted so far in Zimbabwe on the effects of parental migration on children left behind with the aim of informing policy-making processes and improving childcare practices.

To help comprehend the effects of parental migration on children left behind, the study adopted the child-rights conceptual framework. The current research embraces a child-rights oriented conceptual framework. The child-rights framework is hinged on the premise that an inclusive analysis of children's well-being focuses on four variables namely, health, education, economic activity, and psycho-social variables (UNICEF, 1989). Furthermore, it avows that the well-being of children left behind are influenced by several factors, such as individual uniqueness (for example, age of the child, their sex, and competencies), the nature of migration (for example, who migrates, predictability, and level of remittances), household and societal attributes (for example, societal values, social protection, and legal provisions) (Chingwe and Chakanyuka, 2023a, 2023b).

Study question

What effects does parental migration have on the well-being of children left behind in Zimbabwe?

Study objectives

- To examine the effects of parental migration on the well-being of children left behind in Zimbabwe.
- To recommend ways of improving care practices for children left behind in Zimbabwe.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researchers adopted a systematic literature review (SLR) approach to carry out this study effectively. A review gains the adjective "systematic" if it is based on a clearly formulated question, identifies relevant studies, assesses the quality of the studies, and summarizes the evidence gathered using an explicit methodology. While scholars propose several different steps in carrying out SLRs, this study considered

three steps namely, planning the review, the review itself and reporting (Khan et al., 2003, Siddaway et al., 2019).

Planning the review

Whereas Siddaway et al. (2019) recommend the search of at least two electronic databases for primary sources, Khan et al. (2003) add that this search should be as extensive as possible. Furthermore, Khan et al. (2003) opine that an extensive search for studies should include both computerized and printed sources with no restrictions on language. Informed by these and many other scholars, researchers in the current study selected three electronic libraries from which the search for potential studies was made. These libraries are: Academia – https://www.academia.edu/, Google scholar – https://scholar.google.com, and Taylor and Francis – https://www.tandfonline.com/. In addition to the electronic search and in attempting to reduce publication bias, researchers with one or more publications on the topic were contacted for any forthcoming data or unpublished work that could be of interest to this study (Ferguson and Brannick, 2012). Google scholar was also used to search for relevant unpublished dissertations.

Having identified the digital libraries, researchers developed search strings, which helped to facilitate the searches. Taking into consideration tips from Shafiq et al. (2020) and Parveen et al. (2022), the researchers used "AND" and "OR" Boolean search operators to formulate search strings as follows: (effects OR impact, experiences, OR challenges) AND (children left behind OR adolescents left behind, OR boy children left behind OR girl children left behind) AND (labor migration OR parental migration, migrant parents, OR absent parents).

In addition, to clearly defining boundaries of the review, researchers formulated criteria to include and exclude selected primary studies before the search commenced (Siddaway et al., 2019). The inclusion and exclusion criteria were adapted and blended from those of Akbar et al. (2019) and Siddaway et al. (2019). The criteria for inclusion in this SLR were: First, studies must be a conference paper, journal article, or book chapter. Second, studies must describe the effects of parental migration on children left behind, provide empirical investigations (for instance, interview [IR], questionnaire survey [QS], case study [CS], grounded theory [GT], content analysis [CA], action research [AR], and mixed methods research [MMRs]). Third, studies must have been carried out in Zimbabwe between 2010 and 2023 with children as part of their samples. Lastly, unpublished studies must be dissertations or articles written by authors who have one or more published articles on the same topic. Where two or more studies have similar findings, the most updated published version was adopted.

The final step in the planning phase involved carrying out quality assessment (QA). Although a wide range of tools are proposed for assessing study quality, this study considered the recommendations by Kitchenham and Charters (2007). QA criteria guided the evaluation of the significance of each primary study when the

results were integrated (Akbar et al., 2019). Moreover, QA enabled the clarification of findings leading to the drawing of recommendations for future inquiries. For this purpose, researchers generated a checklist to evaluate selected primary studies. The checklist had four questions (QA^1 to QA^4). Correspondingly, the score 1 was assigned to a study that provided an acceptable answer for the listed categories, while 0.5 was allocated to a study that partially met the requirements of a category on the checklist. Lastly, where a study's answer to the category on the checklist failed to meet the requirements, it was given a score of 0. For each question, the assessment was made, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Quality assessment checklist

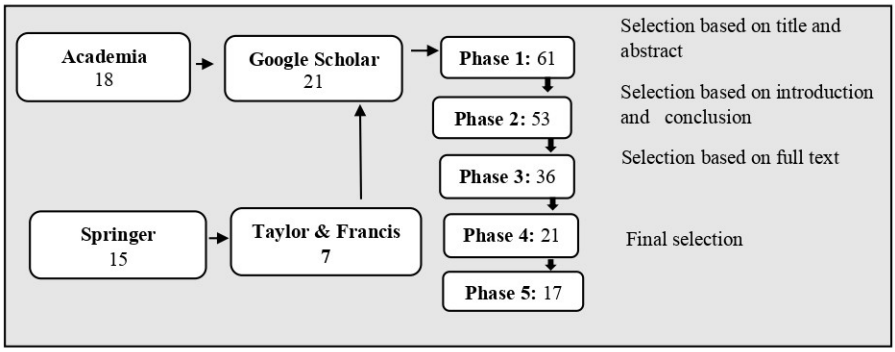
QA Questions	Checklist questions
QA^1	Does the adopted research method(s) link with research questions?
QA^2	Does the study explore effects of parental migration on children left behind?
QA^3	Do the empirical data inform childcare practices?
QA^4	Are the findings related to a justification of the research questions?

Source: Author's own work

The review

Carrying out the review involved three steps, namely, running the final selection of primary studies, extracting data, and synthesizing the data. To enhance the quality and enable data extraction, studies went through a final selection process using the tollgate approach. Results of the final selection were presented using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses method (PRISMA), as shown in Figure 1. The preliminary search done on the four selected digital libraries, using search strings, inclusion and exclusion criteria generated 61 studies. Of these, the research team chose 17 primary studies – equivalent to 27.9% of the total collected studies – to answer the study's research question through the tollgate approach. In this process, the first author extracted 17 final primary studies, the second and third authors diligently reviewed studies that made it to the final list, while the fourth author allocated quality scores guided by the QA criteria. The 17 chosen studies were sufficient for a literature review process, as affirmed by Astadi et al. (2022). The list of selected studies is provided in Appendix A.

Figure 1:



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After carrying out the final selection of primary sources, researchers proceeded with data extraction, which was followed by an interrater reliability analysis (Parveen et al., 2022). An external reviewer was invited to carry out the interrater reliability analysis using a non-parametric Kendall coefficient test of concordance (W) to check interrater agreement between the authors and an external reviewer. The latter randomly picked 10 studies from the first phase of the tollgate approach and performed all steps involved, as shown in Figure 1. To show total disagreement, the value of W=0 was used, whereas to show total agreement, the value of W=1 was used. Results of the interrater reliability test for 10 randomly selected studies was W=.860, indicating substantial agreement between the authors and the external reviewer.

The last step involved data synthesis. This involved extracting the effects of parental migration on the well-being of children left behind from the selected 17 studies in line with the research question formulated at the beginning of the study. The research team combined and interpreted the collected data to allow for the presentation of findings in the section below.

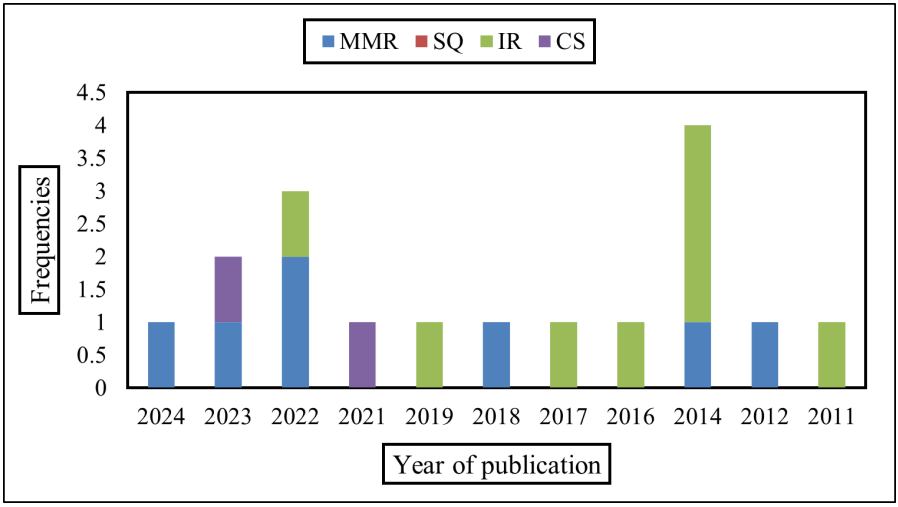
Reporting the review

The review report focuses on key areas like quality attributes, temporal distribution, research methods used, distribution by location, children's ages, and gender of the children sampled. To determine the quality attributes of the studies, the research team used four QA questions shown in Table 1 and analyzed QA scores for each primary study. Interestingly, the bulk of the selected studies attained QA scores ≥75%. These scores imply that studies in the final selection can significantly answer this study's research question, especially since a QA score of 40% was adopted as a threshold for selecting primary studies (Inayat et al., 2015).

Figure 2 displays the publication dates of the selected primary studies, ranging from 2011 to 2024. Of these, 24% were published in 2014, 18% in 2022, 12% in 2023, with the remaining years having 6% each. This time frame is based on the results of

the inclusion and exclusion criteria of the SLR approach. It is evident that there are still very few studies on the effects of parental migration over the years. This implies that the subject has not received much attention in the country under study, despite a surge in parental migration in Zimbabwe over the years.

Figure 2:



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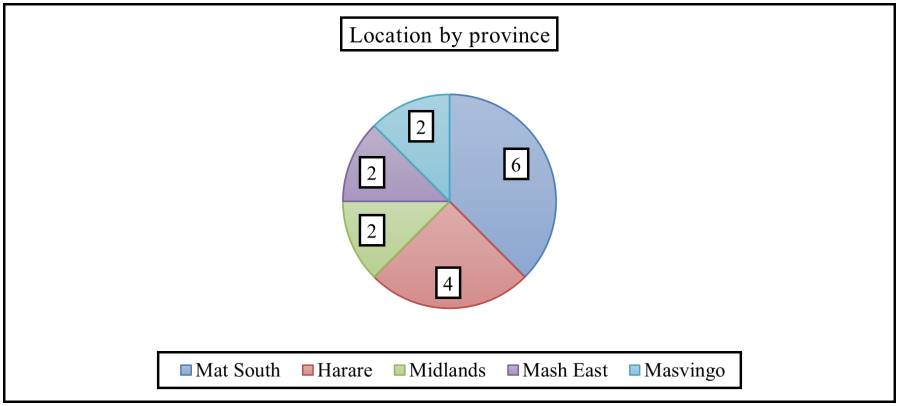
The research methods used in the selected studies are presented in Figure 2. The chronological breakdown of these research methods is as follows:

- Year 2011: Interviews (IR) – 1 or 6%
- Year 2012: Mixed methods research (MMR) – 1 or 6%
- Year 2014: MMR – 1 or 6%; IR – 3 or 18%
- Year 2016: IR – 1 or 6%
- Year 2017: IR – 1 or 6%
- Year 2018: MMR – 1 or 6%
- Year 2019: IR – 1 or 6%
- Year 2021: Case study (CS) – 1 or 6%
- Year 2022: MMR – 2 or 12; IR – 1 or 6%
- Year 2023: MMR – 1 or 6%; CS – 1 or 6%
- Year 2024: MMR – 1 or 6%.

These findings show a widespread use of IR and MMR. These two methods are compatible with the collection of participant views and experiences.

Figure 3:



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The distribution of studies by location displayed in Figure 3 shows that studies were carried out in half of Zimbabwe's provinces, with most of them done in Matabeleland South, which has a long history of parental migration to South Africa (Dube, 2014).

Figure 4:

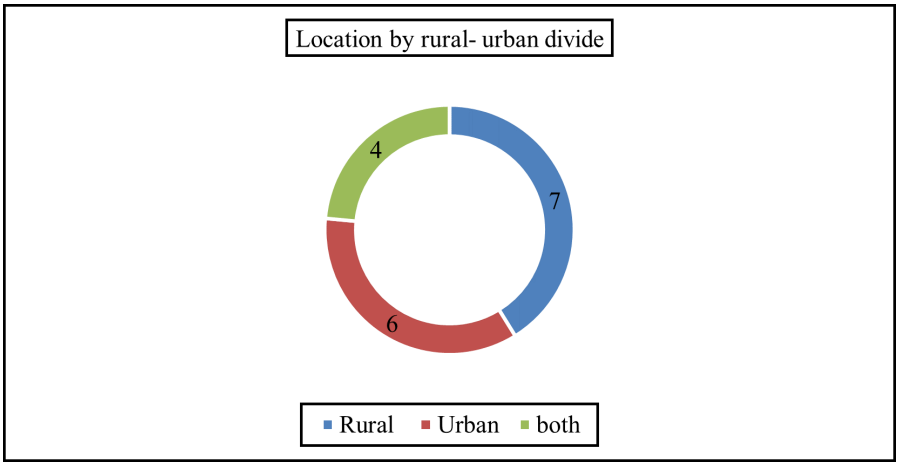

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Figure 4 shows that most of the studies were conducted in rural settings, followed by those carried out in urban settings, and lastly, those which combined both rural and urban settings.

Figure 5:

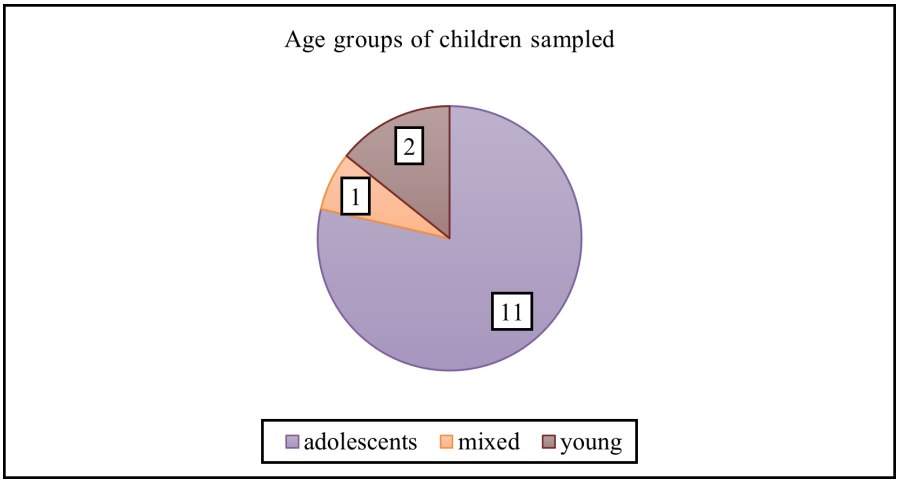

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Figure 5 shows the distribution of studies by the ages of children sampled. Most studies included adolescent children left behind as key participants, with a few having both adolescents and younger children, while only one study involved younger children only. The three remaining studies not reflected in Figure 5 did not include children at all but only caregivers and other adult stakeholders. Involving children in studies about them is progressive, pragmatic, and more child-centered, allowing them to narrate their day-to-day experiences as active participants in research (Semerci and Erdogan, 2014).

Figure 6:

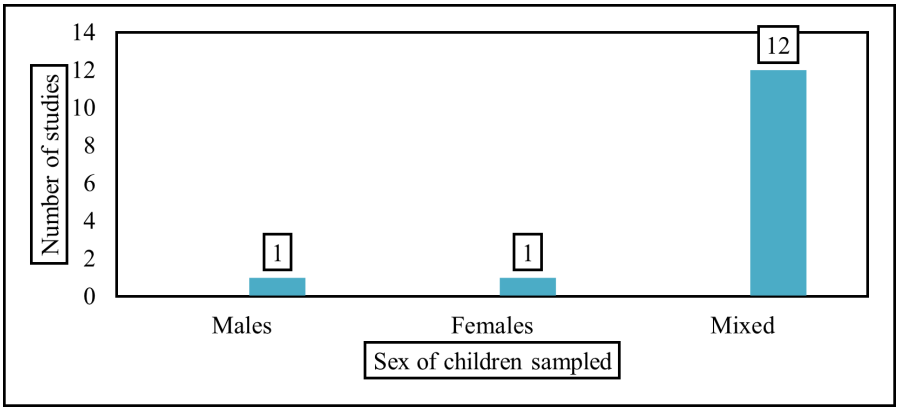

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Figure 6 shows that 12 studies included both boys and girls in their samples, while two included either boys only or girls only. The sex of children sampled is important, as it may provide insights into the effects of being left behind. For instance, Makondo (2022) found that girls left behind are more exposed to depression because of stigmatization, child labor, sexual exploitation, heading households left behind, and missing their migrant parents. Similar findings were also uncovered in China by Gao et al. (2010), where migrant girls were found to be more exposed to unhealthy behaviors like smoking and drinking than those from non-migrant households.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The key objective of this study is to uncover the effects of parental migration on children left behind in Zimbabwe to recommend ways of improving care practices for them. In addressing this objective, the effects of parental migration are divided into four outcomes areas of children's well-being, namely, educational, economic, physical health, and psychological variables. This is a child-rights-centered approach, according more value to the condition of children's lives with the objective of improving the quality of life in these four domains (Semerci and Erdogan, 2014). These four variables convey obligations that nations have toward each child within their territory. All these responsibilities must be afforded to each child without discrimination of any kind, as outlined by the United Nations (Catrinescu et al., 2011).

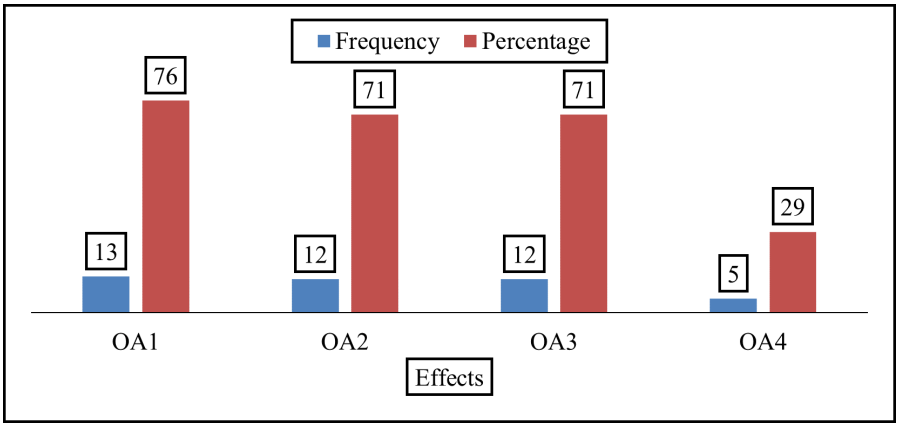
This study adopted SLR to place these effects and interventions in order of frequency. The research team observed that negative effects far outweighed positive effects in all four outcome areas, with psychological, educational, and economic areas having a frequency of over 50%. The effects and proposed interventions with a frequency of at least 50% were regarded as important and are discussed below, in congruence with other SLR studies (Akbar et al., 2019, Parveen et al., 2022). The effects and proposed interventions identified, along with their frequency and percentage are shown in Table 2 and Figure 7.

Table 2: List of effects identified

S.#	Effects identified	Frq. n=17	%	IDs of Selected Primary Studies (SPS)
OA1	Psychological effects	13	76	P1, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P17
OA2	Educational effects	12	71	P2, P5, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P17
OA3	Economic effects	12	71	P4, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P17
OA4	Physical health effects	5	29	P3, P10, P11, P16, P17

Source: Author's own work

Figure 7 here



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The psychological effects (OA1), at 76%, appear in most selected primary sources as prominent effects of parental migration experienced by children left behind. In their study, Chingwe and Chakanyuka (2023) report that the most noticeable psychological effects of migration are more negative than positive and are characterized by heightened levels of hopelessness, misery, suicidal thoughts, rage, and apprehension. Similarly, some left-behind children interviewed by Filippa (2011) felt excluded and rejected and displayed signs of depression – more than just mere sadness.

While separation anxiety primarily accounts for negative psychological effects of parental migration, matters are in some cases worsened by strained parental relations. Pasura (2008) observes that most Zimbabwean migrant marriages are failing and breaking up. Strained relationships between parents create situations in which left-behind parents vent their anger, frustrations, and stress on children left behind, whom they expect to fully assist in shouldering extended household responsibilities. Studies reveal that usually women who are left behind carry a huge emotional burden, with the potential to affect their behavior patterns negatively, directly affecting their children's psychological well-being (Karumazondo et al., 2022).

Furthermore, children left behind are said to be judged negatively, stigmatized, bullied, and abused, aggravating their already fragile psychological well-being. Makondo (2022) notes that adolescent girl children left behind are often regarded as children without guidance and direction and are frequently the subject of community and peer gossip. Such occurrences are worsened when children left behind make mistakes – like any other children do – providing sufficient evidence to community members to offensively label them as children "without manners." This labeling and stigma serve to worsen the psychological well-being of children left behind. Interestingly, several studies confirm that children left behind are prone to all sorts of abuse, such as emotional, sexual, and physical by primary caregivers,

who may be relatives or neighbors. Tawodzera and Themane (2019) observe that children left behind are vulnerable and prone to abuse and often lack viable social support networks. Abuse of all sorts directly affects the psychological well-being of these children, who often have nobody to protect them. The psychological turmoil caused by parental migration often degenerates into undesirable behaviors, such as smoking, drinking, violence, and petty crime (Chingwe and Chakanyuka, 2023b).

Surprisingly, despite the confirmed negative effects of parental migration, other children left behind appear to thrive under the prevailing adverse conditions. Such children often find solace in extra-mural activities, participating in religious and other social youth activities, and hanging out with friends (Makondo, 2022). In spite of experiencing separation anxiety and related stressors, some left-behind children develop conscious ways of adapting to stress and anxiety in a positive and constructive way by using thoughts and behaviors inclined toward searching for information, problem-solving, seeking help from others, recognizing and accepting their true feelings, establishing goals, and striving to achieve them (Filippa, 2011).

The educational effects (OA2) are presented as crucial effects of parental migration on children left behind. These children's educational outcomes are usually affected adversely by parental migration. The inescapable increase in household and external workloads that children are obligated to take up – usually responsibilities shouldered by migrant parents – have an adverse impact on their concentration in school and reduce their time to do school-related work. The situation is worse in newly created child-headed households, where older children care for their siblings, while also needing to care for their own educational needs.

Unsurprisingly, these effects are gendered – girls evidently carry heavier household workloads in assuming nurturing and caring roles in the left-behind households. Furthermore, studies reveal that migration does not always guarantee a steady flow of remittances. In fact, several migrant parents either failed to consistently pay school fees or delayed its payment, thus causing disruptions in children's education (Kufakurinani et al., 2014). The strained mental health of children left behind, as explained above, is yet another factor compromising the educational performance of children left behind, as it reduces their attention span and impairs their concentration.

The lack of parental guidance, motivation, and direct involvement in children's school activities cumulatively influence the educational outcomes of children left behind in extremely negative ways. Children who are left in the care of elderly members of their extended families are bereft of people who can assist them with education-related tasks and activities and consequently perform below expected standards and their own potential (Rupande, 2014). Sadly, within the very educational environment mandated to develop and nurture children's potential, some teachers, often through no fault of their own, fail to provide the educational, social, and mental needs of these children (Tawodzera and Themane, 2019; Makondo, 2022). In worst cases, some teachers exacerbate the vulnerabilities and insecurities of left-behind

children by perpetuating stereotypes and stigmatization. Conversely, where left-behind children have access to a regular supply of remittances and material goods, some of them may be easily swayed off educational pursuits, thereby compromising their academic outcomes (Dube, 2014).

Although most studies portray a negative outlook of these children's educational outcomes, there are some positive effects. In negligible instances, parental migration has been found to help boost children's educational outcomes through consistent and timely remittances for payment of school fees and the provision of learning materials and school uniforms (Weda and Siziba, 2016; Ndlovu and Tigere, 2018).

Regarding the economic effects (OA3) – these appear to share similar weightage as effects on educational outcomes. While global studies have widely confirmed the economic benefits of parental migration on children left behind, studies carried out in Zimbabwe suggest that these benefits are quite minimal and are overshadowed by the negative effects of the phenomenon in the country. Some studies show that Zimbabwean parental migration to Global South countries are generally characterized by low economic benefits, especially since most of the migrants do casual, menial jobs. Makina (2010) observes that most Zimbabweans in Johannesburg earn very little to sustain themselves and children left behind. Illegal entry into these neighboring countries and the lack of documentation restrict migrants to contract work and low-paying jobs, thus severely limiting their capacity to remit meaningfully (Chingwe, 2022). Bolt (2016) and Fisayo-Bambi (2020) aver that migration of Zimbabweans to neighboring countries such as South Africa are usually through illicit entries, unlike migrations to countries further afield, such as the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and the United States of America in the Global North. Tevera and Chikanda (2009) note that while remittances in Zimbabwe come from a wide range of countries, migrants in overseas countries remit more than those within Southern Africa.

Mabharani's (2014) study on children left behind in Dzivarasekwa, a suburb of western Harare, highlights the risk of child labor due to parental absence. While some studies foreground the difficulty of differentiating between child labor and child work, (see, for example, Catrinescu et al., 2011), Mabharani (2014) concludes that incidences of child labor are exacerbated by the increase in parental migration in Zimbabwe. Parental absence evidently drives many adolescent children left behind to search for paid labor on farms and plantations to fend for their younger siblings and at times including the elderly, sick and incapacitated relatives (Makondo, 2022). Zirima (2017) confirms this phenomenon in a study conducted in Mwenezi, in which teachers acknowledged that children left behind are susceptible to child labor.

Studies further report that some left-behind children take up so much extra household duties previously done by migrant parents, that they often miss school (Tawodzera and Themane, 2019). In the same vein, findings by Makondo's (2022) study in Chiredzi show that adolescent girls left behind experience overwhelming household chores, effectively compromising their educational outcomes.

On the contrary, a limited number of children left behind receive substantial remittances almost consistently, helping them to pay for essential services and school fees and to enhance their lifestyle (Dube, 2014; Kufakurinani et al., 2014; Mabharani, 2014). However, some scholars observe that some of these children end up being wasteful, spending money on fancy clothes, drugs, and alcohol. It is unfortunate that such children become wayward to the extent of engaging in wild parties, commonly known as Vuzu, where the abuse of drugs, alcohol, sex, and other socially unacceptable activities take place (Chingwe and Chakanyuka, 2023a, 2023b).

While remittances may help to improve educational outcomes, there are cases where left-behind have evidently become too wayward, to the extent of disrespecting teachers and eventually dropping out of school, because they supposedly have better lifestyles than their teachers or other personalities who, under different circumstances, would be their mentors or role models (Kufakurinani et al., 2014). Improved economic prospects and lifestyles due to parental migration have also reportedly attracted unscrupulous relatives and neighbors, who take advantage of the vulnerability of children left behind to loot the children's material or financial assets and, in worst cases, abuse them in multiple ways (Mabharani, 2014).

CONCLUSION

The increasing number of Zimbabweans migrating to other countries motivated us to explore the effects of parental migration on children left behind. Using the SLR procedure, these effects were categorized into four domains, namely, health, educational, economic, and psychological outcomes. Numerous negative effects were identified, notably in the psychological, educational, and economic domains and are deemed critical. Negligible positive effects were noted in educational and economic domains; hence, it can be concluded that parental migration is "a curate's egg."

The categorization of these four domains can help different organizations and stakeholders in taking measures to improve social protection and care practices for children left behind. Addressing effects of left-behind children requires support from the government and all stakeholders. Before any measures or policies can be fully initiated or implemented, it is vital to gather comprehensive data on the magnitude, profile, and needs of children left behind. The findings in this study imply that there is need for promoting research on children left behind to inform policy decisions. Furthermore, there is a need to update and strengthen child protection systems in line with the needs of children left behind. Finally, it is imperative for relevant governmental arms and agencies to be capacitated to ensure that policies can adapt and expressly provide for the protection of children left behind.

Regarding areas of concern pertaining to this study: First, the bulk of the data was collected by the corresponding author of this article, who has four articles included in the review. This method may be considered a threat to the validity of the study findings, since the researcher could have collected biased data. For that reason, to attend to this possible threat, co-authors randomly inspected and validated

the collected data. Second, it was also observed that a few of the selected studies did not fully describe the principal effects of migration on children but generalized them to the left-behind household, inclusive of adults, which could be a potential threat to the internal validity of the results of this study. It appears that some scholars may not necessarily be concerned about children per se, but the entire family left behind. However, it may still be possible to isolate effects inclined to children only, while in other cases, some effects related to adults left behind may have a ripple effect on the children. Third, we noted that three of the studies selected excluded children from their samples, which may limit the authenticity of their findings. This approach has, however, been the norm, which has recently shifted from focusing on the future welfare of children to the current well-being of children, a more child-centered approach promoting children's involvement in narrating their own stories (Semerci and Erdogan, 2014).

This SLR delineated studies carried out in terms of location based on provinces, rural-urban divide, and the age range and sex of children sampled. It is anticipated that this categorization can be helpful in addressing gaps and providing direction for future studies. We are confident that the effects identified provide a corpus of knowledge for prospective researchers to conduct future research.

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