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Editorial

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With immense pleasure we present the first 2024 issue of the African Human Mobility Review (AHMR). It provides up-to-date, high-quality, and original contributions – research papers, syntheses, and a book review – dealing with various aspects of human mobility in Africa. AHMR is served by a very competent Editorial Board along with a network of scholars from around the world with an interdisciplinary field of study helping to secure high-quality and original contributions toward evidence-based policymaking.

We would like to thank all contributors (authors, editorial board, publisher) to AHMR, including those who have served as anonymous referees for the submitted papers. It is our mission to continue improving the quality and standard of the journal and we seek to reach new milestones to position it more favorably in the scientific community from an international standpoint. This issue consists of five articles and a book review that promote the practice of original research and policy discussions and provide a comprehensive forum devoted exclusively to the analysis of contemporaneous trends, migration patterns, and some of the most important migration-related issues in Africa.

The first article by Sathiya Susuman and Knowledge Sithole is entitled "Influence of Socio-Economic Factors on Crime among International Migrants in South Africa." The study used a quantitative research method that involved the analysis of data for migrants between the ages of 15 and 64. This study also obtained data from secondary sources, notably from the 2019 Statistics South Africa report on labour market outcomes of migrant populations in South Africa, as well as the 2017 South African Police Annual Crime Report. Through chi-square tests and multinomial regression, the study investigated whether these socio-economic factors drove criminal behavior among the international migrant population. The study's findings revealed that unemployment has an impact on migrants and crime rates in South Africa. Within the context of South Africa, immigrants' educational attainment did not significantly influence their criminal behavior. Other elements, like social networks, cultural assimilation, and personal traits, may have a greater impact on criminal activity among migrants. However, addressing unemployment issues among international migrants in South Africa to mitigate the risk of criminal involvement is crucial. The authors suggest that stakeholders and policymakers should concentrate

on creating practical plans that encourage migrant populations' social integration, skills development, and employment prospects. It might be possible to lower crime rates and build a more welcoming society in South Africa for both immigrants and locals by tackling these socio-economic issues.

The second article by Chipo Hungwe and Zvenyika Eckson Mugari is entitled "'Let Them Stay There': COVID-19 and Zimbabwe's Indignation against Return Migrants and Travelers." The methodological approach employed in this research is a qualitative desk-based study of primary source data (gray literature) accessed online using search words. The findings of this research uncovered that in times of change and dealing with uncertainty, there is a tendency to redraw boundary lines between in-groups and out-groups with negative consequences for those labeled as the out-group. This study supports the theory that anxiety engendered by pandemics leads to the marginalization and rejection of regular in-group members. Perceived resource competition, resource scarcity, anxiety, and fear heightened the stigmatization of return migrants and travelers. The authors assert that to recover from the negative effects of the pandemic, it is necessary to review the preventive measures against COVID-19, avoid reckless public statements that stigmatize and incite hostility against returnees, and invest in the health system.

The third article by Kudakwashe Vanyoro, Nicholas Maple, and Jo Vearey is entitled "Compatible Compacts? The 'Social Life' of Vulnerability, Migration Governance, and Protection at the Zimbabwe–South Africa Border." The research employed qualitative research design to gain insight into identifying and assisting non-nationals whom they considered to be vulnerable or to have special needs. The central argument of this paper is that interventions of humanitarian organizations at the Zimbabwe–South Africa border reveal the importance placed on making very clear distinctions between those needing protection and those who do not. These boundaries are retained in the stable definitions of migrant in/vulnerability that have been legitimized by the increased emphasis on two separate frameworks: one, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM) for managing migration and the other, the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) that determines a set of stable norms for international refugee protection. Overall, this paper provides a novel concept to capture and reimagine the limits of and possibilities for protection.

The fourth article by Tackson Makandwa is entitled "Spaces, Places, and Migration: Understanding and Strengthening Public Health-Care Provision in South Africa." This study argues that engaging with a place-based approach is required to understand the local context in which diverse groups are situated. There is, however, a lacuna in studies situating South(ern) African public health-care challenges within such a place-based approach. This paper presents findings from a mixed-methods study that was designed to fill this gap. The research team conducted fieldwork in six health-care facilities across two provinces in South Africa – four in Gauteng and two in the Vhembe district of Limpopo province – representing urban, peri-urban, and rural settings. The findings show how diverse spaces shape and are shaped by

different migrant profiles, producing diverse places, which in turn present particular demands to the public-health system. Accordingly, the study discovered that it is crucial to understand the pathways, behaviors, and meanings associated with such mobility if we are to strengthen the provision of health-care services in South Africa.

The fifth article by Leander Kandilige, Geraldine Asiwome Ampah, and Theophilus Kwabena Abutima is entitled "Migration and the Constant Search for Self-Improvement in Africa." The researchers employed thematic and content analysis of relevant extant literature and examined the contextual factors that characterize the nexus between migration and self-improvement/development in Africa. The results of this study show that remittances have the potential to support development in Africa, but this depends on the environment in which migration takes place and where remittances are brought. Similarly, social remittances are credited with possible improvements in habits, attitudes, and social capital that could support development. The study also indicates that some empirical studies found that political remittances are positively related to the improvement of democracy in Africa. This research study further indicates that the development effects of migration vary in different regions and countries of Africa depending on the environments in which migration takes place and that migration promotes self-development, just as self-development promotes migration.

The last section of this issue is a critical and academic appraisal undertaken by Daniel Tevera of a book entitled "The Palgrave Handbook of South–South Migration and Inequality." He points out that the book is divided into four parts that highlight often-overlooked mobility patterns within and between regions of the Global South and the intersectional inequalities that migrants face. According to the reviewer, the introduction by the editors highlights the critical issues discussed in well-structured chapters that provide fresh insights. The chapters grapple conceptually with the relationship between migration and inequality in diverse Global South locations. They also question the relevance of econometric migration theories that downplay context-specific economic and socio-political processes. The reviewer further indicates that the different book chapters focus on a critical and socially embedded understanding of South–South migration, including the climate change-mobility nexus.

Finally, I wish to see more researchers, academicians, and students engaging with us and continuing to explore new areas of meaningful research with increasing social and practical use in diverse disciplines. I also hope that they will contribute their original and weighty research ideas to this journal.

Thank you to our editing team and to all authors who submitted their work to the African Human Mobility Review.

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Book review

Crawley, Heaven and Teye, Joseph Kofi (editors), 2024

The Palgrave Handbook of South–South Migration and Inequality

INTRODUCTION

The Palgrave Handbook of South–South Migration and Inequality unpacks the multidimensional nexus between migration and socio-spatial inequality in the Global South. It draws on Global South perspectives and migration scholarship to correct what the editors, Heaven Crawley and Joseph Teye, refer to as misunderstandings and misinterpretations of South–South mobility patterns that have been incorrectly based on North–South migration experiences. The authors argue that contrary to narratives suggesting an exodus of migrants to the Global North, South–South migration is the most prevalent type of human mobility in the Global South. The authors unpack the "Global South" as a geographical region and a "relational, structural and political construct within global networks of power." The authors also remind us that the capacity to migrate and the conditions under which migration occurs reflect and reinforce prevailing spatial, structural, and social inequalities related to gender, nationality, race, and age. These conditions determine who migrates, where they move to, and the range of resources they can access. Significantly, migration can increase and reduce inequality depending on the circumstances. For example, income inequalities in countries of origin often increase with international migration, particularly for the marginalized groups in society.

The book is divided into four parts that highlight often-overlooked mobility patterns within and between regions of the Global South and the intersectional inequalities that migrants face. The introduction by the editors highlights the critical issues discussed in the collection of 33 well-structured but uneven chapters that provide fresh insights into South-South migration triggers and patterns. The chapters grapple conceptually with the relationship between migration and inequality in diverse Global South locations. They also question the relevance of econometric migration theories that downplay context-specific economic and socio-political processes.

PART 1: CONCEPTUALISING SOUTH−SOUTH MIGRATION

Part 1, consisting of Chapters 1–7, provides a historical perspective on South–South migration and a conceptual framing of the Global South based on decolonial theory that critiques Eurocentrism in migration research. In Chapter 2, Veronica Fynn Bruey and Heaven Crawley provide a historical perspective on South–South migration that aims to address several Global South knowledge "blind spots." Chapter 3, by Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, argues that there is a need for nuanced studies of migration that focus on re-centering the South by conducting more research in and about particular geographies associated with the Global South. In Chapter 4, Yousif M. Qasmiyeh and Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh engage critically with the geopolitics of knowledge production by discussing how migration knowledge production and dissemination are connected to structural inequalities in the Global South. In Chapter 5, Karl Landström and Heaven Crawley draw on feminist social epistemology to challenge migration scholars researching South–South migration to foreground structural inequalities in knowledge production. In Chapter 6, Kudakwashe Vanyoro challenges Global South migration researchers to frame their studies in ways that value and appropriately recognize their lived experiences. In Chapter 7, Hyab Teklehaimanot Yohannes and Alison Phipps discuss how climate-induced internal displacement has created new patterns of semi-nomadic life within the borders of the Horn of Africa region and how the Global North has created epistemic barriers whose overarching intention has been to immobilize, contain, and detain displaced people.

PART 2: UNPACKING "THE SOUTH" IN SOUTH−SOUTH MIGRATION

Part 2 unpacks South–South migration patterns and explores the interplay between social conditions and policy instruments. In Chapter 8, Kerilyn Schewel and Alix Debray argue that strengthening regional cooperation on migration governance is vital to managing the negative effect of international migration on inequality and poverty. Joseph Awetori Yaro and Mary Boatemaa Setrana (Chapter 9) highlight the adverse effects of South–South migration in Africa. In Chapter 10, Dereje Feyissa, Meron Zeleke, and Fana Gebresenbet focus on the Ethiopia–South Africa spatial corridor in their discussion of the changing contours of "Hadiya migration" to South Africa. In Chapter 11, Bonayi Hubert Dabiré and Kando Amédée Soumahoro examine the contradictory impacts of migration on inequalities in the Burkina Faso–Côte d'Ivoire corridor. They argue that while migration helps poor households in Burkina Faso by transferring resources, it creates multiple inequalities between children whose parents have migrated and those whose parents have not and between remittances-receiving households and households that do not receive any. Chapter 12, by Victoria Prieto Rosas and Gisela P. Zapata, outlines trends and characteristics of migrant social and economic inclusion in several immigration and transit countries, especially Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, and Uruguay, which have experienced rising levels of intra-regional migration.

In Chapter 13, Louis Herns Marcelin and Toni Cela argue that while migration has the potential to contribute to human development and reduce social inequality, migrants are often subjected to entrenched vulnerabilities emerging from social exclusion, marginalization, climate change-related disasters, armed conflicts, and human rights abuses. Chapter 14, by Seng-Guan Yeoh and Anita Ghimire, examines migrant labor and inequalities in the Nepal–Malaysia corridor. Malaysia relies heavily on foreign migrant labor in the manufacturing, construction, plantation, and service sectors. However, in the host countries, foreign migrant workers (together with refugees) are categorized and surveilled. Nepal and Malaysia's closely intertwined migration infrastructures have efficiently facilitated the transnational flow of labor and remittances. In Chapter 15, Joseph Teye, Jixia Lu, and Gordon Crawford discuss the drivers and impact of recent Chinese migration to Ghana on equality. They argue that despite the income benefits received by the local population, there have been increased income inequalities along gender and social-class lines. This chapter focuses mainly on the trading and small-scale mining sectors. Chapter 16, by Luisa Feline Freier, Leon Lucar Oba, and María A.F. Bautista, is based on an interesting methodological approach that uses data on asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants detained in Mexico to map trends in African migration to Latin America.

PART 3: INEQUALITIES AND SOUTH–SOUTH MIGRATION

Part 3 focuses on the inequalities-migration nexus in the Global South. Several chapters examine the role played by porous borders in the South, the dynamics of weak border control, and state capacity in monitoring and registering movements. In Chapter 17, Giulia Casentini, Laura Hammond, and Oliver Bakewell unpack the relationship between migration, poverty, and income inequality by focusing on migration dynamics in the Burkina Faso–Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia–South Africa, and Ghana–China migration corridors. In Chapter 18, Tanja Bastia and Nicola Piper focus on the feminization of migration, temporary migration, and transnationally split families to provide a deeper understanding of the dynamics of gendered patterns of migrant employment in the domestic work and agricultural sectors in several Global South countries. They argue that the rate of return migration is considerably high because of a combination of factors, such as the temporary nature of migration, the employer-tied contracts, and the high occurrences of undocumented migration resulting from absconding or overstaying. Chapter 19, by Jailson de Souza e Silva, Fernando Lannes Fernandes, and Jorge Luiz Barbosa, on Haitian migration and structural racism in Brazil explores the inequalities that influence migration decisions and the role of migration drivers, such as climate change, household food insecurity, and migration intermediaries.

In Chapter 20, Ingrid Boas, Animesh Gautam, and Ademola Olayiwola interrogate the nexus between mobility and climate change. They argue that climate change-mobility patterns are embedded within uneven socio-political dynamics, social networks and kinship ties, mobility experiences, the availability of support

systems, as well as the type and intensity of environmental triggers. Together, these factors determine whether an extreme weather event, such as floods, will create environmental refugees. In Chapter 21, Caterina Mazzilli, Jessica Hagen-Zanker, and Carmen Leon-Himmelstine explore how migration decision-making intersects with perceptions of inequality that are multidimensional, intersectional, and overlapping and that studies that focus on these perceptions increase our understanding of migration decision-making processes. In Chapter 22, Katharine Jones, Haila Sha, and Mohammad R.A. Bhuiyan discuss the critical role intermediaries play in shaping processes and outcomes in South–South migration. In Chapter 23, G. Harindranath, Tim Unwin, and Maria Rosa Lorini show how the use and design of digital technologies play a vital role in South–South migration, from migrant decision-making to increasing migrants' access to opportunities and rights in the host countries.

In Chapter 24, Edward Asiedu, Tebkieta Alexandra Tapsoba, and Stephen Gelb examine the impact of remittances in the countries of origin, including financial flows and diaspora investment, trade flows of goods and services, and knowledge flows, in reconstructing local economies. Chapter 25, by Henrietta Nyamnjoh, Mackenzie Seaman, and Meron Zeleke, drawing on research conducted in Ethiopia and South Africa, argue that migration produces, mitigates, and transforms educational inequalities across generations and geographies thereby making it vital to conduct studies that focus on the links between children, migration, and inequalities. Chapter 26, by Jonathan Crush and Sujata Ramachandran, draws attention to the linkages between food security, inequality, migration, and development concerning South–South migration. The authors critique the positive framing of the migration–development nexus that has largely overlooked the critical theme of food security in contemporary migration studies. The chapter concludes that migration research should pay increased attention to the intersections between migration, inequality, and food security.

PART 4: RESPONSES TO SOUTH–SOUTH MIGRATION

Chapters 27–33 in Part 4 focus on various migrant attempts to access justice and rights in their efforts to construct new forms of transnational solidarity that bridge both geographical and sectoral boundaries at various levels. In Chapter 27, Francesco Carella argues that it is essential for both researchers and policymakers to frame migration as a human rights issue rather than a security problem, to encourage host communities to be more welcoming and tolerant of migrants. Chapter 28, by Joseph Teye and Linda Oucho, argues that despite the measures taken by the African Union Commission and Member States to promote the free movement of persons, there has been a slow and uneven implementation process, due to a variety of factors that include the lack of political will and resource constraints. The chapter also shows that while many African governments have signed regional and sub-regional free movement protocols, their migration policies focus primarily on restricting an influx

of low-skilled immigrants. In Chapter 29, Marcia Vera Espinoza argues that because migration governance in South America has been framed and justified through the "lens of crisis," the challenge is how move from a conceptual lens of crisis, as has been the main feature of governance, to one that encourages human security and social cohesion. In Chapter 30, Jacqueline Mazza and Nicolás Forero Villarreal argue that Peru's restrictive policies have been both ineffective in reducing forced migration flows and counterproductive by further marginalizing Venezuelan migrants fleeing the economic-political-social "implosion" of Venezuela that has created a migration crisis in the region.

In Chapter 31, Rey P. Asis and Carlos L. Maningat explore how the migrant labor brokerage model, involving national governments, civil society organizations, migrant workers, and private recruitment agencies in the archipelagic Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Mekong sub-regional corridors, has resulted in the treatment of migrants as a "commodity" for export-import. In Chapter 32, Pia Oberoi and Kate Sheill argue that while temporary labor migration programs are a comprehensive option for regular migration available to low-wage migrant workers from Asia and the Pacific, these programs bring risks to the migrants and their families. In Chapter 33, Mariama Awumbila, Faisal Garba, Akosua K. Darkwah, and Mariama Zaami discuss how migrants in the Global South organize to defend and access their rights and the solidarity that they build with other civil society actors.

FINAL COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATION

The Palgrave Handbook of South–South Migration and Inequality represents an essential contribution to South–South migration and its relationship to inequalities. The book underscores the need for a critical and socially embedded understanding of South–South migration, including the climate change-mobility nexus. The corridor and regional approach used to empirically examine the migration patterns and trends within or between multiple regions in the Global South facilitates the comparison of findings from multiple and contiguous geographical regions. What emerges from this handbook is an understanding that whether migration increases or decreases, inequality is shaped by a pool of contextual and political factors and historical contexts.

This open-access handbook is a good source for academics, researchers, and students seeking to deepen theoretical and policy insights into South-South migration and inequality. Development practitioners engaged in migration policies and programs in the Global South will find it a helpful source when developing international migration policy responses.

Prof Daniel Tevera, University of the Western Cape, South Africa

Influence of Socio-Economic Factors on Crime among International Migrants in South Africa

A Sathiya Susuman[1] and Knowledge Sithole[2]

Abstract

The presence of immigrants in South Africa has led citizens to believe that migrants are responsible for increased crime rates in the country. This belief is a harmful stereotype that has no basis in reality, as most of the crimes are not committed by the migrants. This study explores the impact of socio-economic factors on crime rates by international migrants in South Africa from 2012 to 2017. Specifically, it focuses on examining the likelihood and association between two key variables: migrants with no formal education and crime, and unemployed migrants and crime. Through chi-square tests and multinomial regression, the study investigated whether these socio-economic factors drove criminal behavior among the international migrant population. This study obtained data from secondary sources. The study's findings revealed that unemployment has an impact on migrants and crime rates in South Africa. The relationship showed a weak association, attributed to insufficient supporting evidence due to the low statistical power of educational status. The relationship proved to not have a strong association, lacking supporting evidence due to low statistical power on educational status. The level of education among migrants did not play a substantial role in influencing criminal behavior within the South African context. Other factors, such as social networks, cultural integration, and individual characteristics, might have a more prominent influence on criminal activities among migrants. However, addressing unemployment issues among international migrants in South Africa to mitigate the risk of criminal involvement is crucial. Policymakers and stakeholders should focus on developing effective strategies to promote employment opportunities, skills development, and social integration among migrant communities. By addressing these socio-economic factors, it may be possible to reduce crime rates and create a more inclusive society for both migrants and the host population in South Africa.

Keywords: immigration, no education, unemployment, social factors, crime

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INTRODUCTION

The relationship between crime and immigration is the subject of ongoing academic research, public discourse, and debates. The increasing levels of migration necessitate the investigation of the potential implications of migration on crime rates in host countries. In many parts of South Africa, particularly in poorer areas, the presence of migrants has led to xenophobia, resulting in migrants experiencing violent crimes at the hands of locals (Niworu, 2018). South Africa's increasing rate of immigration since the country's transition to democracy in 1994 has evoked concerns from analysts, especially since immigrants have been scapegoated for the unemployment and wider economic crisis in South Africa (Machinya, 2022). Lower-class African immigrants in South Africa have faced the worst experiences, becoming victims of xenophobia and violence (Kollamparambil, 2019). In such an environment, the safety of international migrants is not guaranteed, as xenophobic attacks can emerge at any moment, posing a danger to their lives.

Several studies have focused on the impact of immigration on crime in the destination country. Adelman et al. (2017) examine the association between immigration, property crimes, and violent crimes over a 40-year period. They observed a population of young immigrants in the low-service sector to ascertain if poverty is linked to an increase in crime committed by international migrants. Kubrin et al. (2018) investigated the correlation between immigration and crime rates in Southern California, using three approaches – they categorized international migrants according to their ethnicity or race, residential area, and place of origin. The study contrasts these methods with the traditional approach of aggregating all immigrants under a single foreign-born percentage measure. The study emphasizes the significance of disaggregating immigrant groups when analyzing their impact on crime rates. Tufail et al.'s (2023) study investigated the possible connection between increased immigration and crime in 30 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. Kollamparambil (2019) investigated immigration, internal migration, and their connection to crime, using a multilevel regression analysis. They observed several factors, include the sex ratio, income inequality, poverty, and youth proportion.

International migrants, especially those from African nations, migrate to South Africa for better opportunities. However, the country faces significant income inequality, with a stark difference between the wealthy and the poor, exacerbating employment challenges (Orthofer, 2016). Many migrants are highly motivated to succeed, leaving their places of origin to improve their living standards. Unemployment is a major contributor to crime in South Africa; it is widely recognized as a factor leading to poverty, and in turn, poverty is associated with increased crime rates. Due to high unemployment rates, those lacking the means of survival, may resort to engaging in criminal activities as an alternative source of income (Ndlela, 2020).

Tambo et al. (2016) highlight the challenges that immigrants in South Africa face in the employment sector due to unreasonable delays in obtaining work permits from the Department of Home Affairs (DHA). These delays often result in qualified candidates losing job opportunities offered by local firms, as migrants cannot provide the necessary documentation. Even when their permit application process is completed, migrants may not receive timely notifications on the status of their permits. Consequently, some migrants turn to self-employment and the informal sector, which offer little job security and legal protection, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation and low-income opportunities.

Mehmood et al. (2016) and Westbrook (2012) argue that migrant exploitation, including low wages, increase crime rates. Many immigrants are underpaid, and when they fail to achieve financial success through legitimate means, some may turn to illegal activities to attain it. This population group is often susceptible to various factors, including extreme poverty, unlike citizens who may receive basic income support from the government through programs like the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) grants. In contrast, immigrants may need access to such assistance and are more likely to face economic obstacles.

Education has always been regarded as a pathway for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds to improve their circumstances and escape poverty. However, studies by Duncan and Samy (2021), Mehmood et al. (2016), and Westbrook (2012) highlight that migrants without formal education are more likely to face economic disadvantages in their destination country. Limited education can hinder their ability to participate in the labor force, forcing them to engage in illicit activities to survive.

Furthermore, language proficiency plays a significant role in accessing employment opportunities. When migrants are proficient in the language spoken in their host country, they can effectively communicate and connect with relevant individuals who may help uplift them based on their soft and hard skills. Language barriers can limit opportunities for social interaction, access to healthcare, and education.

Research on the relationship between crime and immigration has yielded complex results, with some studies finding a negative correlation between migrants and crime, while others have found positive associations. For instance, a study by Bianchi et al. (2012) in Italy found a significant positive relationship between migrants and robbery crimes. Similarly, Westbrook (2012) conducted a study in Spain, which revealed a positive correlation between migrants from certain countries, such as Herzegovina, Bosnia, Georgia, and Angola and their involvement in crime. The study also found that male migrants aged 35 to 54 were more likely to be involved in arrest events than Spanish citizens. On the other hand, Light et al. (2020) found a relatively small proportion of migrant involvement in crimes compared to American citizens, with assault crimes being higher among migrants but lower than those committed by native-born individuals.

Contrastingly, Ozden et al. (2018) found negative results regarding migrant involvement in crime. Their study in Malaysia showed that migrants were less likely to be involved in various types of crime, including violent and property crimes. Similarly, Tufail et al. (2023), in an investigation from 1988 to 2018, found no positive correlation between migrants and crime rates. They suggested that changes in crime policies and government administration might explain why migrants are less likely to engage in criminal activities in the investigated OECD countries.

Papadopoulos (2014) explored the connection between migrants in Wales and England and property crimes, by ensuring that neither migrants nor citizens were underreported in crime records. Using self-report data from the Crime and Justice System Survey, the study revealed that migrants' crimes were underreported, albeit to a lesser extent than crimes committed by citizens. The study also notes that the relationship between property crimes and migrants varied across different ethnic groups and regions in the United Kingdom (UK). Furthermore, Adelman et al. (2017) found a connection between an increase in the migrant population and a decrease in violent and property crimes. Their study suggests that immigrants generally do not engage in illegal activities. However, their presence alters the structure of opportunities for native-born individuals, leading to a decrease in migrant crimes and an increase in crimes committed by citizens.

In summary, this study suggests that the relationship between socio-economic factors, such as education and employment, and crime rates among international migrants in South Africa warrants more thorough investigation. Understanding these dynamics can inform targeted policies and interventions to address the challenges faced by migrants and promote social cohesion and safety in the host country. Additionally, research on the relationship between crime and immigration has yielded mixed results, highlighting the need for nuanced analysis that considers various factors, such as country-specific contexts and changes in government policies.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

This study accounts for migrants between the ages of 15 and 64. Several other studies indicate that people of working age are more prone to engaging in crimes, which made this population group worthy of investigation. Due to the availability of data from the study's primary sources, the researchers selected the following five provinces for inclusion in the study: KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Western Cape, and Eastern Cape. Based on the study's aim, it investigated the socio-economic factors impacting international immigrants to determine whether these factors influence members of the population group to engage in illegal activities or not.

The study measures three social factors as variables – two independent variables and one dependent variable; crime is a dependent variable, while no education and unemployment of migrants are independent variables. The researchers compiled data for migrants' labor-force status and education to compare rates of connections of immigrants with no formal education and unemployed immigrants to crime

rates. Study variables are coded as follows: employment status (0: not employed, 1: employed), education status (0: not educated, 1: educated), and crime type (0: no crime, 1: contact crime, 2: property crime, and 3: other serious crime). The study's total sample size is 40 for the educational status variable and 30 for the employment status. The study sample was determined by the available secondary sources from which data was captured, which was presented in the form of infographics and reports. Furthermore, these sources do not present the data on crime statistics, migrants' employment status, and educational status at the individual level, but as aggregated data. This study obtained quantitative data from Statistics South Africa (Stats SA, 2019) and the South African Police Report (SAPS, 2017).

DATA ANALYSIS

Chi-square test for independence

McHugh (2013) states that a chi-square is a non-parametric statistical analysis that tests the association between categorical variables. In this study, the chi-square aims to test the association between the employment status of migrants and educational status force on crime. The study consists of two hypothesis tests: the first hypothesis is educational status and crime H0: There is no significant association between migrants with no formal education, educated to engage in crime. The alternative hypothesis is H1: There is a significant association between migrants with no formal education, educated to engage in crime. The second hypothesis for employment status and crime, H0: There is no significant association between unemployed migrants and crime. H1: There is a significant association between unemployed and employed migrants to engage in crime. The test is performed under the significant level of $\alpha \leq 0,05$.

$$DF = (C\text{-}1) \times (R\text{-}1)$$

In order to calculate the degree of freedom, the number of columns excluding the total cells are subtracted by one, similar to the number of rows subtracted by one, excluding the row total cell; then multiply the number of columns by the number of rows.

To test the association between educational status and crime, employment status and crime, critical value is observed at X2 calculated value; therefore $\leq$ X2 2; α:0,05 is the acceptance region. X2 calculated value > X2 2; α:0,05 is a rejection region.

> *Critical values*
> 2 α;0,05 = 5,991
> 3 α;0,05 = 7,815
> 6 α;0,05 = 12,592
> *The expected frequency*
> Ei = (Ri × Ci)/ ΣO

Whereas:
Ri is the sum in row section
Ci is the sum in column section
ΣO is the sum of observations in a contingency table
Chi-square statistics
X2 = Σ(Oi-Ei)2/Ei

To determine the chi-square statistics, observed frequency (Oi) will be subtracted by the expected value (Ei) and then divided by expected value (Ei). The X2 statistics and X2 critical value determine the decision rule; if X2 Statistic > X2 critical value, the H0 for migrants' engagement in crime is driven by social factors is rejected; and if X2 statistic is ≤ X2 then we accept the H0.

Multinomial logistic regression

Multinomial logistic regression (MLR) is the statistical analysis that handles data consisting of categorical dependent variables that carry two or more of the dummy variables. Referring to the study, the crime type variable consists of three dummy variables, as portrayed from variable description. Statistical analysis can accommodate both continuous, nominal variable and have interaction to predict the outcome of dependent variable.

P (Y = k | X) = exp (β $_0$k + Xβ k) / Σ j=1^m exp (β 0j + Xβ j)
Application of the Multinomial Logistic Regression
P (crime type = k |education status, employment status) = exp (β $_0$k + education status β$_1$ + employment status β$_2$)/ 1 + exp (B$_0$ k + education status + employment status)
Where:
P (Y = k|X) = is the probability of crime type variable equal to categorical k, given education status and employment status
B 0k = intercept of the categorical k
Xβ k = Linear of the coefficients for education status and employment status
M is number of dummy variables of crime type (contact crime (0), property crime (1) or other serious crime (2))

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
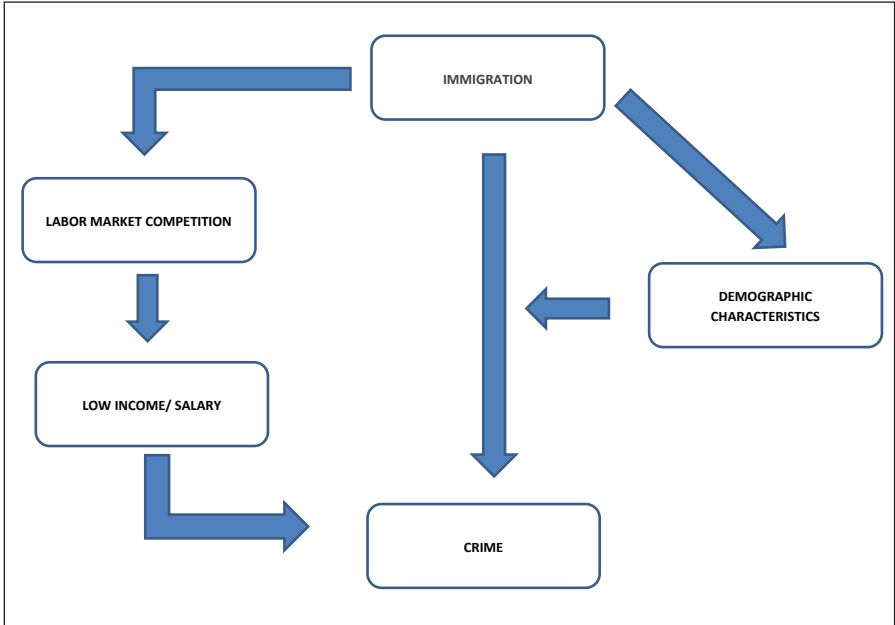
Source: Bianchi et al. (2012).

After reviewing several studies on crime and immigration, Bianchi et al.'s (2012) framework proved suitable for application to the study. This conceptual framework (2012: 4) demonstrates how the relationship between crime and immigration influences the increase in criminal offenses. Their conceptual framework indicates some of the factors leading immigrants to engage in criminal offenses, including low income. Bianchi et al. (2012: 4) maintain that low-income earners are likely to partake in illegitimate business activities to earn surplus income to maintain their needs. They also aver that migrants with low educational backgrounds are likely to be associated with committing crimes, since the opportunity to participate in the labor force is low. Furthermore, migrants' demographic characteristics such as age and gender, as well as their cultural characteristics, are considered to have an impact on crime. Moreover, young migrant males are likely to be suspected of involvement in criminal activities in destination countries.

MAIN FINDINGS

Since the international literature is conflicted on this topic, there is no clear evidence that immigrants are the major contributors to crime in South Africa. However, if politicians in South Africa genuinely wish to address the perceived crime problem

(among politicians and many citizens), then they should address several factors referred to in international literature that contribute to immigrant criminality in other countries.

RESULTS

International migrant profile

The data presented in Table 1 provides valuable insights into immigration rates, employment status, and the level of education among the working-age population group in South Africa. The table compares the data from the Labour Market Outcomes Report (Stats SA, 2019) conducted in 2012 and 2017, allowing us to observe any changes and trends over this period. Regarding immigration rates, South Africa experienced an increase from 3.9% in 2012 to 5.3% in 2017. This indicates a rise in the number of immigrants entering the country during this period. When considering gender, the majority of immigrants were male, accounting for 58.3% in 2012 and 55.8% in 2017. However, the proportion of female immigrants also increased from 41.7% in 2012 to 44.2% in 2017. Overall, the total number of immigrants rose significantly from 1,333,107 in 2012 to 1,984,392 in 2017, highlighting the growing diversity of the working-age population in South Africa.

Examining employment status, the table reveals important insights. The percentage of employed migrants decreased slightly from 84% in 2012 to 81.4% in 2017. This suggests that employment opportunities may have become slightly scarcer for migrants during this period. The rate of underemployment, indicating individuals working in jobs below their skill level or not using their full potential, increased from 3% to 4.8%. This trend is concerning, as it implies that a greater proportion of migrants may be experiencing job dissatisfaction or economic challenges. Furthermore, the table highlights the prevalence of informal employment among migrants. In 2012, 33.9% of employed migrants were engaged in informal work, which decreased slightly to 29.3% in 2017. Informal employment typically needs more legal protection and regulation, often leading to low wages and job insecurity. Therefore, the high proportion of migrants involved in informal employment suggests challenges in accessing formal employment opportunities or decent work conditions (see Table 1).

Table 1: Immigration rate, employment rate, and education
levels of the working-age population in South Africa

Migration at national level				
	2012		2017	
	Unadjusted	%	Unadjusted	%
Males	777,202	58.3	1,150,948	55.8
Females	555,906	41.7	827,492	44.2
Total	1,333,107	100	1,984,392	100
Employed	1,125,142	84.4	1,615,295	81.4
Underemployed	43,993	3.3	95,251	4.8
Informal employment rate	451,924	33.9	581,427	29.3
Unemployed	207,865	15.6	365,128	18.4
No education	87,985	6.6	89,298	4.5
Less than primary completed	110,648	8.3	208,361	10.5
Primary completed	81,320	6.1	123,032	6.2
Secondary not completed	507,914	38.1	775,897	39.1
Secondary completed	349,274	26.2	480,223	24.2
Tertiary	195,967	14.7	305,595	15.4

Source: Adapted from Stats SA (2019).

The unemployment rate among migrants also increased from 15.6% in 2012 to 18.4% in 2017. This indicates a rise in joblessness among this population group, which can have severe implications for their well-being and economic stability. High unemployment rates can lead to social and economic disparities, potentially exacerbating social factors that may push individuals toward engaging in criminal activities. Analyzing the level of education among migrants, the data highlights both positive and concerning trends. The percentage of migrants with no formal education decreased from 6.6% in 2012 to 4.5% in 2017, indicating progress in educational attainment. However, the proportion of individuals with less than primary completed education increased from 8.3% to 10.5% during the same period. This suggests that while some migrants are advancing in education, a significant proportion still faces barriers to accessing higher levels of education. Regarding both completed and incomplete secondary education, the data shows a slight increase in the proportion of migrants with incomplete secondary education, from 38.1% in

2012 to 39.1% in 2017. On the other hand, the proportion of migrants who completed secondary education decreased from 26.2% to 24.2%. This indicates a potential gap in educational opportunities and challenges in completing secondary education among migrants.

In contrast, there was a positive trend in tertiary education, with an increase from 14.7% in 2012 to 15.4% in 2017. This suggests improving access to higher education among migrants, which is crucial for enhancing employment prospects and socio-economic mobility. Overall, the data from Table 1 highlights various challenges and opportunities faced by migrants in South Africa. It underscores the importance of addressing employment-related issues such as underemployment, informal employment, and unemployment. To promote inclusive labor-force participation, policymakers should focus on creating more employment opportunities, removing barriers to employment, and supporting entrepreneurship among all population groups, irrespective of citizenship status. Additionally, the data emphasizes the significance of education as a pathway to socio-economic advancement. Efforts should be made to address educational disparities, promote access to quality education, and support individuals in completing higher levels of education. This can be achieved through targeted interventions, such as educational programs and initiatives that specifically cater to the needs of migrant communities. Moreover, addressing extreme poverty and providing social support, including affordable housing, can play a crucial role in reducing desperation that may increase the possibility of migrants engaging in criminal activities.

Level of education among migrants

Education plays a crucial role in an individual's development and opportunities. The level of education and skills acquired can determine one's access to employment. Table 1 presents the migration rates by the level of education obtained in South Africa. The data shows that the rate of individuals who had never engaged in formal education or did not complete primary education, stood at 14.6% in 2012 and increased slightly to 15% in 2017, indicating a gradual increase of 0.4%. In 2012, the population of those who completed primary school education had the lowest rate at 6.1%, which increased marginally to 6.2% in 2017.

Migrants without secondary education accounted for a significant proportion compared to other educational levels. Most migrants had dropped out of school, resulting in a rate of 38.1% in 2012 and 39.1% in 2017. Similarly, those who had completed secondary education also constituted a significant proportion, ranking second highest behind those with no secondary education, with rates of 26.2% in 2012 and 24.2% in 2017. These statistics indicate that migrants faced barriers to secondary education, leading to high dropout rates.

Furthermore, the data showed that 14.7% of migrants held tertiary education qualifications (diploma, degree, honors, Master's, and PhD) in 2012. This rate increased by 0.7% in 2017, the second-lowest increase compared to those who

completed primary school education. The lower educational-attainment rates among migrants can be attributed to financial constraints, such as a lack of funding opportunities, as well as social factors, such as difficulties in the transferability of credentials and the validation of legal particulars, such as permits. Unemployment is a significant social factor that can push citizens and migrants to engage in illegal activities. Table 1 provides information on the employment status of migrants in South Africa. In 2012, 84% of working-age migrants were employed, but this employment rate decreased by 2.6% in 2017. Out of the overall rate in 2012, 3% of the population was classified as underemployed, and this rate increased by 1.8% in 2017. The population group employed in the informal sector dominated with a rate of 33.9% in 2012, but by 2017, this rate had dropped by 4.6%. A possible factor is the decrease in demand for informal-sector work and an increase in international migrants with higher levels of education during 2012 and 2017. The informal sector needs more legal regulation, resulting in unstructured working hours and income not determined by the number of hours worked (ILO, 2015). Both the population groups employed in the informal sector and those underemployed are more likely to face challenges related to low incomes. As shown in Table 1, unemployment among migrants in South Africa has increased from 15.6% to 18.4% over the last five years, indicating a rise of 2.8%. This is a concerning trend that suggests a potential threat to the well-being of migrants. The overall employment statistics highlight migrants as a group that experiences employment-related challenges, including low income and underemployment, as these rates gradually increase.

Migrants' occupation by level of education

Figure 1 provides an overview of the different types of occupations based on the level of education among migrants. In 2012, 3% of migrants with primary education were employed in professional occupations, but this rate decreased by 1% in 2017. Professional work in this category included roles such as child care, delivery drivers, and security guards. The rate of migrants employed as clerks was 15% in 2012, gradually decreasing to 12% in 2017, indicating a 3% decrease. Elementary occupations, which require minimal qualifications, were the most common among migrants with primary education, with rates of 73% in 2012 and 70% in 2017. These occupations often included street vendors. Overall, the rates for almost all occupations gradually decreased from 2012 to 2017. However, the statistics for domestic occupations showed an increase from 9% to 16%, with a growth rate of 7% over the last five years (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Immigrants' occupation by level of education
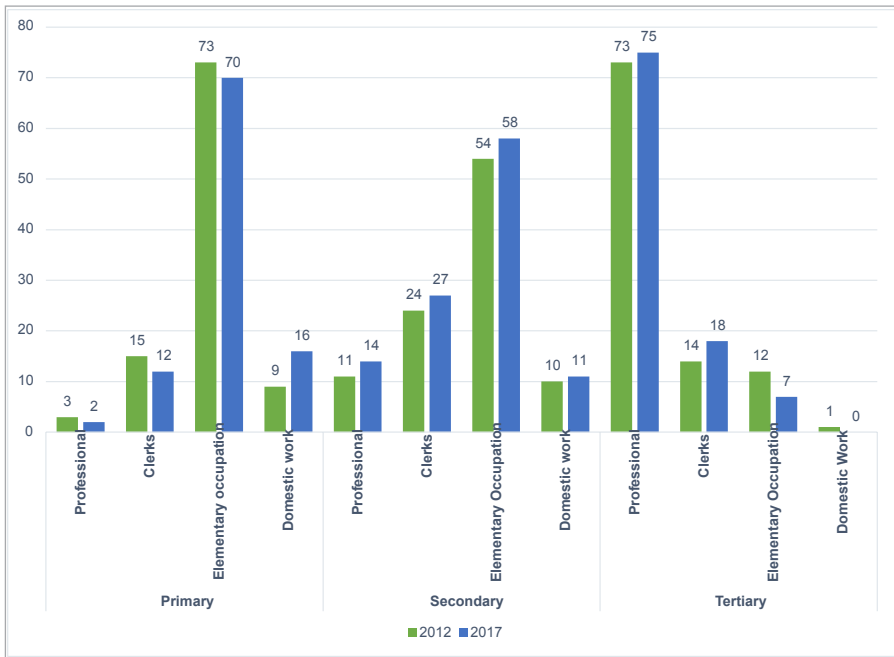
Source: Adapted from Stats SA; Labour market outcomes of migrant populations in South Africa, http://www,statssa,gov,za/publications/02-11-04/02-11-042017,pdf

For migrants with secondary education, all occupations experienced a gradual increase from 2012 to 2017. The rates of professional and clerical occupations increased by 3%, with professional occupations increasing from 11% to 14% and clerical occupations increasing from 24% to 27%. Elementary occupations remained dominant, with a rate of 54% in 2012 and 58% in 2017. Domestic occupations had the lowest rate among migrants with secondary education, with a rate of 10% in 2012 and 11% in 2017. These rates highlight the disparity in opportunities between those with lower educational levels and those with at least secondary education. Migrants with primary education were more likely to face social factors such as low salaries due to their prevalence in elementary occupations.

Figure 2: Crime by migrant education and employment status in South Africa
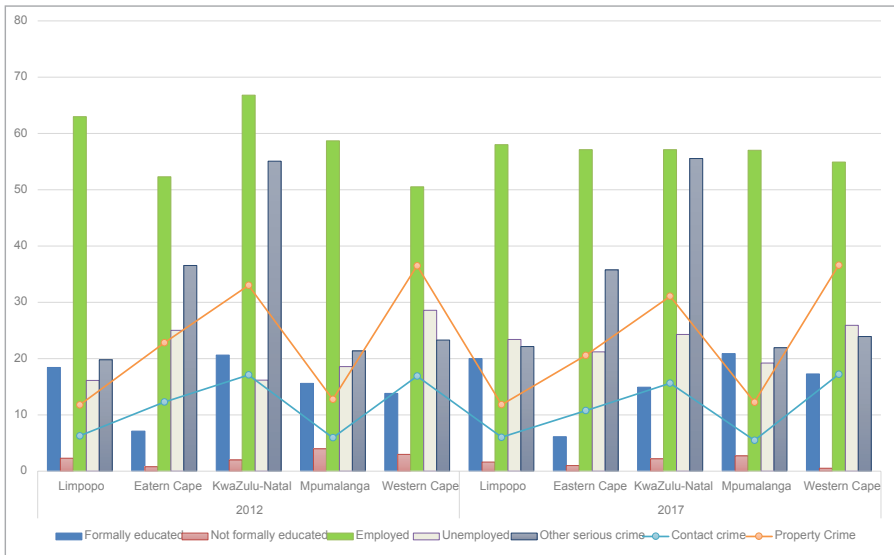
Source: Adapted from StatsSA, 2017, Labour market outcomes of migrant populations in South Africa, and SAPS 2017.

Migrants with higher levels of education had a higher probability of being employed in professional occupations compared to those with secondary and primary education. For migrants with tertiary education, 73% were in professional occupations in 2012, and this rate increased to 75% in 2017, with a growth difference of 2%. In contrast, elementary occupations were less common among migrants with tertiary education, accounting for 12% in 2012 and decreasing to 7% in 2017. Only 1% of migrants with tertiary education experienced employment challenges in 2012, and this rate declined to 0% in 2017.

The chi-square test examined the relationships between immigration rate, employment status, education levels, sex, and age group among the working-age population in South Africa. Notably, the educational status displayed a significant association ($p=0.05$) with crime, particularly among the non-educated segment. Employment status also significantly correlated ($p=0.01$) with crime, particularly among the unemployed. However, the study found no substantial associations between sex or age groups with crime ($p>0.05$). These results suggest that education and employment status influence crime rates within the working-age population in South Africa.

Table 2: Chi-square test results: Relationships between
immigration rate, employment rate, and education levels
among the working-age population in South Africa

	No crime	Contact crime	Property crime	Total	Value	Df	P-value
Variables		N	N				
Educational status							
Not educated	14	5	1	20	7,758	3	0,05
Educated	18	1	1	20			
Total	**32**	**6**	**2**	**40**			
Employment status							
Unemployed	5	3	2	10	8,813	2	0,01
Employed	19	1	0	20			
Total	**24**	**4**	**2**	**30**			
Sex							
Females	18	1	1	20	2,273	2	0,52
Males	14	4	2	20			
Total	**32**	**5**	**3**	**40**			
Age group							
15 to 29	10	2	0	12	6,13	6	0,41
30 to 49	13	1	2	16			
50 to 64	9	2	1	12			
Total	**32**	**5**	**3**	**40**			

Source: Adapted from Stats SA (2019).

The multiple logistic regression analysis investigated the influence of immigration rate, employment status, and education levels on contact crime and property crime among South Africa's working-age population. The findings show that employment status exhibits a statistically significant association (p=0.04) with contact crime. Specifically, the odds ratio suggests that being employed slightly increases the likelihood of contact crime by 1.273 times compared to unemployment. However, education levels did not significantly correlate with contact crime (p>0.05). For property crime, none of the variables reached statistical significance. It implies that employment status may play a role in contact crime within this population, but further investigation might be needed to understand its nuanced impact.

Table 3: Multiple logistic regression analysis of immigration rate, employment rate, and education levels among the working-age population group in South Africa

Variable	Estimates of coefficient	SE coefficient	Wald	p-value	Odds ratio
Contact crime	-1,967	2,25	0,764	0,38	-
Age	-0,328	0,291	1,272	0,26	0,72
Educational status	0,284	0,263	1,167	0,28	1,328
No education	0,002	0,053	0,002	0,97	1,002
Educated	-0,238	0,3	0,631	0,43	0,788
Employment status	0,242	0,119	4,114	0,04	1,273
Unemployed	0,032	0,391	0,594	0,44	0,74
Employed	-0,0154	0,199	0,597	0,44	0,857
Property crime	-3,378	2,337	2,089	0,15	-
Age	-0,024	0,266	0,008	0,93	0,977
Educational status	0,0272	0,27	1,009	0,32	0,315
Not educated	-2,329	1,67	0,968	1	0,097
Educated	-0,067	0,083	0,427	0,99	4,3
Employment status	-0,284	0,12	2,433	0,12	0,119
Unemployed	0,02	1,212	0,008	0,93	4,08
Employed	-0,465	0,032	0,173	0,68	6,19

The reference category is Other serious crime

Source: Adapted from Stats SA (2019).

DISCUSSION

In order to draw meaningful results, the researchers used a chi-square test analysis to test association and independence between variables. The study observed two hypotheses H^0: There is no significant association between migrants with no formal education, educated to engage in crime. The alternative hypothesis H^1: There is significant association between migrants with no formal education, educated to engage in crime. The second hypothesis for employment status and crime, H^0: There is no significant association between unemployed migrants and crime. H^1: There is no significant association between unemployed and employed migrants to engage in crime.

The education variable reveals that the likelihood of migrants with no formal education and those with formal education to take part in illegal activities is not determined by the status of education one possesses. The calculated value (7,758)

appeared to be smaller than chi-square critical value (7,815); this implies that the study failed to reject the null hypothesis. However, the results on employment status and crime seem to be associated – migrant involvement in crimes is determined by their employment status; chi-square critical value (7,815) is smaller compared to calculated value (8,812). This implies that migrants who are employed are not likely to take part in crime-related activities. The sex and age group variables appeared to be not statistically significant.

Most of the results illustrated by the multinomial regression appeared to be not statistically significant. When observing the age variable under contact crime, it reveals that an increase by one year among the observed population, the likelihood of engaging in contact crime decreased by 0,328. When observing the educational variable, there is no difference in crime engagement. As the number of migrants with or without education increases or decreases, crime would remain constant, indicating that education clearly has no impact on their likelihood to engage in contact crime. The employment variable appeared to be statistically significant (p-value= 0,043) and the variable has a negative coefficient (-0,242). This signifies that as migrants become employed, their likelihood of engaging in contact crimes decreases.

When observing variables from the property crime model, all the variables are not statistically significant. Property crime seems to not be impacted by the educational status, similar to the results of contact crime. The study conducted by Papadopoulos (2014) in the United States of America unveiled negative results on migrant involvement in property crimes. The study uncovered negative results regarding migrant involvement in violent crimes in the UK. It found that reports of migrant involvement were more accurate and less frequent than those of native citizens.

This study had certain limitations that should be considered. Firstly, due to data limitations, the study did not include undocumented migrants in the investigation. This omission may affect the overall understanding of the impact of social factors on this particular group. Additionally, the study relied on a small sample size, which presented challenges in analyzing the variables and testing the association and likelihood between migrants' educational status and crime. The statistical power needed to be higher, resulting in non-significant results in the analysis of immigrants' educational status, employment status, and some of the demographic characteristics (age and sex). Future research endeavors should explore these associations in more depth to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing crime patterns.

CONCLUSION

The study aimed to examine the impact of social factors on migrants' involvement in crime. The findings from Table 1 and Figure 2 revealed high rates of individuals with no secondary school education among migrants, as well as a significant level of unemployment. The relationship between social factors and crime among migrants

varied across different provinces. Access to secondary education emerged as a significant social factor affecting migrants. However, the correlation table indicated that immigrants facing barriers in education did not contribute significantly to the increase in crime rates. On the other hand, the study observed a significant association between unemployment and involvement in crime among migrants.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings discussed above, this study offers the following recommendations:

- Address the issue of limited access to education among migrants: Efforts should be made to provide educational opportunities and support systems, particularly at the secondary level, to ensure that migrants have the necessary skills and qualifications to secure employment.
- Promote an inclusive labor force: Efforts should be made to create more employment opportunities and remove unnecessary delays in work permit processing by the Department of Home Affairs that hinder migrants' access to employment. By ensuring equal opportunities for all population groups, regardless of their citizenship status, policymakers can reduce barriers to employment and foster a more inclusive society.
- Support entrepreneurship and sponsorship: The relevant authorities and bodies should implement programs and initiatives that support and sponsor individuals, including migrants who are interested in starting their own businesses. By encouraging entrepreneurship, the relevant stakeholders can empower migrants to contribute to the economy and create opportunities for success.
- Establish social support systems: It is crucial to establish robust social support systems that assist families experiencing extreme poverty, including migrants. Access to affordable housing, financial aid, and other forms of support can alleviate the desperation that may lead some individuals engaging in criminal activities.

These recommendations aim to promote inclusivity, support entrepreneurship, and provide social assistance. By implementing these measures, the state can create a more supportive environment for migrants, reduce the factors that may drive them to engage in crime, and maximize their potential contributions to society.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The study's conception and design were a collaborative effort involving both authors. Knowledge Sithole was responsible for data preparation and performed the analysis. Knowledge Sithole and Sathiya Susuman Appunni jointly wrote the

initial draft of the manuscript. Both authors participated in reviewing and approving the final version of the manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have no conflict of interest to report.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

The authors disclose that all the accepted ethical guidelines and requirements were adhered to, and there is nothing to report regarding live subjects.

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"Let Them Stay There": COVID-19 and Zimbabwe's Indignation against Return Migrants and Travelers

Chipo Hungwe[1] and Zvenyika Eckson Mugari[2]

Abstract

This paper explains the indignation against and stigmatization of return migrants and travelers when Zimbabwe first recorded cases of COVID-19 in 2020. While xenophobic hatred toward foreign migrants enjoyed much media and scholarly attention, the similar risk faced by the return migrants and travelers among "their own" during the pandemic was largely left on the back burner. The paper uses secondary analysis of information from social media, government reports, media briefings, and public utterances of government officials to provide an explanation for the negative attitudes of locals against migrants at the height of COVID-19. The findings revealed that in times of change and dealing with uncertainty, there is a tendency to redraw boundary lines between in-groups and out-groups with negative consequences for those labeled as the out-group. For some time, the returnees were stigmatized as harbingers of the COVID-19 virus and viewed as troublesome and acting in an unreasonable manner, thus courting the indignation of local Zimbabweans. This paper lends support to the view that pandemics create fear, which results in the rejection and exclusion of ordinary members of the in-group. Perceived resource competition, resource scarcity, anxiety, and fear heightened the stigmatization of return migrants and travelers. To build back better from the negative effects of the pandemic, there is a need to review COVID-19 preventive measures, avoid reckless public pronouncements that stigmatize and stoke hatred for return migrants, and invest in the healthcare system.

Keywords: COVID-19, fear, indignation, return migrants, stigmatization, travelers

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INTRODUCTION

This paper addresses the plight of returning travelers (locals who had visited other countries) and return migrants (Zimbabweans who live and work in other countries) who found themselves in a difficult position at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021. Zimbabweans returning from other countries were not only blamed for "importing" the disease but branded as irresponsibly spreading the disease among the "innocent" local communities. This paper analyzes the framing of the discourse of these two groups through their depiction in the social media, mainstream media, government reports, and media briefings. Using Zygmunt Bauman's (2007) views on in-groups and out-groups and the concept of existential fear, this study analyzes how the fear of the pandemic was offloaded on the returning traveler and migrant, because these were regarded as "substitute targets" who could be seen, controlled, ridiculed, and stigmatized, in place of the global virus that could not be seen or controlled and that had no known cure.

In the face of change, which the country could not stop and global processes necessitating the return of residents, which the country could not control, the Zimbabwean society vented its frustration on return migrants, who could be seen and talked with and whose movements could to some extent, be controlled. The anger of society offloaded onto these members of society may have been displaced anger against the pandemic, which could not be treated. The COVID-19 pandemic increased the vulnerability of the Zimbabwean society that was already reeling under a deteriorating economy. It revealed the tenuous nature of the claim to citizenship under conditions of national crisis and the shifting boundaries of belongingness to the nation as an imagined community (Anderson, 2006). Triandafyllidou (2022: 6) reiterates that the pandemic has pushed the boundaries of these different layers, blurring and redrawing their contours. The emergency has raised important clarification questions: where does the boundary between insiders and outsiders effectively lie, and who should be in or out?

The pandemic further strained the national health delivery system that had been declining for some time, much to the perturbation of Zimbabwe's political leadership and ordinary members of the public. The resentment of the locals manifested itself through stigmatization of the returning locals and migrants who were taunted for "leaving the country when it needed them most" and only "irresponsibly" returning to "infect the population of Zimbabwe." Such an attitude rendered returning migrants and travelers vulnerable to harassment and stigmatization and to some extent, needing protection.

There is a growing body of literature on the xenophobic attacks, stigmatization, and harassment of migrants for "importing the virus" into their host countries (see, for example, Guadagno, 2020). In Venezuela and in Central America, returnees "encounter prejudice, profiling and xenophobia when they re-enter their countries of origin" (Riggirozzi et al., 2020: 3). "Malawi had its first COVID-19 case on 02 April 2020, which was imported from India" (Nyasulu et al., 2021: 270). Zimbabwe's

first COVID-19 fatality was also a returnee (Murewanhema et al., 2020; Mashe et al., 2021). However, the literature has not revealed how Zimbabweans reacted to and viewed the rising influx of returning migrants during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to determine the safety of return migrants in times of crisis. This study reveals that the Facebook, WhatsApp, and other social media platforms were awash with stories, illustrations, and images of the reception that some migrants had upon returning to their home countries. Much of the evidence indicates the hatred and the cold and unfriendly reception experienced by return migrants and travelers who were mostly viewed as carriers and super-spreaders of the much-dreaded COVID-19 virus.

METHOD

The views attributed to a senior Zimbabwean government official that COVID-19 was a disease of the white people and God's punishment of the United States of America (USA) for imposing economic sanctions on Zimbabwe (Mutsaka, 2020) were not only reckless but revealed reverse racism against whites and a visceral hatred of the West. While the president publicly criticized and distanced himself from those views as not representative of his government's view on the subject, people shared many conspiracy theories and widely different and often unscientifically verified explanations of the origin of COVID-19, how it is spread, and what factors predisposed one to catch the virus.

Since the discovery of the virus in China's Wuhan province toward the end of 2019 and the subsequent declaration of the health emergency as a pandemic by the Secretary General of the United Nations (UN) in March 2020 (Guterres, 2020), the first and almost instinctive recourse by national governments across the globe was to close their borders to international travel to and from risky destinations while imposing travel restrictions internally (Flores et al., 2022). "The concern that travelers increase the risk of COVID-19 contagion was and still is legitimate" (Triandafyllidou, 2022: 4) and remains a widely shared view globally (Riggirozzi et al., 2020). The British weekly newspaper, *The Guardian* (Mason et al., 2021), carried a story on Europe and Britain's near xenophobic reaction to the emergence of Omicron, a new variant of the COVID-19 virus, reportedly recently discovered in southern Africa, announcing travel bans on southern African nationals from entry into their countries while also imposing stringent quarantine measures on all returnees traveling from that region.

It is against this background that in Zimbabwe, like in many countries across the globe, the return migrants were quickly viewed as the "vectors" of the virus, whose every detail was publicized, much to the satisfaction of the information-hungry public. After the first COVID-19 case was reported in Zimbabwe, early daily statistical reports released by the Ministry of Health and Child Care (MoHCC) on the status of the pandemic fed into the already existing conspiracy theories about returnees being blameworthy for importing the virus into the country. In terms of the World Health Organization (WHO) protocols on contact tracing, there were

demands of every minute detail (including names) of the victims of COVID-19, who they had been with and when, all in the name of protection of the public (Salus Populi Suprema Lex) (Chirisa et al., 2021). This paper contends that much of the interest in the details of these early victims of COVID-19 was driven by fear as much as it also led to ambivalence and indignation against returning migrants.

The uncertain world we live in

Globalization and its associated social, economic, political, and technological processes challenge accepted and constitutive notions of national boundaries rendering societies open, insecure, risky, and unable to control situations at both societal and individual levels. Bauman (2007) notes how our society has bred risks, uncertainties, and dangers because of a sense of loss of control on most issues affecting individuals. These uncertainties and dangers have created fear and distrust among individuals while at the same time desperately trying to control those things or situations we think are within our control. Elaborating on this, Bauman (2007: 11) argues:

> We focus on things we can, or believe we can, or are assured that we can influence; we try to calculate and minimize the risk that we personally, or those nearest and dearest to us at that moment might fall victim to, the uncounted and uncountable dangers which the opaque world and its uncertain future are suspected to hold in store for us.

This attempt to focus on things individuals believe they can influence may mean trying to control the actions of those within their reach, such as the travelers and return migrants within the reach of societal public policy frameworks and in that way minimize risks of transmission of diseases such as global pandemics. The attempts to control, calculate, and minimize risks are driven by fear. Epidemics and pandemics have always been associated with fear (Eichelberger, 2007). This fear causes people to lash out against and seek to blame others (Dionne and Turkmen, 2020; Moreno-Barreneche, 2020; Hardy et al., 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic is not different. One way that societies have tried to cope with the fear of the pandemic is to ostracize and blame travelers and immigrants as the social others whose lifestyles have been judged as "dirty" (Onoma, 2021; Ang and Das, 2022).

COVID-19 and migrants globally

There is a clear existing body of knowledge on how migrants are subject to xenophobia, victimization, and racism in the destination country. Most societies, including those that pride themselves in being fair and tolerant, display different levels of discriminatory and xenophobic tendencies toward different groups of migrants who are perceived as harbingers of crime, violence, disease, competition, and different

forms of pollution (Nyamnjoh, 2006; Gorodzeisky and Semyonov, 2019; Ang and Das, 2022). COVID-19 increased the racism, stigma, xenophobia, and discrimination that already existed against migrants. In general, within the COVID-19 pandemic context, migrants have fared worse than natives of the host country because of the precarious and mostly low-level and informal work that they engage in. Migrants have been subjected to victimization and ridicule as importers of the COVID-19 virus regardless of whether they have recently traveled to their home countries or not (Reny and Barreto, 2022; Sharma et al., 2022). In some cases, this victimization culminated in vandalism of businesses belonging to migrants, ostracism on public transport and in other public places, and in their places of residence. Migrants of Asian origin have faced COVID-19-induced xenophobia throughout the globe, including in some Asian countries (Bofulin, 2021; Le Coz and Newland, 2021; Ang and Das, 2022). Africans have also been victims of COVID-19-related xenophobia. Nsono (2020) explains how African students were discriminated against in China. The International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2020) quotes the UN Secretary General describing a "tsunami of hate and xenophobia" unleashed on migrants during the COVID-19 pandemic resulting in some migrants losing their jobs and means of livelihood, rendering them vulnerable and insecure. Of interest to this paper is the xenophobic treatment that more than 200,000 Zimbabwean returnees (IOM, 2021) suffered on arrival in a country they called "home."

COVID-19 and return migration

Although there is increasing literature on return migration, authors generally bemoan the paucity of data on return and reintegration of migrants during the pandemic. They also highlight the need to clearly theorize return migration (Arowolo, 2002; Cassarino, 2004; Wickeramasekara, 2019; Owigo, 2022). There are different terms used to define migrants who return to their country of birth after having worked in another country for some time. Terms such as "returnees," "return emigrants," "voluntary return migrants," and "reverse migrants" are used in the literature and seem to describe the complex circumstances of migrants, such as whether the decision to return is voluntary or involuntary, and planned or unplanned (Cassarino, 2004; Desie et al., 2021; Efendi et al., 2021). Wickeramasekara (2019) laments that the concept of return migration is a "catch all" term.

When an individual's migration cycle is interrupted by factors beyond their control, such as natural disasters, they may decide to return. In such cases, the level of preparedness for returning is very low and the returning migrant is compelled to return by feelings of vulnerability, insecurity, and fear (Wickeramasekara, 2019; Desie et al., 2021; Martin and Bergmann, 2021); the decision to return is not fully voluntary. The simple IOM categorization of return as either voluntary or forced does not capture the complicated decisions taken by migrants during the COVID-19 pandemic (Di Martino, 2021). Martin and Bergmann (2021) suggest that migrants who return to their country of origin during the pandemic ought to be categorized

as "migrants in crisis." This paper considers the Zimbabweans who had been outside the country for different reasons and durations of time and were disrupted by COVID-19, as return migrants.

Scholars need to probe how migrants are perceived and received in their home countries when they return, as this affects their level of acceptability, the sustainability of the return (Owigo, 2022), and socio-economic integration. While there is literature pointing to perceptions of admiration, envy, and jealousy, there is also a need to realize that migrants may be met with stigma, as well as covert and overt hostility (Hungwe, 2012; Onoma, 2021; Owigo, 2022). During the COVID-19 pandemic, return migrants were subjected to discrimination and victimization in their countries of origin (Martin and Bergmann, 2021). Bofulin (2021: 2) observes that in China, migrants were told to "return [to] where they were coming from" and were blamed "for not participating in building the homeland but being the first to rush from far to harm it." Onoma (2021) captures how Senegalese returning from Europe were stigmatized as disease vectors. Martin and Bergmann (2021) explain how the international frameworks and guidelines on mobility were ignored, violated, and underutilized during the pandemic, as governments imposed travel restrictions. Le Coz and Newland (2021) summarize the complications of negotiating return and reintegration of migrants during the COVID-19 pandemic and suggest the need for more cooperation among countries. According to media reports, southern Africa became a target of ostracism by nations of the global North after the discovery of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 in that region in 2022. Western countries imposed travel bans against nationals from the whole region, whether or not there were confirmed cases of Omicron in their countries of origin. Yet Western countries did not adopt similar measures against Europeans or citizens from countries in other regions of the world where Omicron cases had been confirmed, such as Belgium, Turkey, Egypt, and Hong Kong (*The Guardian*, 2021). Former US president, Donald Trump infamously tweeted about the "Chinese virus" and coined the expression "Kung flu," obviously associating the COVID-19 pandemic with the Chinese (Kurilla, 2021).

Zimbabwe's migration trends: Causes and effects

Since before Zimbabwe's political independence in 1980 and thereafter and due to different social, political, and economic challenges, Zimbabweans have migrated to other countries. They migrated primarily within the southern African region (mainly South Africa, Botswana, Zambia, Malawi, and Mozambique – approximately 71 percent of Zimbabwean migrants) and globally to Europe and more specifically the UK (host to most Zimbabwean diasporans outside Africa), Australia, USA, and Asia (about 29 percent). The actual size of the Zimbabwean diasporan population remains a matter of conjecture, as different agencies often put forth very different and contradictory figures depending on the census method used or other ulterior motives (Nehanda Radio, September 6, 2022). However, what remains evident in most reports, is that there was a marked decline in the diasporan population after 2021 in the wake

of COVID-19-induced deportations from host countries. Zimbabwean migrants are a mix of middle-class skilled and semi-skilled professionals and lower-class poor and unskilled workers (Crush and Tevera, 2010; Crush et al., 2017; UNDESA, 2020).

That Zimbabwe acknowledges the positive economic development impact and potential of the Zimbabwean diaspora, became evident in the Zimbabwean president making "re-engagement meetings" with the Zimbabwean diaspora part of his international itinerary, promising investment opportunities back home under his much-vaunted "Zimbabwe is open for business" mantra. President Emmerson Mnangagwa holds this move as a radically different approach to the one by his predecessor, Robert Mugabe (Government of Zimbabwe, undated). Scholars have, however, revealed certain continuities between the "old" and the "new" governments (Helliker and Murisa, 2020; Nyamunda, 2021). But what is clear, is that the late former president of Zimbabwe openly attacked and humiliated the Zimbabwean diaspora, whom he not only accused of being sell-outs, but as people who groveled to former white masters by accepting low-status jobs far below their skills level (especially in Western countries) working in the care sector (McGregor, 2007). It must be acknowledged that even during Mugabe's rule, there were efforts to re-engage the diaspora through economic initiatives such as home-link, partnerships, and strategies to lure back the Zimbabweans. These had varying levels of success but may be judged to have largely been unsuccessful because the economic fundamentals deemed unattractive, had remained the same (Chikanda, 2011; IOM, 2011; Masengwe and Machingura, 2012).

DISCUSSION

COVID-19 in Zimbabwe

Just like the previous pandemics, COVID-19 is both "destroyer and teacher" (Tomes, 2010). In responding to COVID-19, Zimbabwe was guided by the WHO, which drew on long-standing elements of disease control that were learned from the previous pandemics. These control measures include the banning of gatherings, implementation of social distancing, and the quarantining and isolation of those suspected to be carriers of the virus, such as migrants and travelers.

The screening of travelers from COVID-19-affected countries started on January 22, 2020 in Zimbabwe. The country recorded its first case of COVID-19 on March 21, 2020. The individual involved was a returning Zimbabwean who had traveled to another country. Thus, when COVID-19 started in Zimbabwe, it was regarded as an imported disease. "The cases of COVID-19 were associated with in-bound travelers, mainly from the United Kingdom, United States of America, Dubai and contact cases of people who had travelled" (Chirisa et al. 2021: 2). On March 19, 2020, the Zimbabwe National Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19 was launched with an initial eight pillars of coordination, the creation of a national COVID-19 Response Task Force, and the formation of the Inter-Ministerial

Committee. The Permanent Secretary for the MoHCC led the overall high-level coordination and planning, working with permanent secretaries of other ministries in support of the Inter-Ministerial COVID-19 Task Force. There were weekly high-level coordination meetings scheduled on Tuesdays in the Emergency Operations Centre (UNOCHA, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic was declared a national disaster by the Zimbabwean president on March 19, 2020, while the first 21-day national lockdown started on March 30, 2020 as promulgated by the Statutory Instrument (SI) 83 of 2020 (SI 83, 2020). Through the SI 83 of 2020, the government ordered that returning residents and Zimbabwean citizens be "detained, isolated or quarantined at any place" for 21 days. This order saw the authorities identify and prepare isolation and quarantine centers throughout the country. As a result, the government upgraded and refurbished some hospitals to function as isolation centers, while it identified some schools, colleges, and hotels as quarantine centers. The authorities also deemed self-quarantine at home a responsible action on the part of those who tested negative upon arrival.

While this official stance prevailed, the country witnessed a surge in numbers of returning migrants – mostly from neighboring regional countries. In April 2021, the IOM reported that about 200,000 Zimbabweans had returned from neighboring countries, mostly from South Africa, Botswana, and Malawi. For border communities, such as those in Beitbridge, Plumtree, and Chipinge, some returning migrants continued to use illegal "bush paths" to return home, while travelers made several trips to and from Zimbabwe, for purposes of trade or social ties such as funerals (Mangiza and Chakawa, 2021). The porous nature of the borders made it difficult to officially regulate cross-border travel of residents in Zimbabwe.

Southern African countries recorded high statistics of COVID-19 with South Africa, Zambia, Namibia, Mozambique, and Botswana in the top 100 affected countries (Worldometer, 2021). As of August 15, 2021, a situation report by the MoHCC indicated that Zimbabwe ranked sixth in southern Africa, with 120,088 cumulative cases of COVID-19, after South Africa (2,595,867), Zambia (201,867), Mozambique (137,413), Botswana (136,758), and Namibia (122,097) (Hungwe, 2022: 70). The first person to succumb to COVID-19 in Zimbabwe was a journalist who died on March 23, 2020 after returning from a trip to the USA. What followed was a flood of comments about his travels, some positive and others, mostly negative, describing the late journalist as somehow responsible for his death, with some even blaming him for intentionally spreading the disease (Mugabe, 2020).

What also became clear from the first fatality and the early patients of COVID-19, was that the country had inadequate resources to screen and test those who passed through entry points (Makurumidze, 2020). The designated hospitals and quarantine and isolation centers were also inadequately resourced to cater for people with COVID-19. Indications were that up to the point of the first fatality (and even well after), the country was ill-prepared to deal with COVID-19 patients in its hospitals and related institutions.

The very fact that the first victims of COVID-19 were Zimbabweans who had traveled to other countries for business or other reasons, gave an impression that the disease was related to those who travel beyond the borders of the country. Furthermore, the daily reports of statistics by both the WHO and national institutions, highlighting the number of "imported cases" intensified the stigma of the disease as attributable to those who travel. The Zimbabwean authorities disseminated information that discouraged people from traveling, receiving anyone from outside the borders, engaging in social mixing and mingling and instead required people to observe physical distancing, to be safe from the virus. In Zimbabwe, the overall response to COVID-19, the grasp of its origins, and the interpretation of how the disease was transmitted were heavily skewed toward returning migrants and travelers (Murewanhema et al., 2020), leading medical analysts to strongly associate the disease with travelers. The result was a convergence between prejudices and facts, creating "an environment in which returnees were suspected and accused of bringing the disease with them as 'super-spreaders'" (Mencutek, 2022: 197). Some ill-conceived and insensitive comments posted on social media platforms by senior government officials tended to reinforce the stigmatization and stereotyping of returnees. Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Information, Nick Mangwana's Twitter account was very influential in fomenting the antagonism toward returnees, associating them with disease. It became the go-to source for most local news outlets looking for the government's official position on topical issues of the day. In fact, in 2021 a local newspaper quoted Mangwana as saying:

> And as a caring government, measures have been put in place to ensure that there is no repeat of last year's grim and grave scenario where the *contagion* caused hundreds of deaths. The idea is not to punish citizens. We do empathise with those citizens who have a critical need to come into the country at this critical point in time, but we have *a duty of care for every other citizen* and we have to make sure that *our system is not overwhelmed by disease*, therefore we have put filters and safeguards *to protect* the rest of the citizens (*Bulawayo24 News*, 2021, our emphasis).

The emphasized words, notably "contagion," "overwhelmed," and "disease" with reference to returnees, wittingly or unwittingly encouraged a sense of fear of migrants in members of the public. It is noteworthy that such negative feelings toward returnees as harbingers of COVID-19 were comparable to similar attitudes in other countries and regions of the world (Guadagno, 2020; Riggirozzi et al., 2020; Nyasulu et al., 2021; UNOHC, 2021). In this vein, therefore, migrants were deemed to pose a threat in the spread of COVID-19 (Chirisa et al., 2021) and thus began the stigmatization of returning migrants and travelers, putting these individuals at risk of public humiliation through social media and discrimination in other spaces. Win (2020) compares the stigma attached to COVID-19 victims to that of early victims

of HIV/AIDS. In contrast to the dominant narrative, the Minister of Information cautioned Zimbabweans against thinking that COVID-19 was a disease of the migrants and travelers, as she ended her national address on June 29, 2020 saying:

> My fellow Zimbabweans, as our positive cases rise, let us not become lax thinking that this virus is limited to returnees. We have to be vigilant and work collectively. Protective and preventative measures are there to assist us in combating COVID-19 (Sly Media Productions, 2020).

This was after she had detailed how quarantine and isolation centers would work to prevent transmission of the disease to locals and also how some non-compliant returnees were putting the communities at risk by violating isolation rules. The tweet below posted by the Permanent Secretary, Mangwana, on November 28, 2020 betrays a siege mentality against returnees who deserve to be treated as common criminals to be "rounded up":

> We are opening our land borders on Tuesday and naturally many are nervous about it. We need everyone to play by the rules otherwise we will have a catastrophe. Let's not be tone deaf. Covid19 is real. These pix show illegal crossers to/ex-SA rounded up for quarantining yesterday.

Such comments from a top government official who was supposed to know better aroused public angst and a very unsympathetic view of returnees as a health threat to the nation.

Why returning migrants aroused indignation during COVID-19

Locals also assumed that life (elsewhere) was easy and that the return migrants and travelers enjoyed themselves "there" and wanted to continue enjoying it "here." A tweet by someone called "MJ BITCH" on August 17, 2020 demonstrated this kind of thinking when they said:

> I'm still mad about Zororo Makamba and how he compromised SO MANY people. Apa (Shona word for "yet") he's been out and about in NY… (I don't) even feel sad for him coz nigga was a ZANU propaganda pusher. God really did her thang.

The above assertion is supported by much of the literature on reasons for migration that indicate that potential migrants think that life is better "there." The hostility is clearly manifest in the way locals caricature returning migrants through jokes about how migrants who visit Zimbabwe from South Africa engage in conspicuous consumption (Hungwe, 2012). Jokes about their acquired language and dressing styles indicate how locals resent attempts by returnees to upset the status quo.

Return migrants and travelers are assumed to have come back with so much money to afford recklessly enjoying themselves back "home." Comments on social media and newspaper articles on Zororo Makamba, such as the one by Mugabe (2020) that shows the places he visited in Zimbabwe soon after his arrival, reveal not only that Makamba did not abide by the 21-day requirement to self-isolate, but also the numerous public spaces including nightclubs that Makamba accessed because of his privileged networks. That made it difficult for the public to sympathize with his case when he was hospitalized. There were perceptions that he returned expecting to be treated better than the general populace who was "struggling here."

Dilapidated state of affairs

Quarantine centers

Return migrants were accommodated in teachers' training colleges (such as Belvedere and Mkoba teachers' colleges), schools, and hotels that functioned as quarantine centers. While the country seemed to have many quarantine centers (about 44 by July 2020), returnees raised concerns about the state of dilapidation and inadequate infrastructure (ZIMFACT, 2020). Other concerns included the lack of clear standard-operating procedures, proper personal protective equipment (PPE), overcrowding, sharing of amenities, and illicit sexual activities within the quarantine facilities, as Murewanhema (2021: 3) points out. Unfortunately, these conditions became a turn-off leading to "desertions" by some returnees who could not stomach the inhumane conditions in the centers, thus escaping into communities. Arrests and manhunts for some, and public shaming of the "deserters" became alternative routes to try and bring them back to the quarantine facilities. Stricter measures were suggested to deal with these "detainees." *The Chronicle* (2020) expressed great worry that about 225 people had escaped from quarantine centers across the country and "just" 29 had been arrested. There were suggestions for the police and other law-enforcement agencies to work harder and for the government to release more resources for use by these security agencies to enforce security and minimize cases of people escaping.

Reports of corruption and bribery involving security personnel at these centers did not help either. Additionally, there were numerous administrative blunders, including mixing of different cohorts and delayed release of results, which further complicated the situation, as returnees waited beyond 21 days without receiving their COVID-19 test results. All these factors combined to reveal a very bad picture of quarantine facilities and may thus have motivated the urge to bypass official routes, especially by poor returnees from neighboring countries. Speaking to *The Standard* newspaper about major challenges faced in quarantine facilities, some return migrants said:

> We had to find our own way to avoid starvation … Exposure to COVID-19 is high … We shared rooms with strangers whose history we didn't know …

I wish they could give us basic stuff like sanitizers and masks (Cassim and Muzondo, 2020).

Government officials deliberately exaggerated returnees' responses and gave a hyperbolic caricature of returning migrants' demands. These statements were meant to gain sympathy from the locals by showing how "unreasonable" returning travelers and migrants were. Such statements fueled indignation against return migrants. One official said: "We can try to provide for them, but we cannot provide five-star facilities like hotels" (Burke and Chingono, 2020). Another official said:

> We cannot offer hotel facilities … For those who are able to pay, we put them in hotels and they pay for themselves … This is taxpayers' money and we have to be accountable, so we are providing basics at the quarantine centres (ibid, 2020).

These government officials seemed to have the support of some locals. For example, someone on Facebook commented: "I said it b4 that all quarantine centers must be guarded by heavily armed soldiers with machine guns and grenades. Other than that, we are finished." Another also vented their anger, stating: "We said it kuti dnt (that don't) allow them back but were called heartless ... look at us now ... *NGAVAGARE IKOKO*!! (Let them stay there!)"

This situation was common in other African countries like Malawi, Mozambique, and Kenya (Burke and Chingono, 2020) where lack of food and water in quarantine centers not only led to the spread of COVID-19 but affected return migrants negatively. In some cases, females did not have access to menstrual hygiene products in quarantine centers (UNOCHA, 2020). In extreme cases, returnees committed suicide (HRW, 2020).

State of hospitals

The general state of dilapidation of the health system in Zimbabwe is well documented (Gaidzanwa, 1999; Crush et al., 2017; Murewanhema, 2021). In most cases, it is this state of degeneration that has led to the high labor turnover and skills flight within the health services sector. The COVID-19 pandemic could not have come at a worse time for Zimbabwe. According to the United Nations Africa Renewal (2020), Zimbabwe's health sector is both fragile and underfunded. It employs about 1.6 physicians and 7.2 nurses for every 10,000 people – ratios that are well below WHO recommendations. Furthermore, this sector is frequently disrupted by strikes and industrial action by healthcare personnel; this is compounded by shortages of equipment, medicines, and sundries, including PPE (Murewanhema, 2021: 4).

The first hospital to be declared and used as an isolation center for COVID-19 patients, Wilkins Hospital, was not adequately prepared for it. This was laid bare by the much-publicized story of Zororo Makamba, the young journalist who was the

first Zimbabwean to succumb to the disease (his father is a member of the ruling ZANU PF party, and the family is believed to enjoy certain privileges because of this connection). When he was taken to Wilkins Hospital, the story unfolded as follows:

> Tawanda Makamba, a family spokesperson, said, "We then brought the ventilator on Sunday by 2pm and when we got here, because the portable ventilator had an American plug, they told us to get an adapter because they only had round sockets at the hospital. I then rushed to buy an adapter and came back, and they never used it, and when I asked why they were not using the ventilator, they said they had no sockets in his room. So, they didn't have medication, ventilators and we brought them a ventilator, and they didn't have sockets in his room. I told them that I had an extension cord and pleaded with them to use the cord, but they refused (Zvomuya, 2020).

The doctors' side of the story buttresses the view that there were inadequate resources set aside to cater for COVID-19 patients. The Harare City Council Health Director, Dr. Prosper Chonzi, said:

> All central hospitals refused to take him, even private hospitals refused, arguing that it was an infectious case that should be attended to at an isolation centre. This was despite the fact that Wilkins is administered by Harare City Council and has not received any financial resources from central government to upgrade the facility to an ideal isolation centre. As part of our upgrading, we have reserved seven ICU beds with provision for ventilators and we are still mobilizing to get equipment for those beds. Out of the US\$6.7 million which we requested for COVID-19 response, we were only given \$100,000, which is yet to reflect in our account. We were given an unfunded mandate. By declaring the outbreak a national emergency, we expected financial assistance to upgrade the facility to an ideal isolation centre. Now it's appearing as if COVID-19 is a Harare City Council responsibility (Chipunza, 2020).

This reality prevailed despite the fact that the Minister of Health and Child Care had earlier on (March 2, 2020) insisted that Zimbabwe was 100% prepared to deal with the coronavirus (Madziwa, 2020).

The story of Sakudya (a returning traveler) and his family in Ruwa, Harare reported by Everson Mushava (2020) in *The Standard* newspaper, also depicts a situation of a health institution that was not ready to handle COVID-19 cases. When Sakudya arrived at the hospital, nurses ran away from him and he was referred from one hospital to another until he opted to recover from home. Commenting on the nurses' reaction, he said: "The way they dispersed was as if there were 10 hungry lions released from the ambulance. Imagine, yet I am just a human being. I thought I would die." Moreover, the way his family members' results were handled

also showed that the country had not yet developed mechanisms to ensure privacy and confidentiality. Besides the results being delayed by several hours, they were first revealed to the social media before the patients had been informed individually. After recovery, Sakudya still felt residual stigmatization, saying:

> Some people somehow think I still have residue of the virus. I heard one person referring to my road as "Corona road," and some people now avoid the road altogether. It hurts, but I have to be mature and accept it.

The case of the Sakudya family revealed the effects of the lack of resources and the inadequate training among health workers, leading to their reluctance to handle COVID-19 patients. Stigmatization within the community also affected the family of this returning traveler, lending support to Makurumidze's (2020) recommendation to deal with the mental health implications of stigma.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Return migrants aroused indignation among locals because the returnees had been exposed to better circumstances elsewhere and expected that local standards be raised to match circumstances existing elsewhere. Returnees aroused anxiety because they "asked too many questions" about the status quo and "such questions are viewed as offences and subversions" (Bauman and May, 2001: 37). When they demanded water, better food, and appropriate treatment in quarantine centers, they pricked the conscience of the local officials who were already aware of the inadequacies of the status quo.

Pandemics are known for revealing gaps in the health systems and that is how they prompt administrations to improve (Tomes, 2010; El-Sadr, 2020). The return migrants and travelers "forced" Zimbabwe to look at its image in the mirror, and government officials did not like what they saw. The dilapidation had been taking place for some time and the country had accepted it as the status quo. The pandemic caused extreme discomfort, tensions, and suffering in the society. Because the virus could not be seen and dealt with, the frustration was offloaded onto returning residents who could be seen, touched, and contained. Notwithstanding the pandemic, there have always been ambivalent relations between migrant and non-migrant Zimbabweans. History and the literature also indicate that in times of change and dealing with uncertainty, there is a tendency to redraw boundary lines between in-groups and out-groups with negative consequences for those labeled as the out-group. For some time, the returnees were stigmatized as harbingers of the virus and viewed as troublesome and acting in an unreasonable manner, thus courting the indignation of local Zimbabweans.

Return migrants, known for their conspicuous consumption, elicited ambivalent feelings of hatred, envy, and admiration among non-migrants who perceived them variously as role models before the pandemic, and irresponsible

spreaders of COVID-19 during the pandemic. The argument sustained throughout this paper is that, to some extent, during the COVID-19 pandemic, return migrants were viewed as the out-group and branded as problematic, whereas the non-migrants were regarded as the in-group who were in danger of being "contaminated" by the returnees.

Going forward and taking cues from previous pandemics, it is important to involve communities, including the migrants, in designing responses to pandemics (El-Sadr, 2020; Mencutek, 2022). The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner (UNOHC, 2020) further encourages that beyond being included in national response, return migrants should have access to social protection and recovery strategies without discrimination; they should also be protected against stigma and exclusion in the private and public spheres. Health education is necessary to dispel myths and conspiracy theories. It is also important to pay attention to mental health issues, as pandemics cause fear (Eichelberger, 2007; Dionne and Turkmen, 2020; Ornell et al., 2020; Hardy et al., 2021).

Poverty makes it difficult for African countries to protect their citizens against COVID-19 (Muller-Mahn and Kioko, 2021). To reduce the competition and in line with the views of Taslakian et al. (2022), this study recommends that Zimbabwean migrants assist in the improvement and upgrading of the Zimbabwean healthcare systems. Migrants can use their human, social, and financial capital to assist their country of birth. To encourage the migrants to invest in Zimbabwe, communication channels must be opened with frank and transparent conversations about how migrants can be part of the country's development agenda. Zimbabweans need to believe that they can trust their government institutions that are currently perceived to be riddled with corruption, mismanagement, and economic ills (Helliker and Murisa, 2020; Shumba et al., 2020; Makombe, 2021; Nyamunda 2021).

Another recommendation is that of circumspect language use as a powerful tool to organize thoughts. The use of words such as "detainees," "deserters," and "inmates" (language that criminalizes and reveals the securitization of the nation's COVID-19 response) to refer to return migrants and travelers who were accommodated in quarantine and isolation centers may have conjured up negative images about how these people ought to be treated, leading to indignation against them.

Lack of adequate resources and facilities combined with fear and perceived competition for scarce resources created a situation where return migrants and travelers became vulnerable to hatred from locals and government officials who would have preferred that the migrants remained where they were, rather than returning to Zimbabwe. The fact that the quarantine and isolation centers and hospitals had little to offer, unsettled both the return migrants and travelers and the non-migrant Zimbabwean population. Dealing with an unknown virus in a situation of poverty pitted the migrant and non-migrant groups against each other, drawing a sharp line between those who belong and those who do not. The travelers and return migrants became easy scapegoats in a country reeling from long-standing

economic challenges. In these situations, it was easy to identify the return migrants as "problematic" and unsettling, preferring that they "stay there rather than come here."

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

FUNDING

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Compatible Compacts? The "Social Life" of Vulnerability, Migration Governance, and Protection at the Zimbabwe–South Africa Border

Kudakwashe Vanyoro[1], Nicholas Maple[2], and Jo Vearey[3]

Abstract

The central argument of this paper is that interventions of humanitarian organizations at the Zimbabwe–South Africa border reveal the importance placed on making very clear distinctions between those needing protection and those who do not. This is the case even in times wherein migrants have other protection needs that fall outside these boundaries or intersect with those of others. These boundaries are retained in the stable definitions of migrant in/vulnerability that have been legitimized by the increased emphasis of two separate frameworks: one, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM) for managing migration and the other, the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) that determines a set of stable norms for international refugee protection. These mandates are also connected to other tidy, established identities of vulnerability that pertain to gender, health, legal standing, and persecution. In contexts marked by conflicting and overlapping experiences for persons on the move, and mixed migration flows, these ideas are unstable as a way of governing migration. This is because they can also reproduce and intensify social divisions that may lead to inconsistencies and unethical practices in international protection and migration governance for irregular migrants, as well as failures to respond to "the 'social life' of vulnerability." We propose this novel concept in the paper to capture and reimagine the limits and possibilities for protection.

Keywords: migration, borders, refugees, vulnerability, global compacts, governance

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INTRODUCTION

From around 2007, the border town of Musina became a base for several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international non-governmental organizations (IGOs) that began to slowly move there to establish their presence by opening local offices and building capacity. This was in response to the crisis in Zimbabwe that left many with little choice but to leave in search of livelihoods and protection. This context is well presented and documented by scholars (Rutherford, 2008; Bourne, 2011; Compagnon, 2011; see also Bolt, 2012; 2016). Migrants who came to, or through Musina had access to a range of service providers, including local and international NGOs, faith-based organizations, legal service providers, local civil society organizations (CSOs), humanitarian organizations, health care providers, and governmental and intergovernmental organizations (Amit, 2012: 8). The programs of these organizations were framed mostly along the lines of addressing the perceived vulnerabilities of migrants, but other categories of vulnerability such as unaccompanied minors (pregnant unaccompanied minors, physically or intellectually disabled unaccompanied minors) and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence were also incorporated (Amit, 2012). With the government not assisting these migrants – at least in the beginning – these non-state and international organizations began to provide immediate humanitarian services (Vanyoro, 2024).

In recognition of the increased numbers of cross-border migrants arriving in Musina, the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) opened a Refugee Reception Office (RRO) in 2008. Zimbabwean cross-border displacement has resulted in many migrants remaining in Musina for extended periods of time while waiting for asylum documentation; particularly as the town was – initially – ill-equipped to respond to this increasing migrant population (Nel, 2016). Recent years have seen increasing numbers of NGOs and IGOs opening local offices. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) opened an office in 2007 and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) established an office in 2008 (Amit, 2012). Since 2007, responses to understand and address the legal, humanitarian, social, and medical needs of migrants in Musina have developed. These responses have evolved to include coordination and collaboration between governmental and non-governmental actors, such as the development of bilateral responses between South Africa and Zimbabwe.

Our analysis is limited to the programming of two local NGOs in Musina: one providing migrants with legal assistance and the other offering social assistance. Both are doing so in their capacity as UNHCR implementing partners, which became more necessary after UNHCR closed its field office in the area in December 2019 (Vanyoro, 2024). The central argument of this paper is that the interventions of these organizations reveal a well-mannered yet problematic humanitarian response that highlights the importance placed on clearly distinguishing between those who require protection and those who do not. This was the case even in times where migrants had other protection needs that fell outside these boundaries or intersected

with those of others. These boundaries, this paper argues, are retained through the stable definitions of migrant in/vulnerability that have only been strengthened and legitimized by the two – very separate – global compacts. Whereas one, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM) focuses on managing migration, the other, the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) aims to strengthen existing norms for international refugee protection. These mandates are also connected to other tidy, established identities of vulnerability that relate to gender, health, legal standing, and persecution.

In the South African context, which is marked by conflicting and overlapping experiences for persons on the move (Vanyoro, 2023) and mixed migration flows, these ideas of vulnerability are unstable as a way of governing migration because they can also reproduce and intensify social divisions, both among migrants as well as in the communities they live in. This paper demonstrates that this tension can lead to inconsistencies and unethical practices in international protection and migration governance. It can also result in failures to respond to what the paper refers to as "the 'social life' of vulnerability," which we observed as a key characteristic of this border town. This is a concept we use to capture how responses to the disconnect between single points of rights violations, such as lack of documentation, can lead to conditions that permeate society to the extent that it puts migrants in a position of making decisions that can create more forms of risk and vulnerability for themselves or others living in the same space, regardless of their nationality.[4]

In this context, one form of vulnerability is not removed from another, and more vulnerabilities can emerge from the one form to the extent that suffering and living precariously in conditions of risk and uncertainty begin to appear as a natural characteristic of border life. The social life of vulnerability is a concept that exposes the dangers of emphasizing regular legal status in determining protection in contexts where the majority of those on the move cannot access documentation for different reasons. In these spaces, issues of migration have become so banal because of the kinship and conviviality that are disturbed by the border, crudely known as "the devil's fence" (McCullum, 1992), so much so that imposed vulnerabilities take a life of their own in the community because people are trying to exist in a way that challenges this historical anomaly. This banality is not too far from the ways in which this social life serves as a mobilizing force for humanitarian activities because it keeps present the same representation of suffering that gave rise to the establishment of humanitarian government in the border in the first place.

To develop the core argument, this paper begins by laying out its methodology, followed by an articulation of the social life of vulnerability as a concept and how it can be used to capture the indeterminacy and intersections of different kinds of vulnerability imposed on migrants. This section reveals how focusing on specific kinds of vulnerability assumes invulnerability on the part of "others" who reside in the intermediate space of the migrant/refugee binary categorization, in ways that can

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[4] We are indebted to a community activist in Musina who brought this understanding to our attention during fieldwork.

present further vulnerability to everyone else. It also presents both the conceptual and practical difficulties of differentiating between people with agency and those without it, considering how the lines between vulnerability and precariousness are blurred in the context at hand. This paper then locates this discussion in the GCM's and the GCR's approaches to this vulnerability. Furthermore, it explores the limitations by using a case study of the programming of two local NGOs: one providing migrants with legal assistance and the other offering social assistance; both do so in their capacity as UNHCR implementing partners.[5] This helps the paper to illustrate how this all plays out on the ground in South Africa. Finally, the paper offers conclusions and insights about rethinking vulnerability as a mode of interpreting humanitarian and border contexts in migration research.

METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on research we did as part of a project titled "PROTECT: The Right to International Protection. A Pendulum between Globalization and Nativization?" Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we began our research by conducting remote fieldwork, which took place virtually and telephonically in 2021 and consisted of an initial identification and mapping of relevant organizations based on website and document analysis, and preliminary interviews with key informants. Based on the initial mapping, we identified two key actors for more in-depth study: one organization providing basic care services and one focusing on legal assistance. We conducted remote interviews with organizational representatives to gain insight into the role of these actors in identifying and assisting non-nationals whom they considered to be vulnerable or to have special needs. We were also interested in (i) how these representatives interact with other actors and organizations in relation to these populations; and (ii) what understandings of vulnerability – including negotiations on this notion – characterize the assistance provided by and collaborations with other actors. In 2022, with less-restrictive COVID-19 regulations, we conducted in-person fieldwork. This took the form of participant observations and interviews with ten migrants – five serviced by the legal NGO and the other five by the social-assistance NGO.

We complemented this process with consultative engagements and a community workshop in Musina, in collaboration with local organizations, which aimed at upskilling and training community members on issues relating to protection and statelessness. Finally, we completed a desk-based review and discourse analysis of the GCR and the GCM. The University of the Witwatersrand granted ethical clearance (Protocol Number H20/07/45).

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[5] We do not extend our analysis to the impact of cross-border officials on the vulnerability of migrants and other categories of cross-border actors that the paper considered, although we are aware that the UNHCR operates within South Africa's immigration framework. Yet even with this being the case, both the UNHCR and the state adhere to the same principle of separating migrants from refugees.

A CASE FOR USING THE SOCIAL LIFE OF VULNERABILITY AS A CONCEPT TO CAPTURE MIGRANT EXPERIENCES IN SOUTH AFRICA

This theoretical exercise aims to illustrate the limitations of dichotomous and linear portrayals and framings of vulnerability, as set out in the GCM and the GCR. We argue that the social life of vulnerability as a concept captures the indeterminacy and intersections of different kinds of vulnerability. It also reveals how focusing on specific kinds of vulnerability assumes invulnerability on the part of others who reside in the intermediate space of the migrant/refugee binary categorization, in ways that can present further risk and vulnerability. For example, undocumented migrant women who have not qualified for international protection in South Africa, can suffer uneven power relations in spousal relationships they develop with South African men because they have very little bargaining and economic power. This can put them in a vulnerable position to abuse and separation. In the latter situation, this may leave them alone with children who, in turn, are undocumented and resultantly are often unable to be admitted into schools or to write exams due to the lack of the requisite documents.

Some vulnerability literature suggests that rigid social hierarchies and fixed identities rooted in legal forms are the results of the frequently gendered vulnerable/invulnerable binary (Cole, 2016). There is, unsurprisingly, a dichotomy between "migrants" and "refugees" settled in public and policy discourse and international legal norms such as the GCM and the GCR; not to mention a bifurcated perception of the experiences of men and women. This distinction is viable for targeted humanitarian interventions, although this does not mean that the work it does should be ignored. This status quo can sometimes mean that migrants who travel erratically and do not fit the strict criteria of the 1951 Refugee Convention or the rules governing labor migration have limited legal rights (Pijnenburg and Rijken, 2021). The only remaining alternative for them is "irregular" migration, as they do not fall into the category of officially recognized "deserving refugees" or into the exclusive group of "desirable" or "deserving" migrants (those who serve an economic interest) (Pijnenburg and Rijken, 2021: 277).

Political camps in the migration world have tried to target those identified as being susceptible by creating two strict regimes. Responses to "displaced populations" largely refer to a kind of vulnerability that denotes "a range of negative conditions, disabling qualities and diminished capacities including underdevelopment, abject poverty, conspiracy, violation, injury, harm, weakness, susceptibility, fragility, deficiency, dependency and helplessness" (Cole, 2016: 264). This framing is related to the portrayals of the refugee as a figure of "bare life" in forced migration literature (Bauman, 1990; 2002; 2013). These "wasted lives" give vulnerability its figure as "a shortcoming, an impending failure" (Cole, 2016: 264). This means that while the condition of refugee vulnerability presents protection needs, it is also conceived "as a condition best avoided," which also turns it into a problem or a "burden" that must be

minimized, such that the best way to contain its fecundity is "through various forms of securitization" (Cole, 2016: 264).

Working with Cole (2016), we clearly see the paradoxes of responding to refugee vulnerability because it can slip to a place of trying to protect the host community from succumbing to its own preconceived vulnerabilities. In this way, vulnerability takes on a life of its own, to defend and award limited resources. In an attempt to protect themselves from impending vulnerabilities, host societies can create vulnerability for others by marking them as dangerous to it (i.e., criminals or "illegals"); an act Cole interprets as "biopolitical securitization." This paper shows that this is the political consequence that the framing of the well-intentioned GCM has for groups outside the connoted norm of what it has defined as political "order" in the international system.

This analysis can be extended to the migration governance regime of South Africa. It appears to rationalize policies that are difficult to navigate amid a slow bureaucratic system that is not helped by strict visa regulations. Acting based on the securitization of most forms of cross-border migration and national interest, these systems thrive on the presumptive basis that poor, black, African migrants moving to South Africa are a threat. They are regarded as a burden and blamed for the poor service delivery of the social protection system and social services, which should be reserved to address the concerns and interests of the black citizenry. In a context where corruption runs amok, measures like Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) (1998), Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA) (2006), the New Growth Path (2010), and, most recently, the Economic Redistribution and Recovery Plan (2019) have not reduced poverty and unemployment to the extent that they should have (Vanyoro and Musyoka, Unpublished). Immigration has featured prominently in the election manifestos of opposition parties like the Democratic Alliance (DA) and ActionSA.

Guided by this rationality, the South African state has been aggressive in its response to protect its own interests by ensuring that visa application processes are inaccessible to the poor. Would-be migrants applying for long-term visas are required to show guarantees that they will be self-sufficient, be it in the form of medical aid, job offers or contracts, security deposits, and proof of sufficient funds. These arrangements are inherently elitist, hence exclusionary to poor migrants. In this gatekeeping process, these groups are marked by proxy as more likely to be economically vulnerable because of their class through a process of suspicion meant to uncover their hidden identities and agendas.

This reproduces a further position of vulnerability that emerges from being in the country without legal status. Such migrants move below the radar, undetected and evading spot checks, arrest, and deportation. In certain instances, this may entail hiding from social protections or services meant to improve their immediate material circumstances that would not necessarily require documentation to access, often in fear of arrest, deportation or further victimization. Victims and potential victims of

xenophobic violence may, for example, rely on social networks and local protections, or, if none exist in the nearby vicinity, "suffer" in silence.

Atak et al. (2018) argue that in this instance, migrants are being rendered vulnerable by state authorities. However, while useful, this understanding requires further engagement with how this vulnerability takes a life of its own by creating a condition of illegality that affects other strands of well-being such as livelihoods, to the extent that those who occupy liminal border spaces in poor, low-income households (like the shacks in Campbell in Musina) live with it in their daily lives and distribute it in shared border spaces. In such spaces, residences already have a short supply of electricity, running water, and good waste disposal due to the withdrawal of mining capital (Chiguvare, 2022).

In this context, the lines between vulnerability and precariousness may also become blurred. The term "precariousness" in the literature is used to indicate that a large portion of the migrants' "vulnerability" is policy-driven, rather than related to their fundamental traits (Atak et al., 2018: 4). It suggests that it is critical to distinguish between vulnerability and precariousness, since doing so enables discussion of precariousness' manufactured nature and the state's influence in it (Atak et al., 2018: 4). This conception also emerges because some scholars stress vulnerability as "potentiality" or "constitutive." According to Cole (2016), however, there is a risk of blurring the (temporal) line between a general susceptibility to damage and the actual harm that particular people and groups are presently experiencing. We argue that there is also a point at which people's present experiences of vulnerability become a fundamental trait that is most often characteristic of the liminality that comes with being put in a position to reside in limbo. With it comes a certain way of life that relies on the vulnerability that the individual would like to be addressed.

This scenario invokes the sheer spectrum of vulnerability, such that it cannot be captured by a single ideal position. It is here that we argue for the need to think of vulnerability less as a fixed social condition but more as relational: a lived experience that involves people experiencing social harm due to structurally determined susceptibility to social harm as a result of limited access to resources (e.g., services, social support, social protection). Additionally, this entails acting in harmful ways that are potentially generative of different kinds of undesirable social conditions for other social groups. This also means that the individual is not inherently vulnerable because they arrive in Musina as a migrant or asylum seeker, but rather that they begin to experience social harm because of limited access to resources. This interpretation suggests that focusing only on specific categories of vulnerability in humanitarian programming is not the most useful way to respond to social problems faced by groups like migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees living in already poor communities. The GCM and the GCR thus are likely to be problematic in such contexts, as we discuss below.

THE GLOBAL COMPACTS AND VULNERABILITY

How do the global compacts address the question of vulnerability? This question arises from a context where global CSOs involved in the policy process that gave rise to the compacts expressed optimism about their potential significance in national migration governance. With the Dhaka Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) focused on making a case for a compact for migration, the one that followed it in Berlin (2017) was preoccupied with a focus on designing this social contract on "safe, orderly and regular migration." The outcome was a comprehensive but non-binding global agreement on a shared pathway for the management of migration called the GCM. After states sat side by side during the intergovernmental negotiations phase that led to the New York Declaration to negotiate and come to an agreement on specific wording on international migration, the GCM was ultimately endorsed by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly on December 19, 2018 (Schierup et al., 2019). Also following the New York Declaration and two years of comprehensive consultations with Member States, international organizations, refugees, civil society, the private sector, and experts under the direction of the UNHCR, the UN General Assembly also approved the GCR on December 17, 2018. The GCR recognizes that without international cooperation, a durable solution to refugee crises cannot be accomplished, so it provides a framework for more equal and predictable responsibility-sharing (UNHCR, 2018).

On both fronts, it still remains to be seen whether the compacts will in the long term be engaged by local and national actors, particularly policymakers, with the seriousness the authors feel they deserve. Certainly, there was optimism expressed in the preparation of the GCM's ultimate adoption in Marrakech when civil society was tasked with the role of taking the GCM to local and national levels. This air of hope has been countered by concerns about the fitness of these documents for local contexts; that is, how compatible the compacts would be for different geographic and political spaces. While the emergence of the GCR and the GCM has brought to light the crucial role that global governance can play in national-level international protection and migration governance, as explored below, it has also strengthened and given legitimacy to the efforts opposing the claimed difference between "migrants" and "refugees" in the "vulnerability chain." This linear and dichotomous approach does not engage adequately the complex social life of vulnerability described above.

The GCM represents a "remarkable advancement" in international collaboration since it is the first agreement encompassing a broad range of migration issues to be negotiated at the intergovernmental level on a global scale. The discussions that preceded these negotiations included several topic consultations and a stock-taking exercise. The GCM is clear from the outset about the fact that migrants and refugees are two different populations that are governed by two different legal systems. It recognizes that the unique international protection that is outlined in international refugee law is only available to refugees, so it uses the term "migrants."

The extent to which migrants and refugees are distinct groups governed by separate legal frameworks is, however, questionable as argued previously.

The GCR is a response to "an urgent need for more equitable sharing of the burden and responsibility for hosting and supporting the world's refugees" (UNHCR, 2018: l). With the help of other pertinent stakeholders and all UN Member States, it aims to provide a foundation for predictable and equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing. The very obvious connotation at the core of the GCR's guiding principle is the notion of "burden-sharing," which rightly captures the stated observation that without international cooperation, it will be impossible to adequately address refugee issues because granting asylum could cost some nations excessively (UNHCR, 2018). The GCM also sets out, among others, "shared responsibilities" and unity of purpose regarding migration, making it work for all.

This terminology, particularly in the GCR, nevertheless and perhaps unintentionally, implies that host states and their economies are vulnerable to refugees. This in turn runs the risk of turning the refugees' vulnerability against them while at the same time trying to strengthen "solidarity with refugees and affected host countries" (UNHCR, 2018: 2). It is also more likely that this framing will influence how the local community view refugees, especially if they are not willing to extend the benevolent act of "a generous approach to hosting refugees." The GCR "is entirely non-political in nature, including in its implementation, and is in line with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations" (UNHCR, 2018: 2). This political aloofness is also a questionable approach to a document that is trying to address issues related to vulnerabilities that are political in nature, particularly the precariousness that immigration policies help produce.

In the context of South Africa and COVID-19, state-wide lockdowns and the resulting loss of jobs and income, saw the accountability of the state toward migrants and refugees become even more limited (Mukumbang et al., 2020). As a result, civil society has not seen much in the way of real benefits from the GCM or the GCR filter down to the ground level, in terms of ensuring an inclusive response by the government to COVID-19. Instead, civil society has had to respond to the needs of persons of concern in the country, in many cases, replacing functions of the state to support and protect persons in vulnerable situations. The GCR seems to want to separate questions of vulnerability from politics. Yet as Butler (2012) contends, in addressing vulnerability, we must presume that if the political infrastructure itself is destroyed, so too are the assemblies that rely on it. In short, this shows that politics is at the heart of any kind of discrimination.

The GCR also calls for dedicated efforts to address root causes. According to the GCR, climate change, environmental degradation, and natural disasters increasingly interact with the causes of refugee flows even though they are not causes in themselves. Initially and foremost, it is up to the nations where refugee flows first began to address the underlying causes. It also necessitates early measures to address their drivers and triggers, as well as increased coordination among political,

humanitarian, development, and peace players, to prevent and resolve massive refugee situations, which are of serious concern to the whole international community. This recognition of structural vulnerability is laudable. It is framed in the language of respecting peace, promoting human rights, and resolving global conflict.

However, this does not seem to put in place measures to redress the historical imbalances that continue to structure human mobility, which overemphasizes the situatedness of vulnerability over structural forces. For the GCM, that is rooted in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is framed in the language of development. This is most succinct on GCM Objective 2, which aims to minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin. None of these mechanisms are redeemable on the basis of historical injustices or reparations – a growing call in the decolonizing migration literature.

Vulnerability in both compacts is also framed around specific groups. This, the GCR argues, requires resources and targeted needs that can address specifics needs. Persons with specific needs include: children, including those who are unaccompanied or separated; women at risk; survivors of torture, trauma, trafficking in persons, sexual and gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, or harmful practices; those with medical needs; persons with disabilities; those who are illiterate; adolescents and youth; and older persons. In the setting of massive refugee situations, the GCR specifically recognizes that women and girls may encounter specific gender-related challenges that necessitate a change in approach "while also taking into account the particular needs and situation of men and boys" (UNHCR, 2018: 28–29). GCM is also a gender-responsive framework that ensures that the human rights of women, men, girls, and boys are protected throughout the migration process, that their unique needs are adequately recognized and met, and that they are given the tools necessary to act as change agents. In all these instances, there is reticence regarding the distinctions between vulnerability and precariousness, which is problematic, as it is important to be aware of instances in which responses to the victimization of women and girls, often taken as inherent, can create conditions of precariousness for men. LGBTQI+ groups are also not considered.

Legal status is another important consideration in delivering protection. To provide basic support and protection, including for those with special needs, registration and identification of refugees are essential for the persons affected, as well as for states to know who has arrived. For these reasons, the GCR highlights the importance of the UNHCR, working in conjunction with states and relevant stakeholders, to "contribute resources and expertise to strengthen national capacity for individual registration and documentation, including for women and girls, regardless of marital status, upon request" (UNHCR, 2018: 22). In a clinical way, the GCM complements this narrative by emphasizing that, "we must ensure that current and potential migrants are fully informed about their rights, obligations and options for safe, orderly and regular migration, and are aware of the risks of irregular migration" (UN, 2018: 3). This can be discursively read as a warning of moving

illegally if the wrath of the hosts pushes migrants back into dangerous situations. This becomes a way of excluding irregular migrants and legitimizing forms of violence against them such that it reveals how "concern to address one category through the GCM might even eclipse concern to protect another" (De Vries and Weatherhead, 2021: 300). This framework of safe, orderly, and regular migration for the benefit of all is framed as a benchmark for solidarity and "unity of purpose" "in a spirit of win-win cooperation" (UN, 2018: 3).

In sum, it is clear that there are several blind spots in the compacts regarding vulnerability because they strengthen and give legitimacy to the claimed dichotomy between "migrants" and "refugees" in the "vulnerability chain," as well as other binaries of men/women, legal/illegal, etc. As examined next, this linear and dichotomous approach does not engage adequately with the complex social life of vulnerability evident in border areas in South Africa. Instead, the compacts continue to separate questions of vulnerability from politics; show limited awareness of instances in which responses to the victimization of women and girls, often taken as inherent, can create conditions of precariousness for men; and ignore the intersections of different experiences in between the migrant/refugee binary.

UNDERSTANDINGS OF VULNERABILITY IN FIELD-LEVEL GOVERNANCE

So far, this paper conceptually explored a framework of vulnerability and in doing so, introduced the concept of the social life of vulnerability. It also critiqued the two global compacts and their approaches to vulnerability. Now we turn to the case study to show how these ideas manifest in practice. To this end, we consider the interaction between the types of vulnerability described in the GCM and the GCR with the experiences of irregular migrants in South Africa, particularly in how they are articulated in the programming of local NGOs providing legal and social assistance on behalf of the UNHCR in Musina.

It is worth noting that South Africa's two international migration systems provide fertile ground for the incompatible compacts to thrive. Indeed, the UNHCR contributed to the creation of a system that separates migrants from refugees. In 1995, the UNHCR provided the DHA with a suggested draft Refugee Bill based on the Zimbabwe Refugees Act of 1983, which the agency had a hand in drafting (Klaaren et al., 2008). In 1997, South Africa produced a Green Paper on Migration that contained a draft refugee policy. The new refugee policy, which had received a great deal of input from international scholars, had a focus on temporary protection and burden-sharing across the Southern African region (Crush and Williams, 2002; Klaaren et al., 2008). It also recommended separate policy processes for migrants and refugees (Crush and Williams, 2002). While some hailed the final 1998 Refugees Act as a beacon of progressive African-centric legal frameworks (Smith, 2003), others regard the last-minute changes to the Act by the DHA as severely weakening the law. The Act's focus on protecting refugees with official status creates legal and normative gaps for the protection of asylum seekers and other forced migrants (Amit, 2015).

Klaaren et al. (2008) suggest that the primary purpose of the 1998 Refugees Act was to gain control over groups of people who were not covered by the 1951 Refugee Convention's refugee definition. Thus, a tense relationship emerges between the national refugee system and the immigration system. In turn, the Immigration Act (No. 11) of 2002 and its accompanying regulations (the "2002 Immigration Act") has created a highly restrictive immigration regime that assists highly skilled immigrants but closes immigration to most low-skilled workers (Johnson, 2015).

Legal status: Vulnerable "persons of concern"

There are tensions relating to how different actors approach refugee protection in Musina. This includes differing opinions on how to help those most in need. Most noteworthy is how the UNHCR operates and how its funding drives the operations of implementing partners' under-funded and under-resourced local organizations and more independent, more financially viable international organizations. While the kind of vulnerability the UNHCR responds to in its operations is associated with those seeking asylum, it does not really reflect the needs of irregular migrants in Musina. Here, most migrants tend to be undocumented and occupy a space where they do not fit the refugee definition as set out in the 1951 Refugee Convention. The intersections of different kinds of vulnerability with human mobility make it difficult for a UNHCR social assistance implementing partner to respond to the needs of the community they serve, particularly given their broader mandate as a welfare NGO.

We selected a social-assistance NGO for this study because it runs the Refugees and Asylum Seekers Social Assistance Project, which it implements on behalf of the UNHCR. Under this project, it provides social assistance (food vouchers and transport subsidies) to newly arrived asylum seekers and refugees, who are largely from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Cameroon, Burundi, Somalia, and Ethiopia. It is also responsible for assessing cases to categorize the vulnerability of individuals, and based on these assessments, it allocates services through material support, psychosocial support, and referrals for refugees and asylum seekers across the Limpopo province.

A requirement from the UNHCR is that the organization only assists migrants who are legally in the country. This creates some conflict, with members of the organization questioning the material difference between Congolese asylum seekers and Zimbabwean migrants. For example, Julie was a 49-year-old woman from Cameroon who arrived in Musina in 2013. She had married in a Catholic union before separating when her husband converted to Islam. Her circumstances forced her to abandon her tertiary studies after spending two years at university. She noted that she left because of the fighting in the family: "I was not having peace – every time fighting, fighting. A relative said, 'If you stay, we are going to lose you and your children.' So, I just decided if I can make things straight here" (*Julie, Musina, September 14, 2022*). Julie left immediately and traveled to South Africa with the assistance of truck drivers who smuggled her into the country without a passport.

She was able to obtain an asylum permit on arrival, but when it expired, she was unable to renew it during the COVID-19 pandemic. She said, "I applied 2-3 times; they didn't reply, so I don't know what to do. Even that document they gave me, it's not for me. How can I say you apply for Cameroon, and they give you DRC?" Thus, at that stage, it becomes very difficult for a UNHCR implementing partner to assist a person like Julie. Nevertheless, "… with the help of this social-assistance NGO, I start[ed] [to make] samosas, but with the grace of God, I leave samosas. I cook from home and deliver [to] Senegal, Nigeria" (*Julie, Musina, September 14, 2022*).

The social workers observed that "people who face the most challenges are the migrant population, not asylum seekers." As "asylum seekers they have an option … they can approach Home Affairs and apply for their documentation. But what about the majority of Zimbabweans, what about the majority of Mozambicans, Malawian[s] and the like?" (*social worker, social-assistance NGO, November 2, 2021*). In such instances, the organization would write motivation letters citing their reasons for defaulting assistance to the UNHCR "non-persons of concern" who are largely undocumented. This was only acceptable to the UNHCR in instances when "non-persons of concern" had critical health-related needs and challenges related to chronic illness or serious injuries. This was the case when there was "a guy who was mauled, who was eaten [bitten] by some dogs; he's from DRC and he is not documented. And because he is not documented, I cannot say, 'I cannot provide you with a service'" (*social worker, social-assistance NGO, November 2, 2021*).

These layers illustrate that only those in extreme circumstances are eligible for help, implying that only those facing extreme danger or death qualify for assistance. Yet even then, assistance cannot be guaranteed. It explains why a Zimbabwean woman at the local Roman Catholic Church Shelter for Women relied on her own "piece jobs" by waiting for cars that came by the shelter looking for women to do laundry for R100, as well as the goodwill of church patrons to afford her sick child's medical care in Pretoria. This was Sandy, a 39-year-old woman from Mwenezi, and a married mother of three, whose husband was in Zimbabwe. She studied up to Grade 7 and came to South Africa regularly to seek treatment in Pretoria for her child who had "a problem with his bones" (*Sandy, Musina, September 15, 2022*).

Sandy had managed to secure shelter at the Roman Catholic Church Shelter for Women. Despite the social-assistance NGO's acknowledgment that all people on the move are potentially vulnerable and while the organization had a large presence, it was inaccessible to the Zimbabwean migrants residing in the transit shelters as well as those in the Campbell shacks because they were largely undocumented. For example, Sandy said, "I just travel through the border by asking the officials to let me in because I don't have a passport and I just want to take my child to the hospital. They also can see the situation. I just have to show them his hospital card, even when I'm coming with him for a review" (*Sandy, Musina, September 15, 2022*).

Those in the Campbell shacks lived in congested and unsanitary conditions, which created other vulnerabilities related to health and education. Chiedza, a

40-year-old woman, arrived in the border town in 2004 from Marange with her grandfather who had cared for her because her parents had died and life became difficult. She arrived at the border without a passport and just walked through, much like Sandy. She went to Venda and worked there until she got married in Musina. She later brought Shamiso (a 20-year-old woman) who had grown up in Musina after arriving there as a child. Shamiso had fallen pregnant as a teenager after dropping out of school because she did not have the required documentation to register for her Grade 12 exams. Reflecting on this experience, albeit appearing unperturbed, Chiedza said that their children could attend school "under the understanding that their papers should be sorted. And it's not all schools that allow this. There are only two schools that allow this. This also means they must walk far to school when there are schools nearby, for example this one is 2 km [away]. They must walk to town. They do not have birth certificates because my child has [a] baby clinic card from Zimbabwe." This also means that they are forced to drop out of school because ultimately, they cannot register for their Grade 12 exams (*Chiedza, Musina, September 15, 2022*). Similar experiences threatened the lives of undocumented children who are born to South African fathers.

The only time that legal status did not really matter was when the social-assistance NGO provided psychosocial support or gave families with large numbers of children preference. These families would also undergo best interest case assessments to determine if the family was at risk or the children were subjected to child labor or exploitation. The Zimbabwean families with undocumented children residing in Campbell also had large families but expressed no knowledge of these services.

Shalimba was from Bukavu in the DRC. She had married in Durban but subsequently divorced. She studied up to Grade 3. She arrived in South Africa in 2009, fleeing the war and applied for asylum. However, having children gave her access to shelter where her children were fed twice a day and one of her children who was four years old attended the shelter preschool run by one of the nuns. "Here I am helpless because of the kids, but in Durban I was a car guard. If they give me money, I can go to Durban" (*Shalimba, Musina, September 14, 2022*). She was waiting for a travel subsidy, with the social-assistance NGO being the most likely people to help when they came by to assess the shelter residents. It was a common thread, as Julie, whose son had been born prematurely and was currently nine, noted how the Catholic church give her rice and cooking oil in times of need. "But this is only because I have [a] child. But if you don't have children, you take care of yourself," said Julie. Hence, she identified having a child as "a special need" (*Julie, Musina, September 14, 2022*).

Legal status also played a key role in the work done at the legal assistance organization chosen for this study. At the time of the Zimbabwean crisis in 2008, the UNHCR gave the office a project on case management, general management, and queue management. The office would facilitate the Zimbabwean migrants' access to shelter, and then advised them to find ways of regularizing their lives. This approach

reveals that the office's understanding of vulnerability is also centered on legal status. The office quickly determined that the main reason these migrants were vulnerable was that there was no reception office in Musina to process their asylum claims, which led them to take riskier routes. Their direct engagement with the DHA saw the opening of an RRO in 2009. Undoubtedly, legal status is an important focus in ensuring that people are documented and protected. However, as discussed above, it is also a gateway to the exclusion of migrants from accessing services provided by the UNHCR implementing partners like the social-assistance organization. For example, Memory, a 42-year-old mother, came to South Africa in 2004 because jobs were hard to find in Zimbabwe. She was recruited at Gate 4 by a white farmer from Beitbridge. He got her a work permit to work on the farm, which would be renewed every six months. From 2005, farmers needed to apply for corporate permits, which allowed them to recruit a fixed number of foreign workers in line with immigration law (Rutherford, 2008). When the farmer's lease with government expired, Memory came to Musina. At this juncture, she resorted to using the asylum system as the only means of accessing documentation (*Memory, Musina, September 15, 2022*). The situation presented by Memory raises all sorts of vulnerabilities that included reducing their lives to living off waste: "We go to the dirt, the dumping site where we look for things that people say have expired and we carry it and come eat it here with our children because we can tell that there is no other way" (*Memory, Musina, September 15, 2022*).

Gender

Gender was also an important consideration on the social-assistance organization's work, with a slant toward an overarching understanding that "women are important." In fact, the NGO appeared to view their vulnerability as greater than that of men, which was then compounded by age and legal status. A social worker found that "women are more vulnerable" because of the circumstances they find themselves in either as primary caregivers, or having other dependents. However, this binary notion of vulnerability is challenged by the narratives and experiences of male asylum seekers in Musina. Raheem was a 36-year-old asylum seeker from Burundi, married with three children and educated up to Grade 12. He came to South Africa in 2018, fleeing political persecution, narrowly escaping an assassination attempt as a member of an opposition political party who refused to join the main one. He considered himself vulnerable, stating that he had five people under his "shoulders" staying with him at the salon and some "Zimbabwean ladies" who occasionally came to ask for bread. "I have a very big responsibility, so I need organizations to come and assist me" (*Raheem, Musina, September 14, 2022*).

Similarly, Manqonqo, a Congolese asylum seeker lived with his wife and son in Musina. He had been waiting for his refugee status determination for nine years, which he only received in November 2022. During our conversation, prior to receiving his status notification, he said: "According to my understanding, all

of us, we are vulnerable … since we don't know anything and since you are in need of anything, meaning you are vulnerable." He defined his vulnerability in relation to his mental health and the anxiety he experienced while waiting for his refugee status, which was ultimately granted in February 2023 (*Manqonqo, Musina, September 14, 2022*).

The conception of vulnerability skewed toward women is also challenged in relation to LGBTQI+ people. When doing their assessments, the social-assistance organization also considered LGBTQI+ people as a risk category. However, when asked if sexual orientation is something that stands out as well in this context in terms of layers of vulnerability from his experience, the social worker indicated that these groups often chose to remain invisible rather than seek protection on that basis. They would either change their claim at DHA or remain in these communities without documentation, oblivious to the fact that this constitutes grounds to claim international protection. This is consistent with a recent report on LGBTQI+ asylum seekers in South Africa (Mudarikwa et al., 2021) that found that when engaging with LGBTQI+ refugees' and asylum seekers' claims, many DHA officials regarded them as duplicitous claims and frequently disregarded them based on the assumption they were fabricated. One client was told that they could not be gay and "had to find a way of proving it." This bias feeds into a broader context of abuse of queer people.

The question of gender as a key aspect of vulnerability has often meant that the protection of LGBTQI+ people and men becomes more precarious. Defining vulnerability in this way was informed by the imperative to address the protection needs of migrant women in the border area, as they encounter several risks, especially when they move with children. However, it does not respond to the relationality of vulnerability, which this paper argues entails that effective programming on protection issues has to also consider the needs of other groups because, if ignored, could be generative of different risks imposed on others, including migrant women and children.

PERCEPTION OF THE COMPACTS

Migrant interviewees and attendees at our validation workshop confirmed our findings that knowledge about the global compacts at this level is very limited, if non-existent. This is related to the rather limited knowledge regarding applicable laws in general during the workshop. This shows the limited efficacy of these documents for experiences on the ground, which we argue is particularly grounded in the disparity between a context marked by conflicting and overlapping experiences for persons on the move and mixed migration flows and ideas of vulnerability that are unstable as a way of governing migration.

In our interview with a legal advocate from the legal assistance office, he made no reference to the compacts and even evaded the question, almost dismissively. He maintained that these "beautiful documents" were useful in ensuring that practice was aligned but that they were inaccessible, which makes one wonder who they

are intended for. The GCM's insistence on safe, orderly, regular migration means they can only work effectively in contexts where migrants are documented. On the contrary, they have been accompanied by border securitization, militarization, and greater enforcement. This has in turn worsened the vulnerabilities of migrants by producing more undocumented migrants who are unable to access either labor migration permits or refugee papers.

The UNHCR's insistence on legal status has meant that their partner responsible for implementing social-assistance programs feel "defeated" when it comes to accessing other services that require people to have documentation. During our webinar for the 2nd Expert Forum (September 22, 2021), a participant from the legal assistance partner of the UNHCR observed that many migrants do not use the official border crossing when entering or leaving South Africa. Almost daily, the social-assistance NGO, in collaboration with the Red Cross, writes letters to hospitals or clinics for at least ten undocumented people, typically saying: "Please allow this person to access healthcare, they are undocumented, these are their names, these are their issues" (*social worker, social-assistance NGO, November 2, 2021*). Despite these limitations, the social-assistance NGO has used the compacts in one project and in developing an office manual.

The social worker also indicated that when it comes to vulnerability, the GCM stresses the importance of providing information to those in need, every step of the migration journey – but this does not happen. These imperatives are difficult to implement because the protection space is shrinking due to a lack of funding, and "people are exhausted, or they are fatigued with these migration issues or issues of migrants because the dynamics change every day" (*social worker, social-assistance NGO, November 2, 2021*). This limits the mechanisms of ensuring that migration is legal because migrants do not know the "protection avenues" available to them, such as the means for unaccompanied and separated minors to access documentation. There was almost an expectation from the informant that the GCM could help answer all these questions. However, evidence presented at the previously cited expert forum suggests otherwise. In terms of the GCR, there remains several concerns for African countries related to financial and technical capacity, political will, xenophobia, and data gaps.

In sum, a disconnect is evident between the apparent and perceived influence of the compacts within international organizations, and at the ground level within NGOs and the UNHCR's implementing partners. Local NGOs are unclear about or unconvinced of the influence of these global initiatives. Yet in terms of how the UNHCR operates and informs its implementing partners in South Africa on how to act, these global initiatives appear to be having an impact (directly or indirectly). As noted above, there are numerous praiseworthy elements in the compacts; for example, the GCR in many ways is simply reaffirming norms that exist within the current global refuge regime, such as global responsibility-sharing. Yet the binary distinction between refugees and migrants and the framing of vulnerability outlined

in both compacts remains problematic in a context like Musina. These underlying elements appear to be slowly filtered down to ground-level implementers, even if they are perhaps unaware of how these practices are reinforcing existing problematic approaches that are generated at the international level. This also raises some difficult yet tentative questions around the notion that refugees, migrants, and civil society, particularly from the "Global South," are sufficiently the main actors in these global initiatives.

CONCLUSION: TOWARDS A PROTECTION REGIME THAT ENGAGES "SOCIAL LIFE OF VULNERABILITY"

The global compacts present vulnerability as distinctive and hence capable of being addressed by separating the regimes of migration governance from refugee protection. However, this paper has shown that the two categories are not stable or separable in the Zimbabwe–South Africa border scenario that is characterized by mixed migration. In these contexts, the language of the compacts seems more likely to reinforce and even worsen social hierarchies and the vulnerability of irregular migrants by simply legitimizing state securitization.

The compacts' unclear distinctions between vulnerability and precariousness also make for a concerning situation that allows vulnerability to be removed from the role of strict borders and hostile policies. Responsibility is shifting from the state and UN agencies to the individual as someone who should know better than jump the border, or they should be prepared for the violence that follows. This explains why the uptake of the compacts has been slow and expedient at best for local NGOs who simply would like to secure funding in a difficult operating environment. Realizing the limitations of the compacts and other dichotomous arrangements, these organizations venture into partnering with organizations with more elaborate mandates that can fill the void. Working in collaboration across the Limpopo also allows them to address the needs and vulnerabilities of everyone on the move. Moreover, it is an indictment on the limits of exceptionalizing vulnerability, as it creates programming that is narrowed to silos while inhibiting them from addressing the ways that vulnerability assumes a social life of its own. This is why we have outlined as a concept and heuristic the social life of vulnerability.

It will be interesting to see how the global compacts are rolled out further in the coming years. In particular, it will be important to see whether their "influence" will fully reach border areas such as Musina. However, it appears that many within civil society still remain skeptical about how the compacts will be able to advocate for positive responses and improved protection on the ground for all refugees and migrants in South Africa (ACMS, 2021). Instead, they view them as reinforcements of prevailing migration norms. They appear to find more efficacy in working in collaboration, as they are aware that they are dealing with a cross-cutting and intersectoral issue that has far-reaching implications for the wider border context.

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Spaces, Places, and Migration: Understanding and Strengthening Public Health-Care Provision in South Africa

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Abstract

Given South Africa's historical and contemporary realities of both internal mobility and migration from other countries, this paper argues that engaging with space, place, and migration is pivotal to understanding and strengthening public health-care provision in South Africa. This paper views place as emerging from and relating to space. A mutually reinforcing and reciprocal relationship between people and place over time shapes health-care delivery and health outcomes in South Africa. Therefore, this paper argues that engaging with a place-based approach is required to understand the local context in which diverse groups are situated. There is, however, a lacuna in studies situating South(ern) African public health-care challenges within such a place-based approach. This paper presents findings from a mixed-methods study that was designed to fill this gap. The research team conducted fieldwork in six health-care facilities across two provinces in South Africa – four in Gauteng and two in the Vhembe district of Limpopo province – representing urban, peri-urban, and rural settings. The study included exploratory in-depth interviews with 77 health-care providers (including nursing and administrative staff), a survey conducted with 229 health-care users, and site visits. The findings show how diverse spaces shape and are shaped by different migrant profiles, producing diverse places, which in turn present particular demands to the public-health system. It is crucial to understand the pathways, behaviors, and meanings associated with such mobility if we are to strengthen the provision of health-care services in South Africa.

Keywords: migration, place, space, public health-care, Gauteng, Limpopo, South(ern) Africa

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INTRODUCTION

One of the main migration routes for African migrants who undertake an array of migration journeys is in the southern African region (Makandwa and Vearey, 2017; IOM, 2023). The region has a long history of population movement and this has been a central and defining feature of the region's politics, economy, and culture (Crush and Williams, 2005; Crush and Tawodzera, 2014; Lurie and Williams, 2014). Migration and mobility in southern Africa represent a key livelihood-seeking strategy. However, such movement raises concerns about the health of both those who move and of the local (non-migrant) population (Vearey, 2018). Walls et al. (2016) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2023) note that South Africa is the greatest recipient of migrants from the southern African region. These higher levels of mobility, both from across South Africa's borders and within the country, have placed demands on social services including public health care (Landau et al., 2011). Due to its relative wealth and perceived economic and political stability, South Africa plays a key role in migration on the continent and experiences high levels of mixed (regular and irregular) migration (Makandwa and Vearey, 2017; Misago, 2019), mostly from neighboring countries, the Horn of Africa, and West Africa (Frouws and Horwood, 2017).

According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA, 2019), there were 4.2 million migrants in South Africa in 2019. This constitutes about 7.2% of the entire population. With Gauteng province estimated to experience the largest inflow and outflow of migrants between 2016 and 2021, inflows are estimated above 1,6 million (Stats SA, 2018). Cross-border and internal migrants are concentrated in Gauteng province's urban and peri-urban spaces (most international migrants settle in Gauteng – 47,5%). A high concentration of migrants is also found in the border areas of the Limpopo province (Vearey, 2014; Stats SA, 2018; Patrick et al., 2023). Limpopo province is home to many Mozambican and Zimbabwean migrants due to geographical proximity to the two countries (Landau and Segatti, 2009). Vearey et al. (2018) note that although both internal and cross-border migrants are unevenly distributed across the country, the majority of cross-border migrants are located in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, and the Vhembe district (a district in Limpopo province that borders Zimbabwe).

Despite increased regional migration and mobility, as well as a growing politicization and securitization of migration, its impact on health systems is little understood (Walls et al., 2016). The discourse of migration within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) is dominated by cross-border migration, leading to discussions of immigration management and border securitization (Vanyoro, 2023). In South Africa, securitization with regard to migration is not limited to border control but also extends to the (increasing) securitization of health-care and communicable diseases surveillance (Hunter-Adams et al., 2018). However, there is substantial diversity in arrival routes and patterns of mobility and migration (including internal mobility) in the region, which results in heterogeneous

groups, and is often neglected in migration discourse (Vearey, 2014). The biased focus on cross-border migrants, neglecting those who move within the South African borders means that the real root faced by the health-care system remains far from being addressed.

Migrants can face distinct health needs depending on their legal status and migration journeys (AU, 2021). Migration within the SADC region has a long history that includes forced migrants fleeing conflict, individuals moving in search of improved livelihood opportunities, asylum seekers and refugees, traders, and seasonal workers displaced within their own countries or moving across borders (Schockaert et al., 2020; Mbeve and Ngwenya, 2022). Such diversity creates a unique context in which distinct, locally-relevant health responses are needed (IOM, 2011; Vearey, 2014).

The extent to which migrants' health care is addressed in policy frameworks varies greatly across countries in Africa (AU, 2021; WHO, 2022). The World Health Assembly (WHA) resolution A70/24 (WHO, 2017) highlights the need to adequately address the health-related requirements of migrants in line with the aim of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda of leaving no one behind. More importantly, it calls for nation states to address the needs of migrants and refugees in an inclusive, comprehensive manner and to respond to the health needs of the overall population in any given setting (WHO, 2017). It states that health systems should be migrant and people centered with the aim of delivering cultural, linguistic, gender, and age-responsive services – migrant-aware and mobility competent (WHO, 2017). Furthermore, Vearey et al. (2018) note that health governance has a significant part to play in tackling the challenges encountered by nations dealing with both internal and international migration. In line with the WHA resolution, access to health care in South Africa is constitutionally mandated for all, including migrants, regardless of their documentation status (Sprague, 2010; Walls et al., 2015). The 1996 South African Constitution, as interpreted within the National Health Act (2003), guarantees rights to access health care for everyone in South Africa and also provides for the right to dispute resolution (Makandwa and Vearey, 2017). However, there is a clear gap between policy and practice, and regional, local, and facility variations in how the legislation is interpreted (Walls et al., 2016). Given the potential for discrimination and gatekeeping within the public-health sector, this places health-care practitioners and those at the frontline in public health-care facilities as critical mediators of policy implementation (Walls et al., 2016). In the Gauteng province, for example, the provincial Department of Health (DoH) developed guidelines on how to treat non-South African patients that arguably confuses rather than clarifies the situation by erroneously defining foreign patients – who should be charged full fees for hospital-level services – as including refugees and asylum seekers. The law is clear: documented refugees and asylum seekers should be means-tested in the same way as South African citizens. However, maintaining free access to services at primary level is often regarded by practitioners as being the cause of increasing

workloads, undermining working conditions, and allowing some patients to abuse services available to them (Walker and Gilson, 2004). This may lead to the erosion of health-care provider morale and induce negative attitudes toward patients, because free access is viewed as increasing workload.

THE RELEVANCE OF SPACE AND PLACE FOR MIGRANT HEALTH CARE

In this paper, I focus on the process and interaction between people and place – how place influences people, how such places are also reshaped by people over time, and the bearing of this on health and health-care delivery in South Africa. I locate the concepts of space and place within migration, to explore and understand health-care provision in South Africa. These two concepts aim to illuminate and complicate how the health-care provision can be understood. They help conceptualize the study sites as both physical and social spaces and ascertain their impact on health-care delivery. The concepts of space and place have long histories with a multiplicity of meanings and interpretations (De Certeau, 1984; Jones and Moon, 1993; Kearns and Joseph, 1993; Massey, 2004). In this paper, place is viewed as emerging from and relating to space and used as a lens to understand South Africa's health-care challenges. Where space is regarded as a site that is unfixed, contested, and multiple (Massey, 1994), place is viewed as having more structure and fixed meanings, and it implies an indication of stability (De Certeau, 1984; also see Jones and Moon, 1993). It is in places that people become who they are – growing older, working, learning, and maintaining their health or becoming unhealthy (Kearns and Joseph, 1993). Whether in rural or urban areas, the unique qualities of places contribute to the contours of people's health status and health-care service delivery (Kearns, 1991). The relevance of place for health variations is that it constitutes and contains social relations and physical resources (Jones and Moon, 1993; Cummins et al., 2007). Thus, places are sites where people can interact with multiple determinants of health, including with health-care systems.

Engaging with a place-based approach is required to understand the local context in which diverse groups are situated. Moreover, identifying possible places of vulnerability arising from migratory flows allows us to shape appropriate health-care responses in South Africa. This includes understanding the diverse health risks, benefits, and vulnerabilities that face heterogeneous migrant groups (Vearey and Nunez, 2010). In viewing places as symbols of the heterogenization of the world, Bruslé and Varrel (2012) argue that migration and migrants change space and create places that reflect origins, migration routes, and the relation of migrants to their host community. In this study, this is reflected in how migrants interact with the public health-care system. A number of authors assert that research on health and place should not separate context from composition, because there is a mutually reinforcing and reciprocal relationship between place and people (see, for example, Kearns, 1991; Jones and Moon, 1993; Kearns and Joseph, 1993; Cummins et al., 2007). Context and composition are important explanations for health inequality

and why the association of place with health outcomes has been found to remain relatively weak, as individuals influence and are influenced by conditions in multiple places on a daily basis, and over their lifetime (Cummins et al., 2007).

Using data collected in six primary health-care facilities, this paper is based on the premise that understanding the local context(s) in which diverse groups live, work, and transit through can assist in strengthening public health-care system responses to meet the needs of all users – both local and foreign – in South Africa. More importantly, in the wake of migration and mobility, xenophobia, increased difficulties in accessing basic social services, and an already compromised public health-care system in South Africa, I argue that places are symbols of understanding and strengthening public health-care provision where individuals (migrants and non-migrants) interact with the health system. The interplay between places and people's movements leads to places (including regions, localities, and particular facility settings) affecting people's health, and, in turn, individuals themselves shaping places (including services and their provision). A range of health-care actors – migrants, non-migrants, health-care workers, and managers are influenced by and shape services (Walker and Gilson, 2004). Thus, I argue that place is an important lens through which to understand migrant health-care dilemmas in South(ern) Africa, including responding to migration, access to health care, treatment continuity, service delivery, and the population's health status.

METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on qualitative data drawn from in-depth interviews conducted with health-care providers, exploratory surveys conducted with health-care users, and visits to six primary health-care facilities in Gauteng and Limpopo provinces in South Africa. The researcher selected the facilities to represent urban, peri-urban, rural, and cross-border settings. For each of the two provinces, a team of researchers conducted in-depth interviews with health-care providers and surveys with health-care users. The team interviewed 77 health-care workers, which included a mix of clinical and administrative staff, ranging between 10 and 14 participants per facility. These in-depth interviews were conducted in private settings within each clinic. There were 229 survey responses (30–40 health-care users per clinic), which included 127 South Africans and 102 non-national patients. A random sample of patients, who were queuing at each clinic, were invited to participate in a short, administered survey. Their place was saved in the queue and the survey was administered in a private setting, most frequently an empty consultation room. After every facility visit, the research team wrote detailed field notes. The survey responses allowed participants the opportunity to provide detailed narratives of their encounters within the particular clinic or any other South African clinics and hospitals. The research team conducted observations of clinical settings, which formed part of the detailed field notes. Furthermore, the team recorded and transcribed the interviews. Data analysis consisted of thematic content analysis, which began with the research

team identifying major themes and sub-themes at a three-day workshop. This allowed transcripts to be reduced into relevant themes and quotations arranged in table form to allow for cross-interviewees and cross-site comparisons. Narratives from the surveys and quotes from the in-depth interviews and field notes provided relevant themes and quotations for this paper. To support these findings, the team identified representative quotations. The research was approved by the University of the Witwatersrand Research Ethics Committee (non-medical), the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Research Ethics Committee, and the relevant Provincial and District Health Departments.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Within the fieldwork context of those seeking health-care services, diverse labor and personal profiles emerged: these included (but were not limited to) migrant and mobile workers (e.g., truck drivers and contract workers), local resident women, and those who were crossing borders, including in some cases for health-care reasons. These groups present health-care demands ranging from maternal health-care services, to HIV/AIDS services, and treatment for other chronic conditions, including tuberculosis (TB) and high blood pressure. From the analysis of health-care user surveys and health-care provider interviews five main themes were identified: migrant health-care users and service delivery; increased workload; health-care system displacement; crime and safety; and the challenge of return migrants.

Migrant health-care users and service delivery

First, I discuss the range of health-care users that we identified and their impact on service delivery in the fieldwork sites. This theme highlights the realities of migrants and mobile populations whose lives are embedded in multiple places, the realities of host communities, and the interactions between the two populations (Acevedo-Garcia and Almeida, 2012). People move for a variety of push-pull reasons. This has a differential impact on health profiles and service delivery, including medication shortages (caused by return migrants at the end of the year, as well as cross-border migrants coming for seasonal work and upsetting stock planning), communication challenges, patients having multiple consultations for the same medical condition across various health-care facilities, difficulties with continuity of care, and challenges ensuring that patients complete courses of medications.

Shortage of medication is a challenge facing most public health-care facilities, as they struggle to treat large numbers of patients within their catchment area. The majority of health-care providers reported that such medication shortages are worsened by increasing numbers of non-nationals. For example, a doctor from Vhembe district, responding to the question of whether inward migration contributes to shortages of medication said:

> Yes, it does, because we find that, for example, Mozambican people come and consult, consult in a large number. So, when the local patients, when they come – remember the clinic is for local people – when they come to consult, they find there is no treatment [i.e., medication], the treatment is finished (doctor, rural clinic).

Such a response is underpinned by deep-seated stereotypes about cross-border migrants in South Africa as abusing resources and overburdening state systems to the detriment of the local population (also see Vearey, 2014; Maphumulo and Bhengu, 2019). By appealing to us to "remember the clinic is for local people," the doctor points to both perceived resourcing implications about migrant populations and also exhibits a lack of understanding of policy guidelines relating to their care, given that "local people" are perceived by this particular doctor to exclude migrants. Such negative perceptions regarding cross-border migrants were widely held. Another example was provided by a nursing sister from another facility in the Vhembe district:

> The people from outside, they abuse medication sometimes … because you can see if the patient comes, last we were using booklet, you can see a patient comes today, tomorrow is coming here at the clinic, another day she goes to [name of place] that clinic near here ... For a week, the patients circle all around clinics around [this area]. They want to collect medication. I don't know what they do, but they used to … ya, others say rumors, say they collect medication and they go that side with it, maybe to give [to] their relatives" (nurse, border area).

Such presumed "shopping around" for medication, combined with other forms of perceived misuse by cross-border migrants, is said to result in a shortage of medication in public health-care facilities. These behaviors were also reported (though no evidence was provided) to be taking place outside of the public-health system, whereby cross-border patients who had financial resources were reported by some health-care providers as consulting with private doctors and buying medication. Again, this emphasizes the strongly-held perceptions of public health-care providers that position non-nationals as abusers of the public health-care system. One explanation for this behavior is that patients have a distinct lack of trust in the nurses and the health-care system more generally and resultantly seek out various treatments in the hope that one facility will help them. While this behavior is not confined to migrant populations, health-care providers clearly consider it to be particularly problematic when it is undertaken by migrants.

Similarly, a service provider at a peri-urban facility in Gauteng revealed how cross-border migrants and mobility generate further visitors (e.g., relatives), obligations, and demands for services in public health-care facilities:

> Because this is an industrial area, so there are many traveling firms. Yeah, so they travel with trucks and stuff so we get some people who come in here and collect their medication. The truckers, yeah, and then they leave. And most of the women, because they come in here maybe to visit their husbands because they live in Zimbabwe or Mozambique and stuff, and then they get free access to health [care] and then they leave to another country (nurse, peri-urban facility 1).

These scenarios generate situations whereby health-care users are accused by health-care providers of abusing the free access to health services available. However, data on whether such abuses are actually taking place is limited. Our survey results (reported elsewhere) do not support these suggestions of "shopping around" or abusing the public health-care system.

Migration and mobility give rise to interactions of ethnic groups, diverse languages and cultures within public health-care facilities. Language and communication become a challenge and, in such instances, immigrants' experiences are those of discrimination and denial of services otherwise granted to nationals (Acevedo-Garcia and Almeida, 2012). In this study, health-care users faced the challenge of language ability and effective communication and this could give rise to denial of services, restricted access, and poor-quality treatment. Moreover, language and communication abilities impacted on cross-border patients' access to health-care services and affected the quality of services within that setting, including privacy and confidentiality. A nursing sister in one of the Gauteng peri-urban facilities talked about the biggest challenges facing the clinic and clinicians:

> ... language, it is a struggle. Because you cannot obtain what is wrong from the patient because you know mos [it's like], they have to tell us what is wrong. And again, the confidentiality of them but, and in such cases I have to go out there in the crowd and [ask]: "Please, who is from Malawi here, and do you know English?" "Yes." "Are you sure you understand English?" "Yes." "Then please can you come and translate?" (nurse, peri-urban facility 2).

In some cases, migration and mobility present challenges for treatment continuity for HIV and other chronic conditions and follow-up consultation across facilities. For example, at the rural facility in Vhembe, there was concern that contract workers residing in the area temporarily and those using a facility in the border town, were either visiting for medication and then returning home to Zimbabwe or visiting en route to further destinations. The concerns raised relate to the ability of users to continue to access treatment once they had finished their contract and moved to another location.

Increased workload

Respondents in the fieldwork localities regarded migration and mobility as generating significant additional workload. Problems arising from presumed increased patient numbers and what were considered transient populations were compounded by insufficient staff ratios, high staff turnover, and delays in replacing them. Such pressures have a huge impact on workforce morale. One respondent at a Vhembe facility said:

> … shortage of staff, yes, because we are seeing more patients, especially from outside, only here at [border town] the border. All people from Africa, they start here, to get here at the border. So, we're seeing many patients, the ratio is too big. Ya, it affects health services ... too much overload and staff shortage are the biggest challenge here … we have not received training on migrants. It has had an effect on antenatal care services, because they move from that side [Zimbabwe] to deliver here. They come for antenatal care and to deliver here; they bring their babies for vaccination … Ya, because it's free (health-care provider, border area).

Workload considerations are interrelated and may generate a vicious circle; in fact, staff shortages in facilities gave rise to resignations of overworked staff. Park Station, the primary railway station in inner-city Johannesburg, provides travel connections to the whole of Africa. A health-care provider in this locality offered his opinion (which he could not verify but which reflected the views of other staff members) on the impact of the migration on the clinic:

> Yes, I think they're overworked, some of them. Because the location of the clinic, it's in a transit point. There's Rea Vaya [bus service], there's [transport terminus]. Yes, there's a bus terminus for buses for all over Africa. And then the clients are too much, so sometimes they [the staff] get burned out. I think that's why they resign (health-care provider, urban facility).

Respondents observed that the combination of a greater number of patients and under-staffed facilities, as well as the nature of the workload generated by migrant populations, brought their own particular difficulties. This includes additional demands on maternal health-care services (antenatal care, delivery, and immunization services). However, again this was expressed in interviews as a perception of the impact of migration on the facilities rather than being evidence-based. South Africa provides free health care to women during pregnancy and children under six years (Silal et al., 2012; Makandwa and Vearey, 2017). A health-care provider in Gauteng province's peri-urban informal settlement facility said:

I am just thinking, maybe in their country, maybe they do pay when they're pregnant for deliveries and all those things. So, they decide to come this side because it's free (health-care provider, peri-urban facility).

Health-care system displacement

Aside from availability and cost, when selecting facilities, migrants were motivated by perceptions of treatment quality. A decision to use a particular facility was frequently linked with poor service being previously experienced at another facility. These experiences included verbal abuse from professionals and fellow patients, being denied service, and what users perceived as poor-quality services. For example, we were told that most health-care users using one of the peri-urban clinics did so as a way of avoiding perceived poor-quality treatment from nearby facilities (field notes, November 21, 2015). Verbal abuse and denial of services were widespread, but not necessarily limited to the experiences of non-nationals. It occurred to patients traveling from outside the facility catchment area and where staffing was stretched. One patient at an inner-city Johannesburg clinic spoke about her experience of being denied services:

> I was verbally abused. I came with my child [who] was sick and I was from work. But they said I was not supposed to come to the facility and they told me I am not the only patient here. … Waiting long is always a problem; besides having many people, the staff is slow. I was told that my stitches were not to be removed here; I have to go to this other clinic in the city (local patient, urban facility).

This patient's narrative illuminates a number of service-access and quality dimensions, including that users have to report to facilities early, endure long waiting times, face overcrowded environments, and that staff are perceived as slow and overworked. Poor communication between health-care providers and patients was further detrimental to service experience. One service provider recounted a patient's experience from one of the provinces:

> Nurses at the border clinic four times took blood samples from him but always failed to give him the results – his results were always "pending" – he ended up going to a hospital in the border town because he was not getting any help at this clinic (health-care provider, border area 2).

Similarly, another service provider, referring to the same clinic, said:

> She gets her ARV pills at the border clinic because she started at this clinic; but if she wants to be treated for other illnesses, she doesn't come to the border

clinic, she goes to other clinics. Every time she experiences a problem at the border clinic. She calls it "Satan Clinic" (health-care provider, border area 3).

A further contributor to patients moving between clinics was a wish for privacy. For example, providers identified that some teenagers seeking family planning assistance at a peri-urban clinic from a nearby informal settlement in Gauteng, avoided a mobile clinic in the informal settlement. Some patients were willing to travel significant distances to be treated at a facility that could safeguard their privacy and ensure confidentiality and thus avoid potential stigmatization, particularly for those being treated for HIV/AIDS. This exchange between an interviewer and a nursing sister highlights this problem:

> *Nurse, peri-urban facility*: No, even the locals you know [residential location] is 30 minutes. They are driving; they travel by train, a taxi to come here. So, they've got … they get lots of transport to come this side. They prefer to come to [peri-urban clinic].

> *Interviewer*: So, why do they prefer this clinic [peri-urban clinic] over a clinic in [residential area]?

> *Nurse, peri-urban facility*: When we ask them, they start, [peri-urban clinic] is far, you know, no one will know their [HIV/ AIDS] status …

Such privacy and confidentiality concerns raise questions about the continued stigmatization of HIV (Gilbert and Walker, 2010). Users' reasons – in this case even the citizens' reasons – for changing facilities and their treatment preferences could be an indication of financial and staffing shortfalls within the public health-care system. As Coovadia et al. (2009) observe, South Africa's health-care system and health-service delivery continue to be shaped by the country's controversial past, including racial and gender discrimination, violence, and severe income inequalities.

Crime and safety

Reciprocal relationships between people and place that shape health delivery and outcomes are influenced by perceptions and experiences of crime and safety. A necessary condition for clinical safety and service quality is that health-care facilities are secure sites. South African experiences of migration and mobility largely focus on urban areas, and these are overrepresented in the crime statistics, thus allowing a connection between migration and criminality to be made despite the lack of evidence to support such claims. However, concerns of crime and safety were issues that were often raised during the research and respondents indicated that these were not confined to urban areas. Within the study context, some patients expressed concerns around safety and a fear of being robbed when they walked between

their residences and the health-care facility. This fear was amplified by staff delays – one health-care user at a rural facility in Vhembe district suggested that delivery bottlenecks and waiting times could increase the risk of becoming a victim of crime in localities surrounding the clinic:

> … they neglect patients and ignore patients at the clinic. [Staff are] very slow in assisting and treating patients; patients stay very far, so will walk late to their house. Often thieves will steal their handbags because it is very late (health-care user, rural facility).

Clinicians and health-facility employees also expressed fears for safety in the work location, and this sometimes led to them undertaking lengthy daily commutes from their rural homes rather than residing near the facility. Such commuting patterns have the potential to contribute to staff burnout. Fears expressed by health-care providers from different locations, suggest a widespread impact on health-care delivery. One nurse from Vhembe district rural facility pointed out:

> We cannot offer a 24-hour service because the nurses' home is not completely secure. There is not enough light outside, because nowadays there is a lot of crime. You cannot move from the nurses' home to the clinic where there is not enough light. Somebody can come and tell the security, "I have got someone who is ill," whereas can you see our fence, it is near the main road. Somebody can start there and shoot through whereas we are staying and moving here … (nurse, rural facility).

Similarly, a nursing sister from an informal facility in the Gauteng peri-urban setting revealed how safety and the location of the facility can impact on service coverage and staff retention:

> No. I think the only time the staff that goes [resigns from post], is the dental, one because this place, you know, is a Colored area, so they swear at you, they will tell you, "I'll wait for you, I will stab you." So, there's a white lady who was working that side, a dentist, so they said to her, "We'll shoot you and we're going to take your car. You won't get out of the gate." So, she got so scared; then she just decided, "I'm no longer coming" (nurse, peri-urban 4).

Fear of crime and feelings of insecurity may thus contribute to high staff turnover, long commuting distances, and, in some cases, the closure of particular departments.

Challenge of return migrants

Alongside cross-border migration, there is widespread internal migration where people move locally between provinces. This has received scant attention in the

literature and yet internal migration occurs far more frequently in South Africa than does cross-border migration (Vearey, 2014). Health-care providers within a rural study site in Limpopo province perceived that return migrants, mostly traveling back from Gauteng province, contributed to the spread of diseases and unwanted pregnancies:

> *Health-care provider, rural facility*: Ja. When they come back home during [the] festive season, there are a lot of people, and if people are many, there are a lot of activities and even the diseases. It's increasing.

> *Interviewer:* So, what kinds of diseases? So, you mean the increase in the community?

> *Health-care provider, rural facility*: About the STIs [sexually transmitted infections] and other problems. The teenage pregnancy, it's a challenge also, and of course, now the HIV and AIDS. When people are in Gauteng, they met a large number of people. Gauteng is very busy. So, about the cross-infection, [it] is very easy there.

> *Interviewer*: So, people then come back here over holidays and then you see the numbers of STIs and pregnancy?

> *Health-care provider, rural facility*: Because I know when they come back, they left their wives around here. And when they are in Gauteng, there are other families there, so you see there is a lot of cross-infection. And some are working in mines or where they acquire TB, and so on. And when they came back, they met with those around here and they become infected.

Some interviewees made assumptions of certain places being morally corrupt and contributing to the spread of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, which fit with prevailing place stereotypes. Gauteng, for example, in this study is viewed as a focal point of all social ills. More so, migration is often perceived as a catalyst for extramarital affairs and polygamous marriages, contributing to sexually transmitted diseases (Gilbert and Walker, 2010). Such scapegoating may place blame on return migrants as sources of infection and disease, while downplaying the role of the local non-migrant population.

Return migrants were also blamed for affecting the operations of health-care facilities in rural areas. Rurality complicates the ways in which return migrants are able to access supplies of medication and to attend follow-up consultations at facilities. Health-care providers in Vhembe district highlighted struggles to provide medication, especially antiretrovirals (ARVs) and other chronic treatment during festive holidays, as relayed by this respondent:

> Yes, it does, because when they come, you find out that some of them have finished their ARV treatment, their chronic treatment. When they come here, they expect chronic treatment from you, and you find that the clinic has ordered a certain amount of treatment for people around. So, when they come here, they have to, you can't deny to give someone treatment and they don't even bring anything for them, they just bring the treatment (health-care provider, rural 2).

This demonstrates how health-care policy, organization, delivery, and frontline practices are challenged by the presence of migrant and mobile populations. In response, facilities were creative in how they improvised in order to treat the greater number of patients, while attempting to maintain access and quality. Return migrants have an impact on stock planning, health and risk behavior, size and nature of rural caseloads, and treatment follow up – illustrating the diverse forms of migration that exert demands and shape health delivery and place.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study support previous research that highlights the importance of engaging with place and migration in South Africa for understanding and strengthening health-care provision in the country (Vearey and Nunez, 2010). The findings of this study show that diverse places present heterogeneous migrant profiles, including internal and cross-border migrants, truck drivers, pregnant women, and contract workers, each presenting various and differing demands on the public-health system. Such heterogeneity includes internal migrants who return to their rural homes during the year – highlighting the importance of internal mobility. The study points to the importance of understanding both the places in which migrants interact, the corresponding patterns of demand on the health-care system, and the health-care system's responses. Various places are sites where things get done, demands are placed, plans are made, exposure to health threats is a daily reality, and there is improvisation and negotiation from both health-care users and providers.

In South Africa, a greater awareness of migration and mobility – both internal and cross-border – must be central to public-health care and local municipality planning and service delivery (Vearey, 2010). As argued by Cummins et al. (2007), Macintyre et al. (1993), and Jones and Moon (1993), research on health and place should not separate context and composition – there is a reciprocal relationship between place and people (including migrants and mobile populations) in South Africa and the wider southern African region. The findings reveal a holistic picture of challenges facing the health-care system in South Africa and support existing research that highlights the importance of engaging with a place-based approach (Todes and Turok, 2018). The findings from the health-care providers interviewed in this study are in line with the views of the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2013), that levels of insecurity in South Africa are high in general, and particularly

in poorly resourced areas where migrants are concentrated. Moreover, the recurring complaint expressed by health-care providers around the abuse of free treatment and medication (in spite of a lack of evidence) might be the cause of blocked access and providers' attitudes toward cross-border migrants. This was also echoed by Walker and Gilson (2004) as they argue that there are some signs that policy unexpectedly contributes to a decline in health-care providers' moral attitudes toward patients, with the free health-care policy identified as a cause of concern rather than affirming notions of solidarity, social rights, and health-care entitlement. If this is a correct interpretation, then policy framing must adopt a bottom-up approach, including equipping providers with communication and interpersonal skills and strategies to assist their work with migrant and mobile populations, and ensuring that facilities' planning and stocktaking processes take account of the realities of heterogeneous migrant flows, including return migrants. Here there is support for Kearns and Joseph's (1993) and Kearns' (1991) arguments that whether it is in rural areas or an urban space, the unique qualities of places and residents will contribute to the contours of health status and health-care service delivery.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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Migration and the Constant Search for Self-Improvement in Africa

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Abstract

Globally, narratives about the nexus between migration and development have gained prominence among academics, policymakers, development practitioners, as well as social partners. However, the historical and contextual factors that have shaped the patterns of migration flows within and from the African continent have been poorly conceptualized and theorized. The components of migration that have the propensity to lead to self-improvement and development such as the sending of cash, social, and political remittances; skills and knowledge transfers; and diaspora-origin country engagements, need to be examined as a composite in order to fully appreciate the developmental potential of migration within the African context. Using thematic and content analysis of relevant extant literature, we examine the contextual factors that characterize the nexus between migration and self-improvement/development in Africa. Our analyses are situated within an Africa-centered conceptualization of development and migration. We argue that the development impacts of migration vary across different regions in Africa depending on the contextual factors that shape such migrations. Migration spurs self-improvement and development just as self-improvement and development facilitate migration.

Keywords: development, labor migration, Africa, contextual issues, historical, environments

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INTRODUCTION

The role of migration in supporting development in Africa has been overshadowed by securitized discourses that turn to project migration from Africa as a problem that needs to be solved. The volume of migration from Africa to other regions has been exaggerated by anti-immigrant sentiments and through narratives that seek to demonize migration from Africa (Adepoju et al., 2010; Zanker, 2019). Africa accounts for only 14 percent of the global migrant population, compared to 41 percent from Asia and 24 percent from Europe (African Center for Strategic Studies, 2023). However, Western media and public discourse focus predominantly on migration from Africa to Europe. Africa is seen as a continent of bulk migration to Europe often caused by poverty, conflict, and environmental degradation (Flahaux and De Haas, 2016). However, migration from Africa is more complex and layered than this. Focusing on an African-centered development approach, which highlights self-improvement, this paper provides a nuanced understanding of the bi-directional relationship between migration and development in Africa.

There is a sedentary bias in migration discourse, whereby movement is perceived as an anomaly, and the conventional wisdom is to argue that promoting socio-economic development in Africa has the potential to reduce the migration of Africans to the global North (Bakewell, 2013). This sedentary bias is a continuation of colonial policies that were designed to mobilize labor for mines and plantations, while preventing permanent settlement in the cities (Castles, 2009). European policymakers and some academics are particularly concerned with flows from Africa. Consequently, measures are taken by the European Union (EU) and its member states, which are often designed to reduce these flows but in the guise of well-meaning development policies (Sinatti and Horst, 2015). The reality, however, is that the majority of migration of Africans occurs within the continent, as migrants seek employment opportunities in neighboring regional economic hubs (African Center for Strategic Studies, 2023). In 2020, around 21 million Africans were living in another African country – a significant increase from 2015, when around 18 million Africans were estimated to be living within the region (IOM, 2023). Eighty percent of aspiring African migrants do not have an interest in leaving the continent (IOM, 2020).

However, discussions about the relationship between migration of Africans and development tend to focus on the developmental benefits to Africa from migration to the global North. This paper departs from this tendency by broadening the analysis to include migration to stable African economies. The results draw on narratives on Ghana, Kenya, Somalia, Libya, Egypt, Nigeria, Morocco, South Africa, Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, South Sudan, Lesotho, the Gambia, and Cabo Verde as case studies on the continent. This is reflective of the heterogeneity that characterizes African countries. We acknowledge that the migration-development nexus debate should encompass both the origin and destination country contexts. This approach allows for a deeper analysis of a critical strand within the African context. The paper

is guided by the question, "What are the contextual factors that characterize the nexus between migration and self-improvement/development in Africa?" This paper gleaned data from a critical review of extant literature on the migration-development nexus. The authors made deliberate efforts to go beyond the top journals and most referenced authors to include academic material on "migration and development in Africa" from a broader scholarship. We then did a content and thematic analysis of themes that are relevant to our study, such as cash remittances, social remittances, political remittances, foreign direct investment, and skills transfer.

CONCEPTUALIZING DEVELOPMENT AND MIGRATION

Since this paper focuses on an African migration context, we adopt an Africa-centered conceptualization of development that builds on Amartya Sen's "capability approach." Sen (1999: 3) conceptualizes development using the "capability approach" and argues that it is "the process of expanding the real freedom that people enjoy." Development is, therefore, seen as a tool that enables people to reach their highest potential through being free to live the lives they choose to lead. There is an emphasis on development beyond the strictures of a financialized and highly economized world. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018: 19), African development can be defined based on Marcus Garvey's perspective as perpetual and continual African search for self-improvement. Because of persistent legacies of enslavement, colonialism, imperialism, apartheid, neo-colonialism, and under-development, as well as the recent rush for Africa's natural resources, African theorization of development continues to be a tussle for what Ngugi wa Thiong'o (2009a, 2009b, cited in Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018: 20) calls "re-membering," that is, "a quest for wholeness after over five hundred years of 'dismemberment.'" Development as understood from a decolonial "re-membering" perspective is basically a revitalizing and recovery project (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015a, 2015b, cited in Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018: 20).

Regarding migration, we focus on the totality of African migration, which includes both intra- and inter-continental migration. Narratives about migration of Africans have tended to overemphasize migration of Africans to the global North, ignoring other African migration trends. Narratives are "selective depictions of reality across at least two points in time that include one or more causal claims" (Dennison, 2021: 3). Narratives include related social practices and contextual factors used to make sense of experience (De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2008). We emphasize that Africans also migrate to other global southern destinations such as in Asia and in the Middle East. China, for example, has become a popular destination for Africans, so have some Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.

MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT NEXUS IN AFRICA

The relationship between migration and development is multifaceted. While most scholars in migration and development in Africa often connect these two phenomena to remittance inflows from developed countries, some scholars have also related these concepts to regional integration and affective migration governance (Dick and Schraven, 2018; Spel, 2021), climate change (Bilgili and Marchand, 2016), and conflict (Bussotti and Coimbra, 2023). Oftentimes, the relationship between migration and development is not one-sided. These concepts have been conceived based on their bidirectional nature. Migration can both contribute to and hinder development. This symbiotic linkage between migration and development has been acknowledged in scholarly literature and policy discourse (Castles, 2009; Bakewell, 2013; De Haas, 2019). Thus, migration can contribute to and be influenced by development processes, thereby affecting the socio-economic associations of countries of origin and destination. From a constructive perspective, migration has fostered development in countries of origin through avenues such as knowledge transfers and investments facilitated by return migrants and members of the diaspora community. On the other hand, migration can also pose challenges to development, particularly in countries of origin experiencing significant population loss or demographic imbalances. The departure of young and skilled individuals can exacerbate labor shortages and hinder the delivery of essential services, such as healthcare and education, in sending communities. Additionally, the social and cultural impact of migration, including the separation of families and the erosion of traditional values, can have profound implications for community cohesion and identity (Castles, 2009). African emigrants and the diaspora have been recognized as dual agents, capable of both promoting peace and inciting conflict. According to De Haas et al. (2019), while diaspora communities frequently engage in philanthropic activities, invest in peacebuilding projects, and advocate for peace and justice reforms, the same diaspora communities sometimes become embroiled in conflicts abroad, either through direct involvement in political activities or by providing financial and logistical support to warring factions. Additionally, return migrants who are noted for knowledge transfer can also return with adverse expertise, which is detrimental to development in countries of origin. Thus, the return of migrants who have been exposed to radical ideologies or militarized environments abroad can pose security challenges and potentially escalate conflicts in their home countries (IOM, 2020).

Another perspective of the relationship centers on migration flows and development. A common trend of migration flows is from developing countries to developed ones; however, developing countries do not record the highest emigration figures. This is because migration is resource driven, which requires prior improved levels of development in terms of skills, finances, knowledge, and networks. Consequently, an increase in emigration generally in developing countries is a result of the impact of economic growth in poor areas (De Haas, 2019). Migration is a potential driver of development both in destination and origin countries, because

whereas migrants bring their productive contribution to the economy at destination, they also remit money and ideas that are resources for families and communities in countries of origin (McNicoll, 2020). Given this scenario, factors such as migration policies, migration status associated with rights, and access to labor markets, technological transformations impact the relationship between migration and development in both countries of origin and destination. This, therefore, calls for a nuanced understanding of the transforming and dynamic relationship between migration and development in Africa.

COMPONENTS OF MIGRATION-DEVELOPMENT RELATIONSHIPS IN AFRICA

As noted by De Haas (2019: 6), higher levels of economic and human development are initially associated with higher levels of emigration, which only decrease less precipitously with growing prosperity and development. Typically, over the course of a "mobility transition," the rate of emigration only begins to fall when countries attain upper middle-income status (Clemens, 2014). This inverted-U relationship has been called different names by different scholars – the "mobility transition" (Zelinsky, 1971), "migration curve" (Ackerman, 1976), "migration transition" (Gould, 1979), "migration hump" (Martin, 1993), and "emigration lifecycle" (Hatton and Williamson, 1994). Development experienced in African countries (such as Libya from oil revenues, Côte d'Ivoire from cocoa revenues, Ghana from cocoa and gold revenues, Nigeria from oil revenues, South Africa from mining revenues, Kenya from tea, ICT, and tourism revenues, and Morocco from tourism and agriculture revenues) has led to an increase in migration aspirations. This is because the cost of international migration, especially to destinations outside the continent, represents up to two years' salaries of the average African employee. These can only be afforded when employment rates and standards of living improve with development. In addition, the exponential expansion in access to the internet, social media platforms, and to mobile money transactions have expedited the formulation of migration aspirations through exposure to opportunities elsewhere and easy transfer of remittances from social network members abroad. Also, higher education levels across Africa and greater opportunities for skills acquisition have been associated with higher migration. Higher qualifications and higher skills in economies that are incapable of absorbing the youthful population have triggered labor migration to destinations with higher employment opportunities. For those who find well-paying jobs, they are better able to fund their migration projects. Over the long term, however, higher education, especially of women, is expected to lead to a reduction in the population growth rate on the continent, thereby reducing the demographic pressure. Over time, popular destinations for African labor migrants have broadened beyond the traditional countries in Europe and North America to include countries in the Gulf region (Kandilige et al., 2019) and China (Obeng, 2019).

Development conceptualized as self-improvement (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018) has been associated with migration through a variety of proximate factors. The extant literature on intra-African migration as well as migration from Africa to destinations outside the continent has focused predominantly on the receipt of mostly cash remittances. This has served as the litmus test for whether migration has potential developmental implications at diverse spatial levels – micro level on individuals and families left behind, meso level on migrant origin communities, and macro level on national economies (Gnimassoun and Anyanwu, 2019; McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou, 2021). While narratives on the micro- and meso-level effects might be relatively evident, macro-level claims are more spurious because of the many confounding factors that ultimately determine national development. This is in spite of the World Bank's continuing linkage of remittances to national development. Good governance systems, availability of infrastructure, conducive environment for investments, extension of rights to diaspora members, clamping down on corruption, and education on productive uses of remittance receipts, among others are prerequisites for cash remittances to trigger or support development at the macro level. Globally, remittances have proven to be less volatile and a reliable source of income to developing countries compared with foreign direct investment (FDI) and official development assistance (ODA), as demonstrated in Figure 1. This narrative about the viability of remittances as a foreign exchange earner is informed by the collation of inexact data on remittance receipts. While there has been an appreciable hike in the number of remittances-sending agencies as well as the deployment of innovative technologies using virtual platforms, large volumes of remittances are sent through informal channels (Teye et al., 2017; World Bank, 2021). These channels include "Unity-Link" operating from London, "Sendwave" that facilitates the sending of remittances from the USA, UK, Canada, and the EU, "Xe" foreign exchange company that is based in Canada but facilitates transfers to 200 countries in 100 currencies, "World Remit" that operates from the UK, and mobile phone-based money transfer services such as "M-PESA" originating from Kenya, among others. Despite the use of informal channels, the fact that remittance figures are produced by credible entities such as the World Bank and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) adds to the overall credibility of this narrative.

Figure 1: Receipts from remittances relative to FDI and ODA
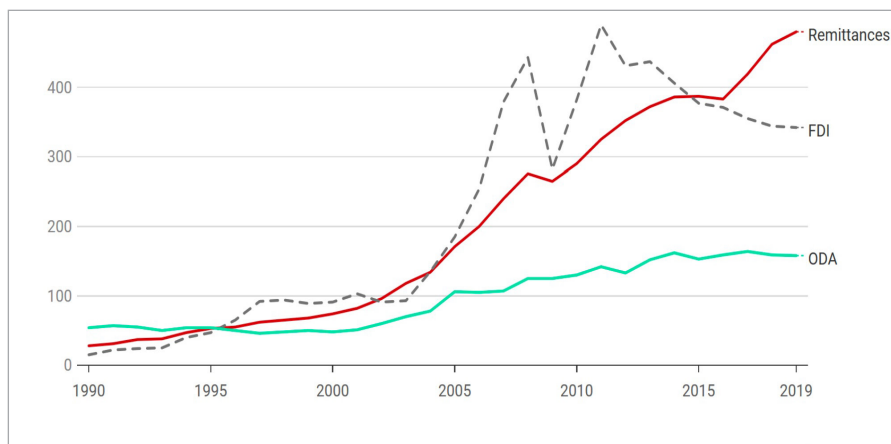
Source: Barne and Pirlea (2019). Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD).

As noted by Ratha (2010), cash remittances can have wide-ranging effects on local economies, such as being used to stabilize local currencies, to reduce the depth and severity of poverty, to stimulate economic activity, to be used as collateral for foreign loans, and to boost the savings portfolio of recipients. Remittances can also support foreign currency reserves to cover the importation of goods and services. They also have the propensity to improve the credit rating of countries and their external debt sustainability. Figure 2 presents data illustrating that across the continent, the countries that receive the highest amounts of remittances, those that are sources of the highest amounts, and those whose economies rely heavily on remittances differ. Whereas Egypt, Nigeria, Morocco, Ghana, and Kenya top the recipients' list, South Africa, Angola, Mozambique, Morocco, and Namibia are the five leading sources of remittances in Africa. As a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP), Somalia, South Sudan, Lesotho, the Gambia, and Cabo Verde have the highest dependency on remittance income.

Figure 2: Top African international remittance recipient
and source countries, 2019 and 2020
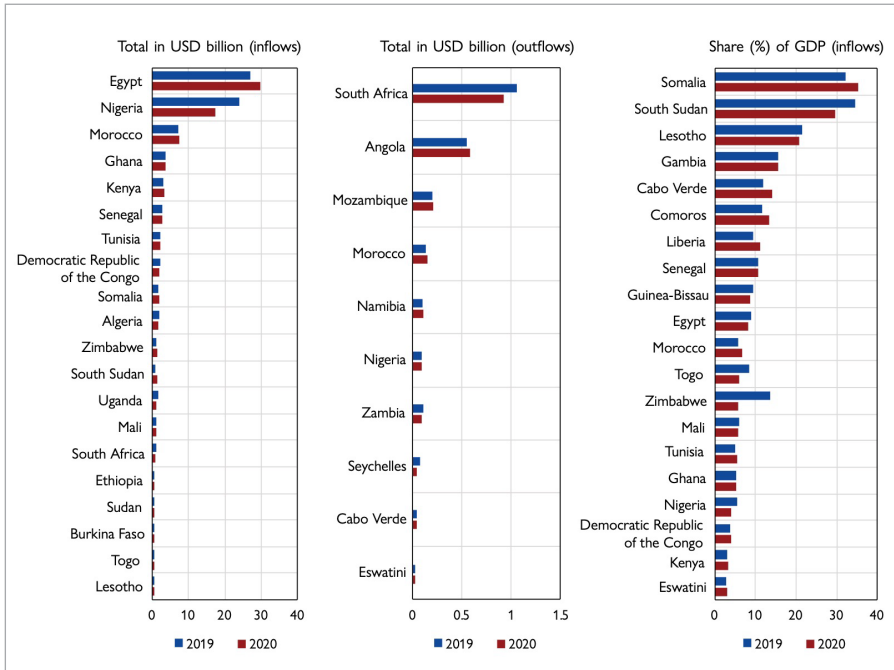
Source: World Bank (2021, quoted in the World Migration Report, 2022: 65).

While the physical absence of migrants from the country of origin could be argued to amount to a loss of positive externalities (Gnimassoun and Anyanwu, 2019), there is a narrative on an incentive effect, which occurs ex-ante of emigration itself. This narrative suggests that families are motivated to invest in the education of their children in the hope of future emigration. As a result, this inadvertently boosts the stock of human capital since not all highly educated and highly skilled persons would emigrate eventually (Agrawal et al., 2011). In addition, there is the narrative of an ex-post effect through diaspora on-going links with the home country by their financial transfers or their possible return, but especially by their participation in scientific, political, and business networks (Gnimassoun and Anyanwu, 2019: 3). Rapoport (2010) argues that such networks potentially generate trade and capital flows, technology transfers, and can also contribute to the dissemination of social and institutional norms conducive to development. Intangible social remittances have increasingly been acknowledged as equally beneficial as cash remittances to the development prospects of countries of origin in Africa. As popularized by Levitt (1998), there is a narrative that suggests that behaviors, habits, ideas, attitudes, and social capital that are transmitted by migrants from destination countries to origin

countries could inform positive behavioral changes. These translate into better work ethic, honesty, holding duty bearers accountable for their actions and decisions, and positively shaping attitudes toward democracy. This rather simplistic refrain has, however, propagated an overly optimistic assumption. It suggests that virtues reside in destination countries and migrants automatically imbibe these development-enhancing attitudes. These virtues are then transmitted to origin countries, either upon permanent return or during temporary periodic visits. These putative narratives sometimes find meaning in a Eurocentric framing of migration from Africa whereby "backward" and "uncultured" African migrants are "evangelized," in enlightened and progressive European destination countries. Such migrants are expected to subsequently transmit development values and norms to their origin countries. There is, however, the need for a nuanced examination of the narrative on the alleged nexus between social remittances and development in Africa by reflecting on the following questions: What are the value systems in destination countries and are they necessarily superior to those in the origin countries? How many return migrants would it take to change societal attitudes and norms in their country of origin? How susceptible to change are people in the country of origin and do return migrants have the credibility to drive systemic change? What is the likelihood of indoctrination of migrants through locals' bad behaviors, xenophobic tendencies, homophobic sentiments, misogynistic attitudes, and criminality in destination countries? Whose standards are used to measure values and norms that are relevant for development? More critical scholarship (Mazzucato, 2008) rather provides a more balanced analysis on social remittances being bidirectional rather than a one-way street with values, ideas, and norms coming to "Africa" from elsewhere.

Closely aligned with narratives on social remittances are those on political remittances. Governance systems, values of probity and accountability, quality of institutions, and voter participation are presumed to be enhanced by the transmission of democratic values by migrants (see Bauböck, 2003; Chauvet and Mercier, 2014; Batista et al., 2019). A further claim is that of crediting return migrants who stand for political office with using their assumed refined political acumen acquired during their migration to improve the political landscape of the origin country (Pérez-Armendáriz and Crow, 2010; Kapur, 2014; Boccagni et al., 2016). Some empirical studies such as the one by Docquier et al. (2016) support this narrative by demonstrating empirically that emigration from developing countries to Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries helps to improve democracy in the countries of origin. Whereas there are examples of prominent return migrants who led their countries of origin to independence or provided visionary leadership (such as Dr. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana), there are equally examples of African governments that have been comprised of a substantial number of returnees, but those governments have been marred in non-democratic activities. These have included corruption and swindling of state resources, incompetent leadership, connivance with foreign agents to loot state resources, and gross abuse of human rights. This notwithstanding, using

the gravity-based Two-Stage Least Squares (2SLS) estimation strategy, Gnimassoun and Anyanwu (2019) examined the impact of the African diaspora on democracy in Africa. They examined variables such as political rights by examining the functioning of institutions through electoral processes, political pluralism and participation, and functioning of government. In addition, they considered civil liberties through freedom of expression and belief, associational and organizational rights, rule of law, personal autonomy, and individual rights. Their results demonstrate a very strong linkage between African diaspora in developed OECD countries and democracy in Africa, especially for the highly educated diaspora.

Another component of migration that holds much promise is the narrative about the potential for skills transfer from African migrants to others who are based in origin countries in Africa. The departure of newly qualified professionals from Ghana, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe to other countries within the continent or outside it, is associated with opportunities to specialize in areas of qualification (Skeldon, 2005). Medical doctors, for instance, pursue specialist training and sometimes progress to become consultants in niche areas of specialization. Others take advantage of sophisticated equipment in destination countries such as South Africa or Kenya, which might be lacking in their countries of origin. Sports migrants join professional teams in destination countries such as Egypt, Morocco, or United Kingdom that support the honing of their skills. Health professionals equally further develop their skills during their migration journeys. African migrants with practical skills or hands-on expertise who migrate to destinations where various types of labor are in demand also acquire skills in construction, hospitality, cleaning, manufacturing, and agriculture, among others. Under the "transnational turn," there is the potential for acquired skills to be transferred either prior to or upon return. Temporary return programs such as the Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in countries such as Sudan, in 2006 benefited thousands of Sudanese and the Return of Qualified African Nationals (RQAN) program facilitated the return of 71 highly skilled Ethiopians in the diaspora to support national development. Also, the Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) initiative by the IOM, for instance, enabled 21,000 health workers in Ghana to understudy 1,000 Ghanaian health professionals from the diaspora between 2005 and 2015. Moreover, the Returning Experts Programme by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) has supported over 15,000 returning experts globally since the 1980s. All these initiatives have been supported by development partners to encourage skills transfers. Beyond the formally orchestrated programs, there are skills transfers that take place organically during short visits by individual African migrants as well as upon permanent return. For these processes to unleash their full developmental potential, the domestic environment must be conducive. Unfavorable domestic environments are associated with inadvertent loss of human capital in the form of brain waste (Mattoo et al., 2005). However, the skills transfer hypothesis assumes that African migrants necessarily acquire superior skills

that are worth transferring. While most migrants do obtain new or better skills, this blanket view obfuscates the several instances whereby skills are rather lost during migration. Highly skilled or qualified migrants who fail to secure jobs comparable to their experience or qualifications can experience deskilling and possible brain waste. Over an extended period, such migrants' skills become rusty, and this complicates their reinsertion into their previous professions after their return. As a result of these fears, several African governments have instituted reaccreditation schemes that validate the skills of professional return migrants.

Migration is also said to drive FDI by non-nationals as well as by diaspora members. The presence of migrants can foster good international relations among countries. In such situations, migrants are perceived to be agents for socio-economic development in their origin countries (Faist, 2008). They can leverage their existing social networks abroad to invest in niche businesses in Africa, such as food processing, scrap-metal reclamation and recycling, dry cleaning, parcel delivery services, taxi-hailing businesses, shuttle services, tourism, fish farming, among others. The cultivation of investment interest is boosted through business expos and roadshows that are organized by labor attachés at African countries' embassies and high commissions abroad. There is also a push for diaspora-led investments. To maximize receipts from the diaspora, some African governments such as Ghana have adopted a very loose definition of their diaspora to include anyone of African descent who is interested in the development of their country. By casting the net wide, people who have never possessed the citizenship of these countries are extended a sense of belonging. Well-curated "homecoming" events are used to marshal investment income from returning nationals, diaspora members, as well as business associates of diaspora members who are exposed to investment opportunities during such events. A classic example is the "Year of Return" celebrations by Ghana, which were planned to mark the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first slaves in the Americas. This event culminated in the arrival of famous and influential individuals and groups, especially from the African American community of the USA. Other visitors came from across the globe and investment pitches were made to the participants, some of whom subsequently invested in the country. Proceeds from hospitality services, transportation, tourism sectors, and others amounted to nearly 2 billion US dollars (ATC News, 2019). Governments also float diaspora bonds as a means of raising development capital. Such attempts have been oversubscribed in most instances. This channel of raising funds for capital projects saves African governments from the international financial markets where interest rates are usually prohibitive.

Beyond the effects of emigration of Africans to destinations both within and beyond the continent on development, there is also a narrative on the nexus between immigration and development. Immigrant labor is instrumental in bridging the skills gaps in destination countries. Despite the common refrain in destination countries that migrants are taking jobs from nationals, empirical evidence suggests that migrants mostly fill vacancies that are either undesirable by

the local labor force or there is an acute shortage of skills. This is particularly true for labor migrants with practical skills or hands-on expertise who do menial jobs, such as picking fruits, collecting recyclable plastic waste, stacking of supermarket shelves, cleaning services, hand car wash, waste collection, and janitorial work. In the realm of skilled labor, there are vacancies that are unfilled because the requisite skills are lacking domestically. Examples include petrochemical engineers for the oil and gas sectors of African countries that recently discovered oil and gas (such as Ghana, Namibia, Gabon, Côte d'Ivoire, Angola), mining specialists, civil engineers, medical consultants, information technology specialists, investment bankers, and insurance brokers. As argued by dual/segmented labor-market theorists (Piore, 1979), there tend to be two parallel labor markets – the primary labor market, which comprises well-paid, secure, and highly skilled jobs that are popular with the native population, and a secondary labor market, which comprises low-paid, insecure, and unskilled jobs that are filled by migrants. The "unskilled" migrants in Africa thus embark on secondary-market jobs, which are largely shunned by the native population because they are labeled as immigrant jobs. However, unlike the dual/ segmented labor-market theorists, empirical evidence indicates that some skilled African labor migrants equally feature prominently in the primary labor market as senior executives, managers, employers, and inventors. In reality, the two segments (primary and secondary) are interdependent. Across the two labor markets, access to social protection schemes and portability of social security contributions at the end of migrants' journeys are critical to the well-being of migrants (both skilled and unskilled) and shape their ability to send remittances home toward consumptive and productive uses.

CONCLUSION

This perspective paper engages with the dominant sedentary bias that is associated with migration from Africa, where migration is perceived as "unusual" and it is expected to be temporary. The paper also challenges the unfounded assumption that the majority of Africans are automatically destined for Europe, should they have the opportunity to migrate. We acknowledge the critical contribution of scholars such as Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018: 19), who notes that African development can be defined from Marcus Garvey's perspective as constant and consistent African search for self-improvement. We, therefore, perceive Africa-centered development as building on the arguments of economists such as Sen (1999: 3), who conceptualizes development using the "capability approach" and argues that it is "the process of expanding the real freedom that people enjoy." Development is, therefore, regarded as a tool that enables people to reach their highest potential through being free to live the lives they choose to lead.

We conclude that cash remittances have the potential to support development in Africa, but this depends on the environments within which migration occurs as well as within which cash remittances are introduced. Similarly, social remittances are

credited with possible improvements in habits, attitudes, and social capital that could support development. However, we question the assumption that superior values and norms preside in European destination countries and African migrants imbibe them and transmit them to a vacuous continent that is devoid of developmental values. We critique this approach as being too deterministic. Moreover, we adjudge political remittances to be positively associated with improvements in democracy in Africa based on some empirical studies. While acknowledging this finding, we caution against a blanket assumption of a positive nexus by noting that some political remittances equally contribute to chaos, political upheaval, and corruption. Akin to arguments around social remittances, skills transfers from migrants are acclaimed as progressive and developmental. We, however, note the possible brain drain, deskilling, and brain waste effects that affect a growing number of African migrants. Ultimately, we conclude that the development impacts of migration are variable across different regions and countries in Africa depending on the disparate environments within which migration takes place, and that migration spurs self-improvement, just as self-improvement facilitates migration.

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