

Migration and Integration as South Africa's Regional Challenge

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Why Migration and Borders are Important Issues in South Africa

- ▶ I. State of South Africa, more than 20 years after the new dispensation
 - ▶ A. Great level of anxiety and dissatisfaction over government performance
 - ▶ 1. Overall state of the economy
 - ▶ 2. Service delivery issues
 - ▶ 3. Corruption
 - ▶ B. Poorly managed immigration and border issues
 - ▶ 1. Perceptions about migrants and crime and jobs
 - ▶ 2. Failure to utilize the border for development purposes
 - ▶ C. Leadership within South Africa compromised and regional authority is weakened



Regional Road and Port Network Demonstrating the Centrality of South Africa for Regional Trade, Human Mobility and Integration





Examination of South Africa's Economic Development Policies

- I. Main issues: unemployment, growth, FDI, and corruption
- II. Policy framework: RDP to GEAR and the National Development Plan (2030)
 - A. Skills of the workforce: June 2018 DHET report showed major deficiencies for those skilled in accounting, finance, science, engineering, and some areas of blue collar employment such as welding and retail management
 - B. South Africa has an excess of unskilled laborers. It cannot take on a large number of immigrants: official 2017 government statistics show that 4 million of the 57 million consisted of legal immigrants, of which 649,385 were from Zimbabwe. There are also a large number of immigrants from Mozambique, Lesotho and Namibia.
 - C. There is however a larger number of undocumented immigrants from many African countries, especially Zimbabwe
- III. Border control and immigration violations remain a major problem for the government
- IV. South Africa attempted to create a developmental state model towards the end of the Thabo Mbeki era, but weak state capacity has precluded this. Large projects failed to create the anticipated jobs or economic regional integration in South Africa (COEGA, 2010 FIFA, and Gautrain)
- V. Government lacked the capacity to implement economic policies or to provide basic services due in part to a skills deficit

The Beitbridge Border as a Case and Point

I. Flow of goods and peoples

- A. South Africa's trade with Zimbabwe has historically served important role and most of it is through Beitbridge
 - 1.) originally built in 1929 with new bridge completed in 1995
 - 2.) the towns of Musina and Beitbridge are the two respective border towns
 - 3.) today most of the trade and human mobility between the two countries takes place through this border
 - a.) Zimbabwe exported \$2.7 billion and imported \$6 billion worth of goods.
 - b.) For Zimbabwe, \$1.9 Billion of exports and \$2.3 Billion of imports are from South Africa, 70% and 38% respectively for the country.
 - c.) 675,000 people crossed the border in the festive season during December to January 3.
- B. Beitbridge Border Post also allows for goods from other parts of the world to enter Zimbabwe and for goods from Zimbabwe and central Africa to be transported to South Africa and beyond
- C. The Zimbabwean diaspora has estimate of 1 to 5 million in South Africa today and the number continues to grow.

II. The border's symbolic importance has increased for both South Africa and Zimbabwe: the former's ruling party's hegemonic projected becoming unraveled and the latter's exhaustion of nationalism

III. Failure to grow the economy, resolve the problems in Zimbabwe, and the inability deliver basic services led to weak legitimacy at home and abroad

- A. Fueled xenophobic attacks that further lowered legitimacy abroad
- B. Created a sense of insecurity and heightened sense of political risk affecting FDI



Seemingly Intractable Problems at the Border as Issue with Regional Implications

South Africa

- ▶ Inability to control the flow of people from Zimbabwe and beyond and the rise of nationalism
- ▶ Inability to develop the northern Limpopo region
- ▶ Perceptions of crime in South Africa as a product of immigration and migrant workers
- ▶ Persistent service delivery and governmental under-performance
- ▶ Long delays at the border

Zimbabwe

- ▶ Corruption and revenue loss at the border
- ▶ From safety valve to opposition headquarters
- ▶ Smuggling of contraband
- ▶ Economic and nationalist bankruptcy
- ▶ De-industrialization

Declining Legitimacy, Banal Nationalism, and Worsening Conditions at the Border....

Long Lines at the Border



Zimbabwe Implodes:
Land Reform, Operation
Murambatsvina, and
Inflation



South Africa's Legitimacy Crisis: EFF,
Service Delivery, and Xenophobia



Conclusions

- 1.) Resolving issues with and within Zimbabwe would increase the legitimacy of the South African government at home and abroad.
- 2.) Governmental refocusing and political reforms that strengthen the government's performance in regards to basic needs is required. Appropriate and strategic placement of personnel and skills strengthening within both the public and private sector is necessary.
- 3.) The government of RSA must address issues of xenophobia and seek to increase the immigration of skilled people into the country.