

The Socio-economic Challenges Facing the Integration of Foreign Nationals in South Africa

Israel Kehinde Ekanade and Rachidi Richard Molapo

*Department of Development Studies University of Venda, Private Bag X5050,
Thohoyandou, Limpopo Province 0950, South Africa*

KEYWORDS Border. Contestations. Immigrants. Security. Violence

ABSTRACT Afrophobic outbreaks in South Africa has given the international community serious concerns about the safety of other Africa nationals in the former apartheid enclave. Lately, the state has been a migrant receiving country with many migrants from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. In this region, Zimbabwe accounts for the highest number of such migrants. Gauteng province which contributes 35 percent to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of South Africa plays host to many Zimbabweans and in most cases they reside in informal settlements notably Alexandra Township and others. The socio-economic and political problem plaguing Zimbabwe is the main reason for migration. This study was intended to understand the causes of Zimbabwean migration into South Africa and attacks carried out on them. Utilising qualitative research methodology via snowball and accidental sampling through semi-structured interviews, it was observed that competition for jobs between locals and Zimbabweans especially in the informal sector, was an important factor that triggered xenophobic incidences notably in 2008 and 2015. Another bone of contention was that of access to housing. The above scenarios have implications on the image of South Africa in the committee of nations. It is therefore recommended that the state should partner with civil society in the integration process of Zimbabweans into the fulcrum of the South African society.