

Economic-Induced Migration as a Security Threat to Regional Stability: The Case of Zimbabweans Migrating to South Africa

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to understand economic-induced migration as a security threat to regional stability, with reference to Zimbabweans migrating to South Africa. The research employed qualitative research methodology, and a case study research design. Primary data was obtained from key informants, and secondary data from peer-reviewed articles, newspapers, and books. The results indicated that the causes of economic migration are economic hardships, unemployment, extreme poverty, and seeking better living conditions exacerbated by the nose-diving economy. The effects of economic migration on regional stability indicated that the hostility between the South Africans and the Zimbabwean immigrants was fueled by the scarcity of resources leading to harsh reactions such as xenophobia, discrimination, organized crimes, human exploitation, and human insecurity hindering Southern Africa's longstanding vision to have a united, peaceful and regional integration. The study concluded that there is a need for the sensitization of both the host and the migrants on the importance of coexisting peacefully; Zimbabwe needs to make economic reforms that attract potential investors and rebuild the collapsing economy. Therefore the study recommends that there is a need for the Government of Zimbabwe to revive its economy to curb economic migration.

Key words: Economic-induced migration; Regional stability; Economic refugees; Organized crime

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1. INTRODUCTION

Migration has come to be a general practice worldwide that continues to alter the population and economy of places of origin and destination. According to International Monetary Fund (IMF) (2020) in absolute terms the migrant population has increased by almost 120 million since 1990, large episodes of migration towards rich countries primarily reflecting a search for better economic opportunities are not new in history and have occurred even when transportation costs were much higher than today. This shows that migration is an occurrence that is common and is accredited to a number of push and pull aspects.

Currently, migration is at the core of every discussion on sustainable development in Africa. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTD) (2018), with economic migration being a key feature of international migration in Africa, the search for economic opportunities is an important driver of mobility in the majority of net-sending countries. While distress-push factors, notably, high youth unemployment influence movements from Northern Africa to Europe and the Middle East, demand-pull factors, in particular, employment, trade, and investment opportunities in neighboring economies drive mobility for instance from Burkina Faso to Cote d'Ivoire (Musau, 2018).

According to International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (2020), Africa's share of global migration is 36 million people of which 19 million move within the continent and 17 million move outside Africa, and the largest net-senders include Egypt (2.9 million), Morocco (2.8 million), Algeria (1.5million) and Tunisia (700 000). Thus migration in Africa is dominated by Africans moving within Africa.

Migration in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region is prompted by people who are on the hunt for job opportunities. Migration to and from countries in Southern Africa is driven largely by

the pursuit of economic opportunities, and political and increasing environmental hazards, in a region with an estimated population of 363.2 million and 6.4 million international migrants in mid-year 2020 (UN DESA, 2020). This implies that people are motivated by the thrill of earning better salaries and living in countries characterized by better standards of living, and they have traveled long distances in search of such opportunities. The unequal rate of economic development in the region has further created an increasing gap between fast-developing nations and slow-developing nations, hence the unequal rate of migration (Mlambo & Ranga, 2020). Thus states in Southern Africa can be divided into migrant-sending (Mozambique, Malawi, Lesotho, and Zimbabwe) and migrant-receiving (South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Tanzania, Angola, and Zambia).

More so, economic migration in Zimbabwe has been sustained, and unrelenting due to the economic meltdown. Zimbabwe has not been performing well economically for the past two decades now, with the foreign exchange rate continuously being determined by a parallel market resulting in the country having been hit by hyperinflation of more than 700 percent, an unemployment rate of over 90 percent, and chronic poverty (Chagonda, 2021). The post-Mugabe era saw a renewed exodus of a large group of migrants from Zimbabwe to neighboring countries particularly South Africa and more than 460 000 Zimbabweans have migrated to South Africa since the general election in Zimbabwe in July 2018 (Moyo, 2019). Thus, migration is seen solely as a speedy response to the crisis in Zimbabwe. Munyoka (2020) avers that migration has induced the scarcity of resources, inequality in the migrant-receiving communities, and subsequent conflicts between the immigrants and the local people. In addition, immigrants have been dying in multiple cities across SA as a result of a wave of xenophobic attacks on African nationals (Internews, 2022).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is guided by the neoclassical economic theory of migration developed by Harris & Todaro (1970). It argues that the drive for migration is primarily premised on economic development deliberations. According to Harris & Todaro (1970), the neoclassical theory explores migration from both a ‘macro’ and ‘micro’ dimension. The ‘macro’ dimension, asserts that the main causes of migration are wage differentials between the sending and destination country, the guaranteed propensity to earn more in the developed economies triggers a desire to relocate to such spheres of economic robustness (De Haas, 2008). This enlightens why most of the skilled and unskilled Zimbabweans are migrating to South Africa, as they are attracted by the expected high salary earnings.

On the other hand, the ‘micro’ dimension takes a more individualistic approach by asserting the rationality of individuals to assess and make decisions based on the possibility of receiving improved economic gain in their destination country (Castles & Miller, 1998). As argued by Hagen-Zanker (2008), migration on its own is part of economic development, migrants make choices that are influenced by ‘push and pull factors. Thus the prominent dynamics of this theory are those of economic nature shown by how the majority of Zimbabweans and even other African citizens tend to migrate to South Africa to seek better livelihoods because South Africa is perceived to be the most economically sound country in Southern Africa. In addition, according to the theory, the only way to stop or limit migration is to fix the wage differentials that are between the developed and less developed countries thus, governments can regulate migration by supporting bilateral development strategies that eliminate wage differentials.

2.1 The Concept of Migration

Nascent works of literature on migration have focused more on the factors that fuel the exodus of people and research has been divided up according to the degree of the voluntariness of the movement. According to the UN (2022), since the earliest times, humanity has been on the move, some people move in search of work or economic opportunities, to join family, or to study and others move to escape conflict, persecution, terrorism, or human rights violations, still, others move in response to the adverse effects of climate change, natural disasters, or other environmental factors. This shows that, while many people migrate out of choice, numerous others migrate out of necessity. Migration is often associated with better human capital at both individual and household levels, better access to migration networks, and age is also important for both work and non-work migration, and people may migrate as individuals, in family units, or in large groups (Coxhead & Shrestha and Nguyen & Vu, 2017).

Studies on forced migration have investigated movements in response to crises, conflicts, and violence. According to UNHCR (2020), the number of globally forcibly displaced people worldwide was 79.5 million at the end of 2019, of these, 26 million were refugees (20.4 million refugees under UNHCR’s mandate, 5.6 million Palestine refugees under UNRWA’s) and 45.7 million people were internally displaced, 4.2 million were asylum-seekers, and 3.6 million were Venezuelans displaced abroad. The UNHCR further noted that, noted the scale of today’s forced migration crisis is unprecedented, and if left unaddressed, will grow in size and complexity and a confluence of factors, including persistent climate-related shocks and increasingly frequent, highly violent, and protracted conflicts impacting civilians have resulted in a record number of people being forced to flee their

homes around the globe. Scholars such as Laborde, Martin & van der Mensbrugge (2017), Jenkins & Braun (2019) supplement studies by the GFM as they scrutinize the forced movements which are climatic-induced, showing the trends, and transitions from concepts such as vulnerability, climate change, and land degradation as well as the effects of the phenomenon of climate change and the related research branches. Whilst studies by Podesta (2019), look at the climate crises, migration, and refugees as a result of Tropical Cyclone Idai on the southeast coast of Mozambique, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that 1.85million people needed assistance. The study goes on to show the large-scale human migration due to resource scarcity in Africa, and the increased frequency of extreme weather events, especially in the developing countries in the earth's low latitudinal band.

Furthermore, according to Anderson & Rolandsen (2017), conflict-induced migration is deep-rooted in countries with conflicts such as Syria, Nigeria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Somalia, Palestine, and Yemen ported an increasingly violent world. In support, IOM (2019) states that conflict-induced migration gained much prominence in the migration discourse as a result of the frequency and severity of conflicts in countries such as South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, and Libya among others, as well as other violent activities of radicalized and extremist groups More so Matseketsa (2019); Hayes, Lundy & Hallward (2016) focus on the response to conflict-induced migration and the refugee crises emerging from receiving Africa's Great Lakes Region and the national security concern in that they can compromise national security. Nikoi, Arthur & Nambe (2019) argued that conflicts impact migration at individual, community, regional and national levels, particularly where political and ethnic conflicts are more pervasive in many developing countries. Although violence is a major determinant of forced migration in Sub-Sahara Africa, the decision to migrate is often multifaceted, with social ties at both the origin and potential destination playing an important role (Osei-Kuffour & Kendie, 2017). In support, Qirui & Samimi (2022) posit that Sub-Sahara Africa is seen as a region of mass migration and population displacement caused by poverty, violent conflict, and environmental stress. In support, Verkuyten, Altabatabaei & Nooitgedagt (2018) in their experimental studies on whether support for newcomers differs for voluntary and involuntary migrants argue that involuntary immigrants are more welcomed and assisted than voluntary immigrants. Some politicians and mass media emphasize the difficult fate of 'real refugees' or 'involuntary migrants' and the need to offer support and help to these newcomers, whereas other politicians and media claim that the majority of newcomers are 'bogus refugees' or 'voluntary migrants' (Lynn & Lea, 2003;

Verkuyten, 2014). This shows that involuntary migrants are more welcome than voluntary immigrants.

Studies by Schneider (2015); Friedrich (2015); World Bank (2017); Transparency International (2018) state that corruption has recently been identified as a major driver of migration, acting on the aspiration of people to migrate to other countries and areas, and it plays a major role in driving highly- educated people away. Scholars such as Cooray & Schneider (2014) and Poprawe (2015) have argued that corruption is a major driver of migration. They indicated that lack of economic opportunities and insecurities have been the major vehicles of migration, as corruption influences, these two factors, and corruption is found to retard economic growth thereby reducing economic opportunities, and fueling insecurity, peace, and conflict. In support, Bruzzone (2021) states that corruption can prompt migration, whether licit or illicit, corrupt political systems inhibit social mobility, migration events are driven by the confluence of poor life prospects and chance economic stresses, and corruption is such a stronger driver of migration for those with some resources than the very poor. However, Merkle, Reinold & Siegel (2017), state that, there is weak evidence that corruption is a direct driver of migration, although it can fuel migration desires among people tired of the existing system and being treated unfairly. The evidence that corruption is an indirect push factor for migration and a driver of forced displacement is much stronger Hence corruption can be seen as a direct or indirect driver of immigration, due to its influence on other vital drivers.

Jana, Martin-Shields & Wedel (2019) has focused on people who, in economic terms, move to maximize their potential, for example by reaping the benefits of wage differentials or job opportunities. The study further stipulates that the migration decision is a complex process that is dependent on a multitude of factors, such as migration governance regimes, migration and smuggler networks, access to technology, or individual characteristics such as age, gender, and educational background. The scholar presents a variety of determinants that have been put forward as influencing migration decisions at the macro, meso, and micro levels. More so, Segal (2019) presents perceptions of the effects of human migration as the major drivers of country attitudes, policies, and programs, and how the increasingly complex global interconnectedness has altered relationships among sending, receiving, and transit countries. The study further argues that the Global North, with its aging and declining populations, requires a healthy workforce; the Global South with limited resources, a high birthrate, and an overall youthful population, can fill the gaps of the former, but with several implications for receiving and sending nations.

According to studies by OECD (2018); Giuliatti & Wahba (2012); Kerr & Kerr (2016); there is a perception

that international migrants are more entrepreneurial than the native population and that data from the US and China shows that international migrants are more likely successful entrepreneurs. For example, in China, 25% of immigrants are self-employed and involved in trade with their country of origin, in the US, longitudinal data shows that approximately 25% of US entrepreneurs (defined as the top initial earners in a new business) are immigrants to the USA. Conversely in European countries self-employment is often the result of discrimination, and xenophobia amongst migrants, when they have the choice, migrants may often prefer wage employment to be self-employed. Therefore migrant entrepreneurs may be very vulnerable to external shocks because they are often in entrepreneurship due to a lack of access to wage employment.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study relied on a qualitative approach while a case study design was utilized. The qualitative approach facilitated the research to comprehend the socially constructed meanings by getting closer to the participants and networking with them in their regular context. This approach endorsed the research to gain access to the natural setting of the participants as well as the participant's experiences. Thus the participants had the direct opportunity to explain themselves and convey their interpretations aiding the researchers collect adequate and suitable data. A purposive sampling technique was used to identify key participants who were able to provide significant data on the research subject. Data was collected using key informant interviews. Key informant interviews enabled the research to attain broad opinions on economic migration as a security threat to regional stability. The research chose the IOM because they have a vast knowledge of the challenges and opportunities presented by migration on the regional and global scale and their involvement in the formulation of migration policies which was useful to this research. The Department of Immigration was considered so that the researchers may have an in-depth understanding of migration issues as well as have a wider knowledge of the number of people that are migrating to South Africa. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade was chosen because it has the Department of Immigration which controls and facilitates the entry into and departure of people from Zimbabwe and they have an in-depth understanding of migration issues in Zimbabwe. More so, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' diplomatic relations with South Africa also enabled them to shed light on the security implications of migration. The UNCHR, Save the Children, and the International Catholic Migration Commission were considered because they are well-

versed and well-equipped with relevant information on migration. Secondary data sources such as newspapers, peer-reviewed journals, and books on migration were reviewed. The reports and annual declarations by the IOM were appraised to gain a distinct body of knowledge on why people migrate, how migration takes place and the security implications of migration on regional stability both for Zimbabwean immigrants and the South African host communities. The study also studied their reports on the Zimbabwean immigrants stranded in South Africa during the COVID-19 lockdown.

4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section discusses the research findings on economic-induced migration as a security threat to regional stability using the case of Zimbabweans migrating to South Africa. The data was collected using 10 key informant interviews. The research used thematic content analysis as described by Braun & Clarke (2006) to generate themes from qualitative data.

4.1 Causes of Economic Migration

The participants were asked to comment on the causes of economic migration in Zimbabwe, and from their responses, four themes were established and these include economic hardships, poverty, unemployment, and better living standards.

4.1.1 Economic Hardships

The study found that the Zimbabwean economy has not been performing well since 2000. The economic crisis in Zimbabwe is characterized by economic hardships as a result of high inflation rates, exchange rates, and severe shortages of basic utilities including water, and electricity among other factors that made it extremely difficult for people not to migrate.

A key participant from IOM commented on the following:

There is no hesitation that the economic situation in Zimbabwe remains the major factor fueling the migration of highly and low-skilled citizens. The Zimbabwean economy keeps on recording negative growth rates notwithstanding the embracing and implementation of numerous economic recovery programs and plans. Societies have been affected by the economic meltdown in Zimbabwe. The economic deterioration in the country can be attributed to poor monetary policies, the failure of fiscal policies as well as the occurrence of parallel markets, and exchange rates. All these factors have pushed people into SA in search of greener pastures.

A participant from ICMC added the following:

The economic situation in Zimbabwe is very dire and has been this way for the past two decades. Zimbabwe's economy is still nose-diving even when it's under the new dispensation. Quite a lot of the country's economic troubles remain unresolved and the Zimbabwean economy is still characterized by the black market for foreign currency, the costs of the basic goods which are always doubling in RTGS, and basic supplies being charged

in US dollars. This kind of economic environment has made it difficult for an ordinary Zimbabwean to survive, hence the need to migrate.

More so, the participants who once migrated to South Africa exposed the level of desperation and economic hardships that they experienced in Zimbabwe that prompted them to migrate to SA seeking greener pastures. Their chronicles were couched in subsequent terms: *survival, curbing starvation, and seeking for economic opportunities*. In support, a male participant said the following:

People are migrating to South Africa as a means of survival. Inflation keeps on escalating and the expenses of basic goods doubles now and then. And at one point things like salt, milk, sugar, cooking oil, eggs and maize were once solid on the black market.

The study also found that women have been affected as well by the economic hardships in Zimbabwe. Especially those who need to fend for themselves and their families. One migrant mentioned:

What's pushing women to migrate to South Africa is because of the economic hardships that they are facing, especially single mothers. Most of them are facing difficulties with the current situation and moving out of Zimbabwe is the only solution, and leaving their families behind to fend for them. I was a hairdresser in 2018, but because of the economic condition which affected the cash flow, customers became scarce. As the breadwinner, I had no option but to migrate to South Africa and my main intention was to find work so that I can support my family.

South Africans have argued that Zimbabwe's never-ending economic crisis is as a result of the Government of Zimbabwe ignoring the plight of its citizens, who are flocking into their country in search of better economic conditions. This direct call on Zimbabwe to solve its problems shows how South Africa has stopped pursuing its policy of 'quiet diplomacy'. Sentiments by Lindiwe Zulu a South African cabinet minister of Social Development and senior chairperson of the African National Congress's International Relations sub-committee are as follows:

When it comes to the issue of Home Affairs, you were saying maybe we are sending Zimbabweans back to starve, as ANC we believe that all countries need to take responsibility for their citizens. First and foremost, we take responsibility for our citizens, we make sure that despite the challenges that we have of poverty, unemployment, and inequality, we shouldn't be having South Africans leaving South Africa with almost nothing ... leaving SA, and going to neighboring countries to go and look for greener pastures when they aren't even that much to talk about.

The narratives by the participants resonate with the reports by the World Bank (2022) that Zimbabwe's economic development continues to be hampered by price and exchange rate instability, the misallocation of productive resources, low investment and limited structural transformations, high inflation, multiple exchange rates, unsustainable debt levels and ineffective

control of public spending have increased the cost of production, reduced incentives for productivity, enhancing investment and encourage informality. Hence all these factors have contributed to fueling economic migration in Zimbabwe. More so the sentiments of the ANC chairperson, concur with the publications by the South African government of their national statement at the International migration review forum in May 2022, that South Africa believes that migration should be a choice rather than a necessity.

4.1.2 Extreme Poverty and Unemployment

Response by the interviewees pointed to extreme poverty and unemployment as major push factors of the migration of Zimbabweans to South Africa. The unavailability of employment in the country has contributed to a high rate of poverty among the citizens. The majority of the people infiltrated the informal sector, due to the closure of companies in 2000 after America slammed Zimbabwe with sanctions. With the majority of people unemployed, with dry spells affecting the country's agricultural production the levels of poverty remain high resulting in the bulk exodus of people from Zimbabwe to South Africa. This was supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade participant who stated the following:

Migration in Zimbabwe is caused by high unemployment rates instigated by the shutting down of industries in Zimbabwe, largely owing to the economic sanctions imposed by the European Union. This had a substantial impact on companies where in excess of 500 companies shut down their operations because of excessive operational environments branded by high input costs and hard money shortages. More so the issue of food insecurity is pushing the mass of Zimbabweans out of the country. The country has been affected by the devastating El Niño drought combined with cyclone Idai, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic leaving the bulk of Zimbabweans at risk of hunger.

Migration in Zimbabwe is characterized by the movement of skilled and semi-skilled youth searching for employment in the neighboring countries. A participant from the Department of Immigration commented:

The number of people that seek traveling documentation such as passports increases daily, showing that people are still migrating in large numbers, and usually their destination is SA. The age group that is migrating is around 18 to 45, and this can be strongly connected to high rates of unemployment, and extreme poverty due to the dire economic situation. With the banks unable to support the initiatives by the Youths so that they can create work for themselves, migration becomes solely option for them.

Most of the participants who once migrated to SA held the view that the inspirations for migration are connected to the life-threatening poverty in Zimbabwe. Most migrants come from societies or households where per capita intake is lesser than the poverty datum mark. This has prompted people to migrate to SA so to ease the situation. A female participant said the following:

I left Zimbabwe because I could not get a job or any other source of income. I chose South Africa as my country of destination because I saw it was better in development as compared to other African countries.

The above narrative is further substantiated by one of the male participants who stated:

Being unemployed can frustrate a person to a point whereby leaving their own country in search of greener pastures is the only solution to do. As for me, I moved to South Africa because Zimbabwe had become dilapidated; it was similar to living in a desert without anything, any protection. When the economy started to deteriorate in 2018, I lost my job, I can't describe the suffering I went through, I became so helpless, and I couldn't provide for my family, so I ended up migrating to SA to escape from hunger and starvation.

The above contributions by the participants concur with the literature from the Neoclassical Economic Theory of Migration which states that the main cause of migration is wage differentials. Luebker (2022), states that poverty affects 76.3% of Zimbabwean children living in rural areas as of 2020, roughly 74% of the population lives less than \$5, 50 a day and the average wage per month is \$253. He further stated that half of Zimbabwe, 13.5 million people living below the food poverty line, and about 3.5 million children are chronically hungry. This is supplemented by Muronzi (2022) who states that the unemployment rate in Zimbabwe is up to 90%. He further stated that most of the country's 14 million people do some sort of informal work to earn a living because finding a job is a herculean task. This resulted in the regime ineffectively standing, unable to invest, and as a consequence caused an immense rise in the unemployment rate.

4.1.3 Better Living Conditions

Better living conditions emerged as a significant pull factor of migration, and the overwhelming majority of the interviewees spoke of the seeking for better living conditions as a major contributor to the exodus to SA. As the fundamental structures of Zimbabwe keep on deteriorating, from the health sector to the education sector, citizens are being forced to migrate in search of better living conditions. Some of the participants mentioned the lucrative salaries that SA offers for a job that is underpaid in Zimbabwe. One participant said:

I moved to SA in search of better living and working conditions, because the salary I was getting had been eroded by inflation, and at the end of the day I was getting not peanuts but nutshells, and my standard of living was compromised. I decided to migrate after realizing that my insufficient salary ruled out the vision of the purchase of a car or securing suitable accommodation, I was convinced that I would never meet my aspirations within the country.

Some participants showed that migration can be viewed as a remedy for poverty, the quest for migration is characterized by the need to provide better living conditions for themselves and their families back at home. A key participant from Save the Children mentioned:

Even though poverty gives rise to migration, households with people who have migrated are better off than those who do not have immigrant family members. People migrate seeking better economic opportunities for their well-being as well as the well-being of their families. More so, remittances are serving to reduce poverty in the nation since many citizens in the diaspora send money through both formal and informal means. Western Union and Money Gram are a couple of examples of official channels. Most permitted migrants with valid travel official papers use the standard methods. Mukuru.com, which does not request a lot of material about the sender, is a common agent for sending money from South Africa to Zimbabwe in the familiarity of migrants without legal documents.

The study found out that Zimbabwean migrants are usually involved in entrepreneurship in SA, and they can sustain themselves as well as the families they left at home. The following was said by a female participant:

When I got to South Africa I opened my hair salon, and I started having a lot of customers I saved my money and further expanded my business, and I started sending money home, and renovated my parent's house. All I can say is that I managed to change our living conditions in Zimbabwe as I would send remittances every month. My parents invested in a tuck shop selling basic commodities and I never had to worry about them sleeping on an empty stomach

The interviewee's chronicles resonate with literature from the publications by the IOM which revealed that between 20%-30% of Zimbabwean migrants in South African cities are involved in the informal economy, and the importance of informal sector employment to Zimbabweans has increased over time. More so, scholars such as Tevera & Chikanda (2008) consider economic migration as a positive phenomenon that eradicates poverty. Their studies reviewed the significance and contribution of remittances to the Gross Domestic Product in Zimbabwe. Mingaedi (2022) argued that due to local political pressure demanding a clear immigration policy, the ANC unilaterally decided to terminate the temporary visa permits for Zimbabweans; this is a radical move whose implementation could see scores of migrants being deported. This shows that whilst Zimbabweans are flocking to South Africa in search of better living conditions, the South African government is feeling the heat, and has decided to start devising ways to deal with the migration by Zimbabweans.

4.2 The Effects of Economic Migration on Regional Instability

The participants were asked what the effects of economic migration on regional instability were and from their responses, their themes were established the scarcity of resources and inequality, xenophobia, discrimination and human exploitation, and organized crimes.

4.2.1 Xenophobia and Human Insecurity

Xenophobia was highlighted as one of the effects of economic migration on regional instability because it causes human insecurity. Participants lamented that often, migrants are given the status of parasites, leading to them

being hunted and killed like insects through xenophobic attacks, and violence targeted at the businesses of the foreigners. The migrant intolerance attitudes being presented by the SA citizens have had an impact on regional stability as other African countries with their populations in SA grieve for the death of their citizens. A key participant from UNHCR stated:

The increased Xenophobia attacks by some South Africans on foreigners may perhaps help divulge the nature of encounters that the Southern African region is facing in promoting deeper integration among citizens of the region, for instance, the region is working towards breaking down colonial barriers by opening up its borders to encourage the smooth movement of goods, services, and persons within Southern Africa...this development is aimed at improving intra-regional trade, and facilitating the movement of skilled personnel in the region. However, attacks on foreigners may hinder the implementation of such regional arrangements and affect SADC's main goals.

The issue of SA citizens performing xenophobic attacks on their fellow Africans can one day result in human insecurity and regional wars. This is so because some countries might retaliate and attack SA citizens in their countries as well. The participants mentioned that the media in South Africa is good at instigating xenophobia. This comes with reference to the ANC Secretary-General Ace Magashule's announcement in January 2019 that 'the issue of undocumented foreigners was raised by the general society in South Africa that is why the ANC wants to deal with it'. It was revealed that these sentiments can be linked to the formation of the Operation for Dudula crew. One participant stated:

When the Operation Dudula crew started killing people that was the last straw for me I started living in constant fear. This fear influenced my choice of areas of work and residence and the forms of public transport that I used. I saw it as a queue to return to Zimbabwe, where I could live my life without checking my back all the time.

Another participant narrated his encounter with the anti-migrant vigilantes:

In January 2022 I was still staying in SA, and a mass of over 20 people came to my house. They demanded to see my passport, I was trembling, and I felt knots in my stomach. I could not walk my physique was soaked in sweat. My spouse gave them our passports, they did not even distinguish what to look for in the passports, and they commanded that I give them money to nourish those doing a good job of spring-cleaning South Africa. At that moment I saw my life flashing in front of me and I decided to pack and move back to Zimbabwe.

The extreme nature of the xenophobic attacks, usually takes place in environments where the host communities and the migrants compete for scarce resources. The close proximity of the host communities and the migrants make it possible for South Africans to kill and burn down businesses owned by foreigners. A key participant from UNHCR indicated:

South Africa has had frequent violent xenophobic attacks over the years, in which migrants have had their big business set

burning, thrown out of their houses, physically ill-treated, and killed with impunity. Often time immigrants are seen as people who are stealing their jobs, feeding off their national resources leading to xenophobic attacks, and foreigners have increasingly become targets of violence. More so xenophobia increases when there is rivalry from employment and social problems increase. Illegal immigrants turn into tempting scapegoats for estranged citizens.

The participants clearly highlighted that xenophobia was wrong and there is no justification for it, because it involved loss of life and burning people with tyres around them was just pure evil and wickedness. More so, In his address following one of the worst Xenophobia attacks on foreigners in SA in May 2008 former South African president Thabo Mbeki clearly said Africans needed to understand that they share a common future, hence there is need a to work together not fighting.

The narratives of the study participants are in line with some scholars' sentiments on xenophobia. Saya (2017) indicated that this xenophobic tendency is based on prejudice and hatred directed towards foreign nationals specifically blacks. Africans are deemed by the native groups as tenacious coercions to their privileges like occupation security, housing, resource dissemination, and other innumerable opportunities within the economic, political, socio-cultural, and technological premises. More so, Xenophobia attacks in SA have shaken the relationships of member states (Mahuni, Taru & Bonga, 2020).

4.2.2 Scarcity of Resources and Inequality

The participants overwhelmingly cited the scarcity of resources and inequality as another issue caused by economic migration that threatens the security of the region. They cited the way they are discriminated against when they want to access public services in South Africa. The levels of inequality among the host communities and the migrants were clearly shown through the viral video in August 2022, when the Limpopo province Health MEC Phophi Ramathuba said the following to a Zimbabwean patient:

You are putting a strain on the provincial healthcare system ... you know that President Emmerson Mnangagwa doesn't give me money to operate you guy ...You're killing my health.

These statements cement the fact that inequality in SA will always be imprinted everywhere as there is nothing that can be done. These sentiments are in line with the statements by the South African government in their International Migration White Paper 2022, article 3.1 which states:

Illegal aliens have the following negative impact on the provision of services and South African societies, they compete for scarce resources with millions of South Africans living in poverty, and below the breadline, they compete for scarce public services, such as schools, and medical care. The article further state that, they compete with residents and citizens for our insufficient job opportunities, and offer their labor at

conditions below those prescribed by law or the applicable collective bargaining agreements, and they weaken the state and its institutions by corrupting officials, fraudulently acquiring documents, and undeserved rights, and tarnish our image locally, and abroad.

The study revealed that the issues of resources have instigated hostility between the South Africans, and other foreign nationalities, especially Zimbabweans. This hostility comes as South Africans accuse Zimbabweans of taking away their jobs, and yet sometimes they won't be qualified for it. According to one key participant from Missions:

The ethnic tensions and conflict between Zimbabwean immigrants and South Africans have been influenced by the mass exodus of Zimbabweans to South Africa. The influx of large numbers of people into SA is eliciting the scarcity of resources. Zimbabwean migrants find themselves as casualties of circumstances as they migrate to SA to share resources, privileges, jobs, and day-to-day activities with South Africans. This has exacerbated inequality between the host communities and the migrants. More so Zimbabwean migrants are facing so much discrimination in South African hospitals because they are seen as overburdening the resources designated for South Africans. Often they are subjected to hostility and xenophobic attacks as they scramble over the resources in South Africa.

The discussions of the research resonate with literature by Matheka (2022), who postulates that, in recent months, South African officials, and politicians have voiced their concerns about the economic and social pressure resulting from this wave of immigration. According to Betts & Collier (2017) Far from appreciating the crisis-driven nature of these movements, host populations very often respond with a mixture of anxiety, animosity, and intolerance to the physical presence of migrants who have been forced to flee intolerable circumstances in their home countries. More so, in this context, migration from Zimbabwe to South Africa tends to be seen as an atypical exceptional, and temporary phenomenon, characterized almost entirely in negative or abnormal terms, longer histories of migration and previous ties connecting these countries in the past are all forgotten (Crush & Ramachandra, 2020).

4.2.3 Human Exploitation

Human exploitation was mentioned as one of the effects of economic migration on regional stability. The key challenges faced by Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa are the fear of deportation, difficulties in securing work permits, lacking access to legal help, accommodation issues, xenophobia, marginalization, segregation, discrimination, irregular incomes, short maternity leave, zero maternity leave benefits, non-payment of salaries, and underpayment of wages. A key participant from IOM stated:

The harsh economic situation has instigated high levels of redundancy, causing a rush in poverty levels. Zimbabweans who are economic migrants repeatedly have to tolerate the burdens of being used as cheap labor meanwhile the labor laws of those

states do not protect them because most of them are illegal immigrants in the country. Often time's immigrants are viewed as a source of inexpensive labor by some employers because most of them lack legal documentation. They are often victims of xenophobic attacks because South Africans accuse them of stealing their jobs with SA recording a 40% unemployment rate.

Often migrant women are lured into South Africa by their relatives or through jobs advertised on the Internet. These women are usually human trafficked and forced into prostitution in their brothels. Usually, when people migrate, they will have very high expectations, thinking that they will instantly get employed, and these hopes may not be fulfilled at their destination. Disappointment and frustrations that migrants endure make them victims of human exploitation. A male participant mentioned:

When I moved to South Africa I didn't have enough documents so I ended up looking for a job at Orange Farm. We would Labor on the farm for nickels and dimes, on average about 5rands per day, and some of the workers were as young as fourteen, and physical abuse of farm workers is very common...that alone send me back home.

The comments made by the participants resonate with what has been submitted by some scholars who also noted that, in addition to lower wages, migrants are also deprived of benefits like pensions and medical aid, they do not belong to trade unions, and hence they receive no protection from exploitation, and are often summarily dismissed Reitzes (1994). According to Garcia & Duplat (2007), illegal migrants are often prepared to work in precarious and unsafe jobs, as a result of their lack of proper documentation; they usually find work in unprotected and or poorly regulated sectors. They further supplement that the construction industry for example reportedly made extensive use of migrants as a source of cheap labor. In support Mawadza (2008) states that many professional migrants, including nurses, teachers, and artisans have traveled to South Africa in search of better living conditions, but once they are here fail to get secure jobs in their professions and therefore are prepared to accept jobs in the domestic, construction or other low skilled sectors. In addition, Mateko (2022) states that some undocumented Zimbabweans have been exposed to forced labor as well as underpayment in the labor industry due to a lack of legal work documents.

4.4.4 Organized Crimes

The participants mentioned organised crimes as another issue caused by economic migration that threatens the security of the people, nation, and region. They talked about the increased crimes in Zimbabwe due to the weapons that were being smuggled from South Africa to Zimbabwe and the issue of drug abuse that Zimbabwe is grappling with. The levels of criminal activities caused by irregular migration and fragile states in the SADC region were noted with concern by the Ms. Zhuldyz Akisheva at the SADC summit held in Johannesburg from 10 May to 12 2016:

The organised nature of crime in the region and how the enterprise appears to generate large profits for the criminals involved at a high cost, and migrants fully dependent on smugglers become an easy target for exploitation and sexual abuse. This has resulted in an increase in armed robberies, and the smuggling of commodities such as firearms, endangered species, diamonds, and other precious stones.

The study reviewed that the issues of human trafficking, drug and firearms smuggling, are among some of the issues that are affecting Zimbabwe. A key participant from IOM stated:

The drug problems that are affecting our youths are because organized criminal groups appear to have created a free-trade zone to illicit their dealings. For instance, South Africa is a destination of trans-shipment point for drugs like heroin, which arrive directly via their sea and air routes, then are smuggled into our country. Most of the people end up getting recruited to sell these drugs, because of the economic hardships that they are facing, resulting in our state becoming more fragile than before. This is destroying the future of our youths and causing premature death rates among the youths. Last year a high number of robberies that included firearms were on the rise, and this shows how weapons are being smuggled into the country. People are no longer safe in their homes especially the targeted business people who are in possession of large amounts of cash. We can also talk about the immigrants that are being smuggled into South Africa almost every day trying to run away from the economic situation in the country.

The discussions of the research resonate with literature by Hubschle (2015) that, South Africa stands out as a major transit country because it is easier for traffickers to move containers to Europe and around the Southern African region. More so, the Trafficking in Persons Report (2019) asserts that people are being trafficked for sexual exploitation, sexual slavery, labor exploitation, sale of illegal substances and goods, forced criminal activity, extortion, and other forms of exploitation, these crimes are perpetrated by what one migrant described as “wolves in sheep’s skin”. These groups include victims of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) those who have been stranded, robbed, and subjected to other forms of violence, women, and girls involved in prostitution and transactional sexual behavior, and unaccompanied minors traveling alone with so-called relatives and taxi drivers/smugglers (Vhumbunu, 2020).

4.5 Measures to Reduce Economic Migration and Regional Insecurity

Key informants were also asked about the measures that can be taken to reduce economic migration.

4.5.1 Reviving Zimbabwe’s Economy

The participants were asked about measures that could be taken to reduce economic migration and regional insecurity and from their responses, they highlighted that the government of Zimbabwe must revive its economy to reduce migration. There is a need for the government to create an environment suitable for investments and ensure that these savings will not be eroded in the near future. A key participant from IOM said the following:

Zimbabweans have migrated to South Africa for economic reasons. Zimbabwe’s general economic situation has been ongoing for 23 years now, people have complained about the escalating inflation, scarcity of basic commodities, exchange rates controlled by the parallel market, and lack of hard currency among other factors, which have hindered the growth of the economy. People have lost their investments when their savings were eroded. Now the government needs to revive its economy to curb economic migration.

The study found out that once the economy has been revived people will stop migrating and those in the Diaspora might find the need to come back home since it’s not always a bed of roses living in a foreign country where one is very vulnerable. As much as the remittances from the Diaspora is contributing a lot to the economy, there is need for the government to come up with genuine reforms that can transform the economic situation in Zimbabwe. A key participant from UNHCR indicated:

Zimbabwe needs to create its currency; the government needs to find ways to build confidence around the Zimbabwean dollar. Because as it is our exports are very expensive because we are using the US dollar, a currency of high value making it difficult for us to export our produce... at the same time our country will become a dumping place for imports from the surrounding countries, whilst they will be hoarding US dollars from us.

Zimbabwe hasn’t had a currency of its own since 2009 after hyperinflation killed off the old Zimbabwean dollar. In addition, Moyo (2019) stressed the issue of genuine economic and political reforms, which are critical in the rebuilding of trust between the Zimbabwean government and its citizens, and pushing the domestic political and economic re-engagement agenda that must complement international re-engagement. In support Tigere & Ndlovu (2021) suggested that the Zimbabwean government should strive to put in place sound and consistent economic policies that would attract Direct Foreign Investments to the country, with the view of developing the economy and creating employment for its people, to reduce or stop economic migration. More so a key platform for interparty political dialogue, the Political Actors Dialogue (POLAD), has begun and it includes most of the smaller parties that contested in 2018 elections, the reforms must demonstrate that they encompass the spirit in which they were recommended, not simply be box-ticking measures.

4.5.2 Sensitisation of Host Communities and Migrants

The issue of sensitising the host communities and migrants was raised by the participants. Based on the interviews, most participants displayed views consistent with coming up with peaceful initiatives. The study found that to reduce any negative perceptions and challenges that may emerge between the South African host communities and the Zimbabwean migrants there is a need for governments to nurture peaceful coexistence between the two, this is the only way we can have peace in this region. A key participant from IOM stated:

There is a need for cooperation between Zimbabwe and South Africa so that there may be a sustainable relationship between Zimbabwean migrants and the South African communities are needed especially in the long run to ensure peaceful coexistence. Both communities will have to learn to understand cultural harms and values bearing in mind the differences in the event conflict arises due to this difference. South Africans should be encouraged to extend their welcome to migrants and reduce inequalities between them. They have to be mindful that migrants have the ability to develop their own incomes, health, and education as well as fill workforce gaps, can be innovative, create businesses, contribute to the economy, and pay taxes.

Sensitisation of host communities and migrants is necessary to reduce any negative perceptions, and challenges that may emerge between the two communities. They further state that the resolve to maintain peace in the host community is an intervention to redress the differences through various means of communication, both in the domestic, and public domain, such as through the radios, posters, television, and other means often used to communicate to the members of the society. According to the publications by IOM (2022), in line with the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM), IOM's global programming takes a "whole of – community" approach, and covers critical phases of the migration continuum, linking pre-departure and post-arrival activities, as well as migrant inclusion, and social cohesion interventions to ensure maximum effectiveness and benefit the diverse population.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The study has established that economic-induced migration results in uncontrollable and irregular migration where people migrate in large numbers. As Zimbabweans migrate in large numbers to SA, it overburdened and strained SA as it had to cater to its people and the Zimbabwean immigrants as well as its own citizens. The study brings to light the need for Zimbabwe to resolve its economic crises so as to relieve South Africa which has been feeling the heat of the Zimbabwean economic decline for 23 years. The study further explored the need for the SADC region to come up with ways that can assist Zimbabwe in solving its economic problems so that Zimbabweans will stop migrating to South Africa, and maintenance of the diplomatic relations between Zimbabwe and the neighboring countries so that Southern Africa's longstanding vision to have a united, peaceful and regional integration may be successfully achieved.

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