THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF AFRICAN IMMIGRATION ON URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA: THE CASE OF EMPANGENI

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Abstract: Beginning in the twentieth century, South Africa experienced rapid industrialization which boosted its economy and thus leading to increased immigration to South Africa particularly after the democratic elections in 1994. Since then, South Africa has become the new 'Europe' for Africans as countries such as the DRC, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Lesotho, Malawi, Nigeria, Mozambique and Zimbabwe now have large migrant communities settled in South Africa. Studies also show that Africans increasingly migrate to South Africa not only as refugees fleeing conflicts and war in some of these countries, but also because of economic reasons.

Based on the foregoing, this paper will examine the nature and patterns of African immigration to South Africa with a view to determining its impacts on urban development in South Africa using the specific case of Empangeni. Apart from a review of literature, policies and other relevant official documents, this paper will also employ a purposive sample survey and in-depth interviews of African immigrants in the area, officials of the Department of Home Affairs, Department of Economic Development and members of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs.

At a theoretical level, this paper is intended to help validate the utility of the pluralist paradigm in explaining the links between migration and development in the specific case of South Africa. In this regard, it will highlight the factors that are critical to making South Africa a beneficiary of African immigration.

Keywords: African, Immigration, South Africa, Urban development.

INTRODUCTION

Migration is an age long phenomenon which has always taken place long before territorial borders became clearly defined. For example, early men, characteristic with their nomadic life, moved from place to place in search of survival. And since then, the formal establishment of borders has not discouraged migration as rather policies have continually been implemented to regularize these movements. The United Nation Population Fund states that about 2% of the world's population is international migrants; adding up to about 120 million people (United Nations 1998) searching for greener pastures. Naturally, in global geo-political parlance, this has meant high South-North flows of people. Tellingly, amongst the world's regions, Europe, North America and Western Asia have the highest migrant populations of 64 million, 45 million and 22 million respectively (UN Press Release, 2006). However, there has been an equally and increasingly dynamic movement of people across borders in the global south known as South-South migration (Ratha and Shawz, 2007). According to them, "while the policy debate and research on migration has focused on South-North flows, South-South migration is almost as prevalent; nearly half the migrants from the South may be living in other developing countries" (Ratha and Shawz, 2007: vii). They contend further that there are approximately 14.5 million migrants who originate from sub-Saharan Africa out of which 10 million have migrated to other sub-Saharan African countries (Ratha and Shawz, 2007: 6). Post-1994 South Africa is notable in this regard.

Indeed, since 1994, South Africa has become the new Europe in Africa and for African immigrants who now see it as the next best destination point for immigration after developed Europe and North America. However, a peek into the history of immigration to South Africa shows that the nature and patterns of immigration to the country has always been changing. For example, before the discovery of diamonds and gold in the late 19th century, there was an established system of labor migration in the region. According to Wentzel and Tlabela (2006: 72), there were labor movements of the Bapedi men of Sekhunkhuneland to the Cape colony and also Basotho farm workers in Orange Free State which were done independently and without regulation. Thereafter, the nature and pattern changed with the discovery of gold and diamond which led to the opening of the Kimberly mines and a whole new economy. According to Crush (2005: 3), migration became regulated by the Employment Bureau of Africa (TEBA) as there were large influxes of workers from mostly neighboring African countries to work in South Africa's mines. For instance, in the early 1970s, African mine workers accounted for 80% of mine workers in South Africa (Wentzel and Tlabela 2006: 74). However, these migrants were contract workers and could not take permanent residence in South Africa due to the apartheid system and legislations in place such as the Aliens Control Act of 1963.

The demise of the apartheid government led to another phase of African immigration to South Africa characterized by transformation in nature and patterns of migration. For example, prior to 1994, there was also a significant movement of immigrants from Europe into South Africa. However, after the demise of apartheid, there was a reversal of trend in immigration from Europe to South Africa as instead predominantly white South African skilled workers started emigrating to Europe and North America. This was followed shortly by a significant influx of immigrants from developing countries especially Africa (Crush 2005: 5). The flow of African immigration to South Africa has remained steady since then. Concisely, from the mid 1990s, there was a shortage of South African skilled labor and a corresponding influx of skilled African immigrants into the country. As aforementioned, European and North American countries which were main destinations of migrants from Africa were no longer the only alternatives for African migrants. While this could be as a result of the implementation of strict immigration policies that made it increasingly difficult for Africans to immigrate to the developed west (Asiegbu 2010), it should not be discountenanced that the level of economic and political development in South Africa is a major attraction (Ngwenya, 2010: 11).

However, what are the development implications of this post-1994 African immigration to South Africa? According to the International Organization of Migration (IOM 2006:4), "there is a two-way; positive and negative connection between migration and development: migration can be both a cause and a result of underdevelopment, while underdevelopment can be either alleviated or exacerbated by migration". What is the case in South Africa? According to Bhorat et al (2002), South Africa has lost approximately 4,600 skilled workers yearly since the demise of apartheid. The South African Bureau of Statistics further confirms that since 1994, an estimate between 1 million to 1.6 million skilled South Africans who hold top professional and managerial positions have emigrated (Ndulu 2004). However, this paper aims to explore the implications of African immigration on this labor void. It looks at the nature of African immigration to South Africa, asking questions such as what are the reasons for African migration to South Africa; how has South Africa's policies influenced migration?; what are the implications of African immigration for socio-economic development in urban South Africa using the specific case of Empangeni.

To answer these research questions, apart from a review of relevant literature, 2 focus group discussions were carried out in Empangeni[1]. This was employed to specifically explore the nature and patterns of African immigration to South Africa with a view to determining its impacts on urban development in Empangeni. The first FGD consists of African immigrants resident in Empangeni and the second consists of South African citizens resident in Empangeni.

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The term development is quite complex and remains essentially contested. Some scholars view development as the increase and sustenance of the gross national income (GNI) while others such as Sen (1999) sees development as a process that exceeds economic development and involves human development and political freedom. Seers (1972) posits that development transpires when there is decrease in the level of poverty, unemployment and inequality, and even if income per capital increases

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[1] The first focus group in Empangeni consisted of 16 African immigrants including medical practitioners, teachers, students and small business owners from the DRC, Ghana, Nigeria, Swaziland and Zambia. The second group consisted of 7 South Africans who were mainly postgraduate students, government employees and those who owned private businesses.

and one of these three decreases, then development is not taking place. However, for this paper, development would be viewed as "a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process, which aims at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of benefits resulting therefrom" (United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development 1986).

The essence of a theoretical framework in this study will be to explain why Africans have increasingly migrated to South Africa since 1994. In this light, there are a multiplicity of theories that seek to explain international migration both at the initiation (why people migrate) and its perpetuation (why migration remains ongoing) levels (see Lee 1966, Massey et al, 1993; Schoorl, et al, 2000). Inclusive of these theories is the famous push and pull theory reinvented by Lee (1966). Lee (1966:50-51), contends that migration is motivated by the disadvantages and difficulties experienced in the country of origin (push factors) and the attractions and benefits in the country of destination (pull factors). He argues further that though migrants are motivated by push and pull factors, the actual decision to migrate may also be influenced by intervening obstacles and personal factors, which could be immigration laws, distance, cost, family among others (Lee 1966: 50-52). Migration is dynamic and cannot be determined by a fixed rule to justify its motivation. People migrate for different reasons and it goes beyond push or pull factors which sees the migrant as a rational individual motivated by environmental, economic, demographic factors (Haas 2009: 8). This does not imply that the push and pull theory is weak. However, it is quite restrictive and inadequate in explaining migration trends.

Massey et al (1993) provides a more encompassing theory pertinent in the study of migration trends in contemporary times. They provide different models that explain the initiation and perpetuation of international migration. Those that explain the initiation of migration include the neoclassical economics, neo-economics of migration, the dual labor market theory and the world system theory; while those that explain why and how migration is perpetuated include the network theory, institutional theory, cumulative causation and migration system theory (Massey et al 1993). The neoclassical theory argues that migrants do a cost benefit analysis before migration and the decision to migrate is motivated by the economic differences between the sending and receiving country- the sending country is characterized by low wages and surplus labor, while

the sending country pays higher wages but has scare labor (Massey et al 1993: 435-436). Migrants are viewed as rational individuals who decide to migrate when it is beneficial to their overall standard of living. Secondly, the neo-economics of migration theory further states that the decision to migrate is not based on individual interest but the interest of the household in order to maximize income and reduce risk from failures in the economy of the sending countries (Massey et al 1993: 439-440). The dual labor market theory explains that migration is motivated by political and economic structure of the sending and receiving countries. It assumes that capitalism leads to dichotomies in the economy; the primary (which include high skilled and professional positions) and secondary economy (low skilled jobs) and the void in the secondary economy due to natives not taking the low skilled jobs which then pulls immigrants to fill in those positions (Massey et al 1993: 433-444). Furthermore, the world system theory postulates that migration is driven by the imbalance of the two existing economies, the core and peripheral countries (Massey et al 1993:447-448).

While economic considerations remain a common denominator in all these theories, political, social, cultural, historical and environmental factors also play significant roles. For example, social factors such as ethnicity and professional groupings are significant in sustaining immigration as they help to lower the cost of movement which in turn encourages an increase in international migration. These have been well encapsulated in migration sustenance theories such as the network theory and the institutional theory. According to network theory, migrant stocks in receiving countries over time form networks which may aid and encourage potential migrants (Massey et al 1993, Esveldt et al 1995). Subsequently, as migration occurs on a large scale over a long period of time, it becomes institutionalized. According to Massey et al (1993), this institutionalization manifest in profit and non-profit organizations operating to serve different needs of migrant communities as well as other potential migrants. Cumulative causation theory explains why migration flow increases. It postulates that the initiation of international migration changes the social context of the sending country, thereby increasing the possibility of others migrating (Fussell 2010:162).

The point is that there is no single factor explanation of why people migrate. Rather, there are several interdependent factors involved ranging from the economic, socio-cultural, political to the demographic, and they are linked in a complex web of human movement.
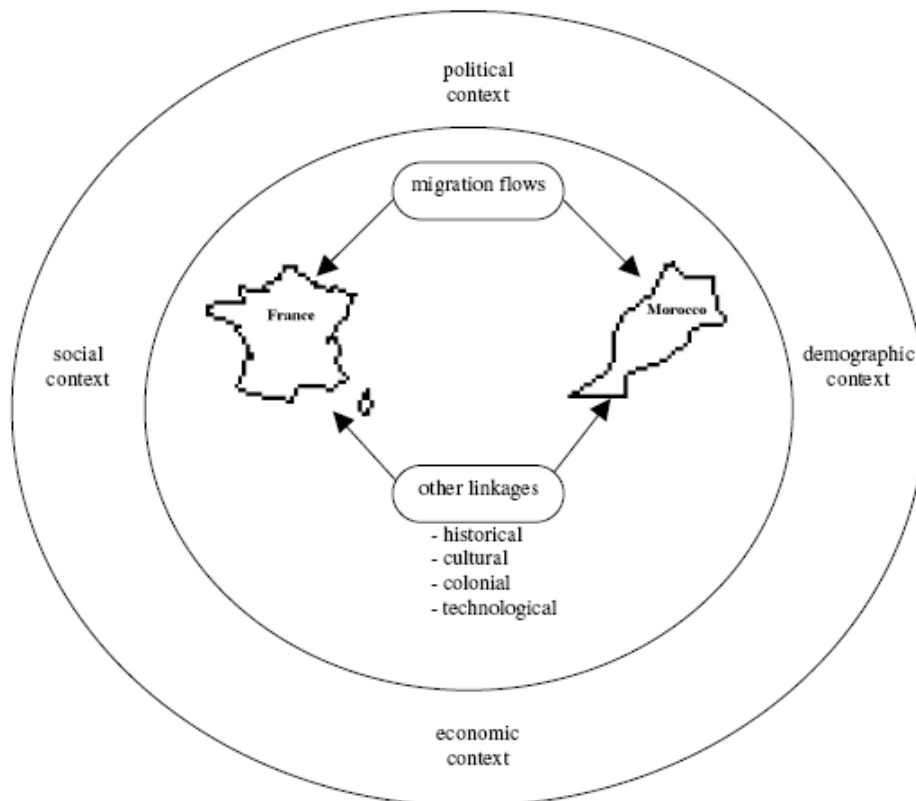
Figure 1: Two countries illustrating a systems framework of international migration

This is why international migration scholars such as Kritz and Zlotnik (1992) advocate a systems approach to migration that attempts to integrate the key aspects of different migration theories. This is apt for this study given the fact that African immigration has both brain drain and brain gain implications for sending and receiving countries which affects the collective development of the continent as an international system. The central idea of the systems approach is that the exchange of capital and people between certain countries takes place within a particular economic, social, political and demographic context which is known as the international migration system. According to them, countries in a migration system are not only connected by people but also by other types of linkages which include historical, cultural, colonial and technological linkages (Kritz and Zlotnik, 1992: 3).

According to the theory, an international migration system has a spatial and a time dimension and the specific countries in the system form the spatial dimension. Also, changes in the context of a migration system and changes in the linkages between countries form the time dimension of a

migration system (Kritz and Zlotnik, 1992). However, while countries within the same geopolitical region would usually exchange migrants within a migration system, they do not have to be close geographically because historical and technological linkages play at least as significant a role as geographical distance. And, according to Massey et al. (1993), countries may belong to more than one migration system. Essentially, the migration system theory holds that changes in the context of a migration system and changes in the linkages between countries form the time dimension of a migration system. Also, changes in the context of a migration system and changes in the linkages between countries may also be caused by international migration itself. In the context of this study, South Africa has migrants from all over the continent. While it exchanges migrants within its SADC region, a significant percentage of migrants also come from outside the region with the DRC, Ghana and Nigeria having significantly high stocks of migrants in South Africa (see Ngwenya 2010). The migration trends and patterns between these countries and South Africa are mediated by a complex web of social, economic, political and demographic contexts

as well as historical, colonial and cultural linkages between these countries.

Although a systems approach has the utility of combining different explanations of migration within geographic and time dimensions, its major weakness is that it still does not account for all the causes of migration per se. However, to make up for this weakness, in addition to available literature on why Africans migrate to South Africa, I got the views of African immigrants who took part in the survey for this study on why they specifically migrated to South Africa.

MIGRATION TRENDS AND INTENTIONS SINCE 1994

South Africa has always been a host country of immigrants from Africa and beyond. During apartheid, immigration was highly restricted and regulated. Migrant labor from neighboring African countries was encouraged during apartheid era to take up jobs in mines and farms (Ponsel 2003:1). Policies and legislations were implemented to regulate this importation of labor into the country. For example, the Aliens Control Act (1963) was implemented to restrict immigration into the country and also, to restrict internal migration (Adepoju 2006:40). This legislation regulated who could migrate into the country. This does not imply that there was no African immigration; there was the import of African labor to work in the mines. In the early 1970s, African mine workers made up 80% of mine workers in South Africa (Wentzel and Tlabela 2006: 74).These labor migrants were contract workers and were not allowed to take permanent residence in South Africa. Wentzel and Tlabela (2006: 78-82) further identify four categories of immigration; professional immigrants, who accounted for 30-40% of skilled immigrants were from African countries between 1982 and 1988; documented temporary residents who migrated for a relatively short period

and returned to their sending country; illegal immigrants; and refugees, who migrated to flee adverse conditions in their sending countries.

As aforementioned, the demise of apartheid also saw the eradication of these restrictions and policies and the patterns and trend of migration changed accordingly. This era saw an influx of African immigrants into the country, who were not only temporary migrants but who wished to settle permanently in South Africa (Ponsel 2003:4). The government was torn between implementing policies that regulates immigration and also not offending countries that assisted as host countries during the struggle to end apartheid. The "debt to other African countries presented a dilemma to the new South Africa government regarding an appropriate policy for temporary labor migration and immigration from other African countries" (Anderson 2006:100). The new South Africa developed a new immigration policy in 2002 that sought to address the countries' need for skilled migrants due to brain drain as a result of emigration. The Immigration Act No 13 of 2002 permitted the immigration of skilled and professional migrants in order to achieve economic growth and development. Therefore, the new immigration policy like its predecessor was regulatory in order to address the new problems of South Africa. However, this legislation did not eradicate the flow of illegal immigrants into the country. South Africa has become not just a host to skilled immigrants but also other categories of immigrants. SAMAT Policy Paper Series (1998) categorises them as documented immigrants (that is, those that are legally permitted to stay in the country) and undocumented immigrants (those that are resident in the country illegally). Although, it is quite difficult to provide a definite estimate of immigrants in South Africa due to the clandestine nature of illegal migration, tables 1 and 2 below provide an estimate of the number of temporary and permanent resident permits issued from 1990 to 1996.

Table 1: Statistics on number of temporary permits issued from 1990-1996

Year	New	Renewals	Total
1990	7 656	30 915	38 571
1991	4 117	32 763	36 880
1992	5 581	33 318	38 899
1993	5 741	30 810	36 551
1994	8 714	29 352	38 066
1995	11 053	32 838	43 891
1996	19 498	33 206	52 704

Source: SAMP Migration Data Base

Table 2: Statistics on Permanent Residence issued in South Africa from 1990- 1996

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Permit Issued	14 499	12 379	8 686	9 824	6 398	5 064	5 407

Source: SAMP Migration Data Base

Table 3: Migrant stock of top sending African countries to South Africa, 2007

Country	Migrant stock
Ghana	208, 226
Ivory Coast	24, 849
Malawi	10, 662
Mozambique	269, 918
Swaziland	80, 593
Zimbabwe	5, 109, 084

Source: Ngwenya (2010: 15)

Succinctly, temporary residents increased after 1990 but permanent residents reduced. We can deduce that the issuance of permanent residence reduced in order to check the population growth rate caused by immigration. This did not discourage migration trend. Table 3 below provides the migration stock of Southern African Development Community (SADC).

The next question that surfaces is what then motivates these African immigrants to South Africa? It emerged from the FGD (01/05/11) that the decisions to migrate to South Africa encompass the push and pull explanations. Indeed, economic consideration was a major pull factor in the reasons why Africans have increasingly migrated to South Africa since 1994 (see Adepoju, 2006; Kok et al, 2006; Khan, 2007; Aregbesola, 2010; Ngwenya, 2010). For example, according to Aregbesola (2010) in his study of 479 African immigrants to South Africa, 53% of the surveyed immigrants initially entered South Africa to seek formal employment (Aregbesola, 2010: 68). However, this does not make other social, political and even environmental factors any less significant. Some of the respondents stated stable political environment, strong rights-based constitution, sound legal framework for protecting and enforcing these rights, Africanism, and low potential for natural disaster (FGD, 01/05/11) as reasons for migrating to South Africa. For example, of the 20, 8 (40%) said, given the high propensity of countries of the north to natural disasters, South Africa was the better choice.

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF AFRICAN MIGRATION FOR DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

As aforementioned, there is a two-way, positive and negative connection between migration and development. Migration can accelerate development through the import of skills and human resources which in many ways contributes to a dynamic society. Also, if not well managed, it can also enable the disempowerment of citizens leading to conflict and xenophobia, which in themselves subtract from economic development. The post-apartheid government of South Africa has been open-minded towards migration. The Immigration Act of 2002 and it's subsequent amendment in 2004 recognise the possibility of South Africa benefitting from skill immigration due to shortage of skills (Landau and Kabwe-Segatti 2008:29). Paradoxically, South African labor market remains riddled with vacancies at professional level and high unemployment at lower levels. The question then is: has South Africa fully leveraged on the skills African immigration presents it? How exactly does African immigration impact on development in South Africa?

Brain drain and brain gain for South Africa

A survey conducted by Mattes et al (2002) on 400 skilled immigrants to South Africa aimed at providing a profile of skilled immigrants and their potential in the development of South Africa showed that skilled immigrants contribute to the development

of South Africa, although their potential are not being fully maximised. It shows that a majority of skilled immigrants came from Europe before the demise of apartheid, however, in 1991, 87% of skilled immigrants were from other African countries (Mattes et al 2002: 2). They further state that these European immigrants enjoy more rights and privileges than the African immigrants and this has in many ways discouraged the maximisation of the potentials of African immigrants (Mattes et al 2002: 3). It emerged from the FGD that South Africa has been a recipient of a lot of skilled immigrants from Africa who are doctors, teachers, engineers, lecturers and small businesses owners. These skilled immigrants have filled in the void in the economy, a void created by apartheid and emigration of skilled workers (FGD 01/05/11). For example, it sufficed during an interview with Dr Harbour, Chief Specialist and Head of Family Medicine, Ngwelezana Hospital that in Kwa-Zulu Natal 25-30% of public health workers are African immigrants and 40% of public health workers in the country are African immigrants. Apart from the health sector, African immigrants have also contributed to capacity building in the education sector in South Africa as a good number of higher education institutions in KwaZulu-Natal have filled and others have exceeded their 7% quotas for foreign workers. The University of Zululand, for instance, as at 2010 already had 14% of foreign academic staff.

Impact on economic growth and local employment for RSA

Immigration may threaten the economic survival of the indigenes. This is as a result of the indigenes being displaced by immigrants (Davies and Head 1995). Immigrants are known to provide cheaper labor compared to the indigenes and are therefore more favored in employment. This is the case because most immigrants take up jobs in which they are underpaid and also they are not protected by various unions (Crush and James 1995). It emerged during the FGD with South African locals that African migrants especially those from Zimbabwe have migrated in great numbers to South Africa and taken up jobs at a lower pay compared to South Africans, thereby discouraging people from employing locals, which leads to increase in unemployment (10/11/11). It was further stated that local businesses in Empangeni are not able to compete with businesses owned by African immigrants due to the low prices of goods sold by these immigrants. Therefore they do not only negatively impact on the local economy, but they also drive the locals to find other means of survival, which in most cases border on criminal activities (01/05/11). On the flip side, it was noted during the FGD with African immigrants that immigration has

its positive side in this regard. For instance, although it could threaten the local businesses, but also small businesses owned by African immigrants employ locals and provide them with jobs, and also transfer skills by training them on how to carry out their duties which invariably makes them lose the dependency syndrome or entitlement attitude that make South Africans expect and depend on government to do everything them (01/05/11).

Increase in population rate

South Africa has been a recipient of not just African immigrants but also other parts of the world. This has increased the population of the country. According to Forced Migration Studies Programme (FMSP) (2010:3), immigrants account for 3-4% of the total population which is approximately 2 million and Zimbabweans which is the largest group account for 1-1.5 million of the total immigrants. These immigrants compete for resources with the locales. It surfaced during the FGD with South Africans that legal immigrants are mostly skilled and although they compete for resources, they give back to the development of South Africa; however, majority of the African immigrants are illegal and compete for resources with poor citizens of South Africa (10/11/11). It was also noted that South Africa has a lot to benefit from African immigration, if only illegal migration to South Africa was properly managed as population growth rate may exceed its carrying capacity (FGD, 10/11/11). Also, as the population increases thus putting pressure on scare resources, illegal African immigrants also resort to criminal activities, like drugs peddling, prostitution, child-trafficking and armed robbery which hampers the social and economic development of South Africa (FGD, 10/11/11). These breed conflict, xenophobic tendencies and violence which are targeted towards the blacks. This was very evident in the devastating xenophobic attacks of May 2008 in the country.

African socio-cultural awareness

African immigration into South Africa has created an African socio-cultural awareness. According to Matsinhe (2011), the apartheid system fostered the exclusion of Black South Africans from the rest of the continent and its peoples and this has greatly influenced the social relations between black South Africans and black immigrants in post 1994 South Africa. He contends that the dynamics of apartheid group relations between the "established whites" and the "outsider blacks" in South Africa then is being replayed in the post-apartheid relations between the now established South African blacks and the outsider African immigrants (Matsinhe, 2011). In this relationship, the African immigrants are profiled and mistreated as the 'other', stereotyped in the most derogatory way as "aMakwerekwere" who must be

eliminated for 'us' (South Africans) to progress (Matsinhe 2011). According to Matsinhe, this afrophobia is perpetuated because of the psychological implications of apartheid group relations and apartheid state policy which effectively blocked South African blacks from knowledge of Africa, its other peoples and cultures. However, the influx of African immigration has stirred up an interest among black South Africans in other African cultures. A study conducted by Isike and Isike (2011) shows that African immigration can encourage regional and continental integration through socio-cultural awareness. For example, African immigration into South Africa has not only stimulated an interest in the cultures of other Africans through movies, dressing and food, but has also fostered unity and tolerance towards the African immigrants and this is the first step in discouraging Afrophobic tendencies in South Africa (Isike and Isike 2011: 16).

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY AND SUGGESTIONS

In conclusion, the impact of migration has been two-faced; it has had positive and negative effect on development as aforementioned. However, South Africa has not fully maximised the potential benefits of this immigrants due to immigration laws that discourages migrants from taking up jobs, and xenophobic attacks due to the lack of awareness of the importance of immigration in the development of South Africa. In order to ensure that South Africa benefits from African immigration, the government must ensure that, immigration staff and officials are trained in order to enable them implement immigration legislation effectively. Skilled Africans who will be made to train South Africans should be sourced and encouraged to immigrate to South Africa, especially in sectors with scarce skills. There is nothing wrong with a deliberate policy aimed at attracting skilled immigrants such as in the US, Canada and Australia which have all thrived from skilled immigration. Lastly, citizens should be reoriented in order to make them more open to the idea of immigration and African immigrants.

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