

ILLEGAL POPULATION FLOWS INTO SOUTH AFRICA

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This article looks analyses the causes, effects and possible strategic responses to the problem of illegal immigration into South Africa.

The article begins with a brief analysis of global migration patterns: intra-state; East-West; South-North; North-South; and South-South population movements-thereby contextualising migration patterns into South Africa within a broader global pattern of mass migration. An analysis of the typology of migrants is then undertaken and the inter-relationship between the different categories of migrants-contract labour migrants, temporary migrants, asylum-seekers, legal migrants, refugees and illegal immigrants- is then examined.

Eight variables accounting for the spatial movement of people in Southern Africa are identified. These, very broadly, are: Sociocultural factors; communications and technology; geographical proximity; precedent; demographic factors/population growth; environmental variables; economic imbalances within the region; and political factors. Each of these are then analysed in depth and in a comparative perspective.

The next section deals with the effects of hosting a large illegal immigrant population. It is noted that a large illegal population influx holds adverse consequences on the host state. These consequences range from housing and educational facilities being overburdened to job losses to South African citizens and increased crime rates to a functional relationship being drawn between illegal immigrants and the spread of disease. In this section I draw on the insights provided by Myron Weiner and other scholars that illegal immigrants should not only be seen as victims; that states(both receiving and sending) can be seen as victims also.

The final section examines the utility and effectiveness of current strategies by the South African state to deal with the problem of illegal immigration. It also looks at how other states have dealt with the issue: thereby hoping that the use of this comparative perspective would enrich the South African debate on the future of immigration controls.

The paper then concludes with a three-tiered approach to the problem of illegal immigration:

- . greater internal and border controls
- . a number of bilaterals between South Africa and neighbouring countries which would cover issues such as entry and departure as well as occupational and social rights of nationals
- . an interventionist approach which would seek to address the root causes- poverty, civil war, drought, etc.-which give rise to mass migrations.