
IRREGULAR MIGRATION, CROSS BORDER CRIME AND THE SECURITIZATION THEORY: A SOUTH AFRICAN REFLECTION

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Abstract: This paper attempted to examine the narratives and debates around Undocumented migration, cross border crime and the securitization and militarization of South Africa's borders. Adopting a systematic review of literature, this paper attempted to add to the growing literature around this highly politicized issue. This paper revealed that Undocumented migration and cross border crime are not serious issues that pose a threat to the country's socio-economic development let alone its national security. The drive to securitize these issues has been driven by politicians who seek voters and who use migrants as political scapegoats. This paper contends that rather than investing millions on border securitization and militarization, such monies will be well spent on health, education, social welfare and infrastructure development. Finally, this paper argues that unilateral approaches to border security are bound to fail because the factors driving Undocumented migration and cross border crime are multifaceted and beyond South Africa's control. Hence regional cooperation becomes key. Securitization and militarization approaches don't stop migration and border crime, rather migrants and crime syndicates always find ways to go around such approaches.

Keywords : Policy, Security, Development

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INTRODUCTION

Since the September 11 attacks in the United States and the subsequent global war on terror, concepts such as securitization, militarization exclusion and national security have become embedded in the foreign policy of nation-states. Phenomenon's such as migration and transitional crimes became the focal points of such concepts. Farny (2016) reflects that in the last decade, many countries have seen a rise in immigration, coupled with an increasing fear of –terrorists||, –illegal migrants|| and other threats to internal safety. Thus the concept of securitization, which was first brought into the agenda of security studies by the so-called Copenhagen School of Security Studies, has become a major topic of discussion.

For Shelley (1995), cross border crime has conventionally been seen as a threat to the state, threatening its national and regional security and rule of law, impeding its political and economic development, and limiting the social and cultural development of its society. In South Africa, the end of apartheid in 1994 singled a new socio-economic era for the country, an era which many hoped would be driven by collective and inclusive development, a non-racial society and more importantly, the integration of South Africa with the rest of the continent which was cut out from South Africa under apartheid. However, post-apartheid South Africa has not reflected the hopes and tolerance many would have hoped, frequent outbreaks of xenophobia directed at African nationals, the increase in cross border crime, corruption and stagnation of economic growth have compounded the developmental potential ability of the country. African nationals have been often being blamed for the country's socio-economic woes, they have become cheap political scapegoats for politicians attempting to win votes and push for tougher border controls (Tella, 2016). At the same time, cross border syndicates have been profiting from the porosity of the country's borders. There have been increased incidences of drugs and human trafficking and the increase in counterfeit clothing. Over the years, there have growing calls for the maximum reinforcement of South Africa's borders to keep the —other|| out and to reduce the growth of cross border crime. Politicians and pundits have called for the securitization and militarization of the border, the introduction of sophisticated surveillance systems to assist border officials to ensure the maximum reinforcement of South Africa's borders. This paper, therefore, seeks to examine how South Africa is slowly sliding back to border securitization and militarization reminiscent of the apartheid era. It seeks to dwell on the narratives that inform the need for border securitization and militarization. It seeks to examine if border securitization and militarization are the rightful approaches towards addressing irregular migration and cross border crime and more importantly, this paper seeks to scrutinize if securitizing borders is applicable in a South African context, especially considering the regional socio-economic dynamics.

METHOD

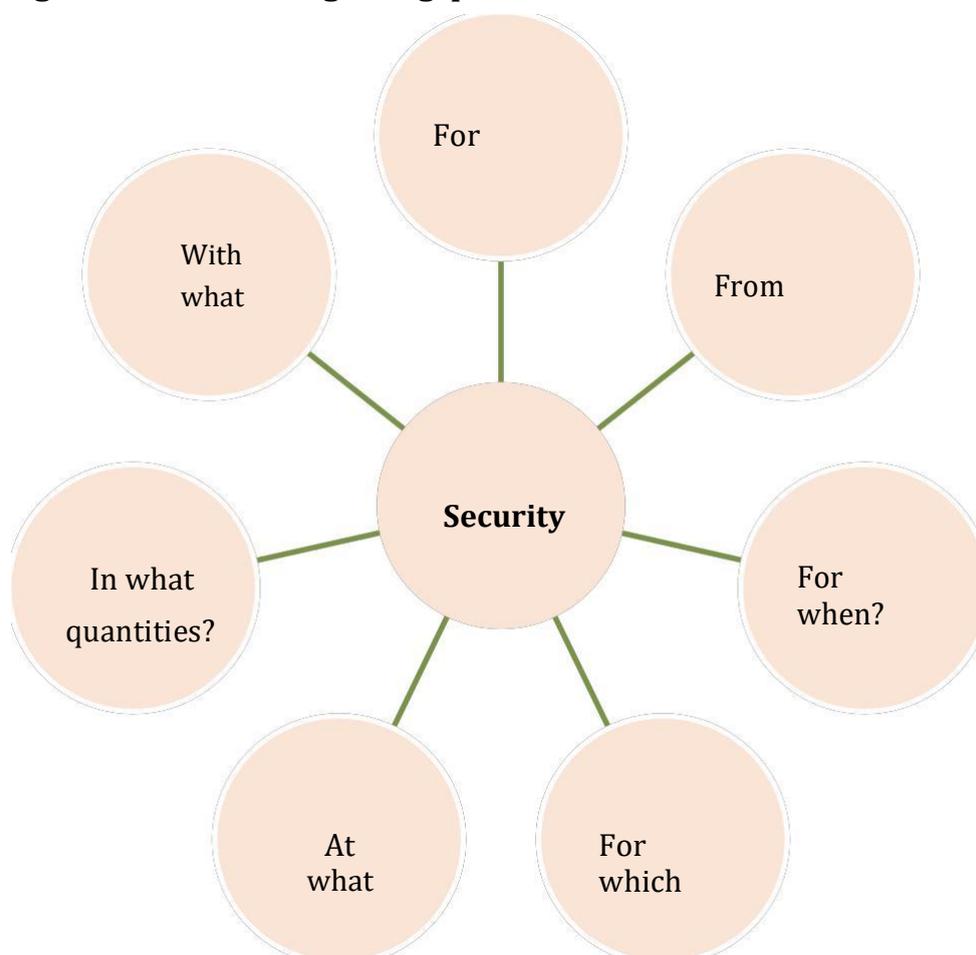
This paper employed a qualitative research approach where the review of the literature was undertaken to answer the underlying arguments of the paper. This approach was employed to contextualize the understanding of irregular migration, cross border crime and the securitization theory, and the narratives informing the debates and arguments within South Africa's political and public domain. Therefore, this paper dwelled on the debates, arguments and theoretical literature informing this contemporary issue. Taking into account the Apartheid and post-apartheid narratives around irregular migration, cross border crime and the securitization of the border, these narratives will therefore become integral in allowing the paper reach a meaningful conclusion hence the reasoning utilization of this methodological approach. Literature which spoke to the key questions of this paper was sourced from research databases such as; Ebsco, Emerald Insight Journals; Google Scholar; IBSS; Scopus and Elsevier. Irregular migration and cross border crime in South Africa have historical connotations attached to them; it was therefore important for the paper to examine these historical narratives and debates to understand how they

have evolved to inform current debates around the concept of border securitization. The collected data from these sources was analyzed and interpreted thematically to answer the research questions underpinning this paper.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The definition of security, as a concept, is generally contested among scholars. In a simplified form, Buzan (1991) defines security as the pursuit of freedom from potential threats. Baldwin (1997) formulates a series of questions that can guide the definition of security.

Figure 1.1: Baldwin's guiding questions to the definition of security



Source: Baldwin (1997)

Baldwin (1997) further asserts that the quest to define security has traditionally revolved around the narrowers and the so-called wideners. Narrowers are associated with the realist school of thought and view the concept of security as freedom from an objective military threat to the survival of the nation-states in an anarchic international system. Narrowers believe that because the international system is chaotic, such anarchy bounds the state to undertake whatever means necessary to militarize or securitize its borders to protect its freedoms from threats from this anarchic international system (Holliday & Howe, 2011). The wideners, on the other hand, have challenged the view of defining security from an anarchic and military perspective. The wideners believe that the military element should not be the only defining element in the quest to define security, mainly because challenges in the international system today range from political, economic, societal and environmental factors. Šulović (2010) asserts that the end of the Cold War brought with it the emergence of entirely new security challenges, risks and threats, and this only added to the intensification of the debate regarding the concept of security.

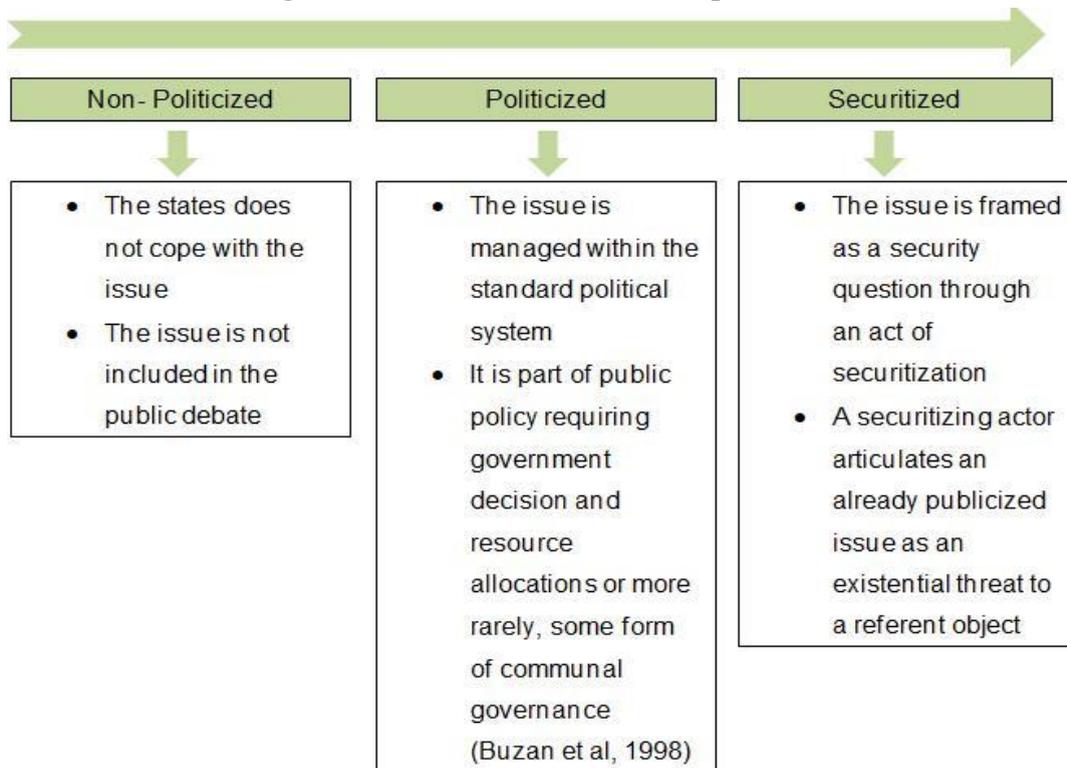
The Securitization Theory

The securitization theory was developed by the Copenhagen School of Security Studies by Barry Buzan, Ole Wøever, Jaap de Wilde and others. Most of its writings came from the Conflict and Peace Research Institute (COPRI) in Copenhagen in the 1990s (Taureck, 2006). Proponents of the Copenhagen School stand firmly as wideners. The philosophical grounding of the theory assumes that to prevent something from becoming a security threat, three elements have to be present. These three elements are the identification of existential threat, emergency action and effect of inter-unit effects on inter-unit relations by breaking free of rules (Guzzini & Jung, 2004). This theory assumes that political situations are constituted as extreme security issues to be dealt with urgently when they have been labelled as dangerous, menacing, ‘threatening’, ‘alarming’ and so on by a securitizing actor who has the social and institutional power to move the issue beyond politics. Consequently, security issues are not simply out there but rather must be articulated as problems by securitizing actors (McGlinchey et al., 2017). The securitization theory conceptualizes security as a process of social construction of political threats by the securitizing actor (mostly politicians and business elites), threats are then declared as a matter of urgency that pose a significant danger to the survival of the nation-state and once this rhetoric is accepted by the audience (citizens) this then legalizes the introduction of measures above the normal realms of politics to neutralize the perceived threat. Once this is achieved (and supported by the audience (society), the issue or situation becomes securitized and removed from the normal bounds of democratic processes and placed in the panic policies agenda, even if the identified threat may not necessarily endanger the existence and survival of the state (Wilkinson, 2007). The securitization agenda has grown to include obvious issues such as terrorism and less obvious issues such as cross-border

crime and irregular migration (Charrett, 2009).

Taureck (2006) argued that language plays a huge role in convincing the audience that a real threat exists. The securitizing actor, in most cases, exaggerates the urgency to deal with the perceived threat and uses language pointing to a point of no return should the threat not be dealt with, i.e. –if we do not act now, we are all doomed|. The Geneva Graduate Institute (2013) explains that every securitization process is made up of a securitizing actor (who speaks the language of security and calls for the adoption of extraordinary measures) and a political act (a political decision to articulate the threat in such a way that it convinces the audience that securitization measures are extremely necessary) and unfortunately, these two components of securitization and politicization have become very difficult to distinguish. For example, when politicians for political reasons use securitization threats as a means to increase their chances of re-election, it then becomes difficult to understand if a threat does exist or not.

Figure 1.2: The Securitization Spectrum



Source: Geneva Graduate Institute, 2013.

The Copenhagen School established a spectrum along which public issues can be classified – ranging from non-politicized to securitized matters. Non-politicized issues are those that the state does not deal with and that are not part of public debate. Politicized issues are tackled within the political system and are part of public debate and policy calling for government action. Securitized matters are at the end of the spectrum. They are those which ask for extraordinary means, beyond normal political procedures of the state (Geneva Graduate Institute, 2013). According to the Copenhagen School, matters are moved from the politicized into

the securitized area of the above-shown spectrum via an act of securitization.

Securitization and the state of South African borders: An apartheid overview

Securitized borders are characterized by, inter alia, stringent immigration requirements that reinforce the actual border in the form of walls or fences and/or border militarization. South Africa has vast borders and serious illegal immigration as well as crime problems (Hennop, Jefferson & McLean, 2001). It has an extensive land border of about 4,864 Km (3,022.4 miles), which it shares with six countries— Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, and Swaziland. Border security during apartheid was pegged on racism, xenophobia, fear of the other and the need to ensure the regime's security apparatus was never infiltrated by hostile forces. Calhoun (1986) reflects that the regime understood that from a geopolitical perspective, it was surrounded by countries who were against it and where intent on assisting liberation movements and anti-apartheid movements in every way possible. Border security during this time was highly securitized and characterized by a huge presence of the SADF (South African Defence Force) in the border. The objective was simple, ensure no hostile forces enter the country but at the same allow for the smuggling of the weapons meant for the regime. McMichael (2012), states that South Africa's borders have a painful history of racism and segregation, during the apartheid era, the regime in the country had a strict border security program. The country's land borders —were fortified with electric fences, regular army patrols and auxiliary civilian commando units. However, it is important to debunk the notion the border security was only meant to keep foreigners out, it was also meant to prevent black South Africans from initiating contact with those beyond the borders. Building on this view, Hennop Jefferson & McLean (2001) revealed that in 1985, the regime installed 2,800-volt fences to seal off some portions of its international borders (with Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Lesotho) and borders with three of the ten homelands (Bophuthatswana, Transkei and Venda), ethnicity-based structures established as states for black South Africans with the idea of carving out an all-white South African republic. However, the boom in mining drove the need for migrant labour and thus the regime had to compromise on its tight border security apparatus. Immigration took place through a —two-gate policy (Lennep, 2019). The —front gate welcomed certain —desirable white migrants that did not constitute a threat to —European culture. The —back gate tolerated —undesirable and often clandestine African migrants for temporary periods, to satisfy the labour demands of mining and agriculture. Humphreys & Smith (2014) explain that the regime was able to apply the assumptions of the securitization theory in its attempt to fortify the borders. During the apartheid period, the National Party strongly promoted patriotism and self-sacrifice, portraying South Africa as facing _total onslaught from hostile neighbours, from guerilla groups from within and beyond the country, hence there was a need to protect the country beyond the realms of ordinary processes. From 1970 onwards, the regime had to contend with the presence in the region of an exiled liberation movement dedicated to infiltrating South Africa's borders to fight guerrilla warfare and to engage in campaigns of armed propaganda (Seidman, 2001). To reinforce its political ideology, the regime ensured that the institutions primarily responsible for border control were the SADF and the quasi-military SAP (South African Police). Nevertheless, as argued above, the regime had a more sinister interest in the

border. As pressure piled up through sanctions and embargos, the regime sought to facilitate the surreptitious movement of goods across borders and was extensively involved in illicit international trade (Steinberg, 2005).

South Africa had a plethora of covert intelligence agencies operating within the border and thus the regime had a permanent and powerful presence in the sphere of borders. The interest in the border by the regime even sidelined civilian agencies which customarily ran border control functions were relegated to a secondary role under apartheid as security concerns eclipsed customary concerns about efficient and lawful trade and human development (Steinberg, 2005). However, by focusing too much on restricting entry into South Africa, the attempts to fortify white supremacy across frontiers were marked by a blurring of the lines between the police and military, the foreign and the domestic (McMicheal, 2012). Under the regime, borders were linked into a wider repressive architecture which joined domestic clampdowns by the military and police with combat deployments, cross-border raids and covert operations in neighbouring frontline states which were seen as a threat to the regimes hold on power (McMichael, 2012). The regime was very hostile to states it observed as threats and who were harbouring liberation fighters. For example, South Africa's conflicts in Namibia and Angola were erroneously described as the 'Border War' necessary to protect the country from the dual threats of communism and black nationalism, a cartographic fiction that disguised invasions of foreign territory (McMichael, 2012). The securitization of the border was thus cared out by an array of actors, while there SADF was deployed in the black townships to crush the internal revolt, police units such as the notorious 'Koevoet' (Afrikaans for crowbar) pursued brutal counterinsurgency warfare across the Namibia-Angola border. In turn, these tactics were later applied within South Africa itself through the Vlakplaas death squad (Stapleton, 2014 & McMichael, 2012). The obsession with border security was not isolated, rather while keeping others out, the regime needed for the border for its sinister motives. As the South African state gradually became an international pariah and as the truth about apartheid became internationally known – it moved from a normal member of the world community to a covert operator (Plaut, 2018). It began working in shady ways, through even more shady operators. To ensure that it had access to arms and oil, Pretoria moved from legitimate to illegitimate trade; from overt to covert deals and from legal to illegal transactions (Plaut, 2018). This was supported (or at least connived at) by many Western powers. The US, Britain and France did this knowingly, or at least suspected, for many years. Therefore, this paper argues that the human right abuses that were taking place in South Africa were not isolated, rather world powers at the time were complacent of the regimes in inhumane actions. Supporting this, Hefti, & Staehelin-Witt (2002) posited that sanctions were not imposed against South Africa because the heads of government in Britain, the USA, and Germany did not regard sanctions as the correct means of prompting political change in South Africa. Since the –constructive engagement –approach favoured by them (stabilizing South Africa, which would strengthen the will of South Africa to reform) but did not lead to ending apartheid for many years, advocates of sanctions could ultimately prevail.

Securitization and the state of South African borders: Post-Apartheid

The demise of apartheid brought with it renewed calls to review the management of South African borders. Key to this review was their securitized approach that hindered a newfound South Africa from advancing its regional and continental interests. Esterhuysen (2019) communicated that there were six reasons which gave rise to these calls. Firstly, there was a consensus in South Africa that colonialism and apartheid affected the continent the same way and thus South Africa is in Africa and therefore –We are in Africa|| – and we need to prove it! Hence there was a need to abolish policies of racism and separation; these included those found at the border. Secondly, there was the notion that –Africa is not a threat – and we need to prove it! Therefore there was a need to foster continental relations to show that the apartheid years were behind and South Africa is now open to its neighbours. Thirdly, there was a consensus that human security-related challenges were better solved in the spirit of cooperation rather than force, therefore, borders to reflect this spirit of cooperation. Fourthly, apartheid and colonialism were racist, exploitative and had total disregard for black life, hence there was a need to consolidate the spirit of brotherhood. Fifthly, there was a need for South Africa to repay its debt to Africa as the continent provided sanctuary to those who were exiled. Finally, there was a need to show that South Africa was not a military state and that the country was open to investments. To begin the road to political transition with regards to border management, post-1994, South Africa, sought to rectify this history in part by scaling back the involvement of the South African National Defense Force (SANDF), historically a key institution in ensuring border security (Hennop, Jefferson, & McLean, 2001). In 1994, the South African government put in place a policy for a gradual withdrawal of SANDF from the border areas. Gone were the days when people were jailed or killed for border violations, in this new era, border security was relaxed, migration (skilled and unskilled) began to increase and the emergence of cross border crime syndicates began to take shape. This paper argues that South Africa soon realised that the accommodative posture it had adopted began to bare problems and ought to be addressed. However, the country realised that going back to the militarization and securitization of the border was not going to be an option, considering how South Africa had expanded its interests regionally. Nevertheless, soon politicians (supported by sections of the public) began to worry about the increasing rates of irregular migration and the subsequent pressure on the country's social services. Increased incidences of drugs, human and cigarette smuggling began to draw the attention of the authorities especially considering the effect these have on the economy (Van der Watt, 2018). Irregular migration poses a considerable problem for South Africa in migration management, population planning, infrastructure development, resource management, governance, social services, economic development and security (Waller, 2006). A government can only work with what it knows, with a reasonable margin of error. By its nature, irregular migration creates many unknowns. While the exact number of migrants in the county is not known, the United Nations population division estimates that 4.2 million international migrants were living in South Africa in 2019. This, it said, represents 7.2% of the country's total population (Clifford, 2020). The militarization and securitization of the border observed under apartheid have not changed much in

post-apartheid South Africa. While there have been few alterations and amendments to South Africa's immigration a policy, however, migration management in the country has not changed substantially since the demise of apartheid (Klaaren & Ramji, 2001). At the implementation level, the SANDF (South African National Defence Force) and police have operated without little or no oversight from the Department of Home Affairs, this has allowed for the growth of corruption which has manifested itself in both the arrest and detention of migrants. In 1997, a South African police service report revealed 192 organised crime syndicates were operating in South Africa, with a combined total of 1,903 primary suspects. At least 32 syndicates were assessed to be operating internationally, while the criminal activities of 150 were restricted to countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Shaw, 1997). This paper argues that while the government was eager to demilitarize the border, it did not have a concerted plan of how borders were going to be managed after this demilitarization process. South Africa's weak border controls are an indictment of a weak government with no plan and sadly cross border syndicates have become well entrenched. In 2003, the Thabo Mbeki Administration instituted a policy in which the South African Police Service (SAPS) would take over the functions of SANDF over five years with the final transfer of functions slated for 2009 (Hennop, Jefferson & McLean, 2001). Nonetheless, when it became clear that SAPS was poorly equipped to effectively secure the borders, in 2009, the South African government overturned its initial decision and ordered the SANDF to resume the function of border security. Securing borders is a task that requires a unique set of capabilities, which neither the SAPS nor the SANDF truly possesses. In many respects, it is a task that falls somewhere between the capabilities of these two branches of our nation's security services (Baker, 2009). On the one hand, it requires the ability to enforce the law, detain and process suspected lawbreakers - something which the SANDF is not adept at doing. It also requires robust patrolling (often over difficult terrain), surveillance, communications and cohesive small unit skills - skills which are not generally in the police officer's toolkit (Baker, 2009).

Many pundits today argue that borders in South Africa have become re-militarized and are becoming securitized. The frequent outbreaks of xenophobia, the increase in illicit border trade and the inability of the region (SADC) to collectively manage border security has seen South Africa unilaterally take control of its borders from a nationalistic perspective. This paper contends that while open borders can be sources of economic development and increased regional financial flows, when borders become porous; they breed criminality and are bound to stir tensions between locals and migrants locals. This has been the case with African migration to the EU and migration from Latin America to the United States. The question, therefore, is to what extent has South Africa securitized and militarized its borders and going forward, will these approaches be effective in addressing irregular migration and cross border crime

Is irregular migration and cross border crime urgent security problems for South Africa?

Given the arguments and politic rhetoric around irregular migration and cross border crime, it is not surprising to note that South Africa is in a dilemma on whether to

securitize its borders or not. Security is a multifaceted and context-specific concept, and there has been an ongoing debate about who or what should be protected and the risks that should be prepared for, by whom, and for what purpose (Baldwyn, 1997). Maliti (2018) contends that it has become undeniable that ever since the fall of apartheid, South Africa's borders have become porous and lack the required resources owing to a lack of investments, upgrading of infrastructure, corruption and a shortage of skilled personnel needed to ensure effective stability and integrity. Mcmichael (2012) commented that South Africa should have long securitized these issues, and while the process of border securitization has begun in the country, it might be too late. Martin (2018) asserts that the failure to sufficiently secure borders increases the like hood of infiltration by threats that may pose significant dangers to the state.

Former South African president, Jacob Zuma, mentioned that cross-border crime and illegal cross-border migration are serious issues that needed to be dealt with as a matter of urgency (above the normal realms of politics). Such statements have not only been uttered by the former president, but by ministers, local authorities, and citizens themselves (Sibiya, 2017). For example, xenophobic speeches and rhetoric uttered by some people in South Africa's political circles have always been welcomed by the audience, some political figures have stated that foreigners in South Africa are stealing jobs, selling drugs and are into prostitution (Landau, 2015). Such securitization sentiments according to Heleta (2018) can be drawn by the statements made by politicians, for example, Haniff Hoosen, a member of the parliament and the opposition Democratic Alliance Shadow Minister of Home Affairs, said that 'the employment of illegal and undocumented immigrants has a direct impact on our job creation abilities as a country.'

They are stealing jobs from South Africans and this must be stopped, even though research shows something completely different. Former Gauteng Mayor Herman Mashaba also a member of the DA stated –Unworthy and unskilled are not welcome. They have nothing that South Africa needs. Most of them are criminals, and to stop migrants from coming, South Africa must build a fence so high that the foreigners cannot jump over. While such remarks lack factual evidence, they nonetheless have been able to garner the support of locals, who view immigrants as criminal and thugs, hence warranting the securitization of migration.

There have been increasing incidences of car smuggling from South Africa to Mozambique and apparently. Politicians have often called for extra measures to be implemented that would not only eradicate such syndicates but also ensure that the issue is securitized indefinitely (Increase police and army presence, modern tech infrastructure, excessive prison sentences for corrupt border officials etc.) as it has caused significant economic and societal damage. Besides car-smuggling, there has also been increasing incidences in human trafficking from SADC into the country and especially in the Limpopo/Zimbabwe border post and this has resulted in increasing calls from locals for government to declare an emergency in dealing with these issue as corruption in the border has made cross-border crime syndicates consolidate their presence and increase their illicit businesses (Irish, 2005). However, this paper argues that the motives for securitization are not underpinned by migrants been threats as such, but rather the socio-economic dilemma many South Africans find

themselves in, i.e. unemployment, poverty and rising inequality.

Shelley and Metz (2017) argue that cross-border crime and migration issues, to some extent, are not as threatening as they have been painted to be by politicians. However, increases in attempts to smuggle drugs, pharmaceutical products and cigarettes into the country, coupled with the increase in foreigners being arrested on drugs charges and the political rhetoric underpinning the call for securitizing these issues have rallied the public to urge the government to use extraordinary measures to deal with these issues. The securitization of migration in South Africa has been largely underpinned by three factors: firstly, it is argued that illegal migration leads to societal tensions; secondly, it has been maintained that illegal migration leads to an increase in cross-border crime and thirdly, there has been growing consensus among South Africans, especially those who are unemployed that illegal migrants are taking jobs meant for South Africans (Maharaj, 2002). This rhetoric has increased with time and has resulted in violent clashes between foreign nationals and locals. For example, recent xenophobic attacks in the Gauteng province in 2019 claimed 12 lives, over 10 000 undocumented foreigners were deported in the first six months of 2019 and there have been increasing calls from political parties for increased border security to keep out illegal migrants as they have been seen as outsiders and perpetrators of cross-border crime (Madia and Somdyala, 2019).

Taylor (2012) argues that to make matters worse, the South African government's unofficial attitude towards migration-related problems is that the country has enough problems of its own – including mass unemployment and poverty, frequent labour unrest and popular uprisings against the state's failure to provide basic services – and cannot be expected to help shoulder the continent's immense burden of migrants. As a result, immigration controls have been tightened significantly in recent years. However, Best (2010), from a general point of view, discusses that while indeed border surveillance, or intelligence as the author calls it, has far-reaching benefits, effectiveness and holistic operational frameworks, border technology alone will not resolve issues of cross-border crime and illegal cross-border migration. Best further opines that for technology to be effective and assist South Africa to realize its border security objectives, there is a need for the integration of three key components, man, infrastructure and technology. Such amalgamation creates a better and more harmonized operational environment. However, even if such elements are combined, they will not eradicate migration and cross-border crime but could facilitate a quick and timely reaction from border authorities (Best, 2010).

This paper reinforces the notion by Shelley and Metz (2017) that cross-border crime and migration issues, serious as they may be, are no immediate threat to the socio-economic development of South Africa let alone the country's national security. While borders are indeed weak and have become a breeding ground for corruption, crime and irregular migration, this paper argues that there are more serious issues that South Africa needs to address rather than investing millions of rands on border militarization and securitisation that may not yield the desired outcomes. Firstly, the South African education system, characterized by crumbling infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms and relatively poor educational outcomes, is perpetuating

inequality and as a result failing too many of its children, with the poor hardest (Mohamed & Bryne, 2020). Secondly, in South Africa, the divide between rich and poor is visible from the sky. Previously disadvantaged South Africans hold fewer assets, have fewer skills, earn lower wages, and are still more likely to be unemployed (Scoot, 2019). Thirdly, South Africans, particularly black working-age South Africans, are less employed today than in 1994, At 36.1 per cent, South Africa's unemployment rate amongst the youth (15 to 34 years) is significantly higher compared to that of those aged 35-64 years (Belling, 2020). Fourthly, Health care inequality in South Africa is even worse for poor, black South Africans than it was under apartheid. Fifthly, former Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Dr Zweli Mkhize, revealed that about a third of South Africa's total of 257 – remain dysfunctional or distressed (Brand, 2018). He identified a plethora of issues such as bribery, fraud, nepotism, and systematic corruption as being factors crippling local government development. Finally, South Africa's economy is in a precarious state, economic growth is low or non-existent. Second, tax revenue collection is repeatedly below forecasts and debt levels have risen rapidly and are now at their highest levels in the post-apartheid era (Brand, 2018).

This paper contends that these issues are not connected to cross border crime or irregular migration, rather they point to an internal policy mismatch within South Africa. Moreover, the above-mentioned issues are more serious threats to South Africa's developmental potential than irregular migration and cross border crime. Hence this paper argues observing border crime and irregular migration as highly important issues (that ought to be securitized) has been hyped up by politicians who seek voters and are not based on the reality on the ground. Even though they do somewhat exert pressure on South Africa's resources, they are not a serious threat to national security or the country's socio-economic development prospects.

Criticisms of border securitization and militarization and in South Africa

The number of undocumented foreigners deported was 33 399 in 2015, 23 004 in 2016, 15 033 in 2017, 24 266 in 2018, and 11 455 in 2019 (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2019). Department of Correctional Home Affairs spent over R33 million in the 2018/19 financial year deporting migrants illegally in South Africa. R9 million was spent between April 1 and August 31 in 2019. Migrants across the globe have been pushed out of countries and regions as a result of poor economic fundamentals that include inflation, unemployment, lack of opportunities among others (Flahaux & De Haas, 2016). Hübschle (2010) argues that crime syndicates operating in the vicinity of borders are driven by weak internal policy to clamp down on border operational deficiencies. This paper reflects that South Africa's drive towards the securitization and militarization of its borders fails to consider factors that give rise to these border challenges. For example, the economic and political decline in Zimbabwe drives migration to South Africa; hence South Africa should intervene and stabilize the situation in Zimbabwe in its quests to address irregular migration. Border securitization and militarization policies are often shortsighted, while they do reduce migration and border crime, often migrants together with syndicates and always find ways around it. South Africa recently passed a new law in response to growing concerns in the country about its porous borders. The socioeconomic and security dangers posed by having large numbers of undocumented migrants and crime on the border have become key political issues in the country in recent times

(Moyo, 2020). The new law provides for the establishment of a Border Management Authority. Its primary function is to provide integrated border law enforcement. Its core functions include the governance and management of the lawful movement of people and goods within the border law enforcement areas and at ports of entry (Moyo, 2020). South Africa realises that migration and immigration are not efficiently managed at the moment, being undertaken by several entities. Hence the BMA bill aims to secure the porous borders, stop undocumented migration and enhance legitimate trade. Moyo (2020) however notes that Chapter 6 of the new act how's that there is a strong move towards the militarization of the country's borders which is similar to what European countries have implemented. Operationalizing this law in South Africa will entail the deployment of border guards who have powers to arrest and detain anybody deemed to have transgressed the new law. The border guards will have extensive powers. They will, for example, be empowered to search any person, premise, goods and vehicles as well as question any person about any matter related to the passage of people, goods or vehicles through a port of entry or across the borders (Moyo, 2020). However, this paper contends that geopolitically, South African, without addressing factors that drive migration and inform border crime cannot pin its hope on securitization and militarization approaches as key to border stability with addressing the policy fragmentation. Moreover, the agency is expected to initially cost just under R4 billion with a future anticipated budget of R10.3 billion annually. The –cost of employment|| of the DHA in 2019 was R 3.5 billion, so the BMA effectively triples the personnel budget of the DHA (Lennep, 2020 & DefenceWeb, 2020). This paper argues that such monies could be used to revitalize existing border management policies. Regionally, many regional counties are sceptical. They fear the opposite, given South Africa's wide-spread governance crisis. A new layer of bureaucracy will be created, more delays are likely and trade could be affected. Compounding this scepticism have been a statement by Home affairs ministers Aaron Motsoaledi who stated that the reason we want to expedite the establishment of the BMA is that we concede that due to the porousness of our borders, law enforcement agencies of the country are not able to be present everywhere where criminal acts are taking place (Eramus, 2020). However, some have argued that the issues of incapacity and lack of coordination do not require the creation of a new institution under the auspices of the DHA, rather there should be a reformulation of border policy and harmonization of tasks, resources and the reduction in corruption. Moreover, Moyo, (2020) argues that militarization of borders and securitization of migration has always failed to stop irregular migration and cross border crime. This can be seen in the case of the EU where they have failed to stop migrants and crime syndicates from crossing into Europe. From a Southern African perspective, no single country can effectively address the problem of irregular migration on its own. Beefing up security at borders through military and security strategies is not the answer. An effective response lies in a regional approach to the management of migration and its root causes.

CONCLUSION

Nation-states are entitled to secure their borders. Indeed, they are constitutionally bound to uphold their territorial sovereignty but this must be done within the frameworks of regional cooperation. This paper argued that cross-border crime and

migration issues are not urgent issues compounding South Africa's development, rather issues related to health, education, corruption and consolidating good governance are of vital importance and need to be placed at the top of the prioritization. The uses of migrants as political scapegoats to drive the securitization agenda is misplaced, but because securitizing actors have been able to consolidate their opinion and ensure public support, today irregular migration in South Africa has been seen as a threat to the national security of the country. Crime within the borders of the country is driven by an array of factors that might not be in the control of the country. While cross border crime has serious socio-economic repercussions, the fragmentation of South Africa's border policies has given way to the inability of the country to respond to this perceived growing threat. In Southern Africa, inequality, poverty, porous borders and economic opportunities and to open up new market factors drive migration and border crime. Hence this would then call for a regional cooperative framework to address these issues rather the border Unilateralism. This paper however notes that cooperation with regards to collective security management in the Southern African Development Community has for decades not been forthcoming, thus countries are left with no choice but to go at it alone. While South Africa's Border Management Authority bill seeks to address issues of border crime, irregular migration and to foster cooperation, it has elements of securitization and militarization. Taking examples from around the world securitization and militarization approaches have failed to stop migration and border crime (even though they have managed to reduce their frequency), and thus South Africa should invest in effective policy development and lobby regional countries on the need for the development and implementation of a collective framework on the cooperation and coordination on security-related issues.

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