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Aurelia Wa Kabwe-Segatti, Loren Landau, eds. *Migration in Post-apartheid South Africa: Challenges and Questions to Policy-makers*. Notes and Documents Series. Paris: Agence Française de Développement, 2008. Illustrations. 239 pp. No ISBN listed. No price listed.

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This collective book, published in March 2008, starts by stating: “International migration is an exceptionally sensitive subject in South Africa,” two months before the violent xenophobic riots that began in Johannesburg before spreading to other South African cities, and pointed out the burning issues of migration and xenophobia in post-apartheid South African society.[1] It analyzes the meaning of “immigration” and South African attitudes toward it and places it into historical perspective, with references to not only the country but also the Southern African region. Written by researchers working for years on migration and policy immigration in South Africa, the book analyzes some key aspects of South Africa’s migration experience following two main objectives: on the one hand, it aims to give a documented overview of migration issues in South Africa putting it into historical, institutional, economic, and social contexts; on the other hand, it offers recommendations for future research and policy development. Indeed, this volume is part of the series Notes and Documents, published by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), whose goal is to strengthen links between academic research and operational expertise on development strategies. That is why the book, written in English, includes a consistent executive summary (twenty pages), in the English and French versions, which puts clearly into light and in a didactic way the main findings.

The result of different research programs and based on original primary and secondary data, this well-documented book deals with a variety of issues, from changes in official attitudes throughout the twentieth century, pointing to the roots of specific ideas and dilemmas, to the South African government’s capacity to man-

age and reform South African migration today. The interdisciplinary approach (political science, development studies, history, politics, and migration studies) enriches the analyses, giving a more complex overview of migration by addressing this sensitive issue from several angles. It is divided into four complementary chapters: “Reforming South African Immigration Policy in the Post-apartheid Period (1990-2006): What It Means and What It Takes” by Aurelia Wa Kabwe-Segatti; “South Africa and International Migration: The Role of Skilled Labour” by Stephen Ellis; “Undocumented Migration: Risks and Myths (1998-2005)” by Darshan Vigneswaran; and “Decentralization, Migration and Development in South Africa’s Primary Cities” by Loren Landau.

The first chapter focuses on the country’s historical experience of migration and in particular analyzes the changes in official attitudes throughout the twentieth century, thereby examining the roots of today’s views and problems regarding migration. The author reminds readers about the genesis of a discriminatory migration with the so-called two-gate policy system. The front gate welcomed populations corresponding to criteria of attractiveness defined by the minority group in power, whereas the other, the back gate, had a double function: it prevented unwanted migrants from entering and let in, on a temporary basis, cheap and docile labor working in the agricultural and mining sectors. A cheap black labor force was maintained in a precarious position. The author shows how the various laws and regulations on migration that passed throughout the twentieth century contributed to mainly coercive migration management practices and shaped stereotypical images of foreigners. Kabwe-Segatti explores and questions three main dimen-

sions: the position developed on international migration by the ruling party in the post-apartheid period, the capacity of the African National Congress (ANC) to transform “problem” identification into public policy reform, and the role played by South African and foreign non-state actors in engaging with the South African government on migrations issues. She presents elements of rupture and continuity in South African migration policy since the democratization process: the laws regulating immigration passed after the collapse of the apartheid system were essentially inherited from the 1937 Aliens Control Act. The main rupture occurred with the new laws in 2002 and 2004. According to the author, the situation of foreigners in 2006 in South Africa was different from what it was in 1994 in at least three respects: refugee matters, public accountability and due process of migration policy, and official and clear condemnation of xenophobia from the highest authorities. However, the post-apartheid immigration policy is still characterized by the persistence of coercive practices, the hardening of entry policies and control as well as of access to South African citizenship. This chapter successfully manages to demonstrate that “the major obstacles to a modernization of South African immigration policy lie in the transformation of the ANC’s vision of what role migration should play in the country’s development,” and underlies the fact that “changes at the macro-level and in elites’ perceptions are not synonymous with profound transformation in the daily treatment of foreigners in South Africa” (p. 107).

The second chapter provides an overview of the role of skilled labor in South African international migration policy and reflects on the link between migration and development. This special focus on skilled labor underlines the diversity of migrant flows and is an interesting counterpoint to the analysis on undocumented migrants. Ellis stresses the significant shift of the government’s official position from 1994 to 2002. Authorities were generally rather reluctant to promote both immigration and emigration of skilled labor, because their priority was to stimulate employment among South African citizens. Indeed, the country needed to encourage immigration by skilled workers in sectors that were vital for the economy, such as engineering, information, and technology. But on the ground, obstacles emerged to improving management of skilled labor migration, particularly within the Department of Home Affairs. In some key occupations, South Africa is still ill-adapted to produce large numbers of highly skilled workers. The main questions Ellis raises in this chapter deal with the transformation of the South African education system; the brain-drain and

brain-gain imbalance; and the resistance of certain constituencies, such as trade unions. This chapter describes existing contradictions with official politics of the ANC, which is subject to significant political pressures that are based on both ideology and the demands to create or preserve jobs for South Africans.

The third chapter, devoted to undocumented migration (risks and myths), examines the role of media in questioning the production and conception of these myths, and their impact. Vigneswaran explores five main dimensions: main characteristics of undocumented migration, methodological difficulties in generating data on undocumented migration, perceptions of risks associated with undocumented migration in South African public discourse, intersections between these perceptions and official methods to enforce immigration laws, and risks generated by enforcement strategies. The author shows that South African public discourse is dominated by a set of tenuous beliefs about illegal migration with which most South Africans tend to concur; that is, that the nation is suffering from an immigration crisis of tremendous proportions and gravity and that the harsh methods South Africa uses to manage this perceived immigration crisis are endangering South African development and democracy. This chapter includes an interesting assessment about research methods, emphasizing the fact that the paucity of reliable data on undocumented migrants and the lack of representative organizations open up room for growing myths, which is a dangerous discursive context for policy making in South Africa. Consequently, the debates have been shaped by a series of highly problematic and often fantastic “images” of undocumented migrants. The prominent myths the researchers have investigated are: “illegal migration began after the end of Apartheid,” “there are many millions of undocumented migrants in [South Africa],” and “illegal tends to increase crime” (p. 141). Cartoons and quotations from newspapers reveal the perception of this phenomenon in the South African press.

The fourth chapter explores local government responsibilities for addressing migration, the localized effects of migration, and the challenges of developing effective local responses. Landau argues that South Africa’s inability to develop effective, contextualized policies on migration is having significant and negative development impacts. The author recognizes that there is a need to complement the current migration analyses with consideration of the social, subnational, and occasionally subterranean processes associated with human mobility. Without a more robust understanding of intended bene-

ficiaries and those with whom they interact, the ability of state and other actors to achieve desired outcomes is severely compromised: important risks, challenges, and opportunities will also go unrecognized. He stresses the need for further localized and socialized studies within a broader comparative framework: it is essential to evaluate and critically analyze immigration and migration at the level of the city, he notes. Landau underscores the consequences of the poor local response to migration that are already evident in a number of areas that are critical to South Africa's development. According to him, cities and provinces need to recognize that they can and should be encouraged to actively advocate for an immigration regime that helps foster inclusion and service delivery for all residents.

In addition to many illustrations and boxes, the book includes a series of useful appendices. The first appendix is about methodological issues, especially the measuring

of both legal and illegal flows of migrants. The second is an update of statistical data on migration in South Africa, composed with a series of tables and graphics, using different sources and comparing different citizenships of migrants living in South Africa. Finally, the third appendix provides a comparative chronology of immigration legislation (in South Africa and in the world) and major political events from the mid-1980s up to now, putting into perspective the South African context. However, a lack of maps precludes us from gaining a better understanding of, for example, migration flows, different borders, and spatial proximity of some countries.

Note

[1]. This publication can also be accessed at <http://www.afd.fr/webdav/site/afd/shared/PUBLICATIONS/RECHERCHE/Archives/Notes-et-documents/38-notes-documents-VA.pdf>.

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at:

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