

An analysis of the opinions of African immigrants on service delivery by the Department of Home Affairs, South Africa

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This paper is an investigation into the views of African immigrants in South Africa on vital services that the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) renders to immigrants, such as issuing work permits, study permits, permanent residence permits, marriage certificates, and conferring South African citizenship. The broad research question this paper deals with concerns how the ideology of 'Makwerekwere' influences the Department of Home Affairs' service delivery to African immigrants. The views of 200 randomly sampled African immigrants based in Pretoria were used to analyse the effectiveness of the DHA in performing its duties as a government department. In so doing, the researchers profiled the immigrants and tried to unpack their views about the technical functions and competence of the department.

The findings suggest that the service delivery rendered to African foreigners by the DHA is generally poor and discriminatory, as it is largely shaped by the popular ideology of 'Makwerekwere' within which African immigrants are imagined and treated as the out-group and excluded from belonging and the formal and informal benefits of citizenship. While making the point that 'Makwerekwere' is not an official government policy, the paper recommends that the state has a role to play in not only reorienting its citizens, but also evolving a more inclusive model of belonging for African immigrants in South Africa in order to reduce inter-group anxiety.

Introduction

Following the inception of democracy in South Africa in 1994, the new South Africa was confronted with numerous challenges, including reconciling decades of mismanagement and redistributing the country's vast wealth, which is still concentrated in the hands of the white minority, and expanding service delivery to the urban and rural poor whom the apartheid regime had previously undermined. A particularly special challenge involved paving the way forward for the inclusion of the black majority of South Africans into the mainstream socio-political system, a challenge that required building a people-oriented or participatory political culture and system (Peberdy 2001). As a lesson and in moving away from its notorious apartheid past, Chapter 1 of the Constitution of the new Republic of South Africa (1996) states that South Africa belongs to all those who live in it. This clearly expressed the state's commitment to an end to any form of discrimination, thus automatically bestowing on all citizens and non-citizens resident in South Africa, equal rights, privileges and benefits from the state. In 1995, the year before the ratification of the Constitution, a major step was taken; the government released a white paper on the transformation of public services, introducing a new framework for the implementation of policies in a new era for the improvement of the general wellbeing of South Africans. Another major step was taken in 1997 with the introduction of a white paper on public service delivery, popularly known as the Batho Pele principles. Notably, none of these reforms excluded immigrants explicitly or implicitly. However, in spite of all the efforts of government through laws and policies aimed at ensuring efficient service delivery, different post-1994 governments have fallen short of rendering the much desired effective service delivery to South Africans. There have been protests and counter-protests across several sectors and localities against poor service delivery, including the so-called 'xenophobic' attacks on African immigrants in May 2008 (Dodson 2010), which left hundreds dead and thousands homeless.

As outlined in Chapter 3 of the Constitution, the government consists of three levels of government, namely national, provincial and local. Based on the operational principle of collective responsibility, the three levels and their branches are involved in service delivery, and the numerous protests across the country constitute an indictment of all of them. For example, according to SAMP (2005), accusations and counter-accusations of poor service delivery, corruption, inefficiencies and maladministration have been levelled against the Department of Home Affairs, which despite its numerous regional offices spread across the country has not been effective in the performance of functions such as the regulation of migration; registration of births, marriages and deaths; and issuing of identity documents and passports (SAMP 2005). This raises significant concerns as the services of the DHA make it central to the everyday life of South Africans and immigrants in the country.

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This article therefore focuses on the views of 200 randomly sampled African immigrants based in Pretoria, the political capital of South Africa, to analyse the effectiveness of the DHA in performing its functions as a government department. It uses the ideology of 'Makwerekwere', as espoused by Matsinhe (2011) and discussed below, in explaining the opinion of African immigrants on the state of service delivery to them and how it has affected globalisation in Africa. The broad research question is: how does the ideology of Makwerekwere influence the service delivery of the Department of Home Affairs to African immigrants? While studies and public commentaries on service delivery in DHA show that all (South Africans and immigrants) who deal with the department complain about the quality of service they receive, most studies on the topic have failed to address the views of African immigrants in this respect.

Ideology of Makwerekwere

According to social identity theory, people can form self-preferencing groups which they psychologically identify with and such groups can be formed on the basis of seemingly trivial characteristics (Tajfel *et al.* 1971; Tajfel and Turner 1986; Hogg *et al.* 1995; Haslam 2001). The social identity theory has proved useful in understanding social differentiation and discrimination between groups in society. According to Tajfel and Turner (1986), people come together to form social groups in order to create a social identity that gives them a sense of worth, and this inevitably leads to a process of categorization which is expressed in a 'we' versus 'them' divide – implicit favouritism for members of the in-group (we) which automatically conduces to discrimination against the out-group (them). This differentiation is constantly maintained by not only the social construction of the group itself, but also the social construction of its superiority over the out-group from which it appropriates its sense of worth. In-group members seek to achieve positive self-esteem by positively differentiating themselves from the out-group based on some self-ascribed value. Haslam (2001) therefore posits that this quest for positive distinctiveness means that people's sense of who they are is defined in terms of 'we' rather than 'I'. It is within this we/us (in-group) and them (out-group) discourse that we seek to locate and use the ideology of Makwerekwere as an explanatory framework for the contest of belonging and non-belonging between black South Africans and black African immigrants in post-apartheid South Africa.

The term 'Makwerekwere' is derogatory slang that was originally used to describe foreignness, in particular the strange sounds of foreign languages, especially languages spoken by African foreigners in South Africa. Over time, it became popular slang used to label African immigrants in South Africa, and in some cases in Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. It is inter-linguistic slang that is modified according to the language of the user. For example, a Zulu would say aMakwerekwere, a Sotho would say Makwerekwere, while an English speaker may drop the prefix altogether and simply say Kwerekwere. Ordinarily, for the authors it would not be an issue if the term was applied generally to all foreign languages or peoples in South Africa. However, this is not the case, as it is selectively used to describe only African languages and African foreigners in the country. The question then is, why is it not used to describe other foreign languages and peoples, especially those of European and even Asian descent, who migrate into South Africa just as African foreigners do? It also begs the question of why only African immigrants in South Africa are viewed as 'foreigners' who come only to take from the country, while their European counterparts are seen as 'investors' and 'tourists' and as such are treated better (see Neocosmos 2006; Strydom and Cronje 2008; Neocosmos 2008; Gebre, Maharaj and Pillay 2011 and Isike and Isike 2012). The listed authors provide some perspective on the challenges that African immigrants face in South Africa. While literature is replete with all kinds of explanations for this phenomenon, for example, Laher (2008) identified factors responsible for selective prejudice towards African foreigners by South Africans, which include inter-group anxiety, realistic threats, symbolic threats, and negative stereotypes and patterns of communication, we have chosen to stick with Matsinhe's Makwerekwere model of explaining Africa's fear of itself because it aptly locates the problem in psychosocial analysis, and this is crucial to dealing with a psychosocial issue of this kind.

According to Matsinhe (2011), what is called 'xenophobia' in South Africa is actually 'Afrophobia' caused by the dynamics of apartheid group relations between the "established white groups" and "outsider black groups" during apartheid. He contends that the social differentiations created by the painful socio-emotional situation of apartheid gave rise to a colonized self of black South Africans, comparing the colonized-self image of black South Africans to what Fanon wrote about his own people, the Antilleans, who did not see themselves as blacks but as whites after their colonial experience (Matsinhe 2011). Matsinhe explains that the apartheid experience of black South Africans who were formerly stigmatized by the white minority who saw and treated them as outcasts made it inevitable for citizenship of South Africa to be synonymous with being white. He explained that the transition from apartheid to democracy created a similar situation in which black South Africans saw the opportunity to stigmatize foreign blacks (Matsinhe 2011). The theory therefore stresses that the distorted consciousness of black South Africans caused by white domination during apartheid created the very colonized-self that makes black South Africans look for unnecessary fantasy characteristics that could set

them apart from African foreigners, creating a similar social gap that existed during apartheid days between white and black South Africans.

In Matsinhe's (2011) analysis, the oppressor's positions and privileges became the envy and aspiration of the oppressed. The black South Africans who were oppressed under apartheid have now taken on the position of their oppressors, creating room for 'others' in socio-politics. These 'others' are the black foreigners who continue to migrate to South Africa from their countries, some in search of greener pastures and others running away from conflict, war and other situations (Adepoju 2006; Neocosmos 2008; Aregbesola 2010; Ngwenya 2010). Matsinhe further argues that the fantasies created by indigenous South Africans to depict African foreigners as 'they' (illegals, foreigners, criminals, drug traffickers, etc.) are generalized stereotypes. For instance, physical appearance, such as a way of dressing, bodily physique and the inability to speak South African indigenous languages have been used to identify African foreigners, subjecting them to different forms of humiliation that escalate from suspicion to arrest, heavy strip searches, detention, torture, and all forms of assault by the state apparatus such as the police and immigration services (Isike and Isike 2012; Matsinhe 2011). Matsinhe further contends that such outlooks have also been used by the public to select African foreigners for discrimination. Logically, violent attacks on African foreigners is not rare in the socio-political system of South Africa, because in the eyes of the locals, African foreigners are jobseekers, women takers, 'diseased', and a threat to their livelihoods (Matsinhe 2011; Neocosmos 2008).

In summary, Isike and Isike (2012) have argued that the ideology of Makwerekwere, which is popularly used by black South Africans to label, despise and ill-treat black African immigrants in South Africa, is an invented imagery and ideology. This is the case because the differentiation between black South Africans and other black African nationals is not based on any real difference between them, and this is consistent with the social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner 1986). We therefore reiterate that South African exceptionalism in this respect, "is an imagined difference which is a result of long years of systematic psychosocial dehumanization that 'blacks' suffered under the apartheid era" (Isike and Isike 2012:103). This conclusion is supported by findings from that study, which surveyed 55 South Africans; the majority agreed that from watching Nigerian and other African movies, they could see that Africa's numerous cultures are more similar than they are different. For instance, 74% of the sample affirmed this view; with 90% highlighting areas of similarity in dressing, family values, marriage, ancestral belief and worship (see Isike and Isike, 2012:107-109). Our main point here is that the average black South African (the average Indian and White is also conveniently catching in on this anomaly) perceives a black African from pre-conceived negative imagery which informs their behaviour towards the African immigrant. This is not only at the grassroots level of informal social relations, but also carries on to official relations between African immigrants and South Africans, officials of the Department of Home Affairs (DHA), and African immigrants seeking documentation, in the context of this paper. Neocosmos (2008) argues that xenophobia is common in state agencies such as the SAPS, Lindela Detention Centre, and the Department of Home Affairs.

This negativity underlies the poor services and ill-treatment that are deliberately meted out to African immigrants (see Johansson and Romans 2008) as the next section will show.

Research methodology

A qualitative approach was adopted in this study's research design and data collection. The paper relied on data from both primary and secondary sources which were analysed thematically in line with the objectives of the study. Secondary sources of information included official government documents, reports, journal articles, and books. Primary data was collected using closed questionnaires which were randomly distributed to 200 African immigrants from six African countries resident in Pretoria. The six African countries were Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Ethiopia, Ghana and Nigeria. From a total sample of 200, 168 African immigrants responded; of these 10% were Mozambicans, 13% were Zimbabwean nationals, 13% Ethiopians, 17% Ugandans, 17% Ghanaians, while Nigeria had the largest representation with 30% of the total respondents.

Of note, while this paper focused on the views of African immigrants, it could also have benefited from the views of DHA officials to provide a more robust analysis. The paper is therefore constrained in this respect, as we could not interview DHA officials due to government communication policy that bars them from expressing their views without approval from headquarters. All attempts to get the required approvals did not yield any results at the time of writing this article. The results from our survey are presented below and in tables and percentages for clarity.

Research findings

Below, significant variables from the personal characteristics of the respondents (African immigrants) that impact on immigration discourse are presented and discussed. These include education and employment.

Level of education

Eight percent of the respondents indicated that they had only attained primary school education, 46% indicated that they had acquired secondary education, while 46% had acquired tertiary education, either in their home countries before relocating to South Africa or in South Africa. In total, 92% of the respondents had attained some form of education, with 46% having attained tertiary education. This is significant because it serves to confirm findings from previous studies (see Adepeju 2006; Gqola 2008; Neocosmos 2008; Ngwenya 2010; Aregbeshola 2010; Isike and Isike 2012) that African immigrants are usually highly educated people whose skills should and are being utilized variously to the advantage of the South African economy and society. In a sense, it negates the popular sentiment expressed by South Africans that African immigrants are a liability as they have nothing to offer and have only come to take out and not give back.

Employment

Directly pertinent to the discussion on the level of education is the employment status of African immigrants in South Africa. Fifty two percent of the respondents stated that they were employed, against 48% who claimed to be unemployed. Although a good number of the African immigrants who claimed to be employed were self-employed, particularly in the informal sector, they also contribute by employing others, especially South Africans, thus reducing unemployment in South Africa.

African immigrants' perceptions about DHA service delivery to African immigrants

This section discusses, analyzes and interprets the sampled African immigrants' responses to questions focusing on their perceptions of the service delivery rendered by the South African Department of Home Affairs to African immigrants resident in the country.

The respondents were asked the following questions:

- Have you visited the Department of Home Affairs in the last 5 years?
- What was the purpose of the visit(s)?
- How did you do your documentation?
- Was the level of service that you received satisfactory?
- If yes, what made the service satisfactory?
- Would you describe the level of competence of the immigration officials as satisfactory?

Visits to the Department of Home Affairs

Table I Visitation

COUNTRY	Yes	No	Total	%
Mozambique	15	5	20	75
Zimbabwe	18	3	21	85
Ethiopia	18	2	20	90
Uganda	27	-	27	100
Ghana	20	6	26	76
Nigeria	44	5	44	90
Total	142	21	163	
%	87.1	12.8		

As Table I shows, 87% of all the respondents indicated that they had visited the DHA in the last 5 years, against 13% who indicated that they had never been to the Department of Home Affairs. The table illustrates the respondents' visits to the Department of Home Affairs in line with the sampled nationalities.

We note that seventy five percent of the respondents from Mozambique indicated that they had been to the Department of Home Affairs for one reason or another, while 25% indicated that they had not visited the Department of Home Affairs for any purpose. Eighty five percent of the Zimbabwean immigrants indicated that they had visited the Department of Home Affairs, compared to 15% who maintained that they had never visited the department. Likewise, 90% of the Ethiopian immigrants had been to the Department of Home Affairs, while 10% claimed that they had never been there. All the respondents from Uganda (100%) had been to the department. 76% of the respondents from Ghana had been to the Department of Home Affairs, as against 24% who claimed that they had never been there. 90% of the

respondents from Nigeria indicated that they had visited the department, while 10% claimed that they had never been there. Cumulatively, 87% of all respondents had visited the Department of Home Affairs.

Purpose of the visit to Home Affairs

The respondents were asked why they had visited the Department of Home Affairs and responded as summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 Purpose of the visit

COUNTRY	Documentation	Others	Total	%
Mozambique	10	6	16	62.5
Zimbabwe	18	1	19	94.7
Ethiopia	16	3	19	84.2
Uganda	24	2	26	92.3
Ghana	19	1	20	95
Nigeria	36	4	40	90
Total	123	17	140	
%	88	12.1		

It is noted that 88% of the respondents had visited the department for the purposes of documentation, such as the application for or issuing of permits relevant to their situations, while only 12% claimed to have been there for purposes other than documentation. The latter ranged from visiting friends and accompanying relatives to other personal reasons. Documentation in this instance includes applications for and the issuing of residence permits, marriage, study permits, work permits, permanent residence, and citizenship.

Further, sixty two percent of the respondents from Mozambique who had visited the Department of Home Affairs stated their purpose as documentation, while 38% said that they had been to the department for other reasons, such as visiting or accompanying friends. 94.7% of the Zimbabwean immigrants stated that they had visited the Department of Home Affairs for the sole purpose of legalizing their permits, against 5.3% who maintained that they had not been to the Department for documentation, but for other, personal reasons. 84.2% of the Ethiopian respondents indicated that they had been to the Department of Home Affairs for documentation; 15.8% indicated that they had visited the department for other purposes, mainly personal. 92.3% of the respondents from Uganda stated the reason for their visit as documentation, far above the 7.7% who claimed to have visited for purposes other than documentation. 95% of the immigrants sampled from Ghana had been to the Department of Home Affairs for documentation, while only 5% had been there for reasons other than documentation. 90% of the Nigerian respondents claimed to have been to the department for documentation, while 10% indicated that they had been there for other purposes.

Making suggestions for better service from the DHA, one respondent from Mozambique, who was unsuccessful in obtaining a residence permit, recommended the need for better service delivery to African foreigners. Another who claimed to have visited for the purpose of asylum and was successful in his application, called for the decentralization in the issuing of permits to African foreigners. A respondent from Nigeria claimed that he had visited the DHA to register his marriage to a South African citizen. He clearly felt that the services rendered to African foreigners in the department are poor. He complained of too many delays in service delivery, and also claimed that the department's officials used their office to intimidate foreigners, especially when they were Africans.

How documentation was done

Sixty seven percent of the total sampled population responded to this question, which asked them whether they did their own documentation or acted through an agent (see Table 3).

Of this number, 69% indicated that they did their documentation themselves, while 31% used agents¹. For some of these respondents, doing their documentation themselves was as much about their distrust of the system as it was about not having the money to pay agents, some of whom were said to be fraudulently consorting with Home Affairs officials.

1. Agents in this context are individuals who, for a fee, act as representatives on behalf of clients to the DHA. These agents can be seen loitering around DHA offices nationwide and are believed to have connections to some DHA officials, who (it is claimed) some of these agents work for (according to over 46% of the total respondents of this study).

For those who used agents, it was more of a sign of their impatience with the procedures in Home Affairs than any other reason. Either way, the nature of service delivery at the DHA is a factor behind why people choose to use or do not use agents to process their documentation.

Table 3 Documentation

COUNTRY	Self	Agent	Total
Mozambique	5	8	13
Zimbabwe	14	3	17
Ethiopia	17	2	19
Uganda	7	5	12
Ghana	11	7	18
Nigeria	23	10	33
Total	77	35	112
%	69	31.2	

When prompted further, some of the respondents gave reasons for resorting to the use of agents. For instance, one respondent from Mozambique admitted to using a paid agent to obtain his permit, largely because doing it in person could jeopardize his stay in South Africa. He felt that not doing so was much more difficult and risky, and was afraid of deportation. A respondent from Ethiopia explained that he did not want to go to the department himself because he did not want to fail in obtaining the necessary permit. He then used a paid agent. He also complained that the insults and assaults on African foreigners start from the gate where the security guards often react angrily by beating African foreigners at the slightest misunderstanding. In both instances, these respondents confirmed that they were more confident of their chances when using agents because “these agents have connections with Home Affairs officials”. According to one of them, “The agents work for some Home Affairs officers, and even though sometimes we know they can dupe us, we still use them anyway because of their connections.”

The use of agents by African immigrants, irrespective of their bad reputation, is confirmed by SAMP (2005), which reported that the DHA has a bad image among the public and the media and foreign and local customers, a situation which forces immigrants to use DHA supported agents. Vigneswaran *et al.* (2010) indicted the South African immigration and security services on the grounds of double standards because they assist immigrants in breaking the law while at the same time are over-zealous to document illegal activities of the immigrants which they blamed on state monopoly of power. Neocosmos (2008) also confirms that state agencies extort money from African immigrants, and using agents is one way in which they do this.

Quality of services provided

In this section we required the respondents to rate the level of service they received from the DHA.

Table 4 Would you rate the level of service you received as satisfactory?

COUNTRY	Yes	No	Total	%
Mozambique	9	8	17	52
Zimbabwe	9	10	19	47
Ethiopia	2	18	20	10
Uganda	17	11	28	60
Ghana	10	11	21	47
Nigeria	17	32	49	35
Total	64	90	140	
%	36	64		

As Table 4 shows, 36% of all the respondents claimed that the level of service that they received was satisfactory, while 64% claimed that it was unsatisfactory. When analysed according to nationality, 52% of the Mozambican respondents

indicated that they had received a satisfactory level of service from the Department of Home Affairs for whatever purpose they had gone there for, while 48% claimed to have received poor service. Forty seven percent of the Zimbabwean immigrants indicated that they had received satisfactory service, with 53% feeling that the quality of services that were given to African immigrants was unsatisfactory. Only 10% of the respondents from Ethiopia claimed to have had a satisfactory level of service from the Department of Home Affairs, while 90% disapproved of the service delivery they had received from the department. Among the Ugandan respondents, 60% claimed that the level of service was satisfactory, while 40% claimed that they had received poor service when they had visited the department. 47% of the immigrants from Ghana had received satisfactory service from the Department of Home Affairs, while 53% claimed to have experienced poor service delivery. Thirty five percent of the Nigerian immigrants indicated that they had received satisfactory service from the department, while 65% of the Nigerian immigrants who responded to this question disapproved of the level of service that they had received.

The results are consistent with reports by the media that the Department of Home Affairs was struggling to deal with a service delivery crisis (SAMP 2005). However, the crisis of poor service delivery to African immigrants is not necessarily an operational one faced solely by the department; it has more to do with how African immigrants are perceived and treated. This is tantamount to our theoretical position that the dominant ideology of Makwerekwere is a factor that drives the DHA's service delivery to African immigrants. For instance, a respondent from Ghana claimed that he could not apply for a permit in person but used an agent because the officials at the Department of Home Affairs always treated white immigrants better than blacks, and he would rather use an agent than experience such blatant racial discrimination in a country with an apartheid past. It was beyond his comprehension that blacks could choose to ill-treat fellow blacks because for him, "African foreigners deserve better treatment on their own continent." Another respondent, also from Ghana, expressed similar disappointment in the level of service rendered to him by the DHA as he claimed that African foreigners are targeted and welcomed with a negative attitude, sometimes right from the entrance. For him, this was consistent with racial discrimination, which is still prevalent in the country's socio-economic system.

Table 5 Reason(s) for verdict on assessment of services rendered

COUNTRY	Good policy	Good officials	Total
Mozambique	12	3	15
Zimbabwe	12	3	15
Ethiopia	11	3	14
Uganda	13	6	19
Ghana	12	9	21
Nigeria	17	12	29
Total	77	36	113
%	68.1	31.8	

As mentioned, 36% of all the respondents indicated that they had received a satisfactory level of service from the DHA. When probed further about what was satisfactory to them, two answers predominated: satisfaction with the state immigration policy, and the good disposition of DHA officials. Those who claimed to have received satisfactory service from the department because of good policy constituted 68% of the sample, while 32% considered the officials to be good.

In terms of country by country analysis, 80% of the respondents from Mozambique indicated that they had received a satisfactory level of service from the Department of Home Affairs because of sound policy, while 20% said that they had received satisfactory service because the officials were good at what they did. The trend is the same among the Zimbabwean immigrants, as 80% claimed to have received satisfactory levels of service because of good policy, while 20% felt that the officials were good at what they were doing. 78% of the sample population from Ethiopia opted for good policy, while 22% disapproved of the policy but agreed that the officials were good at their job. 68% of the sample population from Uganda indicated that they had received satisfactory service from the department because of sound policy, against 32% who pointed to the officials' efforts. 57% of the immigrants from Ghana cited good policy, against 43% who felt that the service was satisfactory because good officials were at work. 58% of the Nigerian immigrants pointed to the good policy that South Africa has in place towards immigration, while 42% of the Nigerian immigrants felt that the officials are doing a good job.

The 68% who rated the service that they received as satisfactory because of a good immigration policy inadvertently showed their approval of the state policy on immigration, which also underscores the fact that the discrimination that is meted out by the Department of Home Affairs is not state policy, but an act by DHA officials on their own. This confirms Morris's (2008) assertion that the South African state does not have an anti-immigration policy as her official policy or legislation. Thus far, the ruling party (ANC) does not have such (an anti-immigration) policy, and no political party has emerged with such a policy in their party manifesto since 1994. However, a respondent from Mozambique argued that both the state policy on immigration and officials are anti-immigration because of how poorly African foreigners are treated. He further argued that the officials deliberately hurt African foreigners because they are xenophobic. Another respondent from Mozambique called on the DHA officials to respect the black race by attending to them without insults and humiliation when processing their permits. He claimed that it was a deliberate act to ensure the exclusion of blacks in the country when they were not indigenous South Africans. A respondent from Zimbabwe condemned the delays in service delivery to African foreigners caused by the department's officials, but approved of the overall state policy on immigration. He further disagreed with officials' behaviour towards African foreigners because the laws state that people in South Africa must be treated equally.

Assessing the technical competence of immigration officials

Table 6 Immigration officials' knowledge of immigration laws

COUNTRY	Yes	No	Total
Mozambique	13	4	17
Zimbabwe	8	10	18
Ethiopia	8	10	18
Uganda	13	13	26
Ghana	7	14	21
Nigeria	16	32	48
Total	65	84	149
%	44	56	

In testing the technical competence of the DHA officials, we used their perceived knowledge of immigration laws as a variable. 44% of the respondents were of the view that the officials' knowledge of the laws was sound, while 56% considered the officials to be novices/lacking in respect of the laws of immigration.

In terms of country by country response, 76% of the respondents from Mozambique felt that officials had sound knowledge of immigration laws, while 24% disapproved of the officials' level of knowledge. 44% of the Zimbabwean respondents were satisfied with the officials' level of knowledge, while 56% disapproved of their knowledge of the laws guiding immigration in South Africa. 44% of the Ethiopian respondents approved, while 56% disapproved of the officials' level of knowledge. 50% of the immigrants from Uganda approved, while 50% disapproved of the officials' level of knowledge. 33% of the respondents from Ghana approved, while 67% disapproved of the officials' knowledge of the laws. 33% of the Nigerian immigrants felt that the officials' level of knowledge was sound, while 67% disapproved of the officials' level of knowledge.

Respondents were further asked their opinion on who, between black and non-black immigration officials, were more knowledgeable about South Africa's immigration policies and laws. 56% of the respondents felt that non-blacks were more knowledgeable¹. This conforms with findings of a SAMP (2005) study which reported that 79% of black officials were not conversant with the laws and policies guiding immigration. One respondent from Ethiopia's response to the question was that "all black workers in Home Affairs need further training", while a respondent from Nigeria complained that the officials always gave complicated, distorted and unreliable information to African immigrants, which in her opinion, was a strategic and structured way of discriminating against African immigrants.

1. However, this finding was discountenanced by the fact that we did not factor in the seniority of positions, both in the racial categories occupied, and the fact that there are more black South African officials than non-blacks in DHA. This impacts on the variable. For example, non-black DHA officials are fewer and occupy more senior positions than black officials in various departments across the Pretoria area where this study was conducted. Surely, a senior official is expected to know more about immigration policies and laws than mostly low ranking, street level bureaucrats who only implement the policies.

Concluding remarks

While the views expressed by our respondents on the documentation processes at the DHA and the competence of DHA officials are geared towards assessing the proficiency of their service delivery, our focus here is on the broad question of how the ideology of Makwerekwere influences the services rendered by the Department of Home Affairs to African immigrants. Given the relationship between perception and behaviour, this question is germane to the quality of services that African immigrants receive from the DHA.

While the South African state has been variously indicted in its role (especially through its inaction or 'quiet' action) in perpetuating anti-African immigrant sentiments amongst its citizens (Solomon 2003; Neocosmos 2006; Gordon 2010; Gebre, Maharaj & Pillay 2011; Isike & Isike 2012), immigration laws in the country do not portray or uphold any anti-African immigration disposition. Implicitly, such sentiments are the machinations of the citizenry (supported by state inaction and the media) which have carried over from the private to the public realm of relations between indigenous South Africans and African immigrants living in the country. It is a popular orientation which DHA officials, as members of society, have carried over to the work place in carrying out their duties. We have argued that this phenomenon is largely fuelled by an invented ideology of Makwerekwere which is used to profile and denigrate African immigrants as despicable 'others' who are different from the exceptional 'us'. We have also argued that this ideology is not based on any real differences between black South Africans who are the main culprits of this anomaly and black African immigrants who are at the receiving end.

Clearly then, in a third world setting such as South Africa where the state is still a significant mode of social, economic and political organization, the government has an important role to play in resocializing people and changing the mindsets of its citizenry. This is intrinsic not only to nation-building to realize the dream of a rainbow nation, but also to South Africa's leadership role in the Southern Africa region and in the continent at large. As Isike and Isike (2012) alerted, *ethnophobia* – the fear and/or hatred of one ethnic group by another – is a grim possibility in South Africa, one that could lead to intra-state war with devastating consequences for nation-building and development. Assuming this notion of "foreigners are the cause of our problems" is allowed to perpetuate unchecked and African immigrants eventually leave South Africa *en masse* because of Afrophobia or even xenophobia, which can extend to non-African immigrant groups, what will happen next? The focus will then shift to internal struggles between different ethnic groups for survival, as was the case in most post-colonial states. This is what led Ake (1996) to conclude that after chasing away the colonialists and attaining independence, most African states simply shifted their focus to intra-ethnic struggles for survival and control of the state, such that development of the state was no longer on the agenda. In the case of South Africa, given the politicization of ethnicity in the runoff to the 2009 elections, we could well have an Ivory Coast or Kenya on our hands, with other ethnicities other than the Zulu and Xhosa wishing to exercise their right to lay claim to the presidency at some point.

Apart from the nation-building consequences of allowing the notion of Makwerekwere to continue unchecked by the state, South Africa, given its past, and the present goodwill and respectability that the country enjoys from the rest of the world, cannot afford to slide down that scale. The goodwill and respectability that South Africa enjoys from the comity of nations are based on its historic principled opposition to human rights abuse and injustice, and these are important to its national prestige as well as core interests. Therefore, the state and all relevant stakeholders within it must rise to the challenge posed by the Afrophobic dispositions of not only its citizens, but also its institutions such as the DHA, which is the face of the government¹. Studies have shown that African immigrants contribute more to the South African economy through capital and skills transfer than they get from the through any kind of welfare provision². This means that African immigration has positive implications for the development of the South African economy and society at large and this potential, if left untapped, will be more detrimental to the South African state than to the countries that have suffered the brain drain of African immigrants (Adepoju 2006; Strydom & Cronje 2008; Vigneswaran, Araia, Hoag, & Tshabalala 2010; Kalitanyi and Visser 2010; Aregbeshola 2010).

1. The DHA is the first point of contact between all foreigners and South Africa at all points of entry into the country. They also have representatives in South Africa's High Commissions abroad.
2. For example, Kalitanyi and Visser (2010) found out that more than 80% of African immigrants in small scale businesses employ South Africans, and eventually transfer entrepreneurial skills to South Africans for the ultimate benefit of the South African economy.

Based on our findings, we suggest the following broad recommendations which may be helpful in harnessing the full potential of African immigration to South Africa while also fostering positive relations between African immigrants and South Africans:

- The South African government can introduce more elaborate policies that are also more inclusive of African immigrants in the country in order to reduce inter-group anxiety for the purpose of a better state (Laher 2008).
- South African leaders should take it upon themselves to explain to the South African public and state agencies the advantages and disadvantages of the presence of immigrants in South Africa.
- Corruption and exploitation of African immigrants in South Africa by the Department of Home Affairs officials should be countered with the full force of the law.
- In-service training is recommended for Department of Home Affairs' officials. The staff should also be acquainted with immigration laws and legislation.
- Increased cultural exchange between the host country South Africa and other African countries would be a major breakthrough to ending or reducing the poor treatment of Africans immigrants by Department of Home Affairs officials.
- The African Union can provide the grounds that are necessary for Africa to create a better atmosphere for the end of xenophobia, Afrophobia or Makwerekwere on the continent.

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