

Preface

How do migrants in foreign countries in Africa, construct their identities, how do they keep and affirm their links to their countries of origin, and what are the dynamics involved in processes of migrant integration in their new countries of adoption? These are just three of the seminal questions *Alternation African Scholarship Book Series (AASBS)* volumes 17 and 18 raise.

As they are engaged, the topic-related relevant data also provides the opportunity to trace migration dynamics and complexities, related to the questions articulated with identity construction. Questions are raised that are pertinent to processes of movement, settlement and integration, but also development paradigms, and ideas on human rights, and development and environmental issues, in the specific contexts of the research.

The implicit or explicit approach shared by all studies, is that migration discourse registers the continuing impacts of the historical realities of colonisation on migration, in various forms, while simultaneously integrating global knowledge perspectives in local knowledge productions among and about migrants and their identities, as well as their forms of integration in their new communities of belonging. Generically, decolonial history and theory provide the parameters within which the research questions were raised, the research conducted, and reviewed and written up.

AASBS #17 principally engages migrant identity formation. Acknowledging that it is stratified and multidimensional and fluid, the main focuses are on,

- The articulation of migration and identity construction with public policy research and development, as well as policy implementation and evaluation;
- The identity construction significance of names and naming, as evident in Khelobedu and Tshivenda naming practices;
- The role of music for migrants, that represent both cultural links with countries of origin as well as countries of adoption, and the diversity and unifying aspects of the continental sharing of religious music;
- Negotiated identities as impacted by modern cultural influences and the articulation with religion and cultural tourism;
- The COVID-19 impacts on xenophobia; and

- The relevance of the intersectional study of the nature of gender-based rights, and especially women's rights, articulated with refugee and asylum seeking migrants, for refugee law and public policy reform.

Following the first volume's study of a sample of aspects of both personal and social contexts of migrants' identity construction practices, AASBS #18, focuses more directly on the matter of migrant integration in host countries. It is assumed that much of the concerns raised about the presence and lives and activities of migrants in host countries in Africa do not only derive from forms of personal and social misunderstandings of the nature and dynamics of migration, but also the dearth of systems and practices that invite and allow migrants to integrate in host country communities. Some of the seminal topics addressed are,

- The role of social media in cultural identity formation, and social integration, e.g. Twitter/ X;
- Security and legal protection concerning the integration of migrants in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Zimbabwean sources for the mitigation of forms of xenophobia;
- The structural dynamics impacting migrants in South Africa;
- The role of gender in migratory realities in foreign countries;
- The articulation of refugee rights with development policies in SADC;
- Mobility poverty as obstacle to social integration;
- The impacts of climate change on inter-state migration and conflicts in West-Africa; and
- Peace-building challenges and opportunities in the context of migrant conflicts in Nigeria.

In addition to the excellent research and publications led by the late Katie Mutula and Stephen Mutula, in *The Diasporean I: The Southern African Perspectives* (AASBS #15); and *The Diasporean II: Perspectives from Beyond Southern Africa* (AASBS #16), these volumes by H. Patrick and E. Khalema, on identity construction and host country integration, significantly add to the AASBS scholarship on migration. We strongly recommend these 4 volumes to our scholars, our South African government, SADC, and further afield.

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