





## Chapter Eight

# Migration, Security, and the State: A Critical Review of the Securitisation of Migration in Africa

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### Abstract

This chapter critically examines the securitisation of migration in Africa, focusing on this phenomenon's historical context, theoretical perspectives, and practical implications. It explores the emergence of migration as a security concern in African states and the policies and measures adopted to address migration-related security concerns. The role of international actors, such as the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU), in shaping migration securitisation in Africa is also analysed. The chapter highlights the impact of securitisation on migrants' rights and experiences, emphasising the ethical implications, the disproportionate focus on border control, and the consequences for regional integration and cooperation. Additionally, the chapter explores alternatives to securitisation, including humanitarian approaches to migration management, comprehensive migration policies focusing on development and integration, and the importance of regional and international



cooperation in addressing migration challenges. Through case studies on country-specific analysis and the impact of securitisation on specific migrant populations, the chapter provides valuable insights into the complexities and implications of migration securitisation in Africa. It concludes with policy recommendations and reflections on the securitisation of migration, highlighting the need for a balanced, rights-based, and comprehensive approach to migration governance in Africa.

## **Introduction**

Migration, a dynamic force that shapes societies, economies, and political landscapes worldwide, stands at the crossroads of global change and challenge (Johannes, Dzingirai & Chirisa, 2023; Castelli, 2018). With its diverse range of countries and unique migration patterns, Africa is particularly affected by migration dynamics (Teye, 2018). The movement of people within and across African borders has been shaped by historical, economic, political, and environmental factors, resulting in a rich tapestry of migration experiences on the continent (Carling & Collins, 2018; Kirwin & Anderson, 2018; Van Hear *et al.*, 2018). Understanding and analysing migration in Africa necessitates a critical examination of the securitisation of migration. Securitisation refers to constructing an issue as a security threat, thereby justifying exceptional measures, policy responses, and securitisation practices (Bourbeau, 2011; Huysmans, 2000; Ibrahim, 2005). In recent years, migration has increasingly been securitised by African states and the international community, elevating it to national security concerns (Barana, 2017). Examining the securitisation of migration in Africa is paramount due to its far-reaching implications. It raises fundamental questions about the balance between security imperatives and the protection of migrants' rights, as well as the impact of securitisation on regional integration and cooperation (Kleinschmidt, 2017). Moreover, understanding the underlying drivers and consequences of migration securitisation is crucial for formulating more effective, equitable, and comprehensive migration policies.

## *Chapter Eight*

This chapter provides a critical examination of the securitisation of migration in Africa. Analysing the historical context, policy responses, and the impact on migrants and the broader region, the chapter sheds light on the complexities surrounding migration securitisation and stimulates informed discussions on alternative approaches. The chapter follows a structured approach. It begins by establishing the conceptual framework, defining securitisation and its application to migration. Theoretical perspectives on securitisation and migration are explored to provide a foundation for the analysis. The subsequent section explores the historical perspectives on migration in Africa, examining the diverse factors that have shaped migration patterns on the continent and the implications for African societies and economies. This historical understanding serves as a backdrop for comprehending the emergence and intensification of migration securitisation. The chapter then critically analyses the securitisation of migration in Africa, investigating the policies and measures adopted by African states and the involvement of international actors in shaping migration securitisation. The impact of securitisation on migrants' rights and experiences is also examined, paying particular attention to the ethical implications of securitising migration and the disproportionate focus on border control over human rights. To illustrate the complexities and variations of migration securitisation in Africa, the chapter incorporates case studies, exploring country-specific analysis and the impact of securitisation on different migrant populations, such as refugees and economic migrants. These case studies provide empirical evidence and nuanced insights into the diverse contexts and implications of migration securitisation in Africa. Finally, the chapter presents alternatives to securitisation, discussing humanitarian approaches to migration management and comprehensive migration policies prioritising development and integration. The role of regional and international cooperation in addressing migration challenges is also examined.

The chapter contributes to academic discussions, policy debates, and formulating more holistic and human rights-based approaches to migration in Africa. Through a deeper

understanding of the securitisation of migration, it is hoped that policymakers, practitioners, and scholars can navigate the complexities of migration governance in a way that upholds human dignity, promotes regional cooperation, and addresses genuine security concerns while safeguarding the rights and well-being of migrants.

## **Conceptual framework**

The conceptual framework of this chapter focuses on the securitisation of migration in Africa, exploring its definition, theoretical perspectives, and the linkages between migration, security, and the state. This framework provides a theoretical lens through which to understand securitisation processes and their implications for migration governance in Africa.

## **Definition of securitisation and its application to migration**

The concept of securitisation is central to understanding the dynamics of migration and how it is framed within political and societal contexts. Securitisation is the process through which an issue or phenomenon is transformed into a security concern, demanding exceptional measures and resources to address it effectively (Huysmans, 2000; Ibrahim, 2005). In the context of migration, securitisation refers to the process through which migration is framed as a security issue, not necessarily because of its nature or the actual level of the threat it poses, but because of the way it is presented and perceived by political actors and the public (Farny, 2016). The securitisation of migration involves using security discourse and practices to manage migration flows, which can have significant implications for the rights and freedoms of migrants and the societies they live in. Securitisation of migration has become a major topic of discussion in recent years, not only in Europe and North America but also in Africa because of the rise in immigration and growing fear of terrorism and other threats to internal safety (Bhanye, Shayamunda & Tavirai, 2023). A range of factors drive the securitisation of migration. These include political

and economic instability, demographic changes, and increasing interconnectedness of the world (Bello, 2022). The securitisation of migration has significant implications for the way migration is governed and managed. It can lead to the adoption of restrictive immigration policies, the use of surveillance and border control measures, and the criminalisation of irregular migration (Chebel d'Appollonia, 2015). The securitisation of migration can also have negative consequences for the rights and freedoms of migrants, including the right to asylum and protection from persecution (Von Rosen, 2019).

### **Theoretical perspectives on securitisation and migration**

Three theoretical perspectives, the Copenhagen School of Security Studies, Critical Security Studies and the Human Security approach, provide a lens to understand the securitisation processes and their implications for migration governance in Africa. The Copenhagen School of Security Studies offers a foundational perspective on securitisation, emphasising the social and political processes involved in framing an issue as a security threat (Floyd, 2007a; McSweeney, 1996). According to this approach, securitisation is a speech act that involves the construction of an issue as an existential security concern, thereby justifying exceptional measures and policies (Floyd, 2007b). Actors such as state officials, media organisations, and interest groups are crucial in securitising migration. In the context of migration, securitisation within the Copenhagen School's framework involves portraying migrants as potential risks to national security, social cohesion, or economic welfare (Demirkol, 2023; Hammerstad, 2014). This framing may be based on concerns related to the impact of migration on the labour market, cultural identity, public services, or social order (Hammerstad, 2014). By presenting migration as a security threat, securitisation enables the deployment of extraordinary measures such as enhanced border controls, restrictive immigration policies, and securitisation practices to manage and control migrant populations.

Critical Security Studies offer a critical lens through which to analyse securitisation and migration. This perspective highlights power relations, discourses, and the role of dominant actors in constructing security threats (Krause & Williams, 2002; Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2020). From a critical standpoint, the securitisation of migration is viewed as a social and political practice that perpetuates existing power structures, reinforces inequalities, and often neglects the rights and vulnerabilities of migrants (Browning & McDonald, 2013; Squire, 2015). Critical Security Studies scrutinise the discourses and narratives surrounding migration securitisation, revealing how they shape public perceptions, policy agendas, and practices. This perspective highlights the role of powerful actors, such as governments, security institutions, and media organisations, in influencing the securitisation process (Bhanye & Bhanye, 2023; Browning & McDonald, 2013; Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2020). It questions the underlying motivations behind the securitisation of migration, exposing potential hidden agendas, scapegoating marginalised groups, or diverting attention from other pressing social and economic issues. The critical lens perspective challenges dominant narratives, uncovers alternative voices, and advocates for more inclusive and rights-based approaches to migration governance.

The Human Security critical approach expands the understanding of security beyond the traditional state-centric perspective. It shifts the focus from the security of the state to the protection and well-being of individuals (Floyd, 2007b; Kaldor *et al.*, 2007). Applied to migration, this perspective critiques securitisation for prioritising state security over human security concerns, potentially leading to the violation of migrants' rights and the neglect of their well-being (Floyd, 2007b). The human security approach highlights the multidimensional nature of security, encompassing physical safety and economic, social, and environmental aspects (Floyd, 2007b; Kaldor *et al.*, 2007; Newman, 2010). When migration is securitised, the focus often lies on protecting state borders, national interests, and public order, sometimes overshadowing the rights and needs of migrants themselves. This perspective

emphasises the importance of respecting migrants' human rights, ensuring their access to basic services, promoting social integration, and addressing the root causes of migration, such as poverty, inequality, and conflict. Through the human security lens, the critique of securitisation in the context of migration calls for a more holistic and inclusive approach that seeks to balance security concerns with the rights and well-being of migrants. It highlights the need to address the structural factors that drive migration and pursue policies promoting human dignity, equality, and social justice.

### **Linkages between migration, security, and the state**

The linkages between migration, security, and the state are complex and multifaceted. Migration is influenced by various factors, including economic, political, and environmental conditions (Carling & Collins, 2018; Kirwin & Anderson, 2018; Van Hear *et al.*, 2018). The movement of people across borders raises concerns about national security, social cohesion, and the management of resources. Different states respond to these concerns by adopting securitisation measures, such as stricter border controls, immigration policies, and cooperation with international actors. The securitisation of migration has implications for migration governance, human rights, and social dynamics (Bello, 2017; Huysmans, 2000; Ibrahim, 2005). It shapes the legal frameworks and policies governing migration, influencing the experiences of migrants and their access to rights and services (Floyd, 2007b; Kaldor *et al.*, 2007). The securitisation discourse and practices can also impact social cohesion, contributing to xenophobia, discrimination, and marginalisation of migrants. Understanding the linkages between migration, security, and the state is crucial for developing comprehensive and rights-based approaches to migration management in Africa. Table 8.1 summarises the linkages between migration, security, and the state.

**Table 8.1:** Linkage Between Migration, Security and the State

Linkage	Explanation
National Security Concerns	Nation-states often perceive migration as a security challenge due to concerns of border control, territorial integrity, and socio-economic stability. The movement of people across borders is seen as potentially threatening national security, particularly in contexts where conflicts, political instability, or economic disparities exist.
Resource Competition	Migration can trigger competition over resources, including jobs, land, and social services. This competition may lead to tensions between migrants and host communities, raising security concerns for the state and potentially exacerbating intergroup conflicts.
Regional Stability	Migration patterns in Africa can have implications for regional stability. Mass movements of people due to conflicts, environmental disasters, or economic disparities can create political and social tensions that may spill over into neighbouring countries. This necessitates regional cooperation and coordination to manage migration-related security challenges.
Transnational Threats	Migration routes can be used by transnational criminal networks, including human traffickers, drug smugglers, and terrorist groups. These transnational threats pose security risks for both the states of origin and destination, necessitating security measures and cooperation between countries.
Governance and Policy Responses	Migration challenges require effective governance and policy responses from the state. How migration is securitised and addressed through policy frameworks can have significant implications for the rights, well-being, and integration prospects of migrants, as well as for regional cooperation and stability.

### Historical perspectives on migration in Africa

Africa has a rich migration history, characterised by diverse patterns and movements of people within the continent and

across its borders. Throughout the centuries, Africans have migrated for various reasons, including economic opportunities, political stability, environmental factors, and social-cultural exchanges (Bhanye, 2024; Curtin, 2018; Van Hear *et al.*, 2018). Historically, migration in Africa was influenced by factors such as trade routes, the expansion of empires and kingdoms, labour movements, and demographic changes (Adepoju, 1995; Curtin, 2018). Trans-Saharan trade routes facilitated the movement of goods, ideas, and people across the Sahara Desert, leading to the exchange of cultures and establishing commercial centres along these routes. Additionally, migration within Africa was driven by factors such as the Bantu expansion, which led to the diffusion of Bantu languages and cultures across vast regions (Cartwright, 2020). Colonialism in Africa also significantly shaped migration patterns (Bhanye, 2020b; Bhanye, 2022). European powers established colonies, leading to forced migration through the transatlantic slave trade and the displacement of populations. The colonial era also saw the movement of Europeans and Asians to Africa for economic opportunities, such as mining, plantation agriculture, and administrative roles (Emmer, 2012).

Various factors have influenced migration in Africa throughout history, including economic, political, and environmental drivers. These factors continue to shape migration dynamics in the present day. Economic opportunities and disparities have been key drivers of migration in Africa. Push factors such as poverty, unemployment, limited access to resources, and economic inequalities drive individuals and communities to seek better livelihoods elsewhere (Van Hear *et al.*, 2018). Pull factors, including employment prospects, entrepreneurship opportunities, and the availability of resources, attract migrants to specific regions or countries within Africa (Carling & Collins, 2018; Castelli, 2018). Political instability, conflicts, and wars have resulted in significant movements of people within and across African borders (Castelli, 2018). Internal displacement and forced migration have been common consequences of political crises as individuals and communities flee violence, persecution, or human rights abuses. Political changes, such as the end of apartheid in South Africa or the

decolonisation process, have also influenced migration patterns (Hiropoulos, 2020; Reed, 2013). Environmental challenges, including droughts, floods, desertification, and resource scarcity, have also triggered African migration (Adaawen *et al.*, 2019). Climate change exacerbates these environmental factors, leading to the displacement of populations and the search for more habitable areas (Zickgraf, 2019).

Migration has significant implications for African societies and economies historically and in the contemporary context through cultural diversity and exchange, labour markets and economic development, and social and demographic changes. Movements of people lead to the diffusion of languages, religions, artistic expressions, and knowledge systems, enriching African societies and contributing to the continent's vibrant cultural heritage (Jerardino *et al.*, 2014). Migrants also contribute to the labour markets by filling gaps in various sectors, such as agriculture, mining, construction, and services. Remittances sent by African migrants working abroad are a significant source of income for households and contribute to local economies, investment, and poverty reduction (Dzingirai *et al.*, 2014). Migration also brings social and demographic changes in African societies. Migrant communities often establish diaspora networks, maintaining connections with their countries of origin while adapting to new environments (Bhanye, 2022; Bhanye, 2023). Migrants also contribute to urbanisation processes, leading to the growth of cities and the emergence of multicultural urban societies.

However, migration also poses challenges for African societies and economies. It strains social services and infrastructure in destination areas, creates tensions over resource competition and cultural differences, and exacerbates inequalities (Abel *et al.*, 2019). The brain drain phenomenon, where highly skilled individuals migrate to seek better opportunities abroad, can also have negative implications for African countries, depriving them of valuable human capital (Dzinamarira & Musuka, 2021). Furthermore, irregular and forced migration poses significant humanitarian challenges. Human trafficking, smuggling, and exploitation of migrants are

prevalent in certain regions, leading to human rights abuses and vulnerabilities (Bello & Olutola, 2020). Women and children, in particular, are at risk of various forms of exploitation, including trafficking for forced labour or sexual exploitation. In recent years, migration in Africa has also become a pressing issue due to the large-scale displacement caused by conflicts, political instability, and environmental disasters (Adaawen *et al.*, 2019; Zickgraf, 2019). The movement of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) within and across borders has strained host countries, affecting their social systems, resources, and security.

### **Securitisation of migration in Africa**

Migration has increasingly been framed as a security concern in African states over the past decades (Gidron, 2020; Laine, 2020). This shift can be attributed to various factors, including economic disparities, political instability, conflicts, and transnational threats. African states have come to view migration through a security lens, perceiving it as a potential risk to national security, social cohesion, and economic stability (Abebe, 2019; Esteveens, 2018). A combination of internal and external factors often drives the emergence of migration as a security concern in Africa. Internally, countries may experience large-scale movements of people due to conflicts, political crises, or economic disparities. These movements can create challenges for state institutions, strain social services, and raise concerns about the potential for social unrest or the infiltration of criminal networks. Externally, African states face pressures from destination countries and international organisations to control irregular migration and address transnational threats such as human trafficking, smuggling, and terrorism (Bello & Olutola, 2020).

African states are implementing various policies and measures in response to migration-related security concerns. These measures aim to enhance border control, strengthen immigration laws and enforcement, and manage migrant populations. Policies include the establishment of border surveillance systems, the deployment of security forces to

border areas, the introduction of stricter visa requirements, and the development of immigration detention facilities. African states also address security concerns by cooperating with regional and international partners (Moyo, 2021). This includes engaging in bilateral or multilateral agreements on border management, information sharing, and joint operations to combat transnational crime (Moyo, 2021; Nshimbi & Fioramonti, 2014). Some countries have participated in initiatives such as the Rabat Process<sup>1</sup> and the Khartoum Process<sup>2</sup>, which promote dialogue and cooperation between African and European countries on migration and security issues.

The securitisation of migration in Africa is influenced by the involvement of international actors, including the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU). To address migration challenges, the EU has focused on externalising its borders by cooperating with African countries to prevent irregular migration and improve border management (Zanker, 2019). This has led to the negotiation and implementation of migration agreements, such as the EU-Turkey Agreement and the EU-Morocco Partnership, which aim to control migration flows from Africa to Europe. The AU has also been shaping migration securitisation in Africa through its policy frameworks (Nakache & Losier, 2017). The AU's Migration Policy Framework for Africa emphasises the importance of managing migration in a way that promotes development, human rights, and regional integration. However, the AU also recognises the need to address security concerns related to migration, particularly in the context of conflicts, terrorism, and organised crime (Léonard & Kaunert, 2022). The involvement of international actors in shaping migration securitisation in Africa has implications for how

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1 The Rabat Process is a political process initiated in 2006 by the European Union and the African Union to address the challenges and opportunities of migration in the Euro-African region.

2 The Khartoum Process is a regional migration and border management initiative that was launched in 2014. It is named after the city of Khartoum, Sudan, where the first ministerial meeting took place. The process aims to enhance cooperation among countries along the migration routes in the Horn of Africa and the European Union (EU) in addressing irregular migration, human trafficking, and smuggling of migrants.

migration is framed, prioritised, and addressed by African states. Such partnerships and agreements should strike a balance between security concerns and the protection of migrants' rights, as well as promoting sustainable development and regional cooperation.

### **Implications of securitisation of migration in Africa**

The securitisation of migration in Africa has significant implications for migrants' rights and experiences, host communities, and regional integration. The subsections that follow substantiate this claim.

### **Implications for Migrants**

The securitisation of migration in Africa has had significant implications for migrants, who are often stigmatised and criminalised (Laurent, 2021). Migrants are often denied access to basic services and opportunities and face social exclusion and discrimination (Gabrielli, 2014). The securitisation of migration has also led to increased border control and detention policies, violating migrants' human rights and dignity. Table 8.2 summarises the implications of securitisation of migration for migrants in Africa.

**Table 8.2:** Implications of Securitisation of Migration for Migrants in Africa

<b>Implication</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Increased risk of human rights violations	When migration is securitised, it can violate migrants' human rights, including the right to seek asylum and protection from persecution. Migrants may face arbitrary detention, forced deportation, or other forms of mistreatment.

## Security-Development Nexus in Africa

Implication	Explanation
Marginalisation and exclusion	Securitisation of migration can also exacerbate existing inequalities and tensions within societies, particularly when it is accompanied by xenophobic attitudes and behaviour towards migrants. Migrants may face discrimination and exclusion from basic services and opportunities, such as healthcare, education, and employment.
Loss of agency and autonomy	The securitisation of migration can also limit migrants' agency and autonomy, as they may be subject to restrictions on their movement and activities. This can prevent them from pursuing their goals and aspirations or accessing opportunities for personal and economic development.
Increased vulnerability to exploitation and abuse	Migrants subject to securitisation measures may become more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, including trafficking, forced labour, and sexual exploitation. This is particularly true for irregular migrants who may be afraid to seek help, or report abuses for fear of being detained or deported.
Reduced access to services and protection	The securitisation of migration can also make it more difficult for migrants to access services and protection. For example, suppose migrants are afraid to come forward and access health care, education, or other services due to fear of deportation. In that case, this can lead to their social exclusion and marginalisation.
Forced displacement	The securitisation of migration can also lead to the forced displacement of migrants. For example, in some countries, migrants who are deemed to be a security threat may be forcibly removed from the country, even if they face persecution or danger in their country of origin.
Limited legal options	Finally, the securitisation of migration can limit legal options for migrants, particularly those seeking asylum or refugee status. For example, if countries tighten their borders and limit access to asylum procedures, this can make it more difficult for migrants to seek protection and safety.

## Implications for host communities

The securitisation of migration also has significant implications for host communities in Africa. Exclusionary policies lead to social tensions and the marginalisation of vulnerable groups. Host communities are often ill-equipped to deal with the influx of migrants, leading to social and economic pressures. Table 8.3 presents some of the implications of the securitisation of migration in Africa on host communities.

**Table 8.3:** Implications of Securitisation of Migration for Host Communities in Africa

Implication	Explanation
Social tension and conflict	The securitisation of migration can exacerbate social tension and conflict between host communities and migrants, particularly when migrants threaten social and economic stability. This can lead to xenophobia, discrimination, and violence against migrants, which can lead to retaliation and further tension between communities.
Strain on resources and services	Host communities may also feel the strain of an increased number of migrants, particularly if there are insufficient resources and services to support them. This can lead to competition for resources, such as housing, healthcare, and education, and can strain the capacity of local institutions to provide these services.
Economic impacts	The securitisation of migration can also have economic implications for host communities. On the one hand, migrants can contribute to the local economy by providing a source of labour and contributing to the local tax base. On the other hand, competition for jobs and resources can lead to resentment and tension between host communities and migrants. It can even result in a decrease in local wages and working conditions.

Implication	Explanation
Displacement and loss of cultural identity	In some cases, the securitisation of migration can lead to the displacement of host communities, particularly when they are forced to move to make way for migrants. This can lead to a loss of cultural identity and connection to the land and can have long-term impacts on the well-being of these communities.
Increased crime	The securitisation of migration can also lead to increased crime in host communities. For example, in some countries, migrants may be forced to resort to illegal activities to survive, contributing to rising crime rates and social unrest.
Trauma and psychological distress	The securitisation of migration can also psychologically impact host communities, particularly if they are exposed to violence, discrimination, or other forms of trauma due to tensions with migrants.
Political tensions	The securitisation of migration can also lead to political tensions in host communities, particularly if migrants threaten national security or stability. For example, in some countries, anti-migrant sentiment has been used to mobilise political support and gain power.

### Implications for regional integration

The securitisation of migration in Africa can also have significant implications for regional integration efforts, which aim to promote cooperation and economic development between countries. Borders have become increasingly militarised, and the movement of people and goods is restricted (Wilson, 2017). This has significant economic implications, with cross-border trade and investment being hindered. The securitisation of migration also hinders efforts to build regional solidarity, with countries adopting increasingly protectionist policies (Moyo, 2021). Table 8.4 shows the implications of the securitisation of migration for Regional Integration in Africa.

**Table 8.4:** Implications of Securitization of Migration for Regional Integration in Africa

Implication	Explanation
Border closures	The securitisation of migration can lead to the closure of borders between countries, making it more difficult for migrants to move freely between nations. For example, in 2019, Nigeria closed its borders with neighbouring countries to combat smuggling and illegal immigration. While this policy had some short-term success, it also negatively impacted regional integration efforts.
Disrupting cross-border trade	The securitisation of migration can also disrupt cross-border trade, a key component of regional integration in Africa. For example, in some countries, increased border security measures have led to delays and increased costs for traders, making it more difficult to do business across borders.
Reduced cross-cultural exchange	The securitisation of migration can also reduce cross-cultural exchange between nations, which is a key component of regional integration efforts. For example, if migrants are seen as a threat to national security, this can lead to increased isolationism and xenophobia, making it more difficult for people from different cultures to connect and share ideas.
Undermining regional agreements	The securitisation of migration can undermine regional agreements and cooperation efforts, particularly if countries prioritise their national security interests over regional integration. For example, if countries begin to see migration as a national security threat, this can lead to the erosion of regional integration efforts and the breakdown of cross-border cooperation.

### Case Studies on migration securitisation in Africa

This section presents specific case studies on migration securitisation in Africa. The case studies analyse the securitisation of migration in specific countries, namely South Africa, Libya, and Morocco. Each country presents unique

dynamics and challenges related to migration, shaping its approach to securitisation.

### **South Africa**

South Africa faces complex migration dynamics influenced by a mix of economic migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers (De Jager & Musuva, 2016). Migration securitisation measures in South Africa aim to address perceived threats to national security, social tensions, and job competition. These measures include stringent immigration policies, increased border control, and deploying security forces in areas with high migrant populations (Tshishonga, 2022). While these measures aim to regulate migration flows and maintain social stability, their implementation raises concerns about their impact on migrants' rights and overall experiences in the country (Mbiyozo, 2018). One of the key effects of securitisation on migration governance in South Africa is the restriction of migrants' access to essential services and opportunities. Migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers, often face challenges in accessing healthcare, education, and formal employment due to securitisation measures (Hlatshwayo & Vally, 2014). This lack of access violates their human rights and perpetuates social inequalities and marginalisation.

Securitisation measures also contribute to hostility and xenophobia towards migrants in some instances (Chekero, 2023; Mushonga, 2022; Nyamwanza, 2023). The securitisation discourse, which frames migrants as threats to national security and economic stability, fuels negative perceptions and discrimination against migrants. This results in social tensions and violence targeting migrant communities, further hindering social cohesion within South African society. Xenophobia is often fuelled by the perception that foreign migrants pose a security threat to the country, particularly in terms of crime and competition for resources (Claassen, 2017).

Another example of the securitisation of migration in South Africa is the construction of walls and fences along the country's borders. The South African government justified the

measures on security grounds, claiming that they are necessary to prevent the entry of illegal migrants and criminal elements. However, the measures have also led to the displacement of many people who rely on cross-border trade and migration for their livelihoods.

## **Libya**

Libya implemented specific securitisation measures in response to migration flows, particularly as a transit country for migrants attempting to reach Europe. These measures have significant consequences on migrants' rights, and external actors have played a crucial role in shaping migration securitisation within the country (Nakache & Losier, 2017). One of the primary securitisation measures employed by Libya is the establishment of detention centres for migrants. Detention facilities are centred around Bani Walid, with approximately 20 camps, including the Bani Walid detention camp. Al Mabani Centre, which opened in January 2021, is located in Tripoli and detains approximately 1,500 abductees. The Triq al-Sika detention centre is located in Tripoli. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) indicated that in 2023, around 5,000 migrants are being held in official detention centres in Libya, but they could represent just the tip of the iceberg. Speaking in Geneva in March 2023, IOM Chief Antonio Vitorino decried "*the violation of the rights of migrants*" in Libya as he urged to look for alternatives to the detention of people on the road to exile.

While the detention facilities are intended to detain and control the movement of migrants, particularly those in irregular situations, the conditions within the detention centres raise serious concerns about the violation of migrants' rights (Al-Dayel *et al.*, 2021). Reports of overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, lack of access to healthcare, and abuse have emerged, pointing to a systemic failure to uphold human rights standards (Beşer & Elfeitori, 2018).

The securitisation of migration in Libya is closely tied to external pressures and regional dynamics. External actors, including international organisations and neighbouring

countries, have played a role in shaping migration securitisation policies within Libya (Nakache & Losier, 2017). For instance, the European Union (EU) collaborated with Libya to strengthen border controls and prevent migrants from reaching European shores. This external involvement influenced the securitisation approach taken by Libya, which had consequences for migrants' rights (Al-Dayel *et al.*, 2021). Migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers, face widespread abuse, exploitation, and violations of their fundamental rights (Beşer & Elfeitori, 2018).

### **Morocco**

Morocco implemented securitisation measures in response to migration flows, particularly from sub-Saharan Africa. The measures include enhanced border controls, increased cooperation with the EU, and establishing migration management policies (Qadim, 2014). While these measures aim to address concerns related to irregular migration, human trafficking, and security threats, they have implications for migrants' rights and social integration. The securitisation of migration in Morocco has positive and negative effects on migrants' rights. On the one hand, securitisation measures decreased irregular migration and improved border control, enhancing security and facilitating orderly migration processes. On the other hand, securitisation led to human rights concerns, particularly regarding migrants' access to asylum procedures, adequate living conditions, and protection from exploitation. The securitisation approach sometimes results in the confinement of migrants in detention centres or informal settlements, raising questions about their rights and well-being. Securitisation measures in Morocco also impacted social integration efforts. The securitisation discourse, framing migration as a security threat, can contribute to social tensions and xenophobia, making it challenging for migrants to integrate into Moroccan society (Berriane *et al.*, 2015). The securitisation focus on border control and migration management has sometimes overshadowed social cohesion and inclusion initiatives. Regarding migration governance, the securitisation measures have influenced the legal framework and policies governing migration in Morocco.

The emphasis on border control and cooperation with the EU shape the country’s migration management strategies. These measures impact the experiences of migrants, affecting their mobility, access to services, and legal protections.

### Lessons learned and implications from case studies

Drawing from country-specific case studies, common patterns, lessons and implications of migration securitisation in Africa can be drawn as follows in Table 8.5.

**Table 8.5:** Lessons Learned and Implications from Case Studies

Lesson learned	Explanation
Human rights and dignity:	The case studies highlight the importance of upholding migrants’ human rights and dignity in migration governance. They shed light on the negative consequences of securitisation on migrants’ rights and the need for a rights-based approach that respects their inherent worth and agency.
Balancing security and human rights	The case studies underscore the need for a balanced approach that addresses security concerns while safeguarding migrants’ rights. They emphasise the importance of comprehensive migration policies that integrate security considerations with respect for human rights, social cohesion, and sustainable development.
Regional cooperation and responsibility-sharing	The case studies also demonstrate the significance of regional cooperation and responsibility-sharing in managing migration effectively. They will highlight the benefits of collaboration between African countries in addressing common migration challenges. The case studies also shed light on the consequences of fragmented approaches and the importance of fostering regional cooperation, information-sharing, and joint decision-making to develop comprehensive and coordinated responses to migration.

Contextual factors and tailored approaches	The case studies emphasise the need for context-specific and tailored approaches to migration securitisation. They highlight the diverse migration patterns, drivers, and dynamics in different countries and populations, underscoring the importance of understanding these nuances in designing effective and appropriate policies and measures.
Long-term implications and unintended consequences	The case studies explored the long-term implications of migration securitisation, including its impact on regional integration, social cohesion, and the well-being of both migrants and host communities. They will draw attention to the unintended consequences of securitisation, such as the perpetuation of inequalities, xenophobia, and the erosion of trust between states.

### Critique of migration securitisation in Africa

This section critiques migration securitisation in Africa, focusing on the ethical implications of securitising migration, the disproportionate focus on border control and securitisation over human rights, and the consequences of securitisation on regional integration and cooperation in Africa. The securitisation of migration in Africa raises significant ethical concerns. Treating migration primarily as a security issue tends to dehumanise migrants and overlook their rights, dignity, and well-being (Floyd, 2007b; Kaldor *et al.*, 2007). Migration is a fundamental human right, and securitising it can violate migrants' rights, including the right to seek asylum, freedom of movement, and protection from discrimination (Floyd, 2007b; Kaldor *et al.*, 2007; Newman, 2010). Ethically, migration should be approached from a perspective that respects migrants' inherent worth and recognises their agency and contributions to society. By securitising migration against the backdrop of the human security approach that shifts the focus from the security of the state to the protection and well-being of individuals (Floyd, 2007b; Kaldor *et al.*, 2007), African states risk perpetuating harmful narratives that criminalise and stigmatise migrants, fuelling prejudice and discrimination.

Another main critique of migration securitisation in Africa is the disproportionate emphasis on border control and security measures at the expense of migrants' human rights. This framing relates to the Copenhagen School, where migrants are portrayed as potential risks to national security, social cohesion, or economic welfare (Demirkol, 2023; Hammerstad, 2014). While border management is important for maintaining security and order, it should not overshadow the obligation to protect and respect migrants' rights. Securitisation measures often prioritise deterrence, interception, and detention of migrants, focusing on preventing irregular migration rather than addressing the underlying causes and vulnerabilities that drive migration. This approach neglects the fact that many migrants are forced to undertake dangerous journeys due to limited legal pathways and a lack of opportunities in their home countries. A more balanced approach is needed, one that combines effective border management with policies and practices that ensure the protection, dignity, and well-being of migrants. This includes creating legal pathways for migration, establishing fair and efficient asylum systems, addressing root causes of migration, and promoting integration and social cohesion.

The securitisation of migration has also negatively affected regional integration and cooperation in Africa. Migration is inherently a regional and transnational phenomenon, and addressing it requires collaborative approaches beyond national borders (Demirkol, 2023; Hammerstad, 2014). However, when migration is securitised, it can also lead to the securitisation of regional cooperation. Securitisation measures often prioritise national interests and control over collaborative efforts to manage migration. This can hinder regional integration initiatives, undermine trust among countries, and impede the establishment of comprehensive regional frameworks for migration governance. It also risks perpetuating a fragmented approach to migration management, where countries focus on protecting their borders rather than working together to address the shared challenges and opportunities migration presents.

## **Alternatives to securitisation**

This section presents alternatives to securitisation. It focuses on humanitarian approaches to migration management, comprehensive migration policies focusing on development and integration, and the role of regional and international cooperation in addressing migration challenges. One alternative to securitisation is adopting humanitarian approaches to migration management. This approach emphasises the protection and well-being of migrants, recognising their vulnerability and the need for a compassionate response (Floyd, 2007b; Kaldor *et al.*, 2007; Newman, 2010). Humanitarian approaches prioritise saving lives, providing access to basic services, and ensuring the protection of migrants' rights, particularly for those needing international protection, such as refugees and asylum seekers. Humanitarian approaches involve establishing robust asylum systems that provide fair and efficient procedures for assessing asylum claims, ensuring access to legal pathways for migration, and creating reception and integration programs that support the social and economic inclusion of migrants (Panebianco, 2016). These approaches promote rights-based and dignified treatment of migrants, aiming to address their immediate needs while recognising their long-term contributions to host societies.

Another alternative to securitisation is adopting comprehensive migration policies that focus on development and integration. These policies recognise the multifaceted nature of migration and aim to address its root causes while promoting social cohesion and inclusive development (Carling, 2017). Comprehensive migration policies encompass measures such as investing in education and skills development in countries of origin to create opportunities and reduce the push factors for migration. They also include programs facilitating regular migration channels, allowing migrants to seek employment or reunite with their families through legal and safe pathways (Baizán *et al.*, 2014). Additionally, comprehensive policies promote social integration through language training, cultural orientation, and support for access to healthcare, education, and housing for migrants.

Regional and international cooperation plays a crucial role in addressing migration challenges and providing alternatives to securitisation. Migration is a complex and transnational issue that requires collaborative efforts and shared responsibilities (Carling, 2017). Regionally, African countries can strengthen cooperation frameworks, such as the African Union and regional economic communities, to develop common strategies and mechanisms for managing migration. This includes harmonising migration policies, enhancing information-sharing and intelligence exchange, and jointly addressing the root causes of migration, such as conflicts, poverty, and climate change. Internationally, cooperation between African states and external factors, such as the European Union and international organisations, is essential. This cooperation should be based on the principles of partnership, mutual respect, and shared responsibility. It should address the drivers of migration, ensure the protection of migrants' rights, promote sustainable development, and enhance capacity-building efforts. Furthermore, international cooperation can support African countries in developing comprehensive migration policies, including financial assistance for infrastructure development, technical support for capacity building, and sharing best practices in migration management. This cooperation can contribute to a more holistic and rights-based approach to migration governance, reducing the need for securitisation measures.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter critically examined the securitisation of migration in Africa, exploring its historical context, theoretical perspectives, and practical implications. Analysing key concepts, theories, case studies, and alternative approaches, the chapter sheds light on the complex dynamics surrounding migration securitisation and its impact on migrants, societies, and regional cooperation. The chapter highlighted several key findings and arguments. Economic, political, and environmental factors influence migration in Africa. Understanding the complexity and diversity of migration patterns is crucial for developing effective

policies. The securitisation of migration in Africa has emerged as a response to perceived security threats, with actors framing migration as a risk to national security, social cohesion, or economic welfare. The securitisation of migration is perpetuated through the discourses and practices of powerful actors, often neglecting the rights and vulnerabilities of migrants. The securitisation of migration also has ethical implications, as it prioritises border control and security measures over human rights and dignity. Further, securitisation measures have unintended consequences, including the disproportionate focus on border control, the reinforcement of inequalities, and the erosion of regional integration and cooperation. Alternative approaches, such as humanitarian and comprehensive migration policies and regional and international cooperation, offer viable alternatives to securitisation.

The implications of the findings presented in this chapter are significant for policy, practice, and future research. In terms of policy and practice, policymakers and practitioners should prioritise protecting migrants' rights, adopt a humanitarian approach to migration management, and develop comprehensive policies that address the root causes of migration while promoting social integration and sustainable development. Regarding regional and international cooperation, African states should strengthen regional cooperation frameworks, foster dialogue and collaboration, and engage with international partners to develop coordinated and comprehensive approaches to migration governance. Future research should delve further into the experiences and perspectives of migrants, explore the gender dimensions of migration securitisation, and examine the potential for alternative approaches to migration governance in specific African contexts. Additionally, research should investigate the role of non-state actors, such as civil society organisations and diaspora communities, in challenging securitisation narratives and promoting inclusive migration policies.

In conclusion, the securitisation of migration in Africa is a complex issue that warrants critical examination and alternative approaches. While recognising the importance of

addressing security concerns, it is imperative to strike a balance that upholds the rights, dignity, and well-being of migrants. The securitisation of migration should not overshadow the ethical obligations to protect vulnerable individuals and respect their human rights. By adopting humanitarian approaches, comprehensive migration policies, and fostering regional and international cooperation, African countries can chart a path towards a more inclusive, rights-based, and sustainable approach to migration governance. Such an approach will not only enhance the protection and well-being of migrants but also contribute to social cohesion, regional integration, and economic development. As we move forward, we must continue challenging dominant narratives, promoting dialogue, and conducting further research to advance our understanding of migration securitisation in Africa. Critically engaging with this complex issue, African nations can work towards a future where migration is recognised as a catalyst for positive change rather than a source of fear and insecurity.

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