

Contra Free Movement: South Africa and the SADC Migration Protocols

Abstract:

This paper examines the formidable obstacles to the development of a regionally harmonized approach to migration management in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. Tracing the origins and development of SADC initiatives on regional cooperation on population movement, the paper shows how the far-reaching 1995 SADC Draft Protocol on Free Movement was killed off by South Africa. An examination of South Africa's response and counter proposals reveal the myth and paranoia that characterize thinking on cross-border migration within the country. The SADC initiative to develop a Migration Protocol, akin to those on education and training and regional trade, finally ran aground in Mauritius in September 1998. This paper shows why it has been so difficult to develop a regional protocol on population movement and speculates on the likelihood of such a development in the future.