

Immigration, Transit and Urban Transformation

**A comparative study of post-apartheid migration and
urbanisation in Lubumbashi, Maputo and
Johannesburg**

Country:

South Africa

Regions:

Johannesburg (South Africa)

Lubumbashi (Democratic Republic of Congo)

Maputo (Mozambique)

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Founded in 1993, the Forced Migration Studies Programme at Wits University is Africa's premier institution for research and training on migration, humanitarianism, and social transformation. With an internationally trained staff and students from across the continent and around the world, it critically investigates human mobility and responses to it. As an active member of the University community, the FMSP offers rigorous academic training and field-research experience to students and research services for international organisations, governments, and civil society.

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Team and project

The programme gathered a multi-disciplinary team drawn from Political Science, Sociology, History, Demography, Economics, and Statistics. This was a diverse team that included both 'northern' and 'southern' researchers (with a bias towards the latter), a mix of established and upcoming researchers (two PhDs were completed through this project), and both men and women (5 female / 6 male). The team members were as follows:

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Abstract:

This study of post-apartheid Southern African migration towards some of the region's cities (Johannesburg, Lubumbashi, Maputo) generated primary quantitative and qualitative data useful to both scholars and policy-makers. The project contributed to expanding and updating existing knowledge on the region's migration systems and interdependencies; assessing the role played by states and their public policies in shaping these migration dynamics and in turn, in reacting to new migration patterns; and the socio-economic and demographic impact of these migration patterns on urbanisation trends.

Key words: mobility and urbanisation – governance - Southern Africa – Johannesburg – Lubumbashi - Maputo

Résumé du projet :

Cette étude des migrations en direction de certaines villes (Johannesburg, Lubumbashi, Maputo) d'Afrique australe a généré des données quantitatives et qualitatives utiles aux scientifiques comme aux décideurs politiques. Le projet a contribué à élargir et mettre à jour la connaissance des systèmes migratoires et des interdépendances dans la région ; à évaluer l'impact des états et de leurs politiques publiques sur les dynamiques migratoires et leur capacité à réagir à de nouvelles configurations migratoires ; et à mesurer leur impact socio-économique et démographique sur l'urbanisation.

Mots clés : mobilité et urbanisation – gouvernance - Afrique australe – Johannesburg – Lubumbashi – Maputo

1. Problem and context of the study

As noted in the 2009 UNDP report on Human Mobility and Development (*Overcoming Barriers*), Africa in general faces a dearth of migration data while the largest part of mobility takes place within the continent and not towards Europe as often portrayed in the media. Southern Africa is no exception on the continent and has become one of the key destinations for both economic and forced migrants.

This study of post-apartheid Southern African migration towards the region's cities was therefore intended to generate primary quantitative and qualitative data useful to both scholars and policy-makers. It was meant to expand the existing knowledge on the region's migration systems and interdependencies; assess the role played by states and their public policies in shaping these migration dynamics and in turn, in reacting to new migration patterns; and the socio-economic and demographic impact of these migration patterns on urbanisation trends.

The countries and cities under consideration were selected in order to present a continuum of colonial and post-colonial trajectories and state specificities from the most institutionalised (South Africa) to the least (Democratic Republic of Congo) and a wide variety of migration situations (host/sending; refugee-generating/refugee-hosting; highly formalised but poorly implemented policies to poorly formalised but authoritarian management of migration).

2. Method used

2.1. Overall Sub-Projects Developed Under Auspices of Grant:

The project initial outline was divided into 2 phases:

- A quantitative (n=2500) survey of international and domestic migrants and 'host' populations in 'gateway neighbourhoods' in Maputo, Lubumbashi, Johannesburg and Nairobi;
- Building on the survey described above, the second phase would include more focused qualitative work. Both were intended to serve as a baseline for a series of qualitative enquiry and longitudinal comparison.

From the project's inception, the team adopted a multi-site perspective to capture the transnational nature of the networks observed. The broader survey work gave birth to a series of sub-themes and projects that were explored by individuals or small teams. These include:

1. Changing family structures among Congolese migrants and the role of the families in facilitating migration (D Dibwe & J Kanku in Lubumbashi, Johannesburg & Maputo)
2. Gender, migration and violence in transit and residential communities (C Kihato, Johannesburg)

3. Policy frameworks at national and local level (A Wa Kabwe-Segatti & L Landau on SA, I Raimundoin Mozambique)

4. New forms of mobility, belonging & liminality (D Vidal on Mozambique migrants bet Johannesburg & Maputo; L Landau & I Haupt & A Monson on migrants' cosmopolitan identity in Johannesburg)

5. Mobility, urban transformation and capital accumulation:

a. 'African traders and the city' project: E Palomares, C Quiminal & A Wa Kabwe – Segatti (Johannesburg and SA cities)

b. Peter Kankonde: Effects of remittances on livelihoods and mobility among Congolese migrants between Johannesburg, Lubumbashi & Maputo.

2.2. Conceptual and methodological innovations

From the early stages, the team decided to approach this project as both a methodological experiment and empirical inquiry. Through debates and publications, the team has helped to develop the empirical bases for further analysis while refining a series of concepts and ideas that inform discussions

- Discussions and workshops have helped the team problematise notions such as transit migration and “new” forms of mobility (and situating those in relation with other paradigms such as transnationalism, circulatory migration): this has been achieved in the framework of joint workshops with another research programme, ANR MITRANS (CNRS Research Unit, J Streiff-Fénart). As a result of these meetings, the team is now considering transit and transformation from three perspectives: legal categories & policies; relation to spatial and territorial movements; and transit as a mindset and set of practices leading to a permanent state of liminality;
- The team has also begun situating our African-based research within a historical and comparative existing literature on cities and migration (e.g., School of Chicago / Simmel / Tarrus / Mbembe & Nuttall / Simone) and a small but growing literature on urbanisation in Africa (Coquery; Coquery-Vidrovitch, Freund, Fourchard, Locatelli and Nugent);
- Methodologically, our interactions have led to envisaging ways of usefully combining quantitative and qualitative data sets, using their specificities to complement each other. The added-value of multi-site analysis (Marcus, Bourdieu, Tarrus) has been explored more specifically as well as the ethics of working on vulnerable populations (Landau & Jacobsen, Vigneswaran), the complexities of designing and delimitating representative sampling methods in informal / limited archival / census contexts.

- As noted in our initial proposal, this project has developed and used an innovative mix of quantitative and qualitative methods to understand the demographic and social recomposition of African cities in an era of migration. This initiative began with the quantitative component. To that end:
 - The questionnaires were initially developed in Johannesburg as pilots in 2003 as collaboration between Tufts University, Boston and the FMSP. It used the South African Census (2001) data, private surveys (Legget, Kagiso Urban Management), qualitative work, aerial photographs, random sampling within cells. This work was refined within the CEPED project in 2006. The selected areas in Johannesburg were done on the basis of a presumed larger presence of targeted groups of foreigners (Mozambicans, Congolese, Somalians): Berea, Yeoville, Bertrams, Rosettenville, Bezuidenhout Valley, Fordsburg.
 - Groups surveyed: Congolese, Somalians, Mozambicans, South Africans (847 for 2006 survey)
 - The questionnaire was translated in 4 languages (French, Portuguese, Somali, Swahili) (and translated back into English).
 - Adaptations to local contexts were done in 2006 and the partners in Maputo and Lubumbashi conducted pilots. After a series of amendments and adaptations, we developed final questionnaires for the two cities.
 - Several specific training sessions for interviewers (all recruited at a minimum of BA level in the partner universities) were organised in Johannesburg, Maputo and Lubumbashi.

2.3. Difficulties encountered with the quantitative surveys:

- Necessary adaptation to the local contexts: While the survey objective was to ensure maximum comparability, the differences among the cities demanded considerable adaptation. These included recognising that the immigrants found in Lubumbashi were Zambians and Angolans with some of them sometimes born there but with no possibilities of acquiring Congolese citizenship; Lubumbashi was also specific given its once large population of Internally Displaced Persons; We also discovered that there were far fewer Somalis in Maputo than we expected -we subsequently replaced that group with Rwandans and Burundians. All these differences between cities called for adaptations and raised the issue of comparability of data; which groups to capture and which to leave out. This has compromised the full comparability of the survey, but allows great insights into the individual cities and strong comparison of the migrant experience generally and the Congolese specifically (who appear in all of the surveys). Another major difference was the unavailability or the dating census data in both countries and the absence of local population surveys at the time of working out the sampling technique there. This called for the use of local administrative knowledge but with sometimes serious limitations on reliability.

- **Temporality:** In addition to different groups, the migrant experience differs substantially in the rate and type of migration and urbanisation that has taken place. For instance, there were very few newly arrived migrants in Lubumbashi although there might have been a specific group of “foreign natives.” In order to capture this, we had to distinguish between two categories: those who arrived more than 15 years ago and those arrived within the past 15 years. This raised the issue of how to situate such surveys historically, in the chronology of urban settlement and in life trajectories. It also presented acute challenges in trying to develop a comparative data set for all of the survey sites.
- **Sampling issues:** In Maputo, Lubumbashi and Johannesburg, different administrative systems are used for dividing the city. While these are well documented in Maputo and Johannesburg, it was almost impossible to secure a current administrative map of Lubumbashi or any recent census data with which to develop a sampling frame. Consequently, our survey is more speculative in Lubumbashi than it is elsewhere.
- **Administration of questionnaires:** Conducting survey work in African cities means overcoming the cities’ social heterogeneity, people’s general suspicion to ‘officials’, and acute security issues. In Johannesburg and Lubumbashi our field workers were able to speak to all respondents in one of their first languages. However, field work in Maputo was conducted almost entirely in Portuguese, potentially compromising the survey results. In Johannesburg, our greatest challenges were security related. This resulted in our inability to work in the evening and the difficulty of accessing buildings and people. In Lubumbashi, the survey occurred in the electoral context of presidential elections which did not facilitate things but people’s suspicion could, on the whole, be overcome.
- **Processing of data:** In order to facilitate the process of data entry and cleaning, we subcontracted a reputable Johannesburg-based survey (non-profit) organisation. Unfortunately, the organisation was in the midst of a leadership crisis and we faced a one-year delay due to mismanagement of processing.

2.4. Logistical and Conceptual Obstacles

Although the programme has been enormously productive (see outputs above), it has largely failed in its efforts to foster collaboration among research sites or to generate multisite analysis. There are at least four reasons for these shortcomings:

- By collecting an interdisciplinary and geographically diverse group, the project ensured a multiplicity of opinions and perspectives. These differences, however, also meant that the questions and concerns animating our research also differed. As a consequence, there was often only peripheral overlap in the questions we have explored. While all parties were able to use the available quantitative data, only in one instance did we undertake an explicitly multi-sited project. And in this case the research in Lubumbashi and Maputo was carried out exclusively by the Congolese team.

- Issues of language also proved to be a primary obstacle in building collaborations across the three sites. Although basic communication was possible, the use of French, English, and Portuguese served to divide and hinder cooperative analysis. In particular, the divide between Anglophones and Francophones was difficult to surmount despite the translation of working documents. In future, every effort should be made to ensure that mutual understanding beyond basic communication can be reached, particularly in order to work towards joint publications. While most Anglophone colleagues have no knowledge of French, Francophone colleagues often have rudimentary notions of English. These could be reinforced with systematic intensive courses, an area certainly worth looking into for future research cooperation programmes and a concrete way to reinforce Francophone researchers' capacity to engage with other researchers within and outside of the continent.
- Due to the irregular and indeterminate flow of funding, it was difficult to make concrete collaborative plans and to stick to a strict time frame. In a number of instances, partners were forced to take on non-project related work due to delays in funding from Paris. The uncertainty as to when moneys would arrive (and how much would arrive), also meant that the project coordinators were unable to make firm commitments to partners. Consequently, all of the participants were required to fit the work in when they could. This and the heterogeneity of approaches and motivations in the team explain partly the inability to organise a final synthetic publication. However, given the richness of the output, we are confident the results speak for themselves.
- This erratic funding only aggravated an already existing structural difficulty that this type of project, as many other research grants to developing countries, does not address: the unequal conditions of work and remuneration between researchers from developed and developing countries. While France and to a certain extent South Africa-based colleagues have regular income as university lecturers or full-time researchers, colleagues from Mozambique and even more so from the DRC, are almost entirely dependent on external sources of funding given the level and uncertainty attached to their salaries (180 USD for a junior lecturer and 500 USD for a University Professor in the DRC usually several months behind in payment). Those conditions were not taken into consideration in the structure of the grant. The impression is that all researchers work in the same conditions. In particular, there is a strong normative assumption for budget money to be used only for fieldwork-related costs. This is clearly a just and useful rationalisation of scarce public research money in industrialised countries. However, it only reinforces already existing major gaps between researchers from developed and developing countries and necessarily impacts on the motivation and commitment of those who have no other source of income. The amounts available are also not commensurate with levels of remuneration applied by international agencies which often are the main research sponsors in African countries. Given those well known conditions, an efficient payment system, respectful of deadlines, becomes even more important. Unless these are addressed, the risk is for that type of grant to serve more as a deterrent than an incentive, particularly for those for whom it was a first experience with either French cooperation or IRD.

3. Results

Although the research team has been unable to produce a single synthetic output (see section on Logistical and Conceptual Obstacles below), the publications and academic and non-academic presentations produced thanks to the grant are rich and diverse. In particular, it is important to note that the three-city data base produced in the project has fuelled part or all of the works listed below. This in itself illustrates the potential contained in the production of such original data and calls for a repetition of such surveys at regular intervals in order to produce longitudinal information over time. The Forced Migration Studies Programme receives regular requests from academic, government and nongovernmental organisations for access to this data base (Gauteng Province; City of Johannesburg; South African Local Government Association; Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO); Maison des Congolais de l'Étranger, Ministère des Affaires étrangères, République Démocratique du Congo; Direction Générale des Migrations, Ministère de l'Intérieur, République Démocratique du Congo). Information is either processed by our demographer or links to documents produced by the FMSP (e.g., maps, data sheets) are placed on the organisations' websites.

The full **list of publications** and other outputs is provided in the full report (ANNEX 5). Over a period of 3 years, the project yielded:

- 3 original databases on the three cities plus a photographic data base of over 100 references on Lubumbashi;
- 5 reports to Government (AFD, Gauteng Department of Economic Development, CORMSA) and international organisations (UNDP, IOM);
- 17 articles in peer-reviewed journals;
- 8 chapters in peer-reviewed books;
- 5 chapters in non peer-reviewed / generalist publications;
- 1 PhD ;
- 8 presentations in conferences;
- 1 exhibition;
- newspaper articles;

Direct access to most of the documents is available at: www.migration.org.za

4. Conclusions and recommendations in terms of research and public policies

4.1 Main conclusions

Scientific questioning

While the quantitative surveys revealed unsuspected key aspects of migrants' urban insertion (in terms of level of education; trust; intentions to further their journey; remittances; relation to the local population and local authorities); the qualitative inquiries produced original knowledge on a number of key issues in the region. More specifically, the project contributed to the production of a data base on comparative migration management policy in urban contexts. It also widened and complicated the knowledge of migration routes between Central and Southern Africa and of Central African and Mozambican migrants' economic and social insertion in Johannesburg,

including but not limited to livelihood strategies, access to capital accumulation, trade routes, gendered strategies. In the process, specific functional urban patterns were unveiled, allowing for an insertion of the case studies into global debates around “ghettoisation”, “ethnic enclaves” and more broadly the impact of migration on urban social cohesion. The report’s brevity is a conscious effort to leave space for working documents and the already existing output that the project generated, all of which are presented in **the Annex** in the full report.

Partnerships and way forward

Although every effort was made to build up partnerships between member institutions and colleagues, the project’s chaotic financial management and the lack of compensation mechanisms to counterbalance structural public research differences between team members (remuneration, language) limited its achievements. The data produced has not yielded all its potential yet and remains highly sought after by both international and local scholars and policy-makers. It is also bound to serve as a reference for the future production of migration data by public institutions. Despite the project’s shortcomings, it has nevertheless served as a stimulus for further research by a broad range of scholars across a wide range of fields. As a pioneering experience of collaboration in the field of migration studies between the teams involved and across the regions covered, the project has already generated several other collaborations. To mention just two involving French partnerships: ANR Mitrans (“Transit” Migration in Africa: Local and Global Dynamics, Politics and Experiences) with Laboratoire URMIS (Univ. Paris 7 – IRD) and Chaire croisée IRD (UMR 201) – Forced Migration Studies Programme (University of the Witwatersrand) Mobility and the Governance of Urban Space in Southern, Central and Eastern African Cities.

The African City Survey would greatly benefit from being reproduced over time. Populations surveyed are by definition extremely mobile and the urban environments in which they dwell are themselves rapidly changing (such is the case of inner city Johannesburg in particular). Building such a data base over time would be quite unique and offer longitudinal information on both internal and international migrants to and within the region’s cities, something that does not exist so far.

4.2 Recommendations to policy-makers

Controls on human mobility and efforts to undermine them continue to shape Southern Africa societies. Despite the need for improved policy responses to human mobility, reform is hindered by lack of capacity, misinformation, and anti-migrant sentiments within and outside of government not only in South Africa but increasingly in other parts of the region. This project was an attempt to contribute to expanding the limited demographic and socio-economic data available on migration to and within Southern African cities. It has clarified some of the spatialised aspects of human mobility in three cities of the region.

The project has identified the vast potential migrants have for the development of regional trade and skills transfers. Despite these potential benefits, there are severe obstacles to immigration reform. These include a renewed South African populism and autochthony hate speeches in Lubumbashi; the influence of a strong anti-trafficking lobby through different organisations with the result of channelling much useful funding

to that issue; a European Union (EU) agenda promoting stricter border controls; poor implementation capacity; and endemic corruption among police, immigration and municipal officials across the region's cities. There are different, but equally significant problems in reforming frameworks governing domestic mobility including perceptions that in-migration is an inherent drain on municipal budgets.

Bearing this context in mind, our **recommendations to policy-makers are the following:**

(1) A **conceptual reconsideration of the divisions between documented and undocumented migrants**; between voluntary and forced migrants; and between international and domestic migration;

(2) An **analytical respatialisation in future planning and management scenarios** involving regional and local bodies in evaluating, designing and implementing policy ;

(3) To **situate migration and its management within global debates over governance and development** and for 'migration mainstreaming' into all aspects of governance.

(4) The success of any of these initiatives will require better data, the skills to analyse that data, and the integration of data into planning processes; a **concentration of financial efforts on specialised training** in both mobility and planning **to equip support structures** across the region would be a definite progress in the management of migration.