

Advances in African Economic,
Social and Political Development

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Crisis, Identity and Migration in Post-Colonial Southern Africa

 Springer

Advances in African Economic, Social and Political Development

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Foreword

Due to regional inequalities bequeathed to the continent by colonists at the time of independence, there have been consistent movements on the continent from economically deprived areas to areas that are economically more stable or better off. Postcolonial Africa and post-apartheid Southern Africa is replete with vast inter- and intra-country economic disparities, making constant movement one of the most viable options for poorer regions to survive. Regrettably, as time passes, spatial inequalities that existed at the time of independence have tended to be more pronounced over time. Within countries, movements are typically from rural areas, which usually lack basic infrastructure and have low economic activity, to smaller towns and finally to metropolitan areas. In most African countries, this means that the major movement stream is towards capital cities or seaport cities. As these hosting areas are brought to the brink due to expanding population that is not matched by a similar expansion in hard and soft infrastructure, movements have tended to look for greener pastures across political boundaries. Although the majority of African migrants straddle host areas and the donor areas, the trend is that migration movements are mainly from economically deprived areas to areas that are economically well endowed. As demonstrated in this book, South Africa has, by far, been a host to the largest recipients of the intercontinental movements.

This volume is significant in many respects. It has managed to put these movements in a historical context. Pan-African movements existed in pre-colonial era. For example, the first great migration of the Bantu-speaking peoples to the south began about 3500 years ago or about 1500 BC. The movements continued during the colonial and apartheid eras, with a large contingent of workers from other Southern African countries—especially Mozambique and Zimbabwe—coming to South Africa as contract workers on the mines. Thus, to a certain extent the South African economy was built on the sweat of cheap labour from South African Black workers and that of workers from neighbouring countries. Many of these workers were on temporary contracts that were made a condition for them to work in South Africa by the apartheid government. Later, professionals from the rest of the African continent began to come to South Africa, mainly to the

nominally independent homelands. The flow to the South accelerated after the first democratic elections in 1994, with many people moving from the rest of sub-Saharan Africa to South Africa, including Congo, Mali, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Zaire, Kenya and Uganda. The new immigrants included professionals, business people and people with low skill levels, including informal traders and vendors.

Current migration streams do pose more challenges than those experienced before. The fragile international economy has tended to exact frequent economic meltdown or common social strife that results in massive movements at a rapid pace. Southern Africa has experienced a fair number of these catastrophic events, which have been well documented in the volume. The economic downturn in Zimbabwe and proxy wars experienced in Mozambique are some of the most recent epochs which triggered massive population shifts in the region.

The demographic transition being experienced in the region is another epoch that elicited massive movements in the region. Regions experiencing demographic transition experience a youth bulge. In turn, youth is characterised by a high degree of mobility in any society. As young people move out of family homes, they are also likely to leave their childhood areas. Another factor which results in the increase in the population of migrants is the increase in the number of women who recently joined migration streams. This has been well articulated in the volume, together with its implications in the very nature of migration patterns.

Incidentally, Southern African governments have been slower than other regions in officially opening political borders than other African regions. Currently, most people in Southern Africa have freedom of movement within their own countries, although movements between countries remain a politically sensitive issue. The ECOWAS regional blocks have moved ahead to facilitate free movements between countries of their regions. The ECOWAS Treaty formulated in 1975 has an objective of abolishing all obstacles to free movement of people between member states and the goal of granting automatic citizenship for all nationals of member states. Although some progress has been made, the goal of integrating the region is far from being achieved. In 1995, SADC started its own process of integrating the region. The 1995 Protocol was signed by some countries in the region, with the aim of easing movements in the region although its implementation has been sluggish. The main problem, expressed by host countries in SADC, is the one-way stream of most movements.

The migration transition is an important concept in understanding changes in the migration pattern societies that are experiencing industrialisation, population growth and other social and economic changes. Migration in pre-transition is usually dominated by one-way movement from underdeveloped areas to more developed areas, whereas post-transition migration streams are much more diversified. Many regions of Africa are catching up to the rest of the world in having a much diversified migration stream. Yet Southern Africa lags behind other parts of the continent in its progression of migration transition.

This is a seminal work in a number of respects. Magidimisha and Khalema et al. have understood the complexity behind migration patterns experienced in the

region. By dedicating space in explaining global political economy and its influence in the region with a decolonial gaze, it has laid foundation for a movement away from current simplistic explanations that are not helpful. Most importantly, the volume has moved away from the dominant narratives that have tended to mainly based in host areas; instead, it has carefully weaved the narrative host and donor areas.

Human Sciences Research Council
Pretoria, South Africa

Monde Blessing Makiwane, PhD

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Part I
Conceptualisation and Overview of
Migration Patterns in Southern Africa

Crisis, Identity and (Be)longing: A Thematic Introduction of the Vestiges of Migration in Post-independent Southern Africa

Nene Ernest Khalema, Hangwelani Hope Magidimisha,
Lovemore Chipungu, Tamuka C. Chirimambowa,
and Tinashe Lukas Chimedza

1 Introduction

This volume is a tapestry weaved by scholars from a variety of disciplines (political economy, development studies, planning, history, sociology, anthropology, policy studies, cultural studies and population studies) to unpack the political economy of crisis, identity and migration in post-independence Southern Africa.¹ The end of colonialism where African states triumphed and set up various forms of resistance against centuries of European imperialist aggression, diplomatic pressures, military invasions, eventual colonial conquest through migrant settlements and subsequent (in)direct rule ushered in new forms of mobility and movement for thousands of people motivated by postcolonial promises of freedom and better economic, political and social emancipation. In essence, the post-independence epoch sparked a euphoria in the immediate postcolonial period as people imagined that they ‘will

¹By southern Africa we mean the SADC region comprising 13 countries of the Southern region [i.e. South Africa, Angola, Lesotho, Swaziland, Tanzania, Botswana, Mozambique, Malawi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Seychelles Zambia and Zimbabwe and Namibia (Arango 2004)].

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govern', that 'the land will be shared amongst those work it' and that the 'people will share in the country's wealth' (Freedom Charter 1955²). Across Southern Africa as the twentieth century turned into the twenty-first century, questions of development, equity, inclusion and the creation of opportunities for what Franz Fanon (1963) described as 'the wretched of the earth' remained elusive; Anderson (2010) described it as a 'development impasse' and Saul (2014) has called it Southern Africa's 'flawed freedom', and Turshen Melber (2004) called it a 'limited liberation'.³ In some cases, the internal and global pressures within these '*nation-states in formation*' burst into intensely brutally contested political conflict as other excluded social groups contested for greater inclusion.

Having said that, the post-independence context also affected patterns of regional and trans-regional human movements. In the aftermath of independence, for instance, several countries (frontline states of Zambia, Malawi, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Angola and Swaziland) hosted political activists from the region and beyond, most noticeably within the socialist block. Whether moving by force or choice, millions crossed borders as refugees, asylum seekers or labour migrants and joined desperate massive population movements in search of better economic security and social opportunities. In Zimbabwe beginning in the mid-1990s, the economic meltdown and contestation for state power between the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDCs) generated a mass exodus. Further afield, Zambia's experimentation with structural adjustment proved catastrophic and led to the demise of the Kaunda-led government; to the east the Mozambique liberation 'moment' was soon engulfed by a proxy civil war sending hundreds of thousands across its border into Zimbabwe and South Africa; further to the South West Angola was engulfed in a brutal civil war which lasted almost a generation; and closer to South Africa the economies of Swaziland and Lesotho have remained almost enclosed into the South African development pattern with little room for independent development.

Similarly, the *end* of apartheid in South Africa in 1994 completed what the Ghanaian revolutionary Kwame Nkrumah's clarion call had framed as 'seek yee first the political kingdom'.⁴ Apartheid's demise at least politically and legally therefore marked an important milestone in Africa's project to decolonise and build polities defined by more inclusion and less by racial domination, dispossession and exploitation. Decolonisation placed into the hands of the black majority governments the political power to lead the transformation of political economies,

²Freedom Charter as adopted at the Congress of the People, Kliptown 1955. <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?is=72> (retrieved 20 May, 2015).

³Fanon, Frantz (1963) *The Wretched of The Earth*, Grove Press; Andreasson, Stefan (2010) *Africa's Development Impasse: Rethinking The Political Economy of Transformation*, Zed Books; Saul, John (2014) *A Flawed Freedom: Rethinking Southern African Liberation*: UCT Press; Melber, Henning (2004) *Limits to Liberation in Southern Africa: The Unfinished Business of Democratic Consolidation*, HSRC Press: Cape Town.

⁴Cited in Landau (2014, p. 229).

which had been shaped structurally to benefit white minorities. The defining feature of that colonial political economy, including apartheid in South Africa and Zimbabwe's colonial-settlerism, was entrenched poverty, exclusion and social disaffection especially within the black majority. As the twentieth century turned into the twenty-first century, questions of migration, belonging and labour became highly contested especially in Southern Africa as the political economy got exposed to a series of crisis-driven migration. The situation seemed to be exacerbated by a regional political economy which has not transformed or grown quickly enough to resolve historic questions of dual enclivity of the economies of Southern Africa,⁵ colonial and apartheid dispossession and contemporary challenges of entrenched poverty and intense globalisation-related migration.⁶

Whilst the liberation phase seemed to have hemmed a regional solidarity forged by the presence of an easily identifiable 'enemy' (apartheid, colonialism, settlerism, racism etc.), the postcolonial period seems to have re-ignited either some vaguely defined pre-colonial or contemporary suspicions as different social groups compete for belonging and material improvement. In the extreme, this crisis has fermented social crisis and once in a while foreigners even when they are 'African' and are supposed to have been receiving 'pan-African' solidarity become a target. In South Africa, the increased ruptures from the African National Congress [i.e. the emergence of two new political parties: *Congress of the People* (COPE) and the *Economic Freedom Fighters* (EFF)], the expansive social delivery services protests, the intra-contradictions within the tripartite alliance within COSATU and the slow but steady evolution of the Democratic Alliance (DA) and other fringe parties demonstrate a shifting political terrain. It is within that changing political terrain that xenophobic violence has become intermittent. Thus, the legacies of colonial domination coupled with postcolonial patriarchal state practices and contemporary global patterns of capitalism in the African political economy impact women and children more negatively (Turshen 2000).⁷

⁵Mhone, G. C. (2001, September). Enclivity and constrained labour absorptive capacity in Southern African economies. In *Draft paper prepared for the discussion at the UNRISD meeting on 'The Need to Rethink Development Economics'* (pp. 7–8).

⁶There has been increased South–South migration in contrast to the usual South–North Migration. See Crush, J., & Ramachandran, S. (2010). Xenophobia, international migration and development. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 11(2), 209–228.

⁷Trushen, Merideth (ed) (2010) *African Women: A Political Economy*, Palgrave: London.

2 The Political Economy of Crisis, Identity and Displacement): Migration Trends and Flows

Contrary to predominant discourse that large numbers of migrants from African countries aspire to relocate to host countries in the developed world of the north (i.e. North America or Europe), current data have shown that this is not the case. Global data from the United Nations⁸ (2016) estimate that at the end of 2015 more than 244 million people worldwide were migrants living outside their country of origin, of which an estimated 19 million are in the continent of Africa. This number rose from 175 million people in the year 2000 to 232 million in 2013, respectively, up to the above-mentioned 2015 figures making an increase of 41% since 2000. Of the current 244 million migrants globally, women accounted for close to half of the international migrants at 48% (United Nations 2016). Additionally, the number of refugees globally has increased from 39 million in 2000 to 59.5 million in 2015. Moreover, internally displaced persons who had been forced to flee their homes by armed conflict, political violence and natural disasters (i.e. those living in displacement within borders of their own and surrounding countries) increased from 21 million in the year 2000 to 38.2 million in 2015 (United Nations 2016).

Africa remains a world region with complex migration dynamics that have a long history of intra-regional as well as inter-regional migration flows. According to the United Nations (2016), more than two-thirds of all migrants from the continent of Africa (approximately 16.3 million) migrate to other African countries and the Southern African region is no exception. Consequently, current trends indicate that nearly 2.7 million refugees were in Africa, which is roughly 25% of the world's refugee population. Most refugees are 'pushed out' as a result of internal, usually ethnic, conflicts exacerbated by international alliances and/or capitalist development. Africa's leading economies and industrial hubs (i.e. South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, and Egypt) inherit the brunt of the casualties of political conflict and violence, influencing further movement of people. Moreover, these major migrant-receiving countries are seen as loftier only in terms of employment, educational and economic opportunities, overall livelihood and well-being, and safety and security. According to the UN's (2015) assessment of migration trends by country of destination in Africa, South Africa remains a destination and host country for most migrant-receiving countries in the continent. Even though the Southern African region experiences all types of migrations (including displacement due to conflict and natural disasters, mixed and irregular migration and most importantly labour migration), Southern Africa has a long history of inter/intra-country migration that has evolved and involved labour dating back to the mid-nineteenth century. Intra-regional migration has long been an important aspect of Southern Africa dating back to the mid-nineteenth century when extensive migration systems were created by the colonial and apartheid state

⁸Data derived from the new UN dataset: Trends in International Migrant Stock The 2015 Revision.

to serve the mining and agricultural sectors (Segatti and Landau 2011; Neocosmos 2010; Posel 2006). Contemporary migration flows originate mostly from conflicts in central and the Great Lakes region, Eastern and North-western Africa, and consist of refugees, asylum-seekers and economic migrants seeking refuge in 'peaceful states' of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Migration trends from the United Nations (2016) indicate that in 2015 the Southern African region recorded over four million migrants, excluding irregular migrants, of which 44% were female and 20% were under 19 years of age. Amongst the four million migrants approximately 200,000 were refugees spread around countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo (447,000), Zimbabwe (361,000) and South Africa (2.4 million), respectively. Research conducted by the Southern Africa Migration Project (SAMP) shows that the majority of cross-border migrants in Southern Africa remain circular migrants. Thus, although many stay for longer than initially intended, their visits are generally seen as temporary not permanent. Cross-border migration in the region, however, points to patterns of regional economic inequality that echoes a Wallensteinian⁹ world systems model of the 'core' and 'periphery'. Thus, by virtue of its strong economic position in the region, the republic of South Africa has emerged as the 'core', the 'hub', the 'host', the 'destination' and the 'receiver' of African migrants from the 'rest of Africa'.

Following the democratic transition, however new forms of labour migration to and from South Africa were observed. The spatial concentration of economic activities to the country of South Africa and the historical process of industrialisation left most countries in the region with a geographically unbalanced pattern of economic activities. With its relatively advanced industrial infrastructure, as well as perceived new opportunities made available as a consequence of the colonial situation and the post-apartheid euphoria and liberation promise, South Africa attracted large numbers of migrants from the Southern Africa region particularly from neighbouring frontline states of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) as well as migrants from the north, west and central Africa that played an instrumental role in the nurturing of the liberation movements responsible for the defeat of apartheid.

⁹The assertion here is that even though the notions of 'core' and 'periphery' are conceptually and heuristically objectionable on the grounds that they are rooted in dichotomous language that reproduces power differentials between diverse actors and sites around the world, terms like logics similar to those described by world system and dependency theory in the 1960s and 1970s are useful operational concepts in explaining the multiple spheres of human activity in the region of Southern Africa. The idea of world system (WS) is advanced by Immanuel Wallerstein as a study of neo-mercantilism in a global context that organises itself in the form of centre-periphery relations between economically and politically powerful and hinterland nations of capitalist world system. The concept of WS, however, emulates Wallerstein's concept of knowledge in the framework of unity in space and time context, which is his idea of historicism. Our reading of the WS exposes the economic, social and political agency of South Africa as a codified economic hub in Southern Africa. Our take on the position South Africa occupies in the region acknowledges that on average most Southern Africans move to the country of South Africa in search of economic and social opportunities.

As such, industrial development with its social, political and economic promise has been a driver for the migration of both skilled and unskilled labourers seeking opportunities for improved livelihoods. For example, as early as the 1950s the South African gold and platinum mines continued to employ large numbers of domestic and foreign migrants. This continued during the 1990s where South African mines experienced major downsizing and retrenchments creating considerable social disruption and increased poverty in supplier areas. Consequently, the proportion of foreign workers rose as ‘externalisation’ of the workforce increased. Countries such as Swaziland, Lesotho and Mozambique benefited from this externalisation making them over 25% of the mine workforce.

South Africa’s inheritance of the ‘core’ emerges from its industrial pre-eminence where it absorbed a pool of skilled labour from neighbouring countries. This recognition remains central to unpacking the political economy of crisis, identity and belonging in migration debates in Southern Africa. Thus, the uneven levels of development and economic within and between countries and the variation in the distribution of economic activities and levels of socio-economic development have had an impact for migration and human movement from the context of the globalisation of the economy within the world system.

3 Scope of the Book

Conceptually, the book unpacks the political economy of crisis, identity and belonging within the migration debate in Southern Africa. Multiple migratory intricacies and complex maps of connectivity, beyond and across borders in Southern Africa, require an analysis that unpacks patterns and impact of migration at the *regional level*. By offering a regional synthesis, the book engages the migration debate by advancing a decentred approach that unpacks the complex dynamics of ‘core’ and ‘periphery’ dichotomy in regional socio-economic contexts and the policy directives that have facilitated mobility in the region. Much of the literature unapologetically advances a body of knowledge that positions the country of South Africa as ‘core’ or the ‘centre’ whilst the rest of the regional players are the ‘periphery’. The hegemony of South African discourse on regional discussions and responses to the migration crisis decontextualises its regional legacies of colonialism, economic domination and hegemony.¹⁰

Our analysis deepens the debate about these crucial issues and situates it in the debate a decolonial critique that unsettles the simplistic notion of a ‘core–periphery dichotomy’ in regional relations and moves the debate into transnational, complex, shared and entwined regional histories of all sorts. Unpacking the regional

¹⁰For example, the discourse makes hardly any mention of South Africa’s de facto 75-year-long colonial rule of Namibia which experienced colonialism from South Africa and the regional implications of that empire building within the migration debate.

complexities, therefore, allows for a more nuanced migration debate that exposes the complexities born of a past dominated by notions of colonial empire building and impositions of multiple nationalisms. Our approach, therefore, is to decentre the analysis by focusing instead on unpacking how regional political processes and individual state practices have enforced and reinforced responses (policy or otherwise) with regional implications.¹¹ Ferguson and McNally (2015, p. 3) have pointed out that there is need to avoid ‘methodological nationalism’ in studying the movement of labour and capital,¹² and in the case of South Africa, Landau (2004) warned about the limitations of ‘national’ migration policies.¹³ There are particular processes, especially the movement of capital, labour, or even the movement of refugees/asylum seekers that has become intensely transnational, and borders have become very fluid and harder and harder to manage in this ‘age of migration’¹⁴ as Castles et al. (2013) assert. Therefore, by focusing the impact of migration at the regional level we intend to offer some understanding of the factors that drive and determine the migration of labour within the Southern African region. Understanding the factors that determine the migration of labour between regions is crucial for assessing the response of the economy to macroeconomic shocks and identifying policies that may encourage an efficient reallocation of labour. The Southern African region is complex enough to capture how intra- and inter-migration flows (including rural-to-urban) are affected by social, political and economic factors. This is important because differences in economic productivity may have a greater impact on intra-migration than on inter-migration, owing to diverse economic situations within the region. Thus, the regional analysis provides explanations about how colonial borders might act as barriers to movement and how in turn labour migration impacts regional differences.

A critical political economy and decolonial approach is adopted in the volume to offer both a *historical* peeling of the process of ‘development’ (in this case, this implies revealing the historical and geographical penetration of capital accumulation in Southern Africa) and *contemporary* glazes associated with multistate practices and responses to crisis and how this has shaped particularised political, cultural and social construction of citizenship and identity. Neocosmos (2010), Koltz (2012), Matsinhe (2014) and Landau (2011) identified the role of *state practice* and *ideologies*¹⁵ in the construction of an exclusionary citizenship.

¹¹Business Day Live, ‘*Uhuru Kenyatta Appeals for The Opening of Borders*’ (May 19 2015).

¹²16 Ferguson, Susan and McNally, David (2015) ‘Precarious Migrants: Gender, Race and the Social Reproduction of a Global Working Class’, *Socialist Register*, Volume 5.

¹³17 Landau, Loren B, (2004) ‘Myths and Decision in South African Migration and Research’, Paper Presented at the African Migration Alliance Workshop, 10–11 March 2005, Pretoria, South Africa. http://sarpn.org/documents/d0001305/P1543-Migration-Myth_Wits_Nov2004.pdf

¹⁴Castles, Stephen., Hass De, Hein and Miller, J Mark (2013) *The Age of Migration: Internal Population Movements in the Modern World*: Palgrave McMillan.

¹⁵Neocosmos, Michael (2010) From ‘Foreign Natives’ to ‘Native Foreigners’: Explaining Xenophobia in Post-Apartheid South Africa, CODESRIA: Dakar; Koltz, Audie (2013) *Migration and Identity in South Africa, 1890–2010*, Cambridge University Press; Loren Landau (ed.) (2011)