Governing Mobility and Difference in Africa’s Urban Estuaries

Violence, Mobility & the Spatiality of Belonging

Loren B Landau
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
loren@migration.org.za

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South-South Migration Gets Its Due
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Points for the day

• **European Fallacy**: Most African migration is within Africa; most is regional and domestic

• **Host/Guest Dichotomy Falters**: Cities are sites of domestic and international migration

• **Formal Frailty**: Integration is localised, socialised and highly political.

• **Forward towards Friendly Cities**: policy demands modesty and better understanding of sites, sectors, spheres, and interests
Average annual rate of change 1990-2014

United Nations - Department of Economic and Social Affairs - Population Division - www.unpopulation.org

Urban Agglomerations 2014

Growth Rate
- <1%
- 1-3%
- 3-5%
- 5%+

City Population
- 1-5 million
- 5-10 million
- 10 million or more
Johannesburg: diverse mobility
Languages most often spoken in households across Gauteng

Language most spoken by individuals in households per Small Area Layer

Percentage indicates language use across Gauteng

- xhosa (19.48%)
- English (13.07%)
- Afrikaans (12.25%)
- Sesotho (11.37%)
- Sepedi (10.45%)
- Setswana (8.92%)
- Xitsonga (6.49%)
- Gxikosa (6.49%)
- b'Ndebele (3.10%)
- Other (3.03%)
- Tshivenda (2.22%)
- Siswati (1.11%)
- Not applicable (1.60%)
- Sign language (0.43%)

Source: StatsSA Census 2011
The urban estuary

- Rapid mixing and churning:
  - Long term residents
  - Newly if poorly ‘urbanised’
  - The ‘suburbanised’
  - Transit migrants
  - Circular migrants
- Varied socio-economic objectives and trans-local configurations
- Dynamic mix of regulatory systems, authority structures and income generation
Diversity and sociality in the estuary

• International and domestic migrants often economically indistinguishable
• Generally low trust levels, including inter-ethnic trust
• Few receiving services or aid from public institutions
• Limited organisational membership – except for churches
• City life is often about life in ‘multiple elsewheres’
Communities of exclusion and convenience

- Without hosts and hegemons, what do we get?
  - Not a story of ‘the coming anarchy’, but of hybrid, pragmatic, privatised and precarious orders
  - Coercion mixed with contingent, tactical forms of recognition, solidarity, citizenship
  - Spatialised and multilocal
  - Double-helix of belonging & exclusion
  - Syncretic and slippery

[Image: Take Me Away From the City, Senzo Shabanugu]
New orders: exclusionary violence

- Alternative governance regimes emerge in absence of state hegemony
- Ongoing violence with attacks on people and property
- Closely correlated with social composition of ‘micro-community’
- Rooted in local struggles articulated in competing language of rights and justice
- Enforcing, breaking & reshaping law
New orders: tactical cosmopolitanism

- Response to fluidity and hostility
- Denies desirability of place-based membership; denigrates purported ‘hosts’
- Pastiche of translocal rhetorical forms and practices
- Recognition is elsewhere, rights are usufruct
- Language of the marketplace
- Only significant membership is in religious bodies
  - Religion is fragmented, conflictual
  - Fosters translocalism and deterritorialized allegiances, ‘tactical cosmopolitanism’

“God owns everywhere, so even if you break the law here, he will forgive you.”
- Stella, Ugandan migrant

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Governing the estuary: formal failures

- General popular disillusionment, disengagement and limited capacity – governance of multiple elsewheres
- Officials’ have poor understanding of their constituency; little interest
- Limited acceptance that migration is a local government concern
- Unsupported financially and administratively
- Politics of scarcity and precarity work against forward planning and inclusions
Finding Fixes

- Obstacles are conceptual, administrative, normative and political
- Improved sectoral knowledge, inter-governmental relations and ongoing search for solidarity
- Focus on local literacy, back routes to rights, and creative conducive environments
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