MIGRATION AS RETERRITORIALIZATION:
MIGRANT MOVEMENT, SOVEREIGNTY AND AUTHORITY
IN CONTEMPORARY SOUTHERN AFRICA

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Introduction

Conventionally, the way that power and sovereignty in the world system have been conceptualized in disciplines such as International Relations and International Political Economy (IPE) has been closely related to particular notions of territory and geographical space: power is seen to be that exercised by (legitimate or illegitimate) political authorities within contained geographical parameters; sovereignty pertains to the tacit and overt yielding to the existence of such geographic-political bodies by other like entities, and upon which the contriving of interaction on world scale occurs. The recent ‘spatial turn’ in social sciences has gone some way to disrupt what Agnew (1994) has lamented as the ‘territorial trap’ of the study of authority and power. Briefly, influenced by the move in philosophy and social sciences that emphasizes space not as a neutral container within which social relations occur, but as a constitutive element and active former of those social relations (cf. Lefebvre 1991), the ‘spatial turn’ has invited different conceptualizations of aspects such as state power. Seen in this frame space occupies and affects political societies; social groupings in turn act upon and create space(s); and entities such as the state can be viewed as manifestations of collective spatial imaginings which are not necessarily territorially bound. Instead, the state is a particular configuration of space upon which social relations are structured, meanings of sovereignty are assigned and political authority is based.

In tandem with this move toward changed understandings of statehood and power, concepts such as deterritorialization and reterritorialization have become widely ascribed to processes of altered state forms, in particular as reactions to globalization. Specifically, forces associated with globalization are seen to lead either to the weakening of state power and the attendant rise of alternative poles of political
authority, economic or otherwise in form (deterritorialization) or to what scholars such as Brenner (2004) have termed the recalibration of state power (i.e. reterritorialization), where state authority is exercised in different guises and at different levels (such as through participation in international/supranational organizations or at substate level, such as through urban governance), but where, essentially the state continues to exercise a regulating influence on the movement of international capital.

Notions of the deterritorialization and/or reterritorialization of authority are useful for describing seemingly disparate processes of capitalist transformation and political shifts in the contemporary era. It is significant however, that what has developed into a rich and resourceful body of scholarship (e.g. Brenner 2004, Brenner et al. 2003, Evans 1997, Hazbun 2004, Ó Tuathail 2000) has tended to neglect how the decamping of the state, the resetting of authority and the reframing of territory are being affected by the current intensification of international mobility and population flows. Historically, migration has been a fundamental force in the formation and change not only of political territory, but also of societies. The longue durée of migration has been a persistent, if largely obscure shaper of nations, state territories and of cultures. In the contemporary era, however, migration across international boundaries has taken on a distinctive form, first in the increased pace with which such movement is able to occur, due in large part to globalization, and second in the political meaning that migration—in the effects it evokes from state authorities and societies—has taken on, as increasingly in receiving countries international relations become defined around convergent goals of stemming undesired population movements and preventing additional burdens on national fiscuses. More fundamentally, however, migration as a force unsettles well accepted and understood parameters of territory, and relatedly, political authority and identity (Appadurai 1996, Gupta and Ferguson 1992).

It is this relationship between migration, territory, power and sovereignty that forms the focus of this chapter. It is investigated how current-day shifts in authority in Southern Africa can be understood in terms of deterritorialization and reterritorialization and how migrant flows are a factor in such processes. In particular, it is examined how different types of migration regimes may be said to exist in the Southern African region, characterized by networks or interlinked chains of migrant movement, and the existence of migrant spaces that are sepa-
rate from formal spheres of power. It is investigated what the impacts of these are on the political economy of the region. It is posited that migration is a discrete form of reterritorialization that is affecting political authority and state sovereignty in the region in distinct ways. Migrant movement and settlement affect economic and developmental processes in the region. More fundamentally however, such transit and settlement also present challenges to formal structures of state power at the intergovernmental, national and subnational levels. While state sovereignty and tied to it, physical features such as borders and delimited territory, have always been more adaptable and fluid in the African context, the way that such elements are being affected by an intensified regional migrant economy, is significant for showing out the disjuncture between attempts at the regional level to define the trappings of sovereignty (by for instance the sharpened defence of borders) and the general inefficacy of state jurisdiction. As a form of reterritorialization migration sees the creation of alternative economic and political spaces that raise the spectre of different forms and entities of political authority in the Southern African region.

The first part of the chapter explores the interrelationship between migration, political spaces and territory in greater depth. This is done, first against the backdrop of the context of migration globally, and second, a review of the way that territory has been applied in scholarly analyses of political authority and statehood. The second part of the chapter reviews the contours of migration in the Southern African region, examining the main features, consequences and challenges posed by migrant flows in the region. Three forms of emergent and separate migrant regimes—formal-institutional, political and informal (defined by migrant spaces) are identified and discussed. The third and concluding part of the chapter extends the concept of this varied regional migrant regime and discusses some of the implications this poses for state sovereignty in the region.

Migration and political authority in the contemporary era

Five main trends in international migration

Increased mobility has become a key adjunct of the technological, economic and societal changes associated with late capitalism and the current phase of globalization. International tourist flows, which have risen rapidly over the past decade (to total 763 million arrivals
in 2005; WTO 2005) are the quintessential example of the way that changes in socio-cultural values regarding leisure and associated travel, and socio-economic conditions have converged to propel the continued movement of people on a very large scale. As a form of migration international tourism has also gained significance as one of the largest and fastest growing sectors of the world economy. It is the crossing of borders on a more or less permanent basis, such as through emigration/immigration, refugee flows and displacement due to conflict, however, which has become a distinctive feature of international relations in the contemporary era, due to the political contexts and effects that such movements have. In this regard, the increased and predominant flow of people from the global South to North since the end of the Cold War, in search of better livelihood opportunities or fleeing from war, has prompted the establishment of policy regimes in major economic sites such as North America and Western Europe, which while aimed at curbing and controlling undesired population movements, have also laid the foundation for new kinds of political interaction between states of the North and South. Multilateral development assistance provided by the European Union (EU) to North African states over the past number of years, for example, have also sought to encourage those African states to exercise more rigid border controls (see, for example, The Times, 11 July 2006). Coarser means of engagement over migration flows have included the discussion in the EU a few years ago to establish transit processing centres (or asylum camps) within the territory of African sending states. In 2003 a proposal was made by the United Kingdom to develop such camps with the purpose of serving as catchment sites for asylum seekers and refugees deported from EU territory, and for would-be African migrants to the EU. The proposal was eventually rejected, but the idea of establishing refugee ‘welcoming centres’ extraterritorially of the EU is one which still holds currency.

While migration flows are highly variegated in form and mode—distinctions can be drawn between temporary and permanent movement; and examples of migrant movement can include sojourning, pilgrimage, or cross-border commuting—five main trends in current-day international migration may be discerned.1

1 I am indebted to Giorgio Shani for this point.
First, it is possible today to speak of the globalization of migration, i.e. the increase both in the intensity and extent of international population movements, with a larger portion of world regions constituting both sites of migration origin and settlement. Statistics from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) indicate that migrant flows have substantially increased over the past decade, totalling 191 million in 2005, and that the number of countries both sending and receiving migrants has significantly grown. In geographical terms these figures emphasize the simultaneous and paradoxical dispersal and ellipsis so typical of globalization as a phenomenon. Socio-culturally, these statistics also hint to the more intense societal interactions and cultural pollination which theorists such as Castells (1997) and Appadurai (1996) describe.

Second, the pace of migration has accelerated. Prompted in large measure by the ability to be more mobile due to shifts in international socio-economic and technological conditions, but also in most major sending regions, circumstances of warfare or general desolation, the tempo by which migration has occurred, has significantly grown. The end of the Cold War, and the new geopolitical conditions which this event precipitated, accounts to a large degree for more intense flows of refugees and economic migrants from world regions such as Asia and Eastern Europe. In the African continent increased migrant flows, both within and across national borders relate closely to the stark proliferation in intra-state conflicts over the past 15 years.

The third predominant trend in international migration involves the increased distinction in the types of migrant flows, and in particular, the growth in economic migrancy. The number of refugees world wide has also increased, prompting a tightening of asylum policies in the regions of largest reception in North America and Western Europe.

Fourth, international migration has become increasingly feminized, with a growing number of women of different ages departing from their homes to search for work opportunities elsewhere. Studies of migration in Asia, indicating a stark change in the gender balance in population movements over the past number of years (e.g. UN 2005) parallel evidence from the African continent that a greater proportion of women are contributing to the steady growth of migrant flows in the continent (e.g. IOM 2005). The feminization of migration is accounted for by the loosening of many social strictures on female mobility and other cultural changes related, for instance to views on the social position of women and their economic role. Increasing
adversity also encourages the greater feminization of population flows. In contexts such as Southern Africa, for example, weakened agricultural sectors affected by harsh and fluctuating climatic conditions have converged with changes in the composition of households due to the increasing incidence of Aids-related deaths, to necessitate on a growing scale the search for alternative livelihoods. The solution for many widows or girl children is to migrate from rural to urban areas within their own country or to the urban centres of other countries (Adepoju 2006). Within Southern Africa this new pattern of migration has replaced former predominant trends of labour migration that arose during the consolidation of apartheid in South Africa, but is built on established migrant labour routes emanating from this period, playing an augmentative role in furthering HIV infections in the region. In addition, the worldwide feminization of migration has gained a highly sinister dimension, as human trafficking and forced prostitution have also increased over the past number of years (Cross and Omoluabi 2006, IOM 2005).

The fifth major trend in international migration involves the manner in which migration has become a key factor in the determination of political agendas and priorities. This feature relates to three aspects: first, how specifically in net receiving countries, issues surrounding migration are central influences on the making of policy, and more noticeable over the past number of years in settings as diverse as Austria, the Netherlands, Sweden, Japan and the United States, perceptions regarding migration have shaped major domestic political outcomes such as electoral results. Second, this feature relates to how societal relations are increasingly also being framed by (often forced) interaction among migrant communities and host populations. The more intense politicization of such interactions over the past number of years has seen sometimes violent public remonstrations in countries such as France and the United Kingdom. This shaping of political identities and the entrenchment of societal divisions along distinctions of migrant and resident in net receiving countries relates closely to the third aspect of the political nature of international migration—how increasingly, migration as a phenomenon is used to mark out the identity of states and other state-related international actors, and how this comes to define international relations.

In this regard the example referred to above of the proposed transit processing centres has as much to do with the manner in which the European Union is seeking to delimit for itself a func-
tion and role as a political entity in the Westphalian system, partly through politico-juridical means and partly through instruments of disguised diplomatic coercion, as it has to do with the way in which this intergovernmental body seeks to consolidate its relationship with other states. Many other examples can be cited where convergent and collective policy-making on governing the movement of people, for stated economic and security reasons, has become an important singular thrust of international relations.

The example of the transit processing zones raises a further important aspect of the characteristics and disjunctures of international migration in the contemporary era, by drawing attention to the central position of 'territory', both in that territory constitutes the geographical latitude by which the movement of people gains context and meaning, but also in that state reactions to migration are defined in terms of territory. With regard to the latter point, the protection of state territory becomes a motivator for policy in a physical sense, manifesting in many receiving countries in the sharpened monitoring and defence of borders. Territory is also employed within states in a symbolic sense, where territory becomes synonymous with societal coherence and homogeneity, and by extension the survival and security of the state (Kumar 2003).

The territorial seclusion of the political unit which then was defined as the state by dominant social classes has been the main mechanism by which statehood historically has been forged (cf. Escolar 1997, Ruggie 1993). The early implementation of effective means of controlling and steering population movements within and outside of, at first abstract and later tangible borders, was a key component of this process. The nature of contemporary migration, however, evokes a different deployment of borders and territory in state rhetoric and apparatus. Recent policies and instruments adopted in the European Union (referred to above) are a case in point: through the use of various means of patrol and surveillance that are outsourced or externalized to migrant sending countries (such as North Africa), ‘the border’ and the responsibility for protecting it becomes shifted (Marvakis et al. 2006); in this process the ‘territory’ over which sovereignty is exercised is simultaneously extended and attenuated. It is in this way that migration can be said to create impulses where seemingly fixed and incontrovertible state zones, territories and borders become only liminal zones of international public interaction, and by which international relations increasingly are being
shaped. As a force, migration however also invites different means of social identification, which in itself impacts on the way that political authority is formulated. It is to an exploration of the relationship between migration, territory and authority that the paper now briefly turns.

Migration and the deterriorization and reterritorialization of power

The prominent role of territory in formal structures of international authority—state-centred or not—is a key point of departure in most scholarly analyses of the world system (Mann 1988). While this centrality of territory in scholarly understanding does pose its limitations (see Agnew 1994 for a cogent review), it does have certain epistemological advantages, such as drawing attention to the reflexive if invisible manner in which societal relations, and by extension institutions of power embed within self-selected territorial ranges. Territory, according to Berezin (2003: 7)

…is social because, independent of scale, persons inhabit it collectively; political because groups fight to preserve as well as to enlarge their space; and cultural because it contains the collective memories of its inhabitants. Territory is cognitive as well as physical, and its capacity to subjectify social, political and cultural boundaries makes it the core of public and private identity projects. Emotion is a constitutive dimension of territory [italics in original].

The territorialization of collective identity was a pivotal element of modern state formation (Anderson 1983, Calhoun 1997). In the context of globalization, it is now widely understood that alterations both in the physical form of territory and perceptions thereof, prompt different social orientations to territory. In this sense, Gupta and Ferguson’s (1992: 68) claim that the contemporary world is one ‘…where identities are increasingly coming to be, if not wholly deterritorialized, at least differently territorialized,’ is a useful description for the shifting involvement of social groupings with geographically defined political entities.

The way that academic scholarship has sought to relate to territory in the era of globalization, is embodied in the twin concepts of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, which have gained significant currency over the past number of years. In brief, deterritorialization encapsulates a set of claims over the decline of state authority in the contemporary world system, as alternative bodies of international
authority, such as multinational corporations or supranational organizations are assumed to subvert the autonomy and sovereignty of the Westphalian state (Ohmae 1993). Reterritorialization can be seen to be the counter to that process, involving the emergence of different scales of political community (e.g. Brenner 1998) or bases of identification (e.g. Deleuze and Guattari 1987).

As concepts, however, deterritorialization and reterritorialization are used in widely varying ways in scholarship. Ó Tuathail’s (2000: 139) depiction of deterritorialization as ‘the name given to the problematic of territory losing its significance and power in everyday life,’ is a broad and for this reason representative definition of a phenomenon which for some would lead to the complete eclipse of the Westphalian inter-state system (e.g. Held 1995), the loosening of the grip of nation-identity (Appadurai 2003), the declining significance of location for economic decision-making (Ohmae 1993) and the increased separation between politico-economic units and territory. Reterritorialization is generally posited as the opposite of that whereby territory is not seen to lose its importance, but where it becomes a container for political and economic relations in forms other than that of the state. Significantly, therefore, predominant usages of reterritorialization tacitly accept arguments about the curbed and eventually shrunken away position of the state.

There is an emergent strand in the reterritorialization discourse, however, which also characterizes this process as one whereby state sovereignty is remoulded and channelled through alternative paths of influence, and through which the state maintains a hand in the regulation of capital. Hazbun’s (2004: 319) depiction of the active role of the state in reconfiguring ‘control over . . . (territorial and national) resources …and the generation of territorial rents and externalities,’ whereby firms are for instance encouraged through the use of policy instruments to invest or operate from a given location, is representative of this analysis. In this, the state is viewed as one among a multitude of economic actors that influence the international movement of capital; the state, however, also helps to establish the broader regulatory parameters for the creation and exchange of capital. As such, while absolute sovereignty in the making of fiscal policy may be affected by globalization, states can and do still exercise influence over the wider flow of capital. Regionalization, incentives to promote firm clustering or agglomeration, the encouragement of industries that are consumption-driven (such as urban-based fashion or design
centres or tourism) or of industries that are geographically less fixed (such as the Information and Communications Technology sector) are all part of a repertoire of state instruments to influence the national and international geography of capital.

Brenner (2004) has analyzed the rising significance of cities in the world economy, and the increased role played by urban authorities in the governance of capital, as a further component of reterritorialization. His is part of a wider discourse that has started to develop in IPE that examines how, centred around cities, state sovereignty can be redefined to coincide not necessarily with territorial borders, but as the means whereby the state engages and adapts with a changing international environment. In this frame, cities (particularly those of the world or global order magnitude) are at times salient points around which international economic relations converge and are steered, but, at times the containers by which state interactions are calibrated and through which national states can give form to policy goals (e.g. Cerny 2003, Jessop 2002, Weiss 1998). Brenner (2004) is representative of an emerging approach to state sovereignty when he characterizes the growing importance of cities as indicative of a ‘rescaling of statehood’: the process by which national states align institutions of policy-making and regulation with or through subnational and supranational bodies, and as a result continue to influence international outcomes.

It is useful to regard deterritorialization and reterritorialization as constitutive and dialectical components of constant processes of international economic restructuring (Brenner 1998). In this view, globalization is part of an extended course whereby capitalistic arrangements are moulded by certain institutional and societal conditions and manifest in certain geographical forms, but are also continuously changed as those institutional and societal configurations change (Harvey 1985). In this sense, power and political authority should be considered both in the manner in which it exhibits in the exercise of state control, and in the way in which other economic and societal bodies (such as firms, communities or social movements) organize and express as autonomous actors, and have political impact.

Taken as an independent force, international migration relates in interesting ways to the dialectic of deterritorialization and reterritorialization at the international scale and the way that these processes are studied. First, it necessitates fluid understanding of ‘territory,’ which could be physical, formal, informal or representational. Migrant
flows unsettle and expand fixed geographical edges, but also interrupt
the coincidence of spheres of collective consciousness (manifesting
in national or group identity) with specific territories. Second, and
relatedly migration is both prompted by but also stimulates distinc-
tive subjectivities that are fashioned within spatial spheres that have
little to do with state territories. Third, at the institutional level, and
following Harvey (1985, 1991) migration may be viewed as a particular
force of ‘creative destruction’ that affects the capitalist foundation
of the world economy in particular ways, influencing the prevailing
economic and political institutions within which capitalism as a mode
of accumulation embeds.

Appadurai (1996) has provided a highly cogent analysis of the over-
lay between migration and capitalism (or modernity, in his terms)
in the contemporary era and the dialectic influence of the first on
the second. Modernity, according to Appadurai rests on the creation
and simultaneous rupture of a particular collective imagination. The
use, dispersal and consumption of symbols through the intervening
influence of mass media, along with cultural dissemination associated
with mass migration, are for Appadurai two main means whereby
modernity is propelled, and globalization as a contemporary facet of
modernity, formed and adapted in diverse social settings. Appadurai
(1996: 33–36) identifies five dominant forms of electronically medi-
ated and mobility-shaped global cultural flows: a) ethnoscapes, ‘the
landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we
live: tourists, immigrant, refugees, exiles, guest workers and other
moving groups’; b) technoscapes, ‘the global configuration, also ever
fluid, of technology’; c) mediascapes, ‘the distribution of the electronic
capabilities to produce and disseminate information… and the images
of the world created by these media’; d) ideoscapes, which ‘are also
concatenations of images, but they are often directly political and
frequently have to do with the ideologies of states and the counter-
ideologies of movements explicitly oriented to capturing state power
or a piece of it’; and e) financescapes, constituted of the diverse bodies
of organizations, markets and agencies that produce and regulate
international finances.

Taken together, these five ‘landscapes’ comprise the international
political economy and are in effect structures whereby international
authority is either constituted (such as the financescape and the
ideoscape) or adapted and ameliorated (such as the mediascapes and
technoscapes). Appadurai’s depiction is useful for laying emphasis on
the relational and disjunctive nature of international structures of authority. It is also important for stressing the production of authority, a process which requires the continuous and affirmative construction of institutions of control and which relies for its existence on the successful stimulation of societal assent (Lefebvre 1991).

Most useful in Appadurai’s analysis for this chapter is, through his identification of ethnoscapes, the stress on the temporality and spatial fluidity of social collections that affect structures of power. Migrant flows create migrant spaces that relate to or disengage with predominant edifices of authority in host societies. Also, territories, political or otherwise, become sites of negotiation for populations on the move, either in their attempts to adjust to new environments, or to adapt such environments to their accustomed social practices. Political authority, in other words, is affected and modified in significant ways by migrant flows.

The political economy of migration in Southern Africa

The context

In one sense, migration has long been a predominant feature of African societies, and demographic and associated political change on the African continent can be viewed as an enduring process of movement and settlement, marked by elemental events such as slavery, colonialism and state formation, but in totality, the longue durée of population shifts on the continent has been undulating and a constant element in the shaping of African political economy (Mafukidze 2006). In the contemporary era, however, migration has gained an added, more explicitly economic dimension, influenced in direct and indirect fashions by wider international processes. The context of conflict and the intensified struggle over resources in the current-day frame, should be viewed as adding to the effects of shifts in the international political economy.

Within Southern Africa, migration has become one of the most predominant factors in the reshaping of this region’s socio-economic and socio-political environments. The political economy of migration in Southern Africa is one which historically, has been driven by distinct forms of industrialization shaped by colonialism and related processes of state formation, and the heavy, spatially mediating impact of apartheid policies. In this context, migration was associated with
social disruption and haemorrhage and from a statist perspective, one element in a tight arrangement of sovereignty, security, social movement and constraint.

The end of apartheid introduced a different momentum to population movements in the region. Changes to both the political meaning and policy approach to migration in the Southern African region followed after the end of apartheid, propelled by a strong ‘redress ideology’ in the policy goals of the new South African government which were transported to that government’s stance to regional migration and development. Migration now came to be viewed as an important component of attempts to foster regional development and the establishment of economic and other types of equity in the region. Migration patterns in Southern Africa have followed much the same direction as flows in other parts of the world, marked first, by a general upward surge in population movement and second a strong increase in rural-to-urban migration. As in most other developing countries, urbanization has been a predominant force in Southern Africa’s political economy, bringing with it an own attendant set of development issues and challenges. Table 1 illustrates the level of migration in a selected number of Southern African countries while Table 2 indicates the levels of urbanization in the main cities in these countries over the same period.

What is not captured in the tables below, is the level of cross-border movement in Southern Africa, which both of a temporary and permanent nature, has increased since the end of the Cold War and the move to democratization in South Africa. Underpinning this increased flow is a complex mix of political and economic forces and impulses. Lengthy periods of intra-state conflict in the Lusophone countries have made population displacement—within and across the borders—an almost constant feature of these countries. The demographic features of neighboring countries have concomitantly been affected. By one estimate for example, more than 120,000 Angolans are currently living in western Central Zambia. The greater portion of these people has settled more or less permanently in Zambia, integrating with the local population (Okamoto 2002). The end of the war in Angola has, however, also prompted a steady flow of returnees to that country. Similarly, continuous circular movement between the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Zambia is accounted for by cycles of violence and non-violence in the DRC.
Since 1994, population flows in several other Southern African countries were influenced by the attempts of the post-apartheid government in South Africa to consolidate the foreign migrant population in that country. In 1995 and again in 1996 an amnesty process was implemented whereby undocumented labour migrants, mainly miners, and people from other states of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) could gain permanent residence status. This process of amnesty was an early effort on the part of the post-apartheid government to establish the number of undocumented migrants in the country and to acquire a grip on illegal immigrant flows. The amnesty process was largely unsuccessful in this regard (Crush and Williams 1999), although it did constitute an initial part of a migration policy in South Africa which has largely been mottled and counterproductive (Crush 2006). In its attempts to ameliorate population settlement, the amnesty process was also part of the

### Table 1. Changes in immigrant populations in a selected number of Southern African countries

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Botswana</th>
<th>Lesotho</th>
<th>Namibia</th>
<th>South Africa</th>
<th>Swaziland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>13,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>42,000</td>
<td>962,000</td>
<td>28,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>84,000</td>
<td>1,815,000</td>
<td>41,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>38,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>124,000</td>
<td>1,353,000</td>
<td>38,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>52,000</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>143,000</td>
<td>1,303,000</td>
<td>42,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from UN, 2003.
Table 2. Urban populations in selected Southern African cities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Botswana</th>
<th>Lesotho</th>
<th>Namibia</th>
<th>South Africa</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual rural population growth (%)</td>
<td>2.5 1.6 2.2 2.5 1.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual urban population growth (%)</td>
<td>12.6 6.7 4.8 2.7 10.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban population proportion (%)</td>
<td>13 11 21 48 14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual rural population growth (%)</td>
<td>-0.3 -0.4 0.9 -1.1 0.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual urban population growth (%)</td>
<td>1.4 3.4 3.3 2.1 2.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban population proportion (%)</td>
<td>50 30 32 59 27</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from UN, 2003.

strong focus on changing the spatial effects of apartheid, that has characterized much of post-apartheid policy-making. Nonetheless, returnee labour migrants from the mid-1990s, encouraged by migration initiatives undertaken by the South African government, have contributed to a not insignificant cross-border flow between South Africa and its neighbouring countries.

The strongest direction for cross-border movement since the end of apartheid, however, has been toward South Africa. The greatest impulse for this is economic, as people from several other parts of the African continent search for better livelihood opportunities. Estimates of the size of the undocumented immigrant population in South Africa vary widely, ranging from between 2 million and 5 million, as claimed by the South African government and bodies such as the Human Sciences Research Council (e.g. Minnaar and Hough 1996) and (a highly improbable) 12 million, as claimed by some civil society groups (such as opposition political parties). Both official and
unofficial estimates and discourses around this issue are telling for the level of chauvinism that they convey. Xenophobia has become a social problem in South Africa, and incidences of violence against immigrants, often resulting in murder, have steadily increased over the past number of years. Popular discourse, carried through by the media, sees immigrants from other African countries blamed for violent crime, unemployment, poverty and other social ills in South Africa (see, for instance, McDonald and Jacobs 2005). The use by the government of terms such as ‘illegal alien,’ a term that is institutionally sanctioned through policy, and reportedly harsh treatment of immigrants by the South African police and border officials, cynically add to the unfavourable position of immigrants in the country.

Data on migrant flows in Southern Africa, as in other parts of the world, are notoriously deficient. Aside from the fact that documenting the movement of peoples who wish to be invisible is near to impossible, the very process of documentation is a political one, as illustrated above. Regional cross-border movement into South Africa of a temporary nature is however captured in statistics that document daily border crossings, and (inappropriately) are depicted as tourism movement. General tourism statistics captured at South Africa’s main border posts, while aiming to gauge the number of leisure travelers from Southern Africa countries into South Africa, indeed predominantly capture the flow of people who seek to find employment, trade or shop in South Africa. While representing only a fraction of cross-border movement into South Africa, it does provide some indication of the general pattern of such movement. Data that are officially captured as intra-Southern African tourism statistics, therefore, do constitute a point of reference for cross-border flows. The greatest level of cross-border movement exists between Lesotho and South Africa, although entry into the country from Botswana and Mozambique, and over the past number of years, Zimbabwe, is also significant.

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2 As an illustration of the extent of this problem, for several months during 2006 more than 10 Somali merchants and shop owners trading in townships in the Western Cape province were killed during what appears to be an orchestrated campaign by organized elements from the host communities.
The emergence of a migration regime in Southern Africa

While it is difficult to rely on surveys and official statistics on migrant flows of any nature to draw conclusions on the size and extent of Southern African migration, such data do portray general tendencies, which in turn carry some implication for the region’s wider political economy. In this regard three main features may be isolated. The first concerns the closer interlinking of Southern African states into a regional migration network. Population movement that is of a circu-itous nature entwine the region’s economies in ways that are not yet completely understood. Related to this, the second feature concerns the development of a migration regime, which is operative at a formal level, through the introduction of several national and regional institutional instruments of collaboration, but also at an informal level, in the form, for instance, of informal economic activities that straddle different national territories. The third feature encapsulates the other two, and involves the fashioning of migrant spaces that both as transnational and localized spaces, affect the exercise of power and parameters of sovereignty in the region.

A migration regime may be defined in an institutional sense, following Krasner (1983) according to the predominant norms, values and goals that are common to the political actors participating in
the regime, and the organizational arrangements by which cooperation among the actors is shaped. In this way a migration regime is a formal expression of collectively determined objectives concerning the regulation of the movement of people. In the Southern Africa region such formal institutional articulation has started to take shape in the various attempts to converge economic and political policy-making, and through the expansion of the SADC. Within the SADC this is firstly observable in the increased movement toward integration most concretely reflected in the decision made in 1996 to establish an area of free trade and labor movement. The rationale for this is to a large part economic, with the assumption that coherence may be encouraged through the establishment of a free trade area, and that this may lead to increased regional trade. In turn, it is assumed that this trade could encourage the evening out of regional economic disparities (Takirambudde 1999).

The regulation of economic exchange is also aimed at influencing the macroeconomic conditions within SADC member states, with the goal of improving the general level of development in those countries, and indirectly, reducing economic migrant flows. Other indirect means of regulating populations with the goal of directing the flow of capital include the use of spatial mechanisms such as Spatial Development Initiatives and relatedly, export processing zones. More direct attempts at regulating regional migration within the structures of SADC involve efforts to develop a common migration policy. Little success has been achieved with these efforts, in large part due to the organizational inadequacies of SADC itself.

Given that the predominant direction of migration within the region is into South Africa, the content of this country’s migration policy and the efficacy with which such policy is drawn up and implemented, may be said to play an inordinately influential role in the success with which migration policy in SADC is enacted. In this sense a second way of characterizing a Southern African migration regime—as the active production of physical and symbolic borders—is relevant. Borders may be viewed both as institutions and as processes (Anderson 1996). As an institution a border encamps and demarcates the territory to which state identity is attached and by which state sovereignty is claimed. As a process borders fulfil the role of matching the exercise of statehood, through policies and various other forms of statecraft, with official discourses that seek to establish cultural and
societal cohesiveness. In this way borders, ‘and their related narratives of frontiers, (are) indispensable elements in the construction of national cultures,’ and identity (Donnan and Wilson 1999: 5). Borders are therefore maintained physically, but also representationally. This latter point is important, since it emphasizes once again the flexible way that territory and borders can be used by states as they go along in their business of security and protection: the ‘border’ is anywhere the state seeks to defend the polity. In the aftermath of 9/11, the initiation of the so-called ‘global war against terror’ and the establishment of various institutions of state surveillance (such as in the United States the Department of Homeland Security and similar agencies of monitoring and control in EU states such as Europol and the Schengen Information System), the geographical and abstract extension of the ‘border’ has become particularly exaggerated.

The meaning and physical content of borders in Southern Africa are vastly different to that in the North. In large measure this is due to the lack of capacity and infrastructure to screen, regulate and contain regional population movements. Given this, proposals have been put forward in SADC to establish regional mechanisms of population control through amongst others, camps for asylum seekers and an electronic database that captures biographical data on all cross-border movements. Although some way off, if migrant, asylum or refugee camps were to be established and operated on a regional basis, they would constitute de facto new border regions which not only would affect the flow of people in Southern Africa, but would also have implications for the foundation upon which territorial claims are made by Southern African states. The meaning not only of borders, but of statehood within Southern Africa would be altered.

Borders relate to the regional migration regime also in a symbolic manner, in the way in which state narratives around the protection of borders serve to inculcate specific, negative views on immigrants in the region. In a perceptive review, Landau (2006) provides account of several prevailing ‘myths’ around migrants and migration that shape policy-making in South Africa. Central of these are claims furthered by the South African state itself, of the ‘deluge’ of ‘illegal aliens’ and the burden they place on a fiscus which is already stretched and on a society with its own developmental imperatives. Landau cites a speech by the first post-apartheid minister of Home Affairs, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, who stated:
If we as South Africans are going to compete for scarce resources with millions of aliens who are pouring into South African, then we can bid goodbye to our Reconstruction and Development Programme (cited in Landau 2006: 230).

Such narratives have the effect of laying the idea of the ‘border’ centrally in citizens’ minds, transforming what is a physical manifestation of power into something symbolic. The state draws its own claims to sovereignty from such symbolic constructions. It is in this sense that a Southern African migration regime has evolved that is pivotally representational in nature, and through which states seek to produce and reclaim their own authority in the region.

There is a third sense in which a Southern African migration regime could be delineated, however, which yields different conclusions on the health of state power and sovereignty in the region. This relates to the spaces that migrants themselves create both in the means and routes by which they transit and in their patterns of settlement. The fact that large numbers of migrants are able to escape detection by institutions of state control of varying sophistication, and that they are able to traverse borders with apparent ease, also means that migrants escape (or better, are not observed by) formal structures of political authority. Once settled, migrants also create their own spaces that at points may interrelate with spaces of host societies, but at others may be completely separate from it. The case of South Africa provides illustration of how migrant economic spaces have arisen in the key urban centres of Johannesburg, Durban and to a lesser extent Cape Town, which have transformed sizeable parts of these cities (e.g. Rogerson 1998). In these cities settlement by migrants from the rest of the African continent has had some effect on the spatial economy, with migrants typically partaking in trading activities and contributing to the growth of the so-called second economy (Rogerson 1996, Rogerson and Rogerson 1997).

One further characteristic of emergent migrant spaces in places such as South Africa’s inner cities, is the stark distinction between ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ spheres of political exchange, with migrants (like the poor, more generally) excluded from the central institutions through which power is exercised. Formal structures of power, however, are impinged upon by migrants, their movements and the spaces that they occupy. Development policy by urban authorities in South Africa, for instance, increasingly is oriented toward if not accommodating immigrants, reacting to and taking shape around the economic...
and social impacts that they leave (Landau 2006). While therefore not able to participate in formal channels of politics, migrants maintain a political force. It is in this way that migrants also challenge established domains of authority.

If it is accepted that migrant movement creates alternative (informal) spaces in Southern Africa, then it is also clear that the transnational networks, remittance economies and diaspora communities that migrants found constitute separate sites of subjectivity, and importantly, alternative regimes of authority. The intensification of migration as phenomenon therefore, carries implications for sovereignty in the Southern African region. While the relationship between territory and sovereignty in the African setting has always been of an aberrant nature in the Westphalian frame—with borders marked by physical and abstract fluidity, and authority characteristically more sinuous, adaptable and varied—it can be posited that migration in its current form stimulates the reframing of authority, precisely because it shows out the paradoxes and limitations of attempts to maintain territorially defined statehood, within a context in which territory has assumed different political meaning. Migration also stimulates alternative economic bases, which may subvert formal establishments of authority. Landau (2005) has for instance described the emergence of ‘zones of exception’ in urban South Africa where ‘economies of corruption’ have emerged around the trafficking of contraband, but also sinisterly, the extension of illegal documentation to migrants by state officials.

**Conclusion: Migration’s challenges to territory and power**

A result of the heavy Weberian influence in political and sociological theory is that ideas about state power have customarily centred, albeit in diverse ways, on territory. In general, territorialization was seen as the physical process by which not only the geographical parameters of the state were set, but importantly, the means of state security—the *raison d’être*—were defined. The wide-ranging impact of globalization in the contemporary era has invited a different deployment of the position of territory in scholarly works on statehood, with deterritorialization portrayed as a reactive process to the loss of state power, and reterritorialization used to refer to novel (territory-less) forms of power. Given that migration is a process which is essentially
about geography, movements across and impacts upon territory, it is interesting that the relationship between migration and authority has not been extensively explored in what is an otherwise steadily growing body of scholarship on power in the contemporary era. In essence, both in process and through effect, migration can be seen as an instance both of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, that affects the way that authority, formal and informal is constituted and put into effect. At the world level, international migration can be viewed as a process that exercises a dialectical influence on formal state-level structures of power, inviting in certain contexts alterations in state authority.

This seems to play out in current-day Southern Africa to a significant extent. Migration has always been a constant feature and significant factor in the creation of communities and the transformation of state power in this region. In the contemporary era, however, migration in the region displays particular traits—it is increasing and more extensive in scope, and a greater politico-economic force than had heretofore been the case. These features result directly from political changes in the region, and relatedly, alterations in state power. At the same time, migrant flows have the effect of further challenging and in some instances weakening states’ capacities of exercising jurisdiction. Migration also sees the emergence of alternative sites of authority which at times may coincide with formal institutions of authority linked to specific territories, and at other points not.

Migration may therefore be said to be a distinct process of reterritorialization that is shaping the nature of power in the Southern African region. What the further impacts of this process may be, and what the implications for authority will be, will to a large measure depend on the way that wider international political and economic factors affect the Southern African region. As a force of reterritorialization migration will also invite different means of political exchange in the region that will require further research. Three areas may be suggested. First, the extent to which formal processes of political participation is adapted to include migrant settlement communities, and axiomatically how forms of political expression could be read through various types of agency within migrant communities; second, the nature of the political economy created by migrant trading activities and how this interrelates with or contribute to established national and regional economies; and finally, the nature of and distinctions
within migrant subjectivities around which economic and other social spaces are created, how these relate to host societies, and what this suggests for the way in political authority is newly comprised.

References


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