

LOST IN SPACE: RESIDENTIAL SAMPLING AND JOHANNESBURG'S FORCED MIGRANTS

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ABSTRACT:

The study of displaced peoples regularly compels analysts to reconsider the relationship between people and space. After several decades of critical scholarship, most research on forced migration begins, at the very least, with an awareness of the difficulties involved in representing mobile populations through the myopic and deeply territorialized lens of the nation-state. However, the silences and dissonances encountered in our attempts to capture the nature of migrant lives and experiences often compel us to go further, to acknowledge the statist and sedentary character of our own ways of knowing. This paper takes us through an example of this brand of epistemological tension, narrating and reflecting on residential sampling problems in the African Cities Project (ACP): a survey of refugees in inner city Johannesburg, Maputo, Nairobi and Lubumbashi. Surveys of marginal and dispersed populations utilise various forms of spatial classification to generate representative samples. While the problems associated with tracing people 'on the move' are widely accepted, this survey began with the assumption that once displaced populations had settled, they could be a) adequately categorized according to residential sampling 'frames' (addresses and area codes) and; b) readily accessed in their homes. This paper explores the theoretical and practical limits of this premise. It shows how, under the combined strain of an unknown urban landscape, the unique blends of public/private space in African cities, and respondents' feelings of insecurity in their new environment, a variety of tensions emerged between spatial boundaries and sampling techniques.

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INTRODUCTION

Modern social science has tended to view social, political and cultural phenomena through a peculiarly modern and deeply territorialised lens (Agnew, 1994, Ruggie, 1993). From this perspective, people are assumed to be naturally linked to territorially defined places of origin. Human mobility and transience are conceived as dangerous, or at least potentially disruptive trends. Analysts of forced migration have mounted a sustained critique on this way of viewing and representing humanity. These works identify divergent idioms of belonging to place, compelling the broader social scientific community to accept migration as part of the very order of things, rather than a curious anomaly (Brock, 1999). Evidence of contestation of orthodox assumptions about human and political geography has been pronounced in sub-Saharan African inner-cities. Urban Africa – historically renowned as disrupting modern ideals of statehood and citizenship – increasingly plays host to multiple, overlapping communities of membership and multiple, conflicting ideals of social space. Older linkages to the village continue to direct and sustain citizens' understanding of, and practices in urban spaces (Englund, 2002). Newer transnational commercial linkages and diasporic communities offer different representations of what the city is for (Landau and Haupt, 2007).

These developments in the sub-Saharan African inner-city are not merely ontologically challenging and theoretically intriguing; they pose significant challenges to conventional research methods: to what extent have research techniques and procedures been designed to suit the analysis of sedentary populations? What are the limits to our capacity to understand mobility as an object of analysis? There have been few attempts to utilise the insights of much of the work on changing identities to respond to these pressing methodological questions. This is a problem if the analysis of African migration and urbanisation is to become something more than a critical exploration of the limits of Western models, i.e. a site where we can begin to generalise about the different ways in which migrant populations relate to space.

The current paper contributes to this process of methodological review by narrating and reflecting on problems experienced in a specific survey of forced migrants in Johannesburg, South Africa. The African Cities Project (ACP) is a comparative and longitudinal study of refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and non-nationals in African inner-cities: Johannesburg, Maputo, Nairobi and Lubumbashi. While the project incorporates and envisages a range of smaller scale and more detailed qualitative inquiries into various aspects of migrant lives, its centre-piece is a survey intended to provide the basis for generalisations and statistical inferences into migrant journeys, livelihoods, aspirations and interactions with host and origin communities. This paper explores the theoretical and practical limits of this data collection approach, paying particular attention to the difficulties involved in generating a representative sample in a Southern

African city. We show how the hidden and volatile relationships between migrants and space in Johannesburg undermined our attempts to employ area-frame and residential sampling techniques. In inner-urban Johannesburg, a sampling strategy based around residence struggled to produce results of sufficient quantity and representativity, and also failed to produce these results in an efficient manner. The paper reflects on the relevance of these findings for the literature on migration and spatial transformation.

The following methodological observations and suggestions draw upon field notes during the 2006 Johannesburg stage of the ACP, and a debriefing questionnaire issues to fieldworkers at the conclusion of data collection. The discussion will, however, also draw upon insights developed during an earlier Johannesburg survey (2003), and the surveys conducted in other Southern African cities.

NEW MIGRATION GEOGRAPHIES

Recent investigations of migration geographies are part of a more general tendency across the social sciences to interrogate the transformation of political and social space. Provoked and inspired by efforts to grapple with the spatial limits of modernist epistemologies (Giddens, 1984, Gregory, 1989, Harvey, 1990), these studies have taken aim one spatial trope in particular: the territorial nation-state. Historical sociologists have been particularly concerned to point out that the political cartography we now inhabit is historically recent (Ruggie, 1993), the product of contingent and contested forces and events (Spruyt, 2000, Teschke, 2003, Tilly, 1985, Spruyt, 1994) and preventative of the pursuit of a cosmopolitan ethic (Linklater, 1998). Eschewing these more grandiose theoretical and political agenda, studies of migration have focussed their challenge at a particular set of myths implicit within the territorially exclusive modern order: a) that humans are naturally and endemically linked to a national territorial homeland (Malkki, 1992, Bauman, 1992); b) that the mobility, diversity and hybridity inherent in the transnational movement of peoples ought to be regarded as troubling forms of deviance, or worse, imminent threats (Bigo, 2002, Huysmans, 1995); and c) that modern social realities can be adequately understood through an analytical lens which takes sovereign political borders for granted and constitutes and categorises human objects of analysis in terms of their linkages to state territories (Walton-Roberts, 2003). This final point of critique is crucial for the current study. Scholars have been dissatisfied with the body of evidence that has been produced in aid of, or in the implementation of immigration policy which depicts “movement across borders as bipolar - migrants leave one contained and defined spatial territory, cross one or more borders, and arrive in another identifiable space” (Mitchell, 1997: p. 103). Critics of this tendency have searched for ways to ‘bring to light’ understandings and experiences of space that do not correspond to the rigid spatial matrices of the modern international system.

In the main, scholars have deliberately selected modes of analysis that reveal the complexity and nuances of migrant experiences of social and political space. In some respects this has taken the form of

immanent critique, a primarily theoretical effort to figuratively 'open up space' within discourses on migration. Other researchers have called for these ends to be pursued through more 'grounded' research. For example, some have chosen to pay attention to migrants' own narratives as crucial repositories of new understandings of movement and displacement (Lawson, 2000, Olwig, 2003). Rouse (1991) called for ethnographies of migration that would, by paying close attention to migrant agency in the construction social spaces, reveal the latter's malleability and mutability, and provide researchers with the tools to build new theories of social geography. Others have gone further, to argue that sustained and grounded ethnography is the only way to ensure that this research agenda doesn't dissipate into a series of critical epistemological forays (Mitchell, 1997, Ong, 1999)

There have been multiple strands of argument emerging from these highly contextualised analyses of the relationship between migration and space. Here I want to focus on two prominent trends. First, scholars have explored how migrants have developed multiple forms of 'place identity' (Manzo, 2003). These studies take two mutually reinforcing aspects of modern political discourse as their object of critique: a) citizenship laws that define political identity in terms of birth or residence within a particular territory (Dummett and Nicol, 1990); and b) nationalist discourses that define belonging to the political community in terms of attachment to the nation as 'homeland' (Svasek, 2002). Studies have explored the multiple spatial scales to which humans form emotional and political attachment (Olwig, 1999, Sutton, 1987). They also show how migrants determine for themselves how they will negotiate questions about where they belong, and in so doing, reinterpret or depart significantly from statist narratives (Flynn, 2007, Lomsky-Feder and Rapoport, 2002).

The second major trend has been to explore the types of space that migrants tend to inhabit and/or construct. These works focus their critique on the international migration regime and the manner in which it a) provides some groups with privileged access to certain spaces over others; b) problematises cross-border migration, to the neglect of other forms of movement and settlement; and c) disciplines and sanctions migrant behaviour. This strand of research is exemplified by the literature on transnationalism which seeks to examine 'occupations and activities that require regular and sustained social contacts over time across national borders for their implementation' (Portes et al., 1999: p. 219). This research project began with the relatively straightforward task of showing that people's spatial activities and orientations rarely corresponded neatly with the borders of nation-states. It has since progressed substantially to reconsider the nature of the types of place that human beings inhabit (Kelly and Lusia, 2006), and to investigate the emergence of new experiences of time-space (Bailey et al., 2002).

Neither of these research strands has given much attention to methods suited to the generation of generalisations and testable theories, with far more preference given to questions of epistemological orientation and ontological definition. In particular, there have been few attempts to consider how one

might collect representative data on the new forms of mobile and trans-boundary existence identified; or b) whether these techniques might be replicated across multiple research contexts. Scholars have made mention of some of the difficulties in generating adequate sampling frames under conditions where the subject population is vulnerable and/or highly mobile (Bailey et al., 2002: p. 130). However, in many cases they have been appeared relatively satisfied to opt for alternative, less representative and context-specific sampling frames and techniques.

Given that this research on the relationship between migration and space is not categorically opposed to theoretical enterprises that demand higher standards of representativity (see, for example Guarnizo et al., 2003) we can only speculate as to the reasons for this gap. One plausible explanation has to do with the tendency, within both strands of research identified, to celebrate diversity and/or prioritise the recognition of difference. Much of this research is built upon an ethical commitment to the integrity of the multiplicity of identities and subjectivities that have been generated through new forms of migration and displacement (Bhabha, 1994). For these works, the primary requirement of research remains the uncovering of increasing numbers and types of human relationship to space, and continued efforts to use this diversity to expose the limitations of a nation-state model. Even researchers who are cautious to distance themselves from a simplistic ‘celebration’ of difference, resist the adoption of analytical categories and techniques that lend themselves to generalisation.ⁱ It could be for these reasons that representative and replicable forms of data collection have yet to present themselves as key lynchpins of their emancipatory and theory building exercise.

The dearth of reflection on issues of representativity is problematic at three separate levels. First, at a research design level this gap constitutes a potential lack of clarification. It may be with good reason that scholars have decided to avoid more representative sampling procedures for their chosen target populations. However, these decisions are rarely explained in any detail, leaving the reader to question why such options were abandoned in favour of less reliable techniques (e.g. snowball/network-based sampling). Second, at the level of argument, it constitutes a potentially significant failure to push forward the theory building process. This is a simple matter of representative and replicable sampling techniques being key criteria for the generation of robust and comparable quantitative *and* qualitative data. Finally, and most poignantly, at the level of epistemological critique, it constitutes a potential point of inconsistency. As pointed out above, the principal object of critique for this body of literature has been the statist spatial lens through which previous observers have viewed migratory phenomena. This view is seen as rendering migrant lives invisible, unimportant or abnormal. However, until we attempt to gauge the degree to which we can generate representative data about these new forms of movement and identity, we cannot be certain whether this critique is entirely correct, or whether blame should rest instead with a different set of assumptions inherent in the *procedures* we use to study migrant populations. As we shall see below, an inadequately identified problem in our efforts to understand how migration is

generating new forms of spatial existence, is that they tend to confound researchers most basic assumptions about how 'subject populations' should be identified and 'known'.

Migration studies has not been inattentive to the methodological problems inherent in its topic of research. Almost two decades ago, James Fawcett and Fred Arnold (1987) provided a comprehensive breakdown of the uses and limitations of sample surveys to the study of migration. The authors noted the range of advantages of surveys over censuses in generating data for migration research, particularly with regard to the spatial dimensions of this phenomenon. Surveys could generate:

- data on micro-level relationships with places (visiting patterns, phone calls, remittance etc) which could provide a better understanding of how migrants negotiate their multiple allegiances to places;
- subjective data (on assimilation, motivations and value expectancies) which could help to hone our understanding of how migrants perceive specific places;
- greater quantities of data on migration patterns (on the frequency of migrants' relocations, information about dates and place, and variegated data on the reasons why an individual moved) that provided a more complete portrait of new forms of spatial mobility (Fawcett and Arnold, 1987: pp. 1528-30).

However, these advantages were balanced by significant limitations in the sampling process. In the absence of an appropriate sampling frame, researchers tended to rely on network based frames, or highly localised area sampling techniques, which created corresponding limitations on researchers' capacity to generalise about their target populations (Fawcett and Arnold, 1987: 1531). Furthermore, due to migrants' high level of mobility, unique work commitments and security concerns, non-response rates were likely to be higher and less predictable than for other groups. These problems of generating representative samples of migrant groups are confirmed by: a) general texts on sampling techniques (Groves and Couper, 1998: p. 103); b) work specifically related to the sampling of 'hidden populations' (Kalton and Anderson, 1986, Sudman and Kalton, 1986, Heckathorn, 1997, Kalsbeek, 2003) and c) work dealing with the 'hidden' character of migrant populations (Wasserman et al., 2005). In recognition of these problems, methodological specialists have provided useful technical guidance on both the range of procedures that can be employed to sample migrant populations, and the statistical measures that can be used to account for these procedures' respective limitations. However, considerable problems remain, provoking William Kalsbeek to argue that 'effectively sampling minority groups [still] remains one of the 'frontiers' of survey design (2003: p. 1545).[#] Since the methodological literature has been almost exclusively focussed on ways of crossing this 'frontier' through technical adjustments and innovations, these scholars have rarely reflected on the possibility that there are absolute limits to researchers' capacity to generate representative samples of mobile populations. To put it another way, the relative silence of scholars interested in migration and space on the issue of representativity is mirrored by a relative lack of concern for epistemological problems in the literature on sampling 'hidden populations'.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The current study constitutes a preliminary effort to bridge this gap through a detailed summary of a series of practical problems confronted in an attempt to apply a specific sampling procedure to a particular research site. Drawing out these issues requires a degree of hindsight. Sampling design, particularly with target populations that have not been regularly subjected to population studies or demographic research, commonly relies upon a set of taken for granted procedures that researchers and their scholarly audiences recognise as conventional (and therefore appropriate) ways of differentiating and accessing human objects of study. While there may often be a coherent set of justificatory logics that define how a particular sampling approach constitutes the target population, researchers do not generally reflect in detail on all of these assumptions and/or their applicability to given sets of research aims and field sites. This ‘taken for granted’ character is the great strength of sampling *techniques*. It provides researchers (and their inevitably somewhat less trained assistants) with the means to develop clear and consistent logistical plans for their fieldwork on an *a priori* basis. Logical, conceptual and procedural inconsistencies in the project design are commonly only encountered during the research process or upon retrospective analysis. Hence, the following is an attempt to engage in precisely the sort of reflective exercise that sampling frames have generally been designed to avoid. To be more, specific, I attempt to tease out how multiple assumptions about migrant’s relationship to space were implicitly incorporated in a research strategy as ways of separating, locating and selecting respondents. The idea here is not to capture the manner in which analysts actually worked from first principles through to a set of procedural outcomes, but merely to reveal the multiple layers of spatial reasoning that were incorporated in the final chosen approach, and then to explore how they were confounded by very dynamics we were hoping to uncover and analyse.ⁱⁱⁱ This paper will not attempt to offer procedural innovations that will circumvent the problems it identifies; nor will it provide measures to estimate the statistical significance of these same problems. Instead, its main aim is to use these findings to reflect back on some of the epistemological problems raised by the research on migration and space.

What is the relationship between migrants, migration and physical space? Do we possess adequate sampling methods to generate a representative sample of migrant populations? What are the limits on our capacity to know the changing character of migrant spaces? These were some of the core questions guiding the design and formulation of the African Cities Project (ACP). It is disappointing, but perhaps not all that surprising that “in studies of transnational migration, the receiving countries have been, overwhelmingly, North American and European” (Olwig, 2003: p. 791). Developments in the sub-Saharan African city have been all but ignored. To those working in the region, it seems counter-intuitive to not ground research programmes that are devoted to discovering instances of breakdown in the traditional spatial forms of the modern state, in Africa. This ‘fringe’ of the modern international system, possesses a rich and perhaps unparalleled history of reinterpretation and subversion of modern territorial norms (Jackson, 1990, Grovogui, 1996). When we care to look beneath the symbolic assertion of

sovereign state power over migrants across the continent, we find shades of pre-colonial authority structures (Hughes, 1999), subterranean economies (Coplan, 2001) and emergent spaces of exceptional rule (Landau, 2005). Unfortunately, although existing research has been strongly suggestive of consistent patterns across the continent, to this point studies have been highly contextualised and case-study oriented and could not go much beyond the common academic predilection to indicate instances of defiance of modern Western political norms (Jacobsen and Landau, 2003). The guiding rationale of the ACP was to offer some basis to gauge what was distinctive about migrant related dynamics in the African city. The core survey questions revolved around a) the nature and course of migrant journeys; b) the economic and social links within the migrant diaspora; and c) the interactions and relationships between migrants and their host environment. What was required was a comparative and longitudinal study of the migration of Southern Africans to a variety of regional centres, and the social and economic shifts that caused, and were in turn, constituted by these movements.

Given the relative lack of precedent for this type of research in the region, the ACP survey was intended as much as a methodological experiment as a theoretical exercise. Issues of representativity and replicability obviously loomed large. How could we generate a sampling technique that could be adequately transferred across multiple urban locations in Africa? In Johannesburg, rather than a pure random sample, we aimed to survey fixed quotas of migrant groups, divided between 600 non-nationals (200 Somali, 200 Congolese (DRC), and 200 Mozambicans) and a control group of 200 South Africans. The choice of sampling techniques was limited at the outset by the lack of a suitable frame. The under-representation of migrants in government census data has been noted elsewhere (Margolis, 1995), but is particularly acute in the African context, where inestimable portions of the target population enter national territory through informal channels, do not formalise their status, and can not be traced on the immigration department's movement control systems. Several migrant organisations, including churches, service providers and refugee advocates, maintain registers of members. However, given the politically and religiously fractured nature of migrant communities, and the lack of reliable procedures for updating these registers they do not provide the rudiments of a suitable frame.

Working from the sampling literature, an area cluster approach appeared to offer a way of generating the most representative sample in this scenario. This approach has been presented as a useful means of increasing coverage of 'rare' or 'hidden' populations when suitable frames are not available (Kalsbeek, 2003, Kalton and Anderson, 1986). Its apparent utility lies in the fact that it provides the researcher with a) a means of generating relatively unbiased selection procedures for an otherwise unknown population (by breaking the target population into units of comparable size); and b) means of accessing and screening the sample population (through door-knocks and face-to-face conversations). The limits of this technique in terms of the possibility of duplication had been considered (Kalsbeek, 2003), but to our knowledge problems of coverage associated with the use of this research technique have not been fully explored.

Although rarely made explicit, this technique rests heavily on the assumption that respondents can be adequately categorised in terms of their residential location, and can be reliably accessed in their homes. The ACP used a particular version of area cluster sampling, a multi-stage cluster approach. Operating with limited resources, and moving from the assumptions that a) migrant populations were concentrated in particular areas; and b) that these areas could be located through a small amount of preliminary consultative work, it was decided to limit the survey to a small number of suburbs, rather than to waste resources combing a wide range of inner-city areas where the chosen groups were thought not to reside. Building on a previous survey conducted in 2003 and consultations with key informants, we developed a schematic picture of where migrants tended to live in highest concentration. In Johannesburg, two areas (Yeoville, Berea) were expected to be areas where *multiple* subject groups could be found, while the remainder (Bertrams, Bezuidenhout Valley, Fordsburg, Mayfair and Rosettenville) were selected because of their association with a particular group.^{iv} This was a wholly pragmatic decision but had substantive implications for the decisions regarding the object of analysis, turning a choice to study migrants associated with the area of inner-city Johannesburg into a decision to take elements *resident* within the inner-city as representative of the target population.

It was also decided, again on the basis of pragmatism, to select a second set of clusters within these neighbourhoods in order to produce an adequate sample of the designated population, without expending the resources to sample the entire tract. The first stage in this process involved randomly selecting sub-units within the chosen suburbs from which to sample. Maps and data generated by Statistics South Africa divided the field site into 'Enumerator Areas' (EAs): areas which have each been estimated to contain approximately ten thousand (10 000) residents. We randomly selected half of the EAs in each suburb to include in the sample. As with the selection of migrant suburbs, this process rested on the assumption that respondents could be adequately categorised on the basis of residence. However, in this case the selection process also rested on the assumption that the distribution of migrant residences across the chosen tract was relatively even. The central notion here was that the residential population of each enumerator area could each be assumed to be, on average, representative of the total population across the seven neighbourhoods. This distinction is crucial because in this case assumptions about linkages between migrants and their residences were not merely being identified as a basis for making pragmatic research decisions, but also as the basis for ensuring that the sample was adequately representative of the target population.

The second stage of the multi-stage cluster approach involved randomly selecting eight (8) respondents from each EA in proportion with the total sample ratio of subjects to control group (3:1). A variety of techniques were used to ensure that this selection took place on a random basis: a) surveying would begin at a randomly selected spot in each EA; b) surveyors would only knock on every third door to request an

interview; and c) surveyors would not interview more than one respondent in each residence. Here, residential categorization again featured as a means of ensuring representativity. The core assumptions were that each member of the target population was equally likely to be accessed by researchers in their residences. It is only on this basis that procedures that ensured researchers moved through each EA in a random fashion could be claimed as adequate means of providing every individual within the target population an equal opportunity to participate in the survey.

There was an additional component of the sampling strategy that was not based upon space, but deserves mention. It was decided, in the case that the spatially and residentially oriented frame did not produce adequate numbers of respondents, that we should employ a modified snowball approach. This involved asking respondents at the end of the interview to each list, the names and contact details of two other persons who were willing to participate in the research. These entries would be utilised to generate a list of potential respondents from which we could randomly select to make up the required number of respondents. In this case a social network would substitute for residences as the core of the sampling frame.

FLAWS IN THE METHODOLOGICAL EXPERIMENT

Thus far, this discussion has separated out each relationship between residential categorisation and the logic of the chosen sampling framework. I have sought to attach a separate rationale to each of these associations, justifying them in relation to the central purposes of the research project and the unique context in which the survey was conducted. The discussion suggests that at least five assumptions pertaining to spatial categorisation were embedded within to the chosen sampling strategy:

- migrant residences in Johannesburg tend to be concentrated in particular neighbourhoods;
- areas where migrant residences were concentrated could be discovered through preliminary consultative work;
- migrant residences were distributed relatively evenly across the chosen neighbourhoods;
- residential categories could be utilised on an *a priori* basis to divide the target population into like units;
- each member of the target population was equally likely to be accessed by researchers in their residences;

The remainder of this account will show how we confronted the limitations of several of these assumptions during the survey itself. The principal point is that the volatility of Johannesburg's migrants' relationship to space rendered sampling strategies predicated on residential fixity deeply problematic.

Explaining this point requires some appreciation of the research site itself and the history of volatility in relationships between population and residential space in Johannesburg's inner-city. Central Johannesburg

has in many ways been built under a shroud of constant change. The original design of the downtown area, particularly its small city blocks, was a product of South Africa's gold rush mentality, which prioritised high numbers of stands to service the town's population, and lacked visions of the city that would ultimately emerge from the mining camp (Beavon, 2004: pp. 23-4). While industrial strength gave the city permanence beyond its resource base, Apartheid era policies actively encouraged the decentralisation of industrial activity away from the CBD (Beavon, 2004: pp. 181-2). For the black population that was prevented from establishing businesses in the townships, the city's commercial functions were an attraction, but not a place where one could legally establish a residence. In the 1980s, many of these restrictions were abandoned and blacks could formalise their presence in the city and establish a more permanent presence. However, during the same period, and linked to long-term processes of decentralisation, the inner city collapsed as the province's commercial and service sectors fragmented to the many malls and con-urban developments of the city's Northern quadrant, and white landlords and residents fled in the same direction. During this period informal housing arrangements proliferated and many of the apartment buildings that dominate the inner-East (Berea, Bertrams and Yeoville) saw a rapid deterioration or disappearance of formal landlord-tenant relationships, often compounded by the increasing tendency of armed criminal elements to claim tenure to defined public spaces (COHRE, 2005). One of the results of this lasting state of impermanence is that very few of Johannesburg's residents, whether citizens or non-nationals, regard the inner city as their home. These issues are illustrated by the survey results. The mean for all respondents for number of residential moves since coming to Johannesburg was 7.5 times.^v Nearly one third of respondents (33.1%) planned to move again within the next six months. Few respondents (13.1%) expected to be living in the same place within the next two years.

The three groups of forced migrants that were chosen as respondents in this survey have each sought to navigate this urban environment collectively and in a relatively patterned fashion, gravitating towards areas of common cultural attraction. Mozambicans, who have been in South Africa for many decades, are relatively dispersed, but have tended to congregate, along with a white Lusophone community in the Southern suburb of Rosettenville.^{vi} Somalis, who began to arrive in South Africa after 1994, have gathered near Mayfair and Fordsburg where the Indian communities had already established mosques, Muslim cultural associations, *balaal* butchers and other key services for Muslim residents.^{vii} Finally, the Congolese are concentrated in the Western suburbs of Yeoville, Berea and to a lesser extent Bertrams, where a larger African Francophone diaspora consisting of Cameroonians, Senegalese and Rwandans resides.^{viii} While finding succour in congregated settlements, each of these groups has experienced distant and uneasy relationships with South African government bodies and South Africans generally. Non-South Africans struggle to acquire documents to formalise their status, either as refugees, asylum seekers or immigrants.^{ix} They are commonly victimised by xenophobic police officers,^x and do not always report to the police when they are the victims of crime.^{xi} The South Africans that they live along-side commonly

blame non-South Africans for increases in crime,^{xiii} even though non-South Africans are more likely to be victims of crime than locals.^{xiii}

These general problems of residential volatility, more non-national-specific problems of insecurity and ostracisation became manifest as logistical problems during the survey. The first problem to emerge related to the capacity of our initial intelligence to clearly indicate the areas where migrant groups tended to live in highest concentration. While the assumption that migrants tended to reside close to one another had merits, identifiable cultural hubs did not necessarily correspond to the boundaries of particular neighbourhoods. The target population could reside in places that lay outside our chosen neighbourhoods, and we mistakenly chose neighbourhoods where very few individuals from the target groups stayed. A significant point of confusion was the tendency of our intelligence to equate areas of prominent migrant commercial activity with areas of dense migrant residential occupancy. For example, Somalis are widely known to pray and work in the Eastern suburb of Fordsburg, and during the day will be commonly seen moving through this suburb. However, at the time of the survey it was found that very few, if any Somalis lived in this neighbourhood any more, opting instead to live in the neighbouring suburb of Mayfair and commute the short distances necessary to work, shop and pray. Another example was our mistaken decision not to include the suburb of Bellevue, which turned out to have a high concentration of Congolese residents, in the sample. We were once again confused by ‘surface-level’ indicators: while the Congolese tend to own businesses, shop and work on and around the main street of Yeoville, this majority Christian community^{xiv} were more likely to live slightly South, in the vicinity of their Bellevue churches. Importantly, these problems appear to have been less the result of ‘bad intelligence’ and more a consequence of the volatile character of migrants’ residential status in Johannesburg. Proceeding in accordance with the findings of previous research, new patterns of migrant settlement emerged diffusely, through reflection on the experiences of locally based surveyors, and after lengthy periods of unsuccessful surveying.

The peculiar character of migrant settlement patterns also impinged upon our capacity to rely upon ‘enumerator areas’ as the ‘second-stage’ clusters. Migrants were not simply concentrated in particular suburbs; they tended to concentrate in specific portions of particular suburbs and/or to almost exclusively reside in a small number of buildings.^{xv} Though the total migrant population appeared to be quite large, the majority of the EAs had few or any migrants living there, and in certain cases the inner-urban population appeared to be densely congregated in two or three EAs. This problem can be partly put down to the high degree of social and economic segregation in Johannesburg which has produced stark divides between geographically contiguous residential zones. It resulted in some trying but retrospectively comic surveying moments, such as when one of our French-speaking researchers spent an entire day combing an EA in Bezuidenhout valley making inquiries through intercom systems to the (mostly white) residents as to whether any Congolese people living in the compound would be prepared

to participate in the survey. This problem was exacerbated by the sheer bad luck of our random selection process, that is to say, we somewhat inconveniently selected those EAs with few or no migrants in them and left out other EAs where all the migrants lived. For example, after having spent several days in Mayfair knocking on doors in a vain search for Somali respondents, we moved directly to the suburb of Fordsburg, only to be confronted with a similar problem: several Somali businesses, but no residences. Some time later a Somali surveyor, who had to this point merely been dutifully following the chosen strategy, pointed out that our randomly chosen EAs were literally on the ‘wrong side of the tracks’, all situated directly across the train lines from the street where largest numbers of Somali’s lived. In addition to Johannesburg’s segregated character, the volatile character of migrant groups’ settlement patterns also made it difficult to know whether one EA was going to ‘yield’ respondents or not. For example, on one day we were mistakenly relieved to inform our French-speaking researchers that we had gained approval from to survey the monolithic and infamous ‘Ponte’ Tower, renowned as a place Congolese early arrivals lived. Two days later, after covering most of Ponte’s fifty floors, and several nearby high-rise apartment buildings, we discovered that the Congolese had ceased to occupy Ponte a short time ago, and that large numbers of them now preferred residence in ‘Seswick Court’ another high-rise tenement, located approximately 100m away.

These problems of residential patterning were compounded by issues of access. Again, large numbers of migrants were ruled out of the sample due to unexpected forms of concentration. In certain cases, many households occupied a building that was accessible by a single door.^{xvi} Hence, adhering to the rule of only surveying one person per door-knock significantly limited our capacity to access some households. More pressing were the limitations of approaching potential respondents in their residences within a high-security environment. Surveyors reported residents consistently refusing to answer or open their doors or to talk with a stranger.^{xvii} Since many Johannesburg residents seem to have given up on the use of doorbells, preferring the familiarity and certitude of cell phones as a way of communicating arrival, significant portions of the houses simply could not be accessed by a stranger. At a broader level, large sections of the population were simply cordoned off from the research process, either because they lived in a suburb or high-rise building that refused entry without invite, or because the building itself was controlled by an unclear and forbidding mix of informal and criminal elements that reacted strongly to the presence of non-locals carrying clipboards and forms. On one occasion in Berea I was apprehended and questioned by a group of men, assuming a range of official associations with a particular building, from security guard, to reception officers to foremen. The men were unwilling to let me go until I clarified that I wasn’t from the government, and had no capacity to determine whether their largely derelict building would ultimately be condemned. These factors denied significant portions of the sample population the opportunity to participate in the survey, probably removing elements of both the poorest (living in informal settlements) and wealthiest (living behind high-security systems) strata. The security scenario also indirectly skewed the sample by limiting the hours when surveyors could work. It is not

considered safe to walk the streets of most of inner-city Johannesburg after dark. As a consequence, surveying was limited to daylight hours. This produced different distortions depending on the subject community. In the case of the Somalis this approach led to the over-representation of women, because a high proportion of the men were involved in trade,^{xviii} and rarely came home until the late evening. In other cases, such as the Indian and White South African communities that formed a part of the control group, daylight access had a quite different result, leading mostly to the over-representation of domestic workers,^{xix} who lived on site and tended to be the only ones present during the day.

We may have been able to overlook these problems had they been exclusive to the Johannesburg survey. Unfortunately, whereas other cities in Southern Africa may have lacked the extremely high security environment of Johannesburg, they also presented a range of other unforeseen complexities. While surveyors were not necessarily construed as direct physical threats, they were often believed to present possible political threats to the insecure, yet tightly-knit migrant worlds of Southern African cities. For example, during the Maputo survey a rumour began to circulate amongst the Somali migrants that the ACP survey teams were providing information about migrant whereabouts to government officials. Within a relatively short space of time it became almost impossible to encourage a Somali national to participate in the survey. Perhaps the most significant issue was the difficulty in establishing comparable spatial clusters. Cities like Lubumbashi and Maputo simply did not possess the census data on Enumerator Areas or data that could be used to construct residential population units of comparable number. Hence, in each case we ended up estimating, on the basis of total area rather than population number, what the boundaries of the clusters would be. Another difficulty that arose was the unmapped character of these other urban spaces. Whereas the Johannesburg survey had relied upon relatively up-to-date street-maps, which offered a realistic depiction of residential areas, in places like Lubumbashi street maps had not been updated for many years, making them almost useless for the purposes of research. In all these respects, the key assumed strength of the chosen sampling frame: the relative ease with which it could be applied to multiple field sites, turned out to be a core weakness.

Building on the preceding discussion the problems with the chosen approach can be summarised as follows:

1. Inadequacy of sample size due to unexpectedly concentrated character of migrant settlement.
2. Inefficient use of resources due to inadequacy of intelligence regarding residences.
3. Lack of representativity due to incompatibility of cluster model with distribution of residences

4. Lack of representativity due to uneven and unpredictable conditions of access to residences.
5. Lack of replicability due to diversity of urban plan across cases and volatility of migrant settlement patterns over time.

Survey teams in Johannesburg adopted a variety of *ad hoc* techniques and strategies to combat these problems and generate an adequate sample size. While these measures did not form part of the original research strategy, and in various ways diluted the integrity of the data, each was selected because of its ability to remain true to the overall project ideals, whilst adapting to the unique character of the field site. First, in order to account for the problems of high density we loosened two of the strictures of the sampling frame: i) in the case of multi-household residences, interviewers could survey one individual for each household instead of one for each dwelling; and ii) in the case of high concentration of migrants within a small number of EAs we allowed for surveys to go over the number of the original quota, so long as parity of total respondent numbers between EAs remained. Second, in order to account for the lack of intelligence regarding migrant whereabouts, we added an additional stage to the survey process whereby English-language speakers, who were primarily employed to survey the South African control group, were utilised to ‘comb’ prospective areas and generate information about migrant residences. Operating according to the original plan, these groups helped us to generate a clearer picture of the distribution of migrant residences and to adjust the size and dimensions of the total survey tract to suit. Third, in order to overcome problems stemming from lack of access, which were particularly pronounced for the Somali respondents, we visited a variety of public places where respondents could be found in the day to solicit interviews. In order to ensure fidelity with our sampling frame, we then asked respondents to identify the enumerator area where they lived, so as to maintain parity of respondents from the three EAs in which the Somali community resided.

REFLECTING ON OUR SPATIAL ASSUMPTIONS

One might be inclined to suggest that these problems can be tackled through refinements at the research design phase, involving improved efforts to take into account the unique character of the field site i.e. through 1) better intelligence; 2) better designed clusters; 3) improved techniques for negotiating access; and 4) more cross-national comparison prior to selection of approach. Surveyors were forced to engage in each of these efforts to contextualise the frame ‘on the fly’ as information came to hand. Could these problems not have been avoided through better planning? There are at a set of solid inter-linked reasons for not supporting this ‘*a priori* tinkering’ approach. First, the 2006 Johannesburg survey was based solidly on prior experience and intelligence regarding migrant residences and the inner-city generated through its 2003 counterpart. As the case of Ponte tower illustrates, in addition to the ‘hidden’ character of migrant settlement, ‘volatility’ is an issue. Given these factors, it seems unlikely that even a set of refined sampling techniques based on residence would have lasting value. This leads to the second point,

that is, that the work involved in fine-tuning the approach to suit a particular environment may move us away from the very strengths of the residential sampling strategy, that is, its utility as a means of generating, from a relatively small and well known set of assumptions, a clear and consistent research plan, and set of surveying procedures. Too much time would be spent in planning to adjust a sampling frame that may simply be wholly ill-suited to the character of the target population.

The third reason for not seeking to refine the existing approach can be found in recent critiques of space and mobility. To critical analysts of migration dynamics the preceding discussion of the shortcomings of this approach will not be particularly revelatory, because the relative intransigence of migrant populations vis-à-vis conventional ways of situating objects of analysis in knowable space has itself been a commonplace in their discussions for some time. At a larger scale, theorists have noted how migrants and diasporic communities do not simply cross the state's territorial borders, but unsettle our statist and territorially biased understanding of the natural order of sovereignty and belonging. The difference to the findings presented here is that they suggested that the problem does not necessarily lie simply in the myopic lens of the nation-state, but also in the core assumptions of our methodological procedures: that a meaningful snapshot of migration-related dynamics could be generated through a strategy which began by positing migrants as a settled population. This may be a problem that is largely specific to Johannesburg context, or to cities in Africa where, largely due to migration from rural areas to the cities and amongst cities themselves, public space has come to resemble a site of 'shifting sands' (Landau, 2007). If so, it remains to be shown how we can begin to build theories supported by representative data, of the changing landscapes we have identified. If not, there may be reason to believe that theorists of society and space face a paradox that they have, up till now, not explicitly acknowledged: that the very object of our interest, the character of new migrant geographies, tends to confound our attempts to develop generalisable claims through conventional methodological practice.

ENDNOTES

- ⁱ Thus, for example Crang et al (2003) staunchly resist attempts to make the transnationalism research agenda amenable to comparative research methods, calling for transnationality to be viewed as a dynamic research object: 'a multidimensional space that is multiply inhabited and characterized by complex networks, circuits and flows' (p. 441)
- ⁱⁱ A similar claim was made almost two decades prior (Kalton and Anderson, 1986 : p. 65)
- ⁱⁱⁱ The overall design of the ACP, including the instruments and findings, have been detailed elsewhere (Jacobsen and Landau 2003)
- ^{iv} At least one area (Hillbrow) was left out, despite the likely concentration of target population in the area, due to security concerns.
- ^v The mean for number of times moved was 7.5.
- ^{vi} 95.0% of Mozambican respondents spoke Portuguese.
- ^{vii} 98.9% of Somali respondents identified themselves as Muslim.
- ^{viii} 98.8% of Congolese respondents spoke French.
- ^{ix} Non-South Africans (16.5%) are more than four times as likely than South Africans (3.7%) to report paying unofficial charges to obtain ID documents. See also NCRA Report
- ^x Non-South Africans (66.8 %) were almost twice as likely to report being stopped by the police or the military than South Africans (33.9%).
- ^{xi} Less non-South Africans (58.3%) who have been a victim of crime reported not going to the police than South Africans (73.4%)
- ^{xii} South Africans (33.8%) who believe that crime has increased in Johannesburg over the last ten years are more than twice as likely to blame this on immigration than Non-South Africans (15.6%). This should be weighed against the finding that a larger portion of South Africans attributed blame for increased crime to economic conditions (78.4%)
- ^{xiii} More non-South Africans (66.1%) have been a victim of crime than South Africans (41.8%).
- ^{xiv} 94.1% of Congolese surveyed identified themselves as either Catholic or Protestant.
- ^{xv} Non-South Africans tended, on average to live in higher concentration than South Africans. A larger portion of non-South Africans (38.3 %) lived in multi-family apartments than South Africans (23.6%).
- ^{xvi} Non-South Africans tended, on average to live in higher concentration than South Africans. A larger portion of non-South Africans (38.3 %) lived in multi-family apartments than South Africans (23.6%).
- ^{xvii} A majority of respondents (59.9%) believed that crime had increased in Johannesburg over the last ten years. A majority of respondents (60.7%) had either been a victim of crime or lived with someone who had been a victim of crime.
- ^{xviii} 40.8% of Somalis interviewed described their current occupation as business owners compared with 17.3% of Congolese, 8.2% of Mozambicans and 10.2% of South Africans.
- ^{xix} 20.4% of South Africans interviewed were domestic workers compared with 1.1% of non-South Africans.

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