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Citizenship in the making: Mozambicans in Johannesburg

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1. Introduction

This paper is the result of field research conducted in Johannesburg in 2009. The research was based on interviews with Mozambican migrants and local actors working in the field of migration (Non Governmental Organizations and Community Based Organizations, media, etc). Through the interviews, the narratives of migrants were reconstructed and their lives in Johannesburg described, as well as their 'access (or non-access) to citizenship'. At the same time, an analysis of scholarly articles and press clippings was carried out on the impact of xenophobic discourse on citizenship practice.

Snowball sampling (Silvermann, 2000) was used for in-depth interviews as an effective way to conduct research on migration (Romania, 2004). The sample representation was ensured by the use of 'knowledge saturation' (Bertaux, 1980). Snowball sampling relies on referrals from initial subjects to generate additional subjects and permits network reconstruction in the studied communities in terms of arriving at a complete clarification of routines, common behaviour and ways of accessing the urban environment. In other words, narratives of migrants were re-constructed through the stories collected and routines were progressively clarified thanks to the information collected during the interviews.

Interviews were carried out in very different settings: initially Mozambican migrants were interviewed in the streets while street vending. However, after a short period of time had elapsed 'privileged space encounters' were chosen to host the interviews.

For example, the Mafalala Club (a club in 'town' owned by a Mozambican), the McDonald's as well as some saloons in Rosettenville (a neighbourhood in Johannesburg) were identified as key places where Mozambican migrants regularly met and, as a consequence, were considered 'productive' places to perform interviews.

Finally, the private residences of migrants were chosen to observe everyday routines and migrants' private lives.

The qualitative analysis of the research materials rests upon the theory of 'social constructivism', according to which practices must be looked at against the backdrop of the specific social contexts. This is in line with the idea that knowledge comes from the individual and is socially constructed. The value of social constructivism lies in the fact that it recognizes that reality can be more properly comprehended by inquiring into the ways people come into contact with the environment they live in. Thus, in the 'known' world multiple perspectives can be negotiated and constructed. This is particularly relevant in the context of social marginalization where the distinction between 'legal' and 'illegal' is constantly negotiated.

If 'citizenship is a historical process that exists at any time and place, constituted by strategies and technologies as ways of being political' (Isin, 2002), the aim of this study is to delve profoundly into the construction of this historical process questioning the same notion of 'citizenship' in the post apartheid Johannesburg.

2. Being an immigrant in South Africa

Cross-border migration within the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) dates back at least 150 years, when labour migrants went to work in the Kimberley diamond mines from modern-day Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Mozambique, long before the drawing of colonial boundaries (Crush *et al.*, 2006). The discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand changed the entire pattern of labour migration in the sub-continent. Though initially most migrants came independently, mine migration soon became highly regulated and recruitment was secured by a single agency, the Employment Bureau of Africa (TEBA).

South Africa was not the only country to migrate to. Cross-border migration was common practice for all SADC Countries. The Southern African Migration Project (Crush, Peberdy Williams, 2006) shed light on some of the reasons behind the numerous and male-based migration in Southern Africa. Firstly, in many cases, colonial boundaries literally destroyed societies and cut communities in half. In many parts of the sub-continent members of the same family or lineage found themselves living in different countries and cross-border social interaction continued unabated. Secondly, before the 1960s, international borders had never been properly drawn or policed and there had been no border control between many SADC States – which made it easy for migrants to move to other countries in search of employment. Thirdly, the mining industry was the only sector to establish a formal contract labour system. Other employers (i.e commercial agriculture and domestic service) did not have access to this labour and often hired migrants illegally. Finally, colonial regulations and the formal contract system for labour migrants were gender-biased. Female migrants could not migrate legally across borders for work. Consequently, they had to migrate illegally, which many did.

Today's States of Southern Africa can be divided into migrant-sending States (Mozambique, Malawi, Lesotho) and migrant-receiving ones (South Africa, Namibia). In a few cases, such as Botswana and Swaziland, States fall into both categories (Crush 1999, Peberdy, 2001). Cross border migration in the SADC is more complex and consistent in volume than in the past, but there is a significant decline in legal migration vis-à-vis an increase in undocumented migration. It is increasingly difficult to migrate formally to the new democratic South Africa, particularly for other Africans (Crush 1999, Peberdy, 2001). Nonetheless, the number of Africans migrating to South Africa has increased. The consequence of the tightening of immigration policy is that migration has become informal, turning ever-increasing numbers of people into undocumented migrants.

Migration today is more and more feminized and there is a rapid urbanization and reconfiguration of rural-urban linkages (Crush *et al.*, 2006). Human capital flight from the region is also increasing, together with resettlement and reintegration of mass refugee movements.

The 2001 South Africa census indicated that there were 350.000 registered non-South African Africans in the country, a significant increase compared to five years earlier when the previous census occurred. Other estimates put the number of foreign migrants (legal and illegal) between 500,000 and 850,000 (Crush, Williams 2001) mostly in the largest cities.

Throughout the Gauteng Province, home to the cities of Johannesburg and Pretoria, there has been a significant increase in the foreign born population over the last decade: from 4.8 percent in 1996 to 5.4 percent in 2001. In Johannesburg, the number of non-South Africans had climbed from 65,000 in 1996 to more than 100,000 five years later (Landau, 2004).

According to CoRMSA 2009 Report, migrants account for 4.1 percent of the total urban population of the country and 1.6 percent of rural residents. While a small number of these international migrants have humanitarian needs, most are self sufficient. Many bring skills and resources that generate employment (CoRMSA, 2009).

In total, more than 90,000 Mozambicans entered South Africa in 2008 (Statistics of South Africa, 2009). What is interesting is that almost all of them entered the country as tourists, while only 140 entered with a work permit. This is due to the fact that the National Immigration Act imposes very strict rules on those entering the country in search of work, while the agreement between South Africa and Mozambique has a provision for a 30 day tourist visa that can be easily obtained. Most migrants simply overstay their tourist visa in order to remain in South Africa.

Before 1994, immigration policy was a mere instrument of racial domination. After 1994, the South African government struggled to formulate a policy appropriate to the country's new role in a changing regional, continental, and global migration regime. In late 2002, a new Immigration Act was passed after nearly eight years of negotiations.

The legitimatisation of an 'illegal' anti-foreigner policy has been endorsed by the overtly anti-foreigner 2002 Immigration Act (Landau, 2004). The Immigration Act effectively authorises Home Affairs agents to conduct searches, arrests, and deportations without reference to other constitutional or legal protection (Landau, 2004). The 2002 Act Preamble endorses the security approach towards immigration and states that: 'security considerations are fully satisfied and the State retains control on the immigration of foreigners to the Republic […] border monitoring is strengthened to ensure that the borders of the Republic do not remain porous and illegal immigration through them may be effectively detected, reduced and deterred'. In terms of human rights protection the Preamble states that 'immigration control is performed within the highest applicable standards of human rights protection, and xenophobia is prevented and countered both within Government and civil society'. However, this is not the case, as frequent violence against non-nationals, unlawful arrests, detentions and deportations show.

In practice voluntary migrants have no means to regularize their stay in the country after their initial study, tourist, or work permits expire. Illegality is almost the only solution for staying in Johannesburg with tangible consequences on the 'right to the city' (Lefebvre, 1978). This focus on immigration control rather than management means that the new Act effectively criminalises undocumented migrants and affords generous provisions for the arrest, detention, and deportation of persons (Landau, 2009).

A recent (2004) move towards a Bilateral Agreement between South Africa and Mozambique to guarantee entry visas (for 30 days) for nationals of both countries is a step forwards to ensuring the right of movement between Mozambique and South Africa. But the legal framework of 30-day visas does not respond to the need for a rights-based access to the country. Generally speaking, voluntary migrants ask for refugee status in order to enter the country less precariously. Otherwise, they enter the country with the 30-day visas and in most cases are forced to overstay. The regime of visas seems to only fit the necessities of 'on the border' migrants, that are regularly coming and going from Mozambique to South Africa. Migrants that want to settle in Johannesburg cannot afford the practice of going to the border every month because it is too expensive; as a consequence Mozambican migrants let their visas expire, occasionally paying bus drivers in order to renew the stamp. The ethnographic observation of the Mozambican embassy in Johannesburg succinctly captures this situation:

'Every morning the embassy is full of Mozambicans queuing for asking information, having passports, visas. People wait silently. Outside something strange is happening, at the same time: 3 guys, two young Mozambicans and a man with a white cap, are been continually asked for something, for help. After a while I ask them to help me with my Visa to go to Mozambique. They are helping Mozambicans filling the form in order to have documents and papers and the small enterprise collaborates with other 3 Mozambicans that are taking ID photographs on the corner. You can have your picture in 5 minutes, ready to be used for your documents. After a while I start talking to the young guy, called Small. Small goes to the border almost every week, helping other migrants with their passport. He is taking with you some passports in order to stamp them at the border to be renewed. Small have some money in exchange. This is his informal job. His boss is the man with the white cap'.

Migrants are forced into a 'deportable' (De Genova, 2004) condition, being forced to constantly move from South Africa to Mozambique or to overstay their Visa becoming illegal migrants in Johannesburg. To this extent, the relations with the hosting society as well as with the public space in the city are very fragile

In the absence of a proper policy response to the immigration phenomenon, Mozambican migrants have settled upon 'practices of resistance' (Isin, 2002) to cope with the necessity/desire to live in Johannesburg. The analysis of these practice give us the chance to problematize the very notion of citizenship in the post apartheid Johannesburg.

3. 'Street level' citizens

According to Isin Engin, what is interesting about the debate on otherness is how the emergence of this figure is implicated in the emergence of new 'sites' through which 'actors' claim to transform themselves and others from subjects into citizen and claimants of rights. In this way citizenship is something 'in the making' that has to be analyzed starting from the practice[1] of citizenship.

The debate over citizenship has focused on two distinct but related aspect: citizenship as status and citizenship as practice (Isin, 2009). When debating citizenship as status, the relevant features of the discussion are related to the question of 'belonging' to a certain country as well as possessing the formal requirements to be recognized as citizen (documents as well as the characteristics of the 'good' citizen). On the contrary when debating citizenship as practice, the notion of citizenship is able to extend beyond the boundaries of the state and nation. What is relevant is that new actors articulate claims for justice through new sites that involve multiple and overlapping scales of rights and obligations (Isin, 2009). In this sense citizenship is an institution in the flux embedded in the current social and political struggles that constitute it.

The aim of this article is to delve into the 'sites' that are formed trough contests and struggles of fluid and dynamic entities (for example the local population and the newcomers); boundaries become a question of empirical determination and not something that is predetermined.

This approach ask for a radical change of mind: not citizens can act as citizens as well as constitute themselves as those with 'the right to claim rights' (Isin, 2009). Considering rights as something that is relational, 'scales' of citizenship bleed into each other. To this extent the moment of encounter/conflict among who is considered insider and outsider is the core of social and political enquiry.

According to Isin, an act of citizenship is something that creates a 'scene' which means both performance and disturbance. An act is different from an action because of the political that is embedded in the same time and space of the act of doing something. Acts are ruptures or beginning but are not impulsive and random reaction to a scene (Isin, 2009). Acts are always purposive though not always intentional. Although acts of citizenship involve decisions, those cannot be reduced to calculability, intentionality and responsibility. In other words a subject can be considered as an 'activist citizen' without being able to give an explicit reason for his/her becoming. De Certeau speaks about tactics: 'the innumerable practices through which users reappropriate the space organized by techniques of sociocultural production' (De Certeau, 2001). Acts of citizenship could be viewed are tactical trajectories through which citizen-strangers trace unintended, heterogeneous spatial stories within and against an imposed political terrain (ibidem, 2001). According to Lefebvre, the right to the city is the right to participate in making 'the urban', the right to inhabit and transform the urban space and thus to become a creator of the city. How this right can be performed if an individual is considered as an 'outsider'? In the case study of Johannesburg this right is simply performed and the narratives of migrants are clearly describing the process.

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[1] According to Isin (2009) an act is different from an action because the act embedded the political of the action. According to Crosta (2010) the political is therefore embedded in the practice as a collective action.

According to Isin, what is relevant is the moment when the act break the routines and common understanding. Foucault talks about heterotopias: 'real places - places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society - which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted' (Foucault, 2006). Taking prisons and psychiatric hospitals as examples, Foucualt talks about heterotopias of deviation: those in which individuals whose behaviour is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed. In this sense heterotopias are sites where the breaking of common understanding is practiced and as a consequence the relation between the outsider/insider can be analyzed.

Moreover what is relevant is not the participation of the *'sans papiers'* in the public affairs but their claims or act of resistance where they do not have the right to do something. Investigating citizenship means analyzing groups whose struggles are able to materialize citizenship as something dynamic, constituting in the process, rather then giving it a static definition.

According to this, the Paper examines the practices migrants put in place to gain access to the city starting from the assumption that 'the city is a projection of the society living in' (Lefebvre, 1978). To this extent, the focus is on 'practices that are shaping the urban space' (Crosta, 2010) rather than on the traditional notion of citizenship that conforms to the national-territorial norms, under the assumption that practices are able to produce 'hybrid citizenships' and 'multiple geographies' (Isin, 2002).

With its bundle of legal rights and duties, citizenship is traditionally the legal status that distinguishes between nationals and outsiders. Such distinction is based on their different relations to particular States and highlights the boundaries of formal citizenship. On the contrary, the so called 'urban citizenship' (Isin 2002, Amin and Thrift, 2002, McNevin, unpublished) is an ever-changing concept recreating itself through everyday practice in the city (Toner and Taylor, 2008). Urban citizenship is the extension of a social process through which individuals and social groups engage in claiming, expanding or losing rights: citizenship emerges in practice in the repetitive act through which people are marked as 'one of us or one of them'. Citizenship is about being there legitimately in public space and being seen to be there.

According to this perspective, the category of alterity becomes relevant when thinking that 'the problem is how and why human beings perceive one another as belonging to the same group, referred to as 'We' [...] while at the same time excluding others whom they perceive as belonging to another group, referring to them as 'They' (Isin, 2002). Alterity conveys difference and distinction, or recognition and affiliation, rather than static categories of inclusion/exclusion. In other words, alterity assumes that social groups do not define themselves in isolation from others, but defines a dialectic relationship with them. The constitution of the social group is in that way mutual and progressive.

4. A space of permanent transit

The field research has confirmed Madsen's findings: 'In the common narrative of departure and return, in which the motivation for leaving home is intimately related to the proper way of behaving while away, the ultimate achievement of the venture to Johannesburg is the return home' (Madsen, 2004).

The relationship between identity and space for Mozambicans in Johannesburg is very fragile. The migrants' narratives describe Johannesburg as a place to invest in and accumulate wealth but not as a place to form durable social relations. Under these circumstances, the sense of belonging to South Africa is inevitably fragile and the request for legitimisation and recognition weak. Being in Johannesburg seems to be the only

important aspect, without calling into question the sphere of belonging to the city and the nation. These feelings are mediated by the sense of being in Johannesburg for a long period of time, aspect that can modify the desires and expectations of an individual. But, generally speaking, the 'narrative of intended return' is a very strong narrative for respondents.

More specifically, from one perspective, the 30-day visa facilitates the practice of permanent transit, like for businessmen or businesswomen who come and go from Maputo to Johannesburg in order to buy cheap and sell at the 'right price'. The interviews report some examples of permanent transit:

I came here in Johannesburg in the '90s because my husband was working there. My husband was working in the mine…he died four years ago because of a cancer. We have lived in Johannesburg for 15 years together, coming from Maputo. We lived in Soweto…now I'm working in Troyville but I live in Maputo, where I was born. Each and every week I come to Johannesburg…I'm leaving on Monday for coming back Friday…every week. Life is better now because I'm not living in Johannesburg. There is lot of people, lot of women that are doing the same: coming and going from Mozambique, buying and selling every week. You can buy cheap in Maputo and then you can sell at a good price in Johannesburg…in that way you can survive. I sell palm oil…it is not easy to find palm oil in Johannesburg; people that live in Troyville come here to have it…and other staff. Lot of migrants are buying from me.
The government has provided us with this 30 days visa, so I'm using this visa to enter the country legally…I'm stamping the visa every week, so I'm not overstaying it. If you overstay you have to pay some money to the officer…so they back pone the stamp. This visa let me survive, but only because I'm not leaving in Johannesburg (B, Mozambican, Johannesburg)

A man interviewed at the Mafalala Club buys clothes made in China that he then sells in Maputo. He lives at his sister's house, and goes back and forth every second week.

At the same time the 30-day Visa reinforces the deportability of Mozambicans that would like to settle in Johannesburg for a longer period of time. As said before, the common practice in this case is to overstay the Visa becoming illegal: the story of Small described in the previous paragraphs, highlights practices that are performed to 'live at the border' in order to stamp the passports or let other Mozambicans have it stamped.

The majority of respondents that tried to settle in the city, described Johannesburg as a place 'in which you can find a salary', but not a place where you can live. The main reasons for that are related to the sense of insecurity due to police control and xenophobia and at the same time to social fragmentation (called 'apartheid') in the city.

No, I'm not feeling part of South African society. I'm not feeling free in South Africa because of apartheid…people are divided, black South African, white South African and migrants…then migrants that belong to different communities. We are not sharing…I must come back to Maputo for that reason. South Africans are feeling me as a migrant, not as a citizen. They will never feel me part of their society (B. Mozambican, Johannesburg)

The transnational space between South Africa and Mozambique leads migrants to construct a multifaceted sense of belonging that is not simply conveyable as 'here' or 'there' but must be considered as being shaped by multiple political, social and economic constraints. Identity is strongly influenced by this process of non linear belonging. To this extent, the very notion of 'being a citizen' has to be problematized.

At the same time, 'today as yesterday, the South African State and migration policies are still political factors which shape the experience of Mozambican migrants and determine their forms of belonging' (Vidal, 2009). The 30-day visa legal framework fits the new migrant labour system and 'this system of migrant labour is perfectly adapted to the political and economic changes of both South Africa and Mozambique, which are two democratic regimes within a broader political ensemble, the SADC, requiring political

cooperation between the two countries, a post-Fordist economy, fluid, diverse, flexible and closely related to an informal economy and cross-border trading' (Vidal, 2009).

In other words the legal framework that govern the immigration (immigration policies) are able to shape the life in the destination country as well as the relationship between the country of arrival and destination. At the same time the everyday life in Johannesburg modifies the 'migration plan' (supposing that migration can be 'planned') of Mozambicans. The narrative about intended return has to consider how material conditions, political constraints, and personal change affect the desire to return home. Some respondents seem to recognize the precariousness of the narrative of intended return:

I want to stay here in Johannesburg…I've grown up here because I came when I was 13 years old. My life is here now…what can I do in Mozambique? I want to stay here if they don't kill me…(laugh). I want my ID and a proper job in Johannesburg. I know it is very difficult…for example, you see, I'm not able to write in English…I can only speak…how can I find a different job…let's say in a office?? Yes, I'm feeling South African because I want to live in here…the problem is that this society are not considering me as a citizen (L. Mozambican, Johannesburg)

As Sayad points out, 'migrancy' can last for decades and, in some cases, be a permanent social condition' (Sayad, 2004). To this extent, Sayad's assumption leads to a revision of the notion of voluntary migration as a controlled process of going and returning after a rational planning exercise. Rather, the complex process of migration shapes future life outside rational choices. To some extent, voluntary migration becomes forced within this process, and migration a constituent element of everyday life. In this way practices are crucial elements of analysis.

Many Mozambican migrants by now have experienced city life for a number of years, raised their children in Johannesburg and, when possible, taken them to South African schools. The narrative of intended return must be measured against the backdrop of migrants' lives in Johannesburg that might change the intention of going back home, even if against their will.

The feeling of being South African is shared among persons who have lived in Johannesburg for a long time, even though they do not refer to a sense of belonging:

I'm feeling South African because I'm here since more than 10 years. But I'm not feeling as a part of the society...I'm not feeling equal to other people (S. Mozambican, Johannesburg)

These figures show how complex migration is. On the one hand, Mozambican migrants seem to have a strong connection to their home country, but on the other hand they consider migration as an element of possible change. Even if all the respondents use the narrative of intended return, life in Johannesburg seems to have a strong impact on life plans made before departure. At the same time exploitation and xenophobia are elements that affect the 'right to the city' for the newcomers.

5. The invisibility of public space

Whereas the apartheid State sustained an onslaught on South African citizens' residential rights, the post-apartheid State has employed similar techniques to alienate and isolate non-nationals (Landau, 2009).

Today the presence of international migrants makes globalization a very concrete and visible condition that concerns a clearly identifiable and circumscribed space. Through migration, globalization thus turns into a trait that has to be entirely dealt with from a local perspective (Balbo, 2009). As a result, local societies are becoming more and more diversified. In this context, the issue of identity becomes crucial.

Providing a stereotyped representation of the other becomes both a way of recognizing each other and a way of defining boundaries between who belongs to the inside and who to the outside in post apartheid Johannesburg. The discourse on citizenship is able to reinforce this process of separation. This process enables the strengthening of social cohesion, especially among separated communities.

In post-apartheid South Africa stereotypes nourish the social, cultural and religious exclusion of the others, whose presence is felt as a threat to the lifestyle of the host community. It also fosters spatial exclusion by enhancing the fragmentation of urban space (Balbo, 2009). 'Decade-long efforts to control political and physical space have generated an enemy within: an amorphously delimited group of outsiders that is threatening, often indistinguishable for the other and it is impossible to spatially exclude' (Landau, 2009).

Xenophobic attacks in the past years could be considered as the direct product of a complex social and political process. Landau highlights three main explanations: i) the demonization of the outsiders and human mobility, ii) the arbitrary socio-spatial separation, and iii) the failure of the State's approach to pastoral citizenship after 1994. These are some of the features that contributed to the creation of 'the alien' (used to refer to migrants before 1994, in The Alien Control Act and the focal 'image' of the recent movie 'District Nine') and to the related xenophobia.

South African history must be taken into consideration, analysed and constantly questioned in order to understand the social and spatial fragmentation that is shaping Mozambican migrants' 'right to the city' (Lefebvre, 1978). The non-national population lives a life similar to that of black labourers during the apartheid regime, being economically integrated but stigmatised and vulnerable to the whims of the State and its neighbours (Landau, 2009).

Today the territory of this condition is the 'zone of exception': a non-physical space where migrants are playing with the State's instrumental logic. In the zone of exception Mozambicans are personifying the 'everyday maker' (Bang, 2005): 'a form of lay citizenship shaped by the everyday experience…they consider knowing as doing, refusing to take on a professional, full-time or strategic citizen identity. The everyday makers do not shy away from being enrolled in strategic civil-governance projects, but do so only if these give them the opportunity to also pursue their own 'small' tactics and exercise their creative capacities as 'ordinary' citizens' (ibidem, 2005).

The zone of exception, from this point of view, is the laboratory (Latour, 2000) of a kind of 'urban citizenship' as a strategy to resist in a contest where the access to 'formal' citizenship is not admitted.

In this sense invisibility is 'performed': invisibility is a technique used when the individual representation of the self comes into question (Romania, 2004). In a place where it is impossible to gain the 'right to the city', the everyday makers cannot conform to the territorial norm ('given the migrants' legal status they have no formal claims on the police or any other state authority') (Madsen, 2004) and, as a consequence, they become socially invisible because their choice/resistance is to live on the margins (Crosta, 2010) of the social and political system. In other words the everyday maker is not conforming to the traditional notion of what a citizen is and as a consequence is invisible to the State.

Social exclusion is '[…] a quiet, subtle way to protect and produce moral communities that situate themselves at the intersection of (present) survival and (future) realization' (Madsen, 2004). Quoting Madsen, what I have called the 'zone of exception' could be considered a form of 'everyday policing' of deportable migrants living in Johannesburg.

The means and dynamics of everyday policing are contingent upon maintaining their invisibility. Mozambicans are building 'moral communities' (Madsen, 2004) where behaviours that are a threat to the communities are not admitted. In other words, immoral behaviour capable of destroying the community of the invisible are sanctioned. In general,

respondents trust neither other Mozambicans nor South Africans. The narrative used is somewhat extreme:

I can trust Mozambicans only when they are at home, not in here. I have friends from Mozambique, lots of them. But I can trust few of them…maybe my brother, my sister and a very close friend of mine. You will never know what happen…if a Mozambican is here to have fun and not to work…the police will find you both. Friends can kill you (J., Mozambican, Johannesburg)

At the same time, upon their arrival most migrants received some help from friends or relatives already in Johannesburg. However, the perception is that this kind of mutual support can easily be broken during the migration path, due to widely differentiating reasons for living in South Africa and circumstances. 'The newcomers are often housed in family homes […] but these ties do not form solid networks' (Vidal, 2009).

The main entry point to South Africa is the family and its networks, which also shapes migrants' lives in the city. The Mozambican narratives always refer to the *distrust* of other Mozambicans in Johannesburg, while compatriots are different at home, where *you can trust them.* The narratives refer to a situation where the city can change an individual's personal traits.

The post apartheid city strongly affects the way migrants relate to their fellow citizens as well as the way they access the city. Social and spatial fragmentation makes relationships more difficult to manage as well as dangerous in a context where invisibility is what matters most. The relationship to space is very fragile too. The main and often only movement is from/to the workplace or to the few public spaces Mozambicans appropriate for themselves, but most of the time not spent at work is spent at home. Concerning the domestic environment, Mozambicans are dedicated to establishing good relationships at a neighbourhood level (Vidal, 2009) in order to set up the protective networks against xenophobic attitudes.

'Peaceful neighbourhood relations' are what Mozambicans aim for in Johannesburg in order to be safe within an invisible microcosm. As a consequence the use of public space as well as social relations are extremely limited.

In this sense invisibility is practiced when a specific social group wants to criticise the dominance of the ruling group, by escaping the authoritative relationship governing alterity (Romania, 2004). To this extent invisibility is a 'mode of resistance'.

The zone of exception is the space in between power, the host society and the fringes and to this extent a productive metaphor for social and political inquiry: this space is something dynamic, shaped by the same relationship that these different groups are creating. Something that might be analysed in that place and time, without any generalization.

Johannesburg fits into the categorization that allows the usage of invisibility for Mozambicans (Romania, 2004): a high level of stigmatization against migrant groups; capabilities migrants have of using languages and cultural traits of the hosting society; weak or no desire of being recognized as being part of that particular group of newcomers; perception of not being recognized and accepted by the host society.

'The invisibility of public space' leads also to the analysis of the relationship between space and identity; quoting Vidal, the 'relationship between space and identity is very fragile' (Vidal, 2009) and the use of public space is consequently scarce.

No, I don't think that people are free to use public spaces here in Johannesburg. Migrants are going to work and then they come back, because they are not feeling free to walk in the street. You can find someone in the morning…in the weekends…but you see, people are doing the same path every day, because they feel safe that way (R., Mozambican, Johannesburg)

Migrants' narratives do not often recognize public space as a meeting or entertainment place, since they only travel from home to the workplace and vice versa. Some

respondents recognize 'Rosettenville next to McDonald's', 'pubs in town owned by a Mozambican' as places of encounter.

The ethnographic observation of the Mafalala Club in Jeppe Street conveys a private space totally populated by Mozambican migrants, where languages from the country of origin are spoken and socialization is based on Mozambican news, political situation and economy. The possibility of meeting South Africans in the Mafalala Club is remote and 'if the police comes here, we are able to control their attitude'. The use of public space in Rosettenville is always mediated by creativity:

If the police is coming, we try to elude their control…going home if we realize they are coming…behaving as a South African hoping they are not asking for documents (R., Mozambican, Johannesburg)

Other spaces of encounter are private homes, where Mozambican migrants meet friends they can trust. The use of public space is quite limited because public space is perceived as being dangerous. This practice contrasts with the necessity embedded in a migrant's life of using the streets for informal trade and business. Obviously, streets and markets are places in which invisibility is hard to attain. Even if invisibility is a means of survival for migrants, migrants are inevitably extremely visible in the social imagination. As said before, 'decade-long efforts to control political and physical space have generated an enemy within: an amorphously delimited group of outsider that is […] threatening, often indistinguishable for the other and it is impossible to spatially exclude' (Landau, 2009).

6. Space as object for alterity

Spatial planning and regulation during the apartheid regime acted as a key feature in thwarting political turmoil through social and spatial fragmentation. Regulating human mobility, both at the border and within the city, and varying degrees of 'rights to the city' based on race and class, are tools the political power continues to use in the post-apartheid era. Spatial control and social immobility are no longer planned by the State, but rather have become a socially constructed process that shapes life within the city. The relationship between migrants and nationals becomes a transaction where reciprocal identities are built within the process, defining where the 'in' and the 'out' stand, at the same time reacting to this categorization.

The xenophobia that burst out in 2008 points to the degree of social tension that exists among the urban poor, tension which politicians and the media frequently manipulate with the aim of crafting an easily detectable enemy. The following interviews provide evidence to substantiate that assumption.

Some respondents used the word 'apartheid' to describe the condition that prevents Mozambican migrants from planning a future life in Johannesburg and from feeling safe in their day to day existence. In many migrants' narratives apartheid is synonymous with xenophobia:

I want to go back to Mozambique and finish my studies there. South Africa is only a country where to find job, money…for saving money…I can't live my life in the apartheid. Xenophobia makes me frightened and I can't live unsafe.
I can't live in Johannesburg all life long. I can't live in apartheid […] Society is so fragmented […] socially divided. (S., Mozambican, Johannesburg)

The use of the word 'apartheid' with reference to the social and spatial fragmentation of Johannesburg is a central topic of analysis. Mozambicans use 'apartheid' both to remind themselves about a relevant historical process ('*Mozambique, my country, was massively involved during the apartheid…we have done a lot for this country*') and to convey the notion of a specific social condition by using a highly meaningful expression.

I think that the word apartheid means a space you can't access because of what you are. For that reason what I see here every day is the existence of apartheid. Let's say that post-apartheid South Africa means that apartheid is still existent under different forms and common behaviours (P., Mozambican, Johannesburg)

Another relevant issue under analysis is the utilization of a post-apartheid narrative that does not want to link black South African struggles with a migrant's destiny.

Vigneswaran explored the caricatures of undocumented migrants in public view, emphasizing the practice of differentiating the polity from outsiders, the self from the other, creating an unpredictable and chaotic phenomenon. While political leaders are 'memorializing' the national progress, undocumented migration is referred to as chronologically distinct from the apartheid's blacks' suffering: 'illegal migration might pose a threat to the development of South Africa because migrants are generally speaking capitalizing on the movement's new success' (Vigneswaran, 2007). Accordingly, migrants are seen as denying South Africans the fruits of their struggle and as threatening the construction of the post-apartheid nation.

The majority of the black South African population expected to enjoy the benefits following the end of the apartheid regime. On the contrary, poverty and inequalities have not significantly declined since 1994. South Africa remains the tenth most unequal country in the world and some groups, racially and economically determined, are relatively poorer than they were during apartheid (Landau, 2009).

Poor South Africans' expectations conflict with Mozambican migrants' perception that:

We are not stealing South African jobs…we are surviving doing whatever we can, like selling in the street. On the contrary, South Africans use to wait for public aid, because of the post apartheid-era…they think that the government should give them houses, jobs…and whatever. They are lazy that way. Xenophobia of last year is based on this contradiction (L., Mozambican, Johannesburg)

The narratives stress this point. The narrative about black South Africans' 'laziness' versus the creativity of the migrant population seems to feed the social division and stigmatization of both social categories. 'The mechanism of differentiation cannot be understood without exploring the part played by a person's image of his group's standing among others and, therefore of his own standing as a member of his group' (Isin, 2002). South Africans think that migrants are 'illegal, criminal, a threat to social and economic prosperity or carriers of diseases such as HIV/Aids'. The media feed this stereotyped description of African migrants and public opinion largely shares it.

In this sense, the extended history of South Africa has created the conditions for the 2008 explosion of xenophobic violence, particularly intense in the Alexandra township (Landau, 2009). As mentioned, the media contribute to create a clear-cut distinction between present conditions of African migrants and those of black South Africans during the apartheid. Migration flows are viewed as a new phenomenon that has nothing in common with the history of South Africa. This is one of the reasons why above all black South Africans do not feel sympathetic with migrants' destinies, the legal and socio-economic precariousness of their existence and the restrictions to their social and spatial mobility. The precariousness and segregation of the apartheid regime are perceived as completely distinct and are referred to as belonging to another era, a different country, a totally diverse social environment. The withdrawal of history plays an important role in the process of mystification. 'Non normative' behaviours performed by the non-citizen are fostering the division within the more deprived population.

The dichotomy between public and private space is one of the most evident contradictions in Johannesburg together with the social fragmentation of space. Public space is extremely scarce and often unusable; as a consequence, private space becomes

oppressive. Public space is well organized and planned, to give the feeling of safety. It is not the result of social interaction; public areas most used are closed, patrolled and aseptic, transforming them into private spaces. At the same time, space is socially fragmented: people use public space according to social level and race; as a result public space used by Mozambicans is inaccessible to South Africans or other migrant groups. The Mafalala Club typically represents the privatization of a public space in a socially fragmented and unsafe context. As stressed in the narratives, Mafalala is well known as a meeting place for Mozambicans where other nationalities should not go.

In Johannesburg, public space physically fits the necessity the 'other' has to stay separate and provides it with the opportunity to hide its alterity. In such a situation, public space is used by 'planned belongings' and is no longer an opportunity for socially constructed encounters.

The relationship with the public space (more precisely, the relationship with natives, police and 'bad Mozambicans' in public space) personifies the dichotomy Mozambicans feel of being an active part of the host society without being considered in possession of the formal requirements to be a citizen (the problem is not only being without documents but, more important, being Mozambican).

The conformation and use of urban space in Johannesburg fit the reciprocal necessity of natives and newcomers to stay separate. But there is a place where Mozambicans and South Africans are meeting: the zone of exception, a sites that is able to highlights the contradictions of the actual model of citizenship.

7. Final remarks

The presence of international migrants makes globalization a concrete and highly visible condition related to easily identifiable spaces. Such spaces can only be managed from a local perspective and yet, international migration makes local societies increasingly complex. A crucial issue that has emerged from such complexity concerns the meaning that the notion of identity takes under current conditions up to the point of questioning the usefulness of such a notion. In fact, reference to identity provides a stereotyped representation of the 'other' that results in both a way of recognizing each other and of defining boundaries between what belongs to the inside and what to the outside. This process may reinforce social cohesion among diverse communities but at the same time it underpins exclusionary trends. In post-apartheid South Africa, stereotypes feed the social, cultural and religious exclusion of the others, whose presence is felt to be a threat to the lifestyle of the host community. It also fosters spatial exclusion by enhancing the fragmentation of urban space (Balbo, 2009).

This Paper aimed at producing a different perspective to analyse terms such as identity/belonging as well as the notion of what the city is. The study of Mozambican immigration in Johannesburg has been used as a key issue to problematize these concepts as well as to reflect on new interpretations/suggestions for the enquiry.

First of all, the category of alterity becomes relevant when thinking that 'the problem is how and why human beings perceive one another as belonging to the same group, referred to as 'We' [...] while at the same time excluding others whom they perceive as belonging to another group, referring to them as 'They' (Isin, 2002). Alterity conveys difference and distinction, or recognition and affiliation, rather than static categories of inclusion/exclusion. In other words, alterity assumes that social groups do not define themselves in isolation from others, but defines a dialectic relationship with them. The constitution of the social group is in that way mutual and progressive.

'Genealogies of citizenship' (ibidem, 2002) must take into account alterity because the sociability of specific groups is defined through the encounter with others, dialectically.

This is the reason why the boundaries between inclusion and exclusion become relevant. The boundaries are contingent, dynamic and reversible, not static. The practices of reversal of the traditional notion of citizenship are the ones to focus on.

Alterity puts citizenship in the perspective of a right to claim more than a possession. It becomes a claim upon society for the resources necessary to meet what it is supposed to be a need (Sen, 2004) and interests of members rather than a kind of property that some possess and others do not (Isin, 2002). Mozambicans are practicing Johannesburg in their everyday experience defining different strategies and technologies to cope become citizen of a society that tend to exclude them. In so doing they are shaping a kind of 'citizen' very distant from the State, that prefer to be invisible in public space as well as living a precarious relation with the destination country (creating a space of permanent transit).

Starting from these assumptions, the city is formed by the dialogical encounter of groups formed and generated immanently in the process of taking up position, orienting themselves for and against each other, inventing and assembling strategies and technologies, mobilizing various forms of capital and making claims to that space that is objectified as 'the city' (Isin, 2002). This is the reason why the Paper has focused on the definition of natives' perception of migrant and vice versa, a process where history plays an important role. In other words, cities feature prominently places in which national-territorial norms of citizenship are being reconfigured (Isin, 2002), questioning the 'where' of belonging as highlighted before.

'The familiar way of thinking of democratic mechanism are familiar because we are used to thinking in a relatively fixed and territorial terms. Interesting alternatives emerge when we begin to think of new mechanisms which might help us to address issued which are changeable, perhaps temporary, sporadic in their manifestations and which constitute and define new political communities…' (Saward, 2005).

Practices of migrants in Johannesburg have been observed in order 'to recognize the creative potential of laypeople in their ordinary political practices' (Bang, 2005). At the same time, these practices epitomize how the concept of citizenship conceived in strict territorial terms is no more fitting the contemporary discourse on democracy.

'The global city is not a place, but a process' (Castell, 1977). The post-modern city conveys a new space of centrality and marginality, but at the same time it is the space for new claims (Sassen, 1999). The analysis of practices within the zone of exception gives materiality to multiple 'in' and 'out': the margin between the two representing the possible space of 'being political' (Rancière, 2007). The invisibles, the 'non-people', do impose their presence within the city by their way of resistance, even if it is 'silent', as in the case of Mozambicans in Johannesburg.

The concept of urban citizenship should enable all citizens, regardless of colour and cultural preference, to lay claim to the nation and contribute to an evolving national identity; the ethnic moorings of national belonging need to be exposed and replaced by criteria that have nothing to do with Whiteness (Amin, 2002). If this change of mind will not occur, newcomers in Johannesburg (and newcomers in many other parts of the world) will be forced to live in a zone of exception indefinitely, detached from the State, seeking invisibility from the society and public space to cope with the constant threat of deportation.

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