

**Paola Piscitelli**

Università Iuav di Venezia [p.piscitelli@stud.iuav.it](mailto:p.piscitelli@stud.iuav.it); [medea200489@hotmail.it](mailto:medea200489@hotmail.it)



PhD Student in Spatial Planning and Territorial Policies at the University IUAV of Venice.

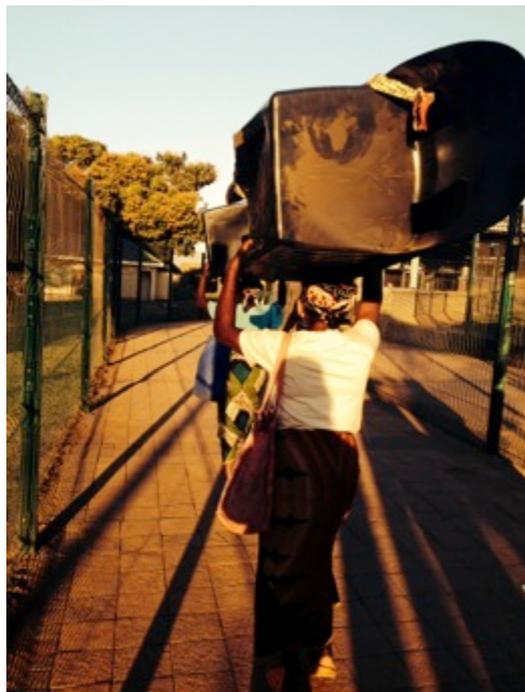
She holds a degree in Urban Planning and Policy Design from the Politecnico of Milan and a Master in "COOPERATION (C)TION. Knowledge and skills for sustainable cities in the Global South" from the same University.

She has been a visiting PhD candidate at the ACMS-African Centre for Migrations & Society, University of the Witwatersrand (Johannesburg), in the framework of the EU IRSES-SharingSpaces exchange program, promoted by the UNESCO Chair-Venice and at the University of Westminster (London).

Her research is about the translocal territories and spatialities of Mozambican cross-border traders between Johannesburg and Maputo.

***Unveiling Transactional Spaces in the City. Routes, Territories and Places Shaped by Mozambican Cross-Border Traders in Johannesburg"***

Paola Piscitelli



*abstract*

At the intersection of critical urban theory (Lefebvre 1947, 1991 and 1992) and critical mobility studies (Södeström et al. 2013), this work investigates the link between trans-local geographies and spatial practices of mukheristas -Mozambican informal cross-border traders commuting between Johannesburg and Maputo. These practices take place in (in)visible interstitial spaces and along routes to and within the city, where mukheristas connect heterogeneous spaces and networks, shaping a territory of “in-betweenness” (Kihato 2013). Movement becomes a strategy for urban survival, as well as a “transactional” way of finding and carving out space in the everyday life of the city (Lefebvre, 1992). Space reflects a complex spatial agency, and in so being it is instrumentally approached and built through the liminal tension between socio-economic networks and the self (Awan et al. 2011).

These complex systems of “transactional relationships” structure a process of assemblage (McFarlane 2011; Fariás and Bender 2012) across a range of singular capacities and needs, which forms the infrastructure of a platform providing for and reproducing life in African cities (Simone 2004). The meanings behind these transactional spaces that the paper tries to unfold reveal complex socio-spatial agencies, often ignored and/or underestimated as one of the spatial processes pertaining to the construction of the “urban”.