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Measurement, concepts and definitions of international migration:
The case of South Africa *

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Policies and administrative practices

South Africa monitors the inflows and outflows of foreigners and non-nationals through transit visas and temporary resident permits (TRP). There are about 15 types or categories of TRPs –each with its own eligibility criteria. Duration for the visa depends on several issues such as the purpose of the visit and country of passport. For example, visitor visas range from 30 to 120 days and American passport holders do not require a visa if they stay for less than 90 days.

There are bilateral or regional agreements (e.g. trade, economic treaties, employment, etc.) with SADC countries to facilitate citizens of member states to travel study or work in South Africa. The passport holders of some SADC countries (e.g. Mozambique) are exempt from visas. There is no entry form completed at the border. The information in passports is captured electronically and TRPs are scanned in. Similarly, foreigners who leave the country have their information scanned in and no forms are completed. Foreigners are not required to register with the local agency upon arrival in the country or when they leave.

In terms of the policies and administrative practices to monitor the in and outflows of South African citizens, the following procedure is followed. At border control, the travel documents of South African citizens are scanned; no form is completed when entering or leaving the country. South African citizens are also not required to de-register before leaving the country nor are they required to obtain clearance to travel abroad.

The categories in reference to duration of stay for foreigners include temporary, short-term, long-term and permanent. While these terms are used frequently, there are no official cut off dates given at present. In South Africa, collection has therefore equated permanent with documented migrants. These categories are poorly defined in South Africa.

A present, Statistics South Africa is in the process of re-engineering the migration series and has proposed that permanent and long-term would refer to arrivals that include foreigners who arrive in South Africa intending to stay for a long period of time (12 months or more) or permanently in the country. This group will include foreigners with work permits, long-term temporary resident permits, family formation and reunification with a relative permit, student permits, and retired persons permit. There is some debate as to whether or not this should also include South African nationals that return after a period of absence of 12 months or more.

Permanent long term departures would include South African nationals departing for an intended period of 12 months or more, or permanently, and foreign visitors departing from South Africa after a period of stay of 12 months or more.

Short-term and temporary visitors refer to foreigners who arrive in South Africa intending to stay for a short period of time (less than 12 months) while short term or temporary departures refer to South African nationals and permanent residents who intended to leave the country for less than 12 months.

Work permits govern the stay and residence of foreigners for employment purposes. Other policy provisions that govern the stay or residence of foreigners for education and training purposes are study permit, while for family formation and reunification with a relative permit is required. Business Permits

are required for the establishment of businesses while permanent settlement requires permanent residence permits or retired person's permits (RPP). An asylum permit is issued for humanitarian reasons to refugees, asylum seekers, and to persons granted temporary protection. A medical treatment permit is issued to those requiring urgent medical attention. For each category, the Department of Home Affairs is the agency responsible for monitoring the exit and entry in the country. The information being collected includes biographical data, the purpose of entry and the TRP bar-coded number.

There are several things regarded as benefits for migrating to South Africa. These include better opportunities for employment, escaping war and civil strife such as those from Somalia or Zimbabwe, financial security, access to better educational facilities especially for dependent children and potential for further skills development, as well as religious and political freedoms. The costs to immigration include accreditation costs (especially for medical professionals), exposure to xenophobia, and the need to develop new social networks. Perceived benefits of emigration from South Africa include escaping from the high levels of crime. Costs of emigration are the same as those who immigrate to South Africa.

The South African government has actively recruited medical doctors from Cuba to provide services to rural and other underserved areas. Government also encourages the recruitment of Indians in scarce fields such as engineering and mathematical sciences.

Concepts and definitions

There are several categories of people that are granted permission to live and/or work in South Africa. These include guest workers, contract laborers, migrant workers, permanent residents, etc. South Africa does not use the term "international migrant" and only distinguishes between documented and undocumented migrants. Documented migrations refer to those legally in the country with a valid permit such as a work permit, study permit or retired person's permit, etc.

The place of usual residence and duration of stay are not used in defining documented international migrants or migration. South Africa uses country of birth and citizenship to measure international migrant stock.

As shown below, the 2001 South African census asked several questions on migration. Questions focused on place of birth and country of birth, citizenship and the country of citizenship. Other questions focused on usual place of residence. The census asked information about whether the person lived in the household for at least four nights a week. If the person did not stay in the households, information was asked about where the individual usually lived. The census also asked individuals for information about where they lived five years ago, the place of previous residence and the year they moved. This question does not, however, capture repeat migration (it focuses on the last move only), or people who leave and return within five years.

BORN IN SA? (P-09)	PLACE OF BIRTH (P-09a)	COUNTRY OF BIRTH (P-09b)
<p>Was (the person) born in South Africa?</p> <p>Include former "homelands" as South Africa.</p> <p>Y = Yes N = No</p> <p>Dot the appropriate box.</p> <p>If NO go to P-09b</p>	<p>If YES to P-09</p> <p>In which province was (the person) born?</p> <p>1 = Western Cape 2 = Eastern Cape 3 = Northern Cape 4 = Free State 5 = KwaZulu-Natal 6 = North West 7 = Gauteng 8 = Mpumalanga 9 = Northern Province</p> <p>Go to P-10</p>	<p>If NO to P-09</p> <p>In which country was (the person) born?</p> <p>Write the present name of the country.</p> <p>Use CAPITAL LETTERS only.</p>

USUALLY LIVE (P-11) (P-11a)
<p>Does (the person) usually live in this household for at least four nights a week?</p> <p>Y = Yes N = No</p> <p>Dot the appropriate box.</p> <p>If YES go to P-12</p> <p>If NO (P-11a) Where does (the person) usually live?</p> <p>IF IN THE SAME PLACE as the place of enumeration, dot the S box.</p> <p>IF NOT the same place, write the PROVINCE P R, MAIN PLACE (city, town, tribal area, administrative area) and SUB-PLACE (suburb, ward, village, farm, informal settlement).</p> <p>IF ANOTHER COUNTRY, write the name of the country in the boxes below.</p> <p>Use CAPITAL LETTERS only.</p>

CITIZENSHIP (P-10) (P-10a)
<p>Is (the person) a South African citizen?</p> <p>Y = Yes N = No</p> <p>Dot the appropriate box.</p> <p>If YES go to P-11</p> <p>If NO (P-10a) What is the name of the country of citizenship?</p> <p>Use CAPITAL LETTERS only.</p>

FIVE YEARS AGO (P-12)	FROM WHERE MOVED (P-12a)	IN WHICH YEAR (P-12b)
<p>Five years ago (at the time of Census '96), was (the person) living in this place (i.e. this suburb, ward, village, farm, informal settlement)?</p> <p>Y = Yes N = No B = Born after October 1996</p> <p>Dot the appropriate box.</p> <p>If Y or B go to P-13</p>	<p>If NO to P-12</p> <p>Where did (the person) move from?</p> <p>If more than one move, give details of the last move.</p> <p>Write the PROVINCE P R, MAIN PLACE (city, town, tribal area, administrative area) and SUB-PLACE (suburb, ward, village, farm, informal settlement).</p> <p>IF ANOTHER COUNTRY, write the name of the country.</p> <p>Use CAPITAL LETTERS only.</p>	<p>If NO to P-12</p> <p>In which year did (the person) move to this place?</p> <p>1 = 1996 2 = 1997 3 = 1998 4 = 1999 5 = 2000 6 = 2001</p> <p>If more than one move, write the code for the year of the last move</p>

Measurement issues

South Africa does not at present use duration of stay to define documented (international) migrants. The main reason for not collecting the data is that it not reliable. In the past duration of stay had been calculated based on the expiration date of the permit. However, this proved to be very unreliable as the majority of visitors left before the expiration date on the visas or permits leading to an overestimation of duration of stay. However, information on intended duration of stay is used to identify migrants. For example, for persons with Temporary Resident permit (TRP) the scanned information from travel documents are used and are reliable. Falsified TRPs are relatively rare.

South Africa does not use direct source such as school enrollment, investment data, or data on remittances to measure specific segments of migrants. However these documents may be used as supporting evidence when applying for South African identity documents.

The country relies mainly on arrival and departure data to obtain aggregate number of inflow and outflow of international migrants.

South Africa technically allows dual or multiple citizenship but information is poorly captured if at all. In the early 1980s the apartheid government passed a law that enabled foreigners to obtain South African citizenship. This was largely aimed at increasing the number of the White population.

Sources of data

Table 1 shows the data sources used in South Africa, the agency responsible for the maintaining and implementing the data source, whether it is used for the compilation of migration statistics on stock, inflows or outflows and whether that data are collected for both foreigners and citizens.

The data reflected in Table 1 can be seasonally adjusted and presented by source country. It is also possible to group countries. For statistical releases done by Stats SA, this is the practice. However, stakeholders such as South African Tourism may request detailed information. It can also be analyzed for citizens and non-citizens. Changes in the patterns of visitors can be calculated using this data.

There are, however, several weaknesses. First, the South African Network of Skills Abroad database only contains information on South Africans who graduated at a selected group of universities in South Africa in selected fields (engineering, medicine, mathematics and science) who settled permanently in England, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the USA. It is not compulsory for South African migrants to register. Furthermore, the register is not updated frequently enough. Second, the seasonal adjustment is unsatisfactory. The values of the adjustment is fixed rather than adjusted every month and constantly revised. Third, South Africa does not have adequate definitions of short and long-term migrants. Fourth, the completeness of databases is not regularly assessed. This means it is not possible to determine how well subgroups are covered. There is a general acceptance that the level of completeness is very low because undocumented migration is large and increasing especially from neighboring countries such as Zimbabwe.

Table 1: Data sources for international migration statistics used in South Africa

Data source	Responsible institution/agency	Whether used for measuring			Whether data are on:	
		Stock	Inflows	Outflows	Foreigners	Citizens
Administration						
Population register	Department of Home Affairs	X	X			X
Registration at national consulates	Department of Foreign Affairs					
Register of refugees/asylum seekers	Department of Home Affairs	X	X			X
Other administrative sources						
Residence permits	Department of Home Affairs	X	X		X	X
Work permits	Department of Home Affairs	X	X		X	X
Application for asylum	Department Home Affairs					
Exits permits	Not Applicable					
Clearance of migrant workers	Department of Home Affairs	X	X			X
Other specify						
Border statistics						
Border collection (entry/exit forms)	Department of Home Affairs, Airports Company South Africa (ACSA)		X	X	X	X
Border sample surveys	South African Tourism		X	X	X	X
Other specify						
House hold-based field inquiries						
Census	Statistics SA		X		X	X
Household surveys	Statistics SA				X	X
South African Network of Skills Abroad (SANSA)	National Research Foundation			X		X
Other sources						

The Department of Home Affairs (see Table 1) provides administrative data to Stats SA for analysis. Only a sub-set of all the variables collected by the Department of Home Affairs are provided to Stats SA. The variables received by Stats SA are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Variables received by Stats SA from the Department of Home Affairs

Name of port of entry	Country issuing passport
Date of entry (year, month, day)	Country of residence
Direction (In or Outbound)	Socio-economic characteristics of visitor (sex, occupation, date of birth)
Type of visitor (Type of visa or permit)	Expiration date of permit (year, month, day)
Purpose of visit	Flight number/Vessel number
Manner of entry (Land, Sea, Air)	

An important variable on the Home Affairs database, which is not provided to Stats SA, is the Permit number. This number is unique to each traveler and would allow the statistics agency to link the information to the date of entry and actual departure. Thus we will be able to estimate much more accurately the duration of stay and the proportion of those who stay beyond the legal duration of stay. This will also allow us to have a better understanding of changes in migrant category e.g. those travelers who intended to stay for short term but stay longer or those who intended to stay long but stay shorter.

This will also lead to better estimates of illegal migration. The practice of estimating duration of stay based on the expiration date of the permit has been discontinued as this provides grossly biased information.

South Africa publishes a regular statistical publication on migration. The information is made available via the Internet, as statistical releases and reports. The Department of Home Affairs and Statistics South Africa produce these publications. The most recent publication on international migration is the 2003 Annual Report on Documented Migrants.

The Department of Home Affairs and Statistics South Africa collaborate to produce international migration statistics. The Department of Home Affairs is responsible for providing Stats SA with the input data. The Health and Vital Statistics Division of Stats SA is responsible for processing the data and writing the report. The Department of Home Affairs has the responsibility to develop policies in the area of data collection, which has an influence in the type and quality of the data delivered to the national statistics agency. However, Stats SA is not involved and is often not consulted on these matters. This makes the statistics agency vulnerable to issues of quality and the scope of migration reporting. Efforts should be made to develop a more effective relationship with the Department of Home Affairs. Stats SA makes some rudimentary data quality assessment of data.

Data exchange and sharing

There has not been any formal type of data exchange or sharing with other countries or regional and international organizations in the area of migration. Stats SA has an information association with ACAP at the University of Pennsylvania. A 10% sample of each of the censuses since 1970 data is available through the South African Data Archive or Stats SA to any person. Stats SA has, however, organized several workshops and conferences among SADC countries on the issue of migration. In terms of bilateral arrangements, Stats SA and other Statistics agencies in SADC collaborate. Stats SA also provides technical expertise to some of the national agencies in the region.