REFLECTIONS FROM THE MARGINS

COMPLEXITIES, TRANSITIONS AND
DEVELOPMENTAL CHALLENGES:
THE CASE OF THE EASTERN CAPE
PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA

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Abbreviations & Acronyms

ACC	AmaDiba Crisis Committee
ANC	African National Congress
BCCMs	Black Charismatic Church Ministries
Coalition	The Eastern Cape Health Crisis Action Coalition
CYPR	couple year protection rate
DMR	Department of Mineral Resources
DPW	Department of Public Works
ECDoE	Eastern Cape Department of Education
ECDoH	Eastern Cape Department of Health
EMS	emergency medical services
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IQMS	integrated quality monitoring system
MMR	maternal mortality rate
MMRiF	maternal mortality ratio in-facility
MPRDA	Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act, 2002
NCDs	non-communicable diseases
NEETs	[young people who are] not in education, employment, or training
NHI	National Health Insurance
PGDP	Provincial Growth and Development Plan

SAIMD	South African Index of Multiple Deprivation
SDG	sustainable development goals
SRH	sexual and reproductive health
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
TEM	Transworld Energy Minerals
WHO	World Health Organization

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Monde Makiwane and Ntombizonke A. Gumede

AMA-CHEAPER

At times, I dream of days where some hauntingly beautiful songs
don't make sense anymore
that, I do not relate anymore
to songs that echo louder after graduations of boys
from initiation schools of manhood
if it means walking down mountain tops after summiting
when many passed away draped in white deaths.
To be buried deep, in belly
returned home, choking on back-breaking work
in a shallow grave

At times, I dream away the many paths created from our chosen labour
province, to build glittering cups
if it means losing my brothers and fathers
turning our women bitter, angry
and gold-digging the remains, bread-won during our festive splashes

At times, I dream away the connect
of ama-join who without fail supply the ever-feasting
thundering empty walls
then spitting out "ama-cheaper"
dream away, the townships and squatter camps
that reduce our uncles to noma-yini chants
at chances,
of winning their daily bread

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At times, I dream ama-farm, turn back to farms that feed us again,
dress us again, warm our huts again, bellow from our kraal again
smear with cow dung again,

At times, I dream in first songs
sung by our mothers when broody, during pregnancies,
when we are sick, when we are in need
when we want to leave

At times, I dream of isifihlo being just that,
a hiding of the dead
and none of these hard stones, pointing out where the hidden is
dead is,
when is,
their death date
and birth date.
Parading of casket, and heavy feasts
and sweets

At times, I wish for our new plots of given lands, amanxiwa to be not reduced
So we do not buy fence, building materials, furnitures
Then buy foods forever

At times, I dream of the stories from 1982 during the shipwreck that
introduced us,
the Roskruges to South Africa
And love, between my grandfather Fredrick and Masukude

At times, I dream of many things, and many of those things
Are dear to me, and are from the Eastern Cape

Rodney Roskruge

Introduction

The concept of ‘rurality’ is deeply connected with people migrating to urban areas. One needs to be wary of idealising the notion of ‘African Peasantry’ and setting up rurality in contrast to urbanisation. This creates a false idea about the historical realities, agency, and dynamism of people in rural areas. In South Africa, the history of rural areas cannot be understood without acknowledging the complex nature of the migrant labour system. Thus, this chapter looks at the unremitting urban-rural dynamics in South Africa and how rural-urban movements have been viewed over time.

Settlement patterns in South-Eastern South Africa

South Africa has a long tradition of dynamic population movements and the current situation of internal migration movement is, in that sense, not unique. While milestones in South African history, such as the Great Trek and forced population movements during apartheid, may initially come to mind, today’s internal migration dynamics are equally vital, albeit in a different context.

Migration studies in contemporary South Africa commonly take a significant turning point in South African history into account, namely, the end of apartheid in 1994. While the apartheid regime applied several laws and regulations to support racial segregation, like limiting people in their freedom of movement, the population in contemporary South Africa is not confronted with such legislative rules. This does not imply, however, that people who intend to migrate will not face any obstacles on their way. For example, certain levels of social and financial resources are required to be able to migrate. As Castles and Miller¹ emphasise, the poorest of the poor is rarely the group with the highest migration numbers since they lack the resources and support to become mobile, and this is likely the case for internal migrants as well.

In 1955, the Tomlinson Commission provided a watershed report that theorised the basis for the spatial settlement of the African majority. The report sought to explain the urban-rural settlement patterns of the African majority in South Africa. The commission was triggered by the increasing number of people moving from rural to urban areas in search of employment. It was then (perhaps even now) of great concern to city dwellers that a significant number of people from rural areas flocked to urban areas and were not fully integrating into city life. The commission maintained that this was “because of cultural difference and prejudice...as a result they (in-migrants) tend to form an uncertain and unstable group living upon its fringe...” The commission encouraged society to “accelerate the rate at which the African is adopting

Western civilisation” and planning the development of social structures “in keeping with the culture of the Native”. The commission was quite progressive in many respects, recommending that communal land tenure cease and, more importantly, advising the introduction of freehold tenure for the African majority in both rural and urban areas. Not surprisingly, the recommendations created a political storm which resulted in the recommendations not being implemented.

While the language and terminology of current debates are different to those used by the Tomlinson Commission, the issues are the same. In many respects, the Tomlinson Commission generated discussion at levels more advanced than those of current debates as it explicitly engaged with issues of circular migration, culture, and freehold rights. Unequivocal discussions on these issues are rare, despite them having been of interest for some time, as evidenced by a number of popular artworks. Classical artworks that documented the concern about the flocking of the African population into cities include: the canonical novel *Cry the Beloved Country*; the ground-breaking 1949 African film, *Jim Comes to Johannesburg*; the popular Zulu radio drama, *Izigemegeme zikaNtsakantsaka eGagasini*; and the theatrical work, *King Kong*, which made its debut in Sophiatown. These have the same plot, showing the tragedy that befalls rural African people when they reach the cities.

The influx of rural people to cities remains of concern to urban dwellers, and their continued attachment to rural life while living in the city is an unsolved puzzle. In response to this conundrum, the Traditional Courts Bill (2017) mooted a separate system of law for rural ‘tribal’ communities in South Africa, thus regurgitating the discussion points from the Tomlinson Commission which stated that development of the African must be in keeping with the ‘culture of the native’. Similarly, the issue of freehold for people in rural areas has been revisited with vigour, but without any resolution.

Historical dynamics

The portrayal of migrancy in academia in South Africa has changed drastically over time. Initially, scholars suggested that migrancy emerged from the destruction of the rural economy. Most of the early work on migrancy saw it as a draconian measure which was a direct result of colonialism, industrialisation, and capitalism in South Africa. Although to a certain extent this was the case, as migrancy became more and more entrenched in labour systems while the rural economy collapsed, these people had degrees of agency, showing how central the idea of migrancy has become to a rural identity. It should be noted that the concept of movement has been key to the rural economy with an

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ancient history in South Africa, long before the onset of colonialism. Young men would travel thousands of kilometres to attach themselves as workers to wealthy homesteads where they would receive cattle and other items which could be used to secure bride wealth.²

Migrant labour and the collapse of agricultural sustainability of rural areas provided an impetus for the accelerated movement of African women to the cities. Households could not be sustained by the inadequate remittances of migrant labourers. Agricultural production was, therefore, critical to the survival of the people in the rural areas reserved for them.³ Over time the land became less productive and, therefore, migrants' wages became increasingly central to the survival of rural households. As Walker⁴ illustrates, "by the 1920s the reserves were producing less than 50 per cent of the subsistence needs of the population". The increasing dependence on migrants' remittances meant that if the man stopped sending money back, as often occurred, there was no money at all. Women, therefore, left the reserves to find their husbands or to start a new life in the city. Men dominated land ownership and rural practices reflected that. Therefore, when men absconded to the city and elsewhere, women were left landless. This initiated a pattern of marginalised women fleeing to the city, as illustrated by Bonner⁵ in his article on Basotho women. The women left in increasing numbers as Bonner stated: "The number of absentees from Basotho land stood at 22 669 in 1939 increased to 32 331 in 1946 and 41 992 ten years later".⁶ The Basotho Chamber of Commerce stated that the four main categories of women moving to the city were: women abused by their husbands; widows; abandoned girls who had eloped; and women deserted by their husbands. All these women were "victims of land shortage".⁷

Eastern Cape

IsiXhosa-speaking people have historically dominated the Eastern Cape. Before the colonial invasion, the settlement patterns among the amaXhosa followed the availability of water and pasture for their cattle, spreading throughout the eastern and western regions of the Cape.⁸ Since most dense settlements were near rivers and forests, many places were named after major rivers. In the short space of time that followed colonial invasion, this community lost their spatial freedom of settlement forever. AmaXhosa were pushed eastward, following the hard-fought wars of dispossession with European invaders from the mid-seventeenth century to the end of the nineteenth century. This push ended with the isiXhosa-speaking people as a conquered nation,

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squashed in the south-eastern corner of South Africa. This defining settlement feature remained in place for several centuries and continued after political emancipation.

Some population movements at the time – also linked to European expansion – were known as *imfecane* or *difaqane*. These movements occurred throughout Southern Africa during the early nineteenth century resulting in several societies being scattered throughout Southern Africa. Various wars and refugee movements which happened in the early nineteenth century in the Eastern part of South Africa, resulted in King Shaka having conflicts with several local indigenous chiefdoms, including those of the amaHlubi, amaBhaca and amaMfengu.⁹ Many of the survivors of these conflicts fled to the south-eastern parts of South Africa, the area that currently constitutes the Eastern Cape. Hard on the heels of this disruption, the encroachment of colonial powers put increasing pressure on existing power dynamics.

Thus, the current spatial settlement pattern in the Eastern Cape should be understood within the context of the historical encounters between colonist and indigenous populations that occurred throughout the global south. Dagut¹⁰ classifies these encounters into three models. The first was that of the so-called ‘empty world’ of North America and Australia, where small groups of indigenous populations were conquered and ultimately disposed of. The second was the colonial model, usually with a small foreign community whose members were temporary visitors rather than permanent settlers. The third model is a “complete interaction” model which is represented by the experiences of central and southern America, where newcomers were absorbed by the original inhabitants after an initial conflict. In a unique South African experience, the newcomers adopted the country they colonised as their permanent area of residence but created legal and other coercive instruments to enforce political, economic, and social separation from the majority indigenous population.

From the time of the formal settlement of white immigrants to South Africa in 1652, demographic factors played a central role in the definitions, models, and practices of governance in the colonised country. An overarching concern of successive colonial and apartheid authorities was how to circumvent or minimise the economic, political, and cultural implications of the numerical superiority of the African population.

The policy of separate development was a direct response to the perceived dangers of the numerical superiority of the African population in the country. Measures that included pass laws and a check on African urbanisation were

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designed to address this perceived population problem. From the standpoint of outsiders, an appeal to demography reinforced the moral repugnance of colonial and apartheid authorities' subjugation of African people. Similarly, African resistance movements of various historical periods drew their inspiration from sheer numerical superiority. By the second decade of the twentieth century, white authorities feared that the comparatively large African population would swamp the white minority population, and they determined to do something about it. One of the early practical steps taken by British colonial authorities during this period to consolidate the policy of segregation was the Natives Land Act, 1913,¹¹ which confined Africans to only 13 per cent of the land.¹²

During the first half of the 1950s, the apartheid state built on previous colonial laws to address the perceived population problem in South Africa. Pieces of apartheid legislation that were relevant to the population question included those that prohibited mixed marriages,¹³ enacted forced population registration,¹⁴ created racially segregated living areas,^{15; 16} reserved separate amenities for different racial groups¹⁷ and provided a poor quality of education for Africans.¹⁸ Alarmist interpretations of the empirical demographic trends in South Africa informed these direct population control activities during the apartheid era. By 1960, it appeared that neither the classic Malthusian solutions nor unaided development had the power to achieve a rapid decline in the population of Africans. The State considered more seriously the neo-Malthusian options offered by the report of the Tomlinson Commission, which emphasised the rationale for population control activities. During the period in question the relationship between population and economic growth, or over-population of the entire geographical territory of South Africa, was not the issue at stake. Rather it was concerned merely with the racial composition of the population and implications for political power, socio-economic privileges, and cultural hegemony. Hence, an engineered spatial distribution of the population was found to be the ultimate solution to the race problem of South Africa. It is in this context that we need to understand the current state of the Eastern Cape. It should be noted that the current Eastern Cape Province is an amalgamation of two former homelands, formerly known as Transkei and Ciskei, and parts of what was then the Cape Province. The two homelands, especially Transkei, were the ultimate labour reserve for the rest of South Africa and, as we argue in this chapter, this remains unchanged.

Consolidation of the Eastern Cape region

After a long and fierce resistance from the inhabitants of the Eastern Cape which lasted for more than a century, the eMampondweni area – which is the

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eastern region of the Eastern Cape Province – ultimately succumbed to British rule in 1894. Thus, it became one of the last areas to be annexed to South Africa and sealed the South African colonial project. Early in the administration of this region, the colonial authorities set aside the Eastern Cape as a labour reserve that was indirectly ruled by white magistrates through tribal authorities. The discovery of gold in the late 1800s intensified the need for labour, especially at the newly discovered mines. In the early years of industrialisation, African labour was drawn away from white agriculture to the mines where it attracted better wages. As a rule, the British in South Africa used indigenous labour, and imported slaves were an exception. In line with this policy, the Glen Grey Act of 1894 was promulgated to force the African population to seek wage employment by redesigning the patterns of African landholding throughout the Cape and thus forced many Africans off the rural land, thereby making them dependent on the colonial cash economy. Various direct and indirect policy instruments were used to force African residents of the reserves to work as circulatory migrants in the cities. African households were required to pay hut and poll taxes in cash to colonial magistrates, and rural African farmers were forced to reduce livestock holdings, supposedly as a way of decreasing overgrazing in the reserves. Eventually, the colonial authorities introduced subsidies for commercial white farmers which destroyed the market viability of peasant farming. Those from these reserves who were of working age and active, were forced to seek alternative forms of employment in the urban areas.

The Natives Land Act, 1913, formally established the labour reserves in South Africa. Through this infamous Act, only 7 per cent of the land area in South Africa was set aside as the reserve areas, which was extended to 13 per cent in 1936. The Native Trust and Land Act, 1936, as well as other pieces of legislation, were introduced to curb the migration of the rural population to urban areas. When the Nationalist Party rose to power, it resolved to curtail a rising trend of African urbanisation by pushing more people into the reserves, strengthening pass laws, and implementing forced removal of Africans from other areas to the homelands. ‘Betterment Planning’ was established in the homelands to deal with the influx of people removed to those areas. Although the stated aim of the so-called betterment schemes was to improve the use of rural land, it was designed to facilitate the absorption of a growing population of landless and jobless Africans on the reserves.¹⁹

As a way of reducing the cost of labour, city workers were required to reside in the labour reserves permanently. This rule was partly enforced by not allowing labourers to take their families to the cities. Most of the male labour migrants, especially mineworkers, were accommodated in ethnically segregated compounds in the cities and labour contracts were not permanent.

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This situation gave rise to the practice of labour migration with workers oscillating annually between the reserves and South African major cities. Well into the apartheid regime, the authorities promulgated two separate reserves in the Eastern Cape. Transkei was the ideal African homeland because it had the shortest experience of direct integration into the greater South Africa and, unlike most homelands, formed an uninterrupted patch of land. It was proclaimed a self-governing territory in 1963 and an independent state in 1976. Ciskei was declared independent in 1981. This independence was not recognised by the international community.

For a long time in South African history, the population profile of African areas was almost entirely a reflection of demographic responses to the crisis of living in the reserves in a racially segregated society. Some of these features, which have been highlighted by demographers, include high rates of mortality, massive numbers of out-migration of males in the active working-age group, the radical imbalance of age-specific sex ratios in favour of women, high rates of female-headed households, and high rates of non-marital childbearing and teenage childbearing.

Implication of the division of spatial distribution

The main aim of the colonial and apartheid project was a spatial separation of areas of reproduction and production. Throughout the apartheid years, the African majority mainly resided in the homelands, on white commercial farms and in townships located on the outskirts of South African cities. These areas were spatially dispersed, as anti-apartheid activist and political leader – who was to serve as South Africa’s first black head of state 30 years later – Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela stated in his defence at the Rivonia trial in the then Supreme Court of South Africa in Pretoria on 20 April 1964. He said:

Forty per cent of the Africans live in hopelessly overcrowded and, in some cases, drought-stricken reserves, where soil erosion and the overworking of the soil make it impossible for them to live properly off the land. Thirty per cent are labourers, labour tenants, and squatters on white farms and work and live under conditions like those of the serfs of the Middle Ages. The other 30 per cent live in towns where they have developed economic and social habits, which bring them closer in many respects to white standards. However, most Africans, even in this group, are impoverished by low incomes and high cost of living. The highest-paid and the most prosperous section of urban African life are in Johannesburg, but their actual position is desperate (Nelson Mandela, 1964).²⁰

In his speech, Mandela analysed the distribution of the African population across the three geographical areas, namely rural areas, commercial farms, and cities. This distribution changed dramatically during the mid-sixties when

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many people were uprooted to homeland areas, especially those who were resident on commercial farms. The main point of the speech was related to the challenges faced by the African majority. Mandela highlighted the decline of subsistence agriculture in rural areas, a slide which continued over time. Mandela also outlined the poor living conditions of the African majority on commercial farms, as emphasised by his comparison to serfs of the Middle Ages. While he highlighted the advantages provided by city life, especially Johannesburg, in producing some of the most economically well-off Africans in South Africa, he stressed the difficulties related to low wages and the high cost of living that the majority experienced in cities. The growing rate of unemployment in many South African cities has resulted in many in-migrants spending a good part of their time without jobs.

The influence of city life on the African majority has been a source of curiosity for some time. The story of the movement of Africans from rural areas to urban areas generated much interest and became a major subject of classical art in South Africa. Most of this artwork did not depict the movement of Africans to the city in a positive light, instead portraying their movement to cities as a tragedy. For example, in *Jim Comes to Johannesburg*, the main character, Jim, left rural areas for Johannesburg and became the victim of crime before finding a benevolent benefactor. Jim eventually became successful in the city and, as a result, severed his rural ties. In *Cry the Beloved Country*, the lives of three main characters who left rural Natal for Johannesburg end in tragedy. The upright Gertrude becomes morally sick in Johannesburg, turning to prostitution, illegal liquor sales, and socialising with gamblers. John becomes economically successful but gets involved in unprincipled politics. Absalom becomes involved with crime, is sentenced to death, and is later executed. The popular theatrical work, *King Kong*, is set in Sophiatown. The main character leaves Natal for Johannesburg and becomes a successful boxer. He later becomes involved in a fight with gangsters and is sentenced to twelve years' imprisonment for his role. Following this, he commits suicide.

Nevertheless, some social commentators had a different take. In an earlier depiction in 1946, Jan Smuts saw city life, especially Johannesburg, as having a positive influence on the lives of Africans throughout Southern Africa. Smuts is quoted as saying:²¹

The impact of the new experience must be very far-reaching. New economic needs are developed, new ideas are learnt, a whole new mental horizon is growing which is carrying the native far beyond the old native outlook and self-contained economy of [the] primitive outlook of primitive native society. More and more the mines are becoming the most important factor of change for the native. Johannesburg, with its

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glittering prizes (on native standards) in wages, the fantastic excitements of its large vivid life, its opportunities of larger more adventurous experience, the prestige of familiarity with the great unknown which attaches to those who have returned from employment there-Johannesburg has become a sort of Mecca of the native, and quite the biggest factor of change to all over Southern Africa.²²

Population movements in the Eastern Cape

As stated in the previous section, the Eastern Cape Province is an amalgamation of three historical administrative areas that were established by the apartheid government, namely Transkei, Ciskei, and the eastern part of the Cape Province. Transkei and Ciskei were the two homelands set aside for the isiXhosa-speaking peoples; the Cape Province was a preserve of the white minority. The Kei River remains a visible identity symbol of its historical legacy as a boundary dividing the Eastern Cape African population that has not faded in the minds of many in the region. From the late nineteenth century, the Eastern Cape lost many people to the greater South Africa, most of whom worked on South African mines. The overwhelming majority of those who left the region were able-bodied men. The Eastern Cape was not only a donor area, but it also hosted a small, but eminently influential, group of people who came from different parts of the continent in their quest for intellectual development. Many young people travelled to the Eastern Cape from the British Empire of eastern, central, and southern Africa, to get the best education that was available to an African child at the time. Subsequently, Eastern Cape education enabled the rise of nationalist leaders who led the struggle for independence on the continent. Later, these became the first political leaders and public intellectuals of independent Africa. Even during the height of apartheid, African children from all over South Africa attended Eastern Cape boarding schools to obtain the best education available in the country to the African majority.

Throughout the decades, the net migration stream has been from the rural areas to cities as people search for employment. The direction of the net migration stream was reversed during the early seventies when the Eastern Cape had a net gain in population. This was mainly due to the massive eviction of people, from various parts of South Africa to the Eastern Cape, which was part of the homelands system consolidation process. The increase in in-migration to the Eastern Cape picked up in 1973, three years before nominal independence was granted to the then Transkei.²³ Besides movement to and from the Eastern Cape, there was significant intra-regional movement, mostly confined within each homeland. For instance, during the time of nominal independence, there was much movement within the Transkei homeland.

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Butterworth was the biggest recipient of in-migrants, mainly because it was being primed as the homeland industrial capital. Thus, from 1980 to 1990, Butterworth grew by 67 per cent. The second growth area was Mthatha, which grew by 42 per cent during that period, mainly due to its homeland capital status. Ezibeleni and Ilinge near Queenstown's industrial areas also experienced massive in-migration. At the same time, most Transkei districts experienced massive out-migration.²⁴ The established trend in Transkei was for people to move towards nascent industrial centres in Butterworth, Ezibeleni and Ilinge, created specifically to serve the homeland system. These industrial centres eventually proved to be unsustainable, as they were supported by huge subsidies from the Pretoria administration and exploitative labour regimes that did not allow trade unions and did not have minimum wage regulations. In line with population movement trends in post-colonial African countries, the region experienced massive migration towards the capital, which was Mthatha. The major difference between movements within the Eastern Cape and the rest of Africa was that more women than men migrated from rural to urban areas in the former Transkei.²⁵ The Ciskei homeland also experienced considerable internal movement. Ciskei was generally a high-density area, with a population density of 126 people per square kilometre, compared with 25 people per square kilometre in the rest of South Africa. The situation was made worse when a large population from the Cape farmlands was moved to several areas in Ciskei, including Mdantsane, Sada and Dimbaza. As in the Transkei, these areas were near industrial areas, specifically designed to serve the homeland communities.²⁶

After the demise of the apartheid system, other forms of movement manifested in the province. Thus, this chapter updates currently known facts about migration trends in the Eastern Cape and presents important migration trends and patterns relevant for development planning at provincial and local levels. As a result, Mthatha and areas that surround the N2 route continue to attract in-migrants from other parts of the former homeland.

Patterns of family and households

To delineate families as either urban or rural is not as simple as it may sound. The main reason for this is that many people straddle both urban and rural areas. As Naidoo, Leibbrandt and Dorrington commented, "Circulatory and oscillatory migration are impossible to measure, ...where family ties are so close that households in rural and urban areas operate as one, serves to confuse questions regarding place of usual residence".²⁷ That said, administrative statistics show that there are differences in the composition of

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rural and urban families, the first of these being the size of households. Rural households are generally larger than those in urban areas. The second issue relates to the headship of households in rural areas. Gender distribution of household headship between urban and rural households are striking. Heads of rural households are more likely to be older women, whereas in urban areas they are likely to be younger men. The difference in household headship is also related to class division, as more educated people are likely to head households in urban areas. Thus, the urban-rural household differences are likely to be along the lines of age, gender, class and ableism. Large rural-based households are often overseen by women heads who are ageing and poor. The larger size of households in rural areas is a result of three main factors: first, because of higher rural fertility; secondly, some urban-based young adults repatriate their children to their places of origin to be cared for by ageing parents; and thirdly because of the age and gender-selective nature of urban-rural movements.

Figure 1.1 Changes in the district population, 1996-2011. Data sourced from 1996 and 2011 censuses.

The data in Figure 1.1 shows the pattern of change in the population size of districts from 1996 to 2011. All but two districts recorded some small increase between 1996 and 2001, and between 2001 and 2011. Sarah Baartman (formerly Cacadu) and Nelson Mandela Bay, situated in the western part of the Eastern Cape Province, gained more people than other districts over the period. This gain reflects a general trend of a shift from the poorer eastern part of the province to the relatively more affluent western part of the province. Amathole’s population declined by 0.3 per cent between 1996 and 2001, and

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by 0.8 per cent between 2001 and 2011, partly because of rezoning of the district. Chris Hani District experienced a similar decline in its population size between 1996 and 2001, with a marginal decline in population size of 0.1 per cent between 2001 and 2011.

Currently, the population in the Eastern Cape Province is unevenly distributed. OR Tambo covers the widest geographical area and has the largest population, inhabited by 20.8 per cent of the provincial population in 2011. It is followed by Nelson Mandela Bay, the largest metropolis in the province, with 17.6 per cent of the provincial population. Relative to other districts, Joe Gqabi and Sarah Baartman had small shares of the provincial population in 2011 (5.3 per cent and 6.9 per cent respectively). In 2011, the population of the four districts of Buffalo City, Chris Hani, Alfred Nzo and Amathole, ranged from 11.5 to 13.6 per cent. Population trends for the period 1996 to 2001 are shown in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2 Population growth, 1996-2011. Data compiled from various censuses conducted by Statistics South Africa.

The provincial population recorded only modest growth of 7 per cent from 1996 to 2011, as shown in Figure 1.2. Although the population increased from an estimated 6.15 million in 1996 to an estimated 6.56 million in 2011, this increase was considerably lower than the overall population growth in the rest of South Africa. The change in the size of the provincial population, as in any other society, is related to the rate of childbearing, migration, and mortality. Among these three population processes, migration played a big part in this region. The lower population growth rate in the Eastern Cape was mainly attributable to the high out-migration from the area.

Recent migration patterns

Historically and to date, Transkei in the Eastern Cape has been the leading supplier of mineworkers in South Africa. For instance, in 1984, 52 per cent of South African mineworkers came from the Eastern Cape. In line with the historical out-migration, which was spurred by the mining industry, the proportion of people who currently leave Eastern Cape remains demographically and economically selective.

Table 1.1 The net change in the population size of South Africa’s nine provinces, 1996-2011

Province	1996-2001	2001-2007	2007-2011
Western Cape	37.4	21.7	16.8
Eastern Cape	-51.2	-39.3	-25.7
Northern Cape	-1.2	0.5	-3.5
Free State	-7.9	-6.5	-5.4
KwaZulu-Natal	-13.9	-8.0	-14.0
North-West	-5.3	0.1	6.2
Gauteng	78.1	68.0	45.4
Mpumalanga	-5.1	-1.1	-3.3
Limpopo	-31.0	-35.4	-16.4

Source Compiled by Bijker (2013) from Population Census 1996, Census 2001, and Community Survey 2007²⁹

The migration patterns reflected in Table 1.1 were derived from Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) *Population Census 1996, Community Survey 2007, and Census 2011*. Table 1.1 reflects the net percentage gain or loss in each of the nine South African provinces during the three periods in history, namely: from 1996 to 2001; from 2001 to 2007; and from 2007 to 2011. The patterns of migration have been estimated using census figures. The South African census uses figures derived by counting people in the areas where they spent the night of the census. Thus, such figures do not reflect the proportion of the population who had moved to a new area, but who spent a reasonable amount of time in their place of origin, as is common among South African internal and external migrants. Secondly, the change in the number of people enumerated in each province is a result of changes in natural growth, because of a higher birth than mortality rates, and migration. The general trend is that poorer rural provinces have reflected a net loss (as reflected by a negative growth rate) and that more affluent urban provinces reflected a net gain. As

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natural population growth (growth due to the difference in the birth and death rates) is generally higher in rural areas than in urban, the net loss in poorer provinces and the net gain in rich provinces reflected in censuses is an under-estimate of the number of people who have moved.

Noting the limitation of estimating migration changes based on inter-census population estimates, several observations can be made from Table 1.1. The two provinces with the largest population losses were the Eastern Cape and Limpopo, with out-migration from Limpopo declining faster than in the Eastern Cape. More people migrated from the Eastern Cape which lost more people than any other province over the period from 1996 to 2011. Table 1.1 also shows the net change in the population size in South Africa’s nine provinces between 1996 and 2011.

Another indirect method of assessing population movements is by tracking changes in isiXhosa speaking people within provinces, as illustrated in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 Movement of isiXhosa-speaking population

Province	2001 All ages	2011 Aged 10 & up	Xhosa Survival	2011 Expected	Movement
Western Cape	1 071 808	1 108 560	0.80	856 354	252 206
Eastern Cape	5 250 182	3 875 237	0.80	4 194 792	−319 555
Northern Cape	54 373	48 099	0.80	43 443	4 656
Free State	246 215	160 445	0.80	196 721	−36 276
KwaZulu-Natal	335 984	272 375	0.80	268 445	3 930
North West	242 638	154 467	0.80	193 863	−39 396
Gauteng	644 378	641 393	0.80	514 845	126 548
Mpumalanga	45 945	39 952	0.80	36 709	3 243
Limpopo	15 631	17 133	0.80	12 489	4 644
South Africa	7 907 154	6 317 661	0.80	6 317 661	−

Source: Bijker (2013) Data sourced from the 2001 Census and 2011 Census

Table 1.2 shows the movement of isiXhosa-speaking people from the Eastern Cape and an increase in every other province, especially the Western Cape and Gauteng. There was massive movement within the Eastern Cape by 2011. The major movement occurred among young people from the poorer eastern

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part of the province who travelled to the more affluent western region. Most of the eastern region consists of the densely populated areas of the former homelands.

Generally, people who left the province were young adults, males, and people who were highly skilled. As indicated above, more people left the Eastern Cape each year than from any other province in South Africa, creating a vicious cycle of underdevelopment. Thus, more than a quarter of all persons born in the province now reside in other provinces, the most reside in the Western Cape (44 per cent), 24 per cent in Gauteng, 20 per cent in KwaZulu-Natal, and the rest in other provinces. It is mainly because of out-migration that Eastern Cape’s share of the national population declined from 15.5 per cent in 1996 to 13.5 per cent in 2010.

Profile of migrants

Migration patterns that have emerged in the Eastern Cape are complex, taking different shapes. Nevertheless, migration patterns in the region can be classified into three categories: migrants ‘proper’, labour migrants, and a third category of migrant families that straddle the Eastern Cape and other provinces. The difference between proper and labour migrants is the motive for relocation. For instance, labour migration is often used to identify those who move in search of employment. Proper migrants are those who move as family units, not necessarily in search of work but rather to join someone who has already obtained employment. Without a bespoke, longitudinal study of migration, it is difficult to clearly distinguish the nature of migration that has taken place in the region. Nevertheless, some insights into the profile of migrants from the region can be gleaned.

The age profile shown in Figure 1.3 confirms that out-migration of people from the province was age-selective and shows the age distribution of migrants (born in the Eastern Cape, outside the province during the census, 2011), and non-migrants (born in the Eastern Cape, present in the province during the census). The peak migration age was between 20 and 39, although there were comparatively more people in the migrant population in the wide active working age range of 20 to 64 years. The reverse was the case among non-migrants, who mainly predominated at younger and older ages.

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Figure 1.3 Age distribution of migrants and non-migrants. The figure was constructed from 2011 census figures.

Figure 1.4 shows the age-sex distribution of people who left the province in 2011. Male adults between the ages of 20 and 29 and who were born in the province, were most likely to stay away from the province.

Figure 1.4 Per cent age-sex distribution of people born in Eastern Cape but were living elsewhere in 2011. Data from 2011 census figures.

Out migration of skilled professionals

After the end of apartheid, two significant phenomena were observed in the migration of professionals in South Africa. The first is that migration flows tended to be income-maximising and educated Africans moved to places with higher concentrations of people who had a secondary school education.³⁰ The migration trends in Eastern Cape followed the same trend as, over the years, the professional constituent of people migrating from the region to metropolitan areas has grown. Thus, the proportion of the population who

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were professionals and who remained in the Eastern Cape notably declined from 13 to 5 per cent between 1996 and 2001.³¹ Selective skill flow was also noted, for instance, a high number of African migrants from the Eastern Cape with computer skills, data processing and other related computer skills, moved to the Western Cape between 1996 and 2001.³² In general, the largest proportion of migrants out of the Eastern Cape had at least some secondary education. The fact that in-migrants to Gauteng account for half of all people with post-matric qualifications in Gauteng, also shows the flow of skilled people to metropolitan areas.³³ Several provinces in South Africa have been able to replenish lost skills through the influx of migrants from other countries, who bring much-needed skills. In contrast, the Eastern Cape has attracted the least number of immigrants as the 2011 census figures suggest.

According to census figures, the Eastern Cape had one of the lowest proportions of non-South African residents in 2011, a trend that continued at the time of writing. Thus, the province does not benefit from the skills that are usually associated with the migrant communities.

Childbearing and the age-sex distribution of the population

The level of childbearing in the Eastern Cape is related to two major issues that are of concern in this chapter. First, childbearing is often linked to debates on poverty. The classical Malthusian perspective often blames poverty on the high rate of childbearing in traditional societies. Conversely, an impoverished society will not drastically reduce its rate of childbearing. Nevertheless, perspectives on population growth and development have experienced important shifts towards the end of the last century. One of the outcomes of this development is growing doubt about the economic wisdom of blaming high rate of childbearing for the poverty of an area, especially in countries that have made encouraging progress in aspects of human and social development. In the case of the Eastern Cape, it has been shown that the rate of childbearing does decline even in the context of high poverty. Secondly, childbearing is important when understanding society as it affects the structure of the population.

Life-time childbearing experiences measured by the total number of children ever born by women in each childbearing age group for 2011, showed that most women had at least one child by the age of 30. The mean parity for women aged 25 to 29 in 2001 was 1.4. In 2011, women in the oldest childbearing age group (45-49) had an average of 3.4 children, confirming a gradual but steadily declining trend in provincial fertility. A downward fertility trend in the context of poverty has an obvious implication for development policy and population activities in the province and other parts of the country.

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The current levels of childbearing take place in the context of a declining rate of marriage in the province. In 2011, more than half (54.4 per cent) of all mothers of childbearing age (15-49) had never married. The percentage of unmarried mothers ranged from 91 per cent in the youngest childbearing age group (15-19) to 30 per cent for women in the 45 to 49 age group.

The number of people aged 15 to 24 years increased from 1.25 million in 1996 to 1.39 million in 2011. Their contribution to the provincial population barely changed within this period from 20.3 per cent in 1996 to 20.8 per cent in 2011. A significant volume of out-migration by people in this and other proximate age groups tempers the propensity for sizeable growth of the youth population in the province. The province is yet to demonstrate a capacity to convert the numerical strength of the youth population into an asset for economic growth and human development.

People aged 65 years or older numbered 257 000 in 1996 and 442 000 in 2011. Their share of the total population increased from 5.8 per cent in 1996 to 6.3 per cent in 2001, and 6.7 per cent in 2011. The relatively high proportion of older people in the region was mainly a reflection of the high number of people of working age who moved away from the area and the number of old persons who returned to the area once they reached pensionable age. Immediate and extended family bear a lessened economic burden of caring for older people with the improvements in access to non-contributory old age and other forms of government grants. Consequently, many older persons make increased contributions to the material support of younger people in multi-generational families using social grants.

All censuses showed a visible shortage of males from the age of twenty and older. This trend was pronounced from the age of seventy years. In this age category, there were less than fifty men for every hundred women in 2007 and 2011. These patterns of sex ratios were a result of selective migration patterns in the area, where more men left the province, and also as a result of men dying earlier than women.

Females headed close to half of all households in 2011. Thus, many children and young people did not live in two-parent families. Historically and currently, women play a major role in the household economy. There are currently more women in active employment than men. The disproportionate economic burden on women, and subtle forms of gender imbalances in other areas of social and cultural experiences, remain major hindrances for human development in the province.

Health and mortality patterns

“Swing low sweet chariot, coming for to carry me home”, those were the lyrics of a song which was sung by Africans who were in bondage in America, bemoaning the exceptionally low life expectancy suffered by slave communities. It also seems the sweet chariot has persistently come early for the many in the Eastern Cape. The life expectancy in 2011 was estimated at 53 years of age – way below that in developed countries such as Japan, where it is estimated at around 82 years. Men’s lives in the Eastern Cape are generally much shorter than those of women, with their life expectancy estimated at 48. Women in the region reach an average age of 59. Thus, the region experiences a high incidence of widowhood. The high prevalence of migrant labour is a contributory factor to high male mortality. Many miners die of lung-related diseases in addition to mining accidents and the generally poor working conditions associated with the industry in South Africa. The often wide age gap between husbands and wives exacerbate the high rate of widowhood and the fact that re-marriage among the region’s women is uncommon.

Declining trends of poor health and overall under-development of any society are generally reflected by the decline in infant and child mortality rates. The trends in infant and child mortality, as indicators of the post-apartheid transformation response in the region, appears to be compromised by HIV/Aids which interrupted a declining trend in the province. About 60 out of every 1 000 infants born annually do not live to see their first birthday; a further 75 die before their fifth birthday. Thus, an infant born in the Eastern Cape stands less chance of reaching adulthood than an infant born in any other South African province. The very experience of giving birth is also associated with death. A total of 68 out of 10 000 women giving birth in the Eastern Cape died in 2001, and this increased to 81 of 10 000 by the year 2003. Most deaths in the province are due to natural causes, with non-natural deaths accounting for about 10 per cent of all deaths. Tuberculosis is continuously reported as the leading underlying natural cause of death in the province, followed by influenza, pneumonia, and intestinal infectious diseases. As in other parts of southern Africa, the Eastern Cape has been hard hit by the scourge of HIV/Aids.

Nevertheless, the impact of the antiretroviral drug rollout was noticeable, and a significant increase in life expectancy followed the rollout. The Eastern Cape suffers from ‘double risk’ – an increasing number of chronic ailments and high rate of communicable and diet-induced diseases. The reported percentage of people suffering from hypertension is exceptionally high. Chronic conditions, with higher prevalence rates among men, include high blood pressure, strokes, and high cholesterol. Among women, there is a greater incidence

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of high blood pressure, strokes, diabetes, asthma, and arthritis. Men in the region are generally taller but weigh less in comparison to women. There is a high rate of obesity among women – 32 per cent of women in the region are obese, compared to 8.8 per cent of men. As observed in other parts of the world, societies that have historically suffered undernutrition generally stand a bigger chance of experiencing obesity pandemics.³⁴

A considerable number of the non-natural deaths occur on roads in the Eastern Cape. For instance, information collected by the National Department of Transport and other sources indicates a general increase in road accident fatality in the province. In 2003, the rate of road accident fatalities was 15.8 per 100 000 people, increasing to 24.8 per 100 000 people in 2006. Non-natural deaths affect more males than females and have a marked effect among the younger population. Lifestyle choices are also an important factor of longevity in the region. Although the number of men who smoke or drink alcohol is considerably higher than that of women, indications are that the gap between men and women involved in these activities is declining, with about 54 per cent of men having ever smoked compared to about 18 per cent of women.³⁵

Moreover, among drinkers, more women than men are involved in hazardous drinking. Overall, the health profile of the Eastern Cape follows a pattern of poverty that is rooted in historical, socio-economic deprivation as the province lags behind most of the country according to several objective health indicators. The importance of structural inequalities and poverty is reflected in spatial differences in mortality rates in the province. These are reflected in the rural-urban and provincial east-west inequalities and the high mortality rate differences experienced in local municipalities within districts. These disparities are in addition to the well documented South African racial differences. The impact of poverty is evidenced in the region by the predominance of infectious and communicable diseases.

While the exact impact of the current Covid-19 pandemic is not known, when the numbers have been tallied, we are likely to realise a lower life expectancy and a higher number of orphans in the region.

Conclusion

As shown above, the Eastern Cape Province remains one of the poorest in South Africa. The above brief historical overview provides useful insights into the background of contemporary socio-economic outcomes. Of importance is the practice of labour reserves, starting during the early stages of colonial rule and gradually institutionalised during the apartheid era when the Nationalist

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Party assumed power and which, as shown in this chapter, is still in practice to date. During colonial administration of the Eastern Cape, authorities set aside large parts of the Eastern Cape as a labour reserve that was indirectly ruled by white magistrates and tribal authorities. These trends, which began centuries ago, continue to impact on population dynamics in the Eastern Cape with a self-perpetuating cycle of circular migration due to poor economic opportunities which further distort the population dynamics and lead to further out-migration.

Currently, the Eastern Cape suffers from out-migration more than any other province in South Africa, particularly among young people escaping from crippling poverty to search for livelihoods elsewhere. Most migrants from the province move to the more economically advanced provinces and metropolitan areas of the country. Within the Eastern Cape, there is a significant movement of people from the poorer eastern part to the relatively more prosperous western part of the province.

Migration patterns remain gendered, with more males out-migrating; this remaining the case despite a notable increasing trend in female out-migration. As a result of this sex-selective migration, the Eastern Cape has a large proportion of females compared to more affluent provinces. These patterns of out-migration have negatively affected many aspects of Eastern Cape life, including social development and family and social relations. The exodus of people of working age has resulted in a higher than average proportion of the population who are either unable to work (mostly older persons, and differently-abled individuals) or whose work is not remunerated – mostly women whose primary work is related to childbearing and caregiving. As such, the socio-economic development of the province is unlikely to benefit from its well-educated and entrepreneurial citizens who migrate to other parts of the country. The resulting burden of heavy economic dependency contributes to the disorganisation of families. Most development indicators show a deficient low socio-economic status in the province relative to other parts of South Africa.

For a long time, high-level poverty has been a prominent feature of the development profile of the Eastern Cape because of prolonged economic and other forms of material deprivation. High levels of unemployment amongst the youth, the impact of urbanisation and circular migration, labour fragmentation, and associated demographic patterns highlighted here continue to inform our understanding of poverty in the province. How the province manages these and other issues, including skills shortage, migration patterns, and sustainable development, will shape the interactions of population, poverty, and development in Eastern Cape.

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Poverty in the Eastern Cape exacerbates the high inequalities that exist in South Africa, which the national Government has made a priority to reduce. The current development profile of the Eastern Cape raises an intriguing question that must be seriously addressed by policymakers as part of the process of designing effective interventions for the province. What is it that keeps the Eastern Cape Province in an economic state of poverty more than two decades into democracy in South Africa? The major development problem in the province today is poverty and socio-economic deprivation among most of the population. Population characteristics of the province are, to a large extent, demographic responses to poverty and long-term socio-economic deprivation and vulnerability. Therefore, policy challenges raised by the population profile are no different from those raised by poverty in the province.

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