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**CONTEMPORARY MIGRATION TRENDS IN SOUTH AFRICA:  
AN ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTERISTICS AND PROFILES OF  
CROSS-BORDER AND INTERNAL MIGRANTS**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter contains a discussion of the characteristics and profile of current cross-border migrants (i.e. migrants from Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana and Namibia) in South Africa as well as internal migrants in the country. For this purpose data of the 2001-02 HSRC Migration Survey was utilised. Issues being discussed include country/province of origin, employment status, occupational categories, reasons for moving to South Africa or to another district in the country, reasons for selecting specific destination areas, prior information about the destination area and migrants' satisfaction with their present circumstances.

To supplement the findings on cross-border migration as derived from the HSRC survey, findings of another study by the HSRC (on the causes of cross-border migration from Mozambique and Zimbabwe), are also presented. Finally a comparison is drawn between the characteristics and profiles of both cross-border and internal migrants.

This chapter consists of three sections: In the first section the characteristics and profile of cross-border migrants are discussed. This is followed by a discussion of the characteristics and profile of internal migrants, and finally, in the third section, the findings on the cross-border and the internal migrants are compared.

## **CROSS-BORDER MIGRANTS**

### **FINDINGS OF A STUDY ON THE CAUSES OF CROSS-BORDER MIGRATION TO SOUTH AFRICA**

In conjunction with the HSRC Migration Survey a study on the causes of cross-border migration to South Africa from Mozambique and Zimbabwe was also undertaken, and the findings presented here were extracted from Wentzel and Bosman (2001).

The study focused on the movement of people between South Africa and two of its neighbours, namely Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The study was based on qualitative interviews with three groups of migrants, namely undocumented migrants awaiting repatriation at the Lindela Repatriation Centre, contract workers at the Impala Platinum Mine near Rustenburg and the Blyvooruitsig Gold Mine near Carletonville, and farm workers on commercial farms in eastern Mpumalanga and in the Limpopo Valley in the Limpopo Province. Interviews were also conducted with relevant stakeholders in South Africa, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

This study, along with various other studies,<sup>1</sup> confirmed that many migrants from neighbouring countries exhibit circular movement patterns between South Africa and their home countries. Some come to South Africa for a relatively short period of time, for example Zimbabwean and Mozambican women involved in cross-border trading generally do not stay longer than a month in South Africa before returning to their countries of origin. Other migrants, however, enter South Africa for a prolonged period of time before returning home. Many migrants do not intend to settle permanently in South Africa,<sup>2</sup> and

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Reitzes (1997) and Southern African Migration Project (1999a and 2002).

<sup>2</sup> This finding was confirmed by other studies. See for example Reitzes (1998) and Southern African Migration Project (1998).

many have dependants in their countries of origin to whom they send remittances as well as consumable commodities that they have bought in South Africa.

The causes of cross-border migration to South Africa from Mozambique and Zimbabwe are complex and interwoven and cannot be ascribed to one specific factor. Although the poor economic conditions<sup>3</sup> in both Mozambique and Zimbabwe and the consequent unemployment, low wages, expensive consumer goods and low value of local currencies were offered by the interviewees as the main reasons for migrating to South Africa, other important reasons were also mentioned.

Circumstances specific to Zimbabwe and Mozambique complemented economic-related decisions to migrate to South Africa. Some migrants from Zimbabwe mentioned political tension and marginalisation of minority ethnic groups as factors facilitating their migration to South Africa. An interviewee of Ndebele origin commented: *We are suffering in Zimbabwe. The government does not employ people from tribes other than the Shona. The government killed the Ndebele people so we left for South Africa.* Some of the migrants working on South African farms also mentioned the severe drought in the southern parts of Zimbabwe where most of them had come from, as a reason for their decision to migrate to South Africa. In addition, some veterans of the Zimbabwean liberation struggle felt that they were not sufficiently compensated and thus had to eke out a livelihood elsewhere.

The civil war in Mozambique between FRELIMO and RENAMO (1975-1992) influenced the Mozambican migration flow to South Africa to a great extent. During the war many Mozambicans fled to South Africa as refugees. After the war many of the refugees did not return to Mozambique, thus remaining illegally in South Africa. In some instances family members joined them later. Some of the refugees who did return to Mozambique after the war had ended, decided at a later stage to return to South Africa. They did this because in many instances their families were killed in the war, they could not find employment, and importantly they were familiar with the situation in South Africa. As one Mozambican interviewee put it: *During the war I fled to South Africa, but went back to Mozambique after the war. I decided to come back to South Africa since my family in Mozambique was killed during the war and I could not find a job. There was really nothing left for me in Mozambique. I came to South Africa because I knew that here are jobs available and the people were always friendly towards me.*

After the war soldiers of the war-torn Mozambique came to South Africa to look for employment. A former Frelimo soldier commented in this regard: *I was a soldier during the war, but after the war I came to South Africa to look for a job, because there were no jobs available in my country. I came to South Africa because the country is near Mozambique. I am quite familiar with South Africa since my family and friends had worked on South African mines in the past. South Africa was a natural choice for me to look for a job.*

Due to the long history of migration from both Mozambique and Zimbabwe to South Africa networks were created in both the sending and receiving countries. The existence of these networks in the sending and receiving countries were an important factor facilitating migration to South Africa. Social ties with migrants in the home countries and with those

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<sup>3</sup> This accords with the findings of a study by the Southern African Migration Project (1998).

already settled in South Africa were often utilised by potential migrants in Mozambique and Zimbabwe to find work, accommodation and new networks of social support.<sup>4</sup>

The tradition of labour migration from Mozambique to the South African mines also facilitated the creation of networks. An interviewee from Massinga in the Inhambane province commented in this regard: *My father worked on a South African mine for many years. Although he only visited us once a year, he regularly sent us money for schooling, clothes and food. I grew up with the idea that I would also work on a South African mine when I became old enough. Unfortunately there were no vacancies at the mine, but I nevertheless decided to come to South Africa to look for a job. Because my brother and two of my friends found jobs in the construction business, I thought that I would also be able to find a job there.*

Apart from the creation of networks the long history of movement of people to and from South Africa created perceptions of South Africa as a country of opportunities where conditions in at least some respects were better than in the migrants' countries of origin. The perceived and real availability of employment opportunities in South Africa played a major role in the decision of potential migrants to migrate to South Africa.

The nature of the work available for migrants was an important factor in facilitating migration to South Africa. Some Zimbabwean migrants stated that they were familiar with the kind of work they had to do on South African farms and were consequently more readily employed by South African farmers, and farmers in border areas readily employed unskilled migrants. Skilled and semi-skilled migrants found it relatively easy to find employment, particularly in the construction sector. It seems that Mozambican and Zimbabwean unskilled labourers are also sought after in the construction industry, probably because they generally do not belong to trade unions and are willing to work for low wages.<sup>5</sup> Although the mining industry is more interested in skilled mine workers, newly recruited unskilled workers do receive some on-the-job training. These trends indicate that certain niches for migrant workers were beginning to develop in the South African labour market.

Labour-intensive agricultural practices on farms along the eastern and northern borders of the country created a demand for workers which the Mozambicans and Zimbabweans crossing the borders could readily supply. Informal recruitment of workers by kinsmen and acquaintances for these border farms has provided potential migrants with work.

On both the Mozambican and Zimbabwean borders, kinship and cultural ties with South African citizens facilitated movement into the country. Shangaan-speaking Mozambicans and Venda- and Sotho-speaking Zimbabweans appeared to be readily assimilated by communities in the border areas concerned.

Various respondents stated that migration to South Africa, especially by young Mozambican men, was regarded a tradition, often seen as a rite of passage to adulthood. Yet critics of the labour migration system maintain that the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WENELA) created or reinforced the idea of a migration tradition in order to recruit sufficient workers for the South African mines (First, 1983).

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<sup>4</sup> In a study conducted in the late 1990s the Southern African Migration Project also stressed the importance of networks for potential migrants. (See Southern African Migration Project, 1999a).

<sup>5</sup> This accords with the findings of a study by the Southern African Migration Project (1999b).

Relatives and friends who had already migrated to South Africa in some cases motivated those left behind to migrate to South Africa. Some of the women stated that they had come to South Africa to find husbands or boyfriends with whom they had lost contact. These women sometimes found accommodation, made new social contacts or found jobs and consequently stayed on for longer than they originally intended.

The penetrability of the South African borders appears to have played a significant role in decisions to migrate to the country. Migrants indicated that the perception existed that it was easy to cross the South African border whether legally or illegally. A 32 year old Mozambican interviewee commented in this regard: *Today I am being repatriated for the third time. It does not really matter. I will be back next week. I will jump the border and travel with a taxi to Gauteng.* In addition, some migrants were confident that once in the country, they would not be easily detected, as migration control in South Africa was perceived to be rather lax, in contrast to that in Botswana.

Some migrants were ignorant about visa requirements and regarded a passport as sufficient to find work and live in South Africa. An interviewee from the Gaza province of Mozambique commented as follows: *I have a Mozambican passport. I cannot understand why I have been arrested. I worked as best I could at the construction firm where I was employed.* Another respondent who noted that his employer never asked for any documentation shared this misunderstanding: *I think I was arrested because my Mozambican passport has expired. I do not need a worker's permit since I have a Mozambican passport. My employer did not ask any documentation. In fact, before this arrest nobody in this country ever asked any documentation from me.*

The preceding sector highlighted some of the reasons why Mozambican and Zimbabwean interviewees migrated to South Africa. The next section utilises the 2001-02 HSRC Migration Survey to consider the characteristics and profile of cross-border migrants currently in South Africa.

## CHARACTERISTICS AND PROFILE OF CROSS-BORDER-MIGRANTS<sup>6</sup>

### COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

**Table 1: Cross-border migrants by country of origin (last move)**

Country	Proportion (%)
Botswana	10
Lesotho	49
Mozambique	9
Namibia	2
Swaziland	28
Zimbabwe	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>6</sup> The research is based on the findings of the 2001-02 HSRC Migration Survey and only on the most recent moves of the cross-border respondents, of which only 18 were included in the study. Only those respondents whose last move was across a South African border are classified as cross-border migrants. Those who had moved across the borders before their last move are therefore not included. The "internal migration" category also includes those international and cross-border migrants that might have moved to South Africa earlier.

Analysing the findings of the HSRC migration survey by country of origin, the following results emerge (only taking into account migrants from neighbouring countries): nearly half (49%) of the respondents came from Lesotho, 28% from Swaziland, 10% from Botswana, 9% from Mozambique and 2% each from Namibia and Zimbabwe.

The above findings do not necessarily reflect the full picture regarding the country of origin of cross-border migrants. The figures in Table 1 have to be treated very carefully as they may be affected by a number of other factors, such as the fact that many migrants did not want to disclose their nationality/status. In other cases migrants may already have moved more than once in South Africa (e.g. from Mozambique to Komatipoort and then to Johannesburg).

Based on other sources, the Mozambican and Zimbabwean migrants may well be under-represented in the survey (see also the explanation above). It is noticeable that while migrants from Mozambique only constituted 9% and Zimbabwe 2% of all the cross-border migrants identified in the survey, the majority of individuals repatriated for being "illegally in the RSA" had come from these two countries. Furthermore, it is generally known that large numbers of Zimbabwean and Mozambican migrants work on border farms in the Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces.

According to the survey almost half (49%) of the respondents came from Lesotho, in recent times the main supplier of migrant workers for South African mines. The survey also found that 97% of the cross-border migrants originated from rural or peri-urban areas.

## SEX RATIO OF MIGRANTS

Historically more males than females migrated from neighbouring countries to South Africa, largely because only males were officially recruited. This tendency was also reflected in the survey results, with 72% of the cross-border migrants being male and 28% female.

## EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF VARIOUS RESPONDENT TYPES

**Table 2: Employment status of various migrant types (percentage distribution)**

<b>Migrant status of respondents</b>	<b>Proportion currently employed (%)</b>
Non-migrants	30
Internal migrants	40
Cross-border migrants	78
All respondents	35

More than three-quarters (78%) of the cross-border migrants in the survey were employed, compared to just more than one-third (35%) of all the respondents in the survey (see table 2). Both the cross-border and the internal migrants had employment rates above the survey average. One can argue that this is because the majority of these respondents had moved to South Africa specifically to secure employment (see also Table 8).

**Table 3: Reasons for not working by migrant category**

Reasons for not working	Proportion (%)		
	Non-migrants	Internal migrants	Cross border migrants
Never worked	48	29	31
Currently unemployed & looking for work	27	31	29
Currently unemployed & not looking for work	7	13	
Housewife/homemaker	3	5	
Pupil/full time student	3	2	8
Retired person/pensioner	6	9	24
Disabled (not able to work)	3	7	8
Between jobs/contracts or on extended stay at home	1	1	
Not wishing to work	1	2	
None of the above	1	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

When asked the reason for not being employed 31% of the unemployed cross-border respondents in the survey responded that they had never worked before compared to the 29% of internal migrants (see Table 3). These would include women coming to South Africa to join their husbands.

In the category "unemployed and looking for work" cross-border migrants, internal migrants and non-migrants all showed a similar commitment to finding a job. Interestingly, almost a quarter (24%) of the cross-border group that were not working, were pensioners or retired individuals, compared to the only 9% of the internal migrants and the 6% of the non-migrants. This indicates that many cross-border migrants would have entered South Africa a long time ago (see also Table 6).

## OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF MIGRANTS

**Table 4: Percentage distribution of occupational status categories by respondent grouping**

Occupational status categories	Proportion (%)			
	Non-migrants	Internal migrants	Cross border migrants	All respondents
Managerial, executive, high admin and independent professional	7	7	3	7
Middle and lower level professional, semi-professional and inspectional	6	11		8
White collar, sales and clerical	11	10	4	11
Skilled manual and supervisory	6	9	4	7
Semi-skilled, operator, driver	15	12	34	13
Unskilled manual, labourer	45	44	55	45
Not answered, other	10	7		9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4 indicates that respondents in the cross-border migrant category were mainly unskilled (55%) and semi-skilled (34%). These percentages were significantly higher than those for the other categories of respondents. Only 3% of the cross-border respondents fell into the managerial/executive/high-administrative category. The clerical/sales and skilled manual/supervisory groups each accounted for 4% of the cross-border migrants. In the higher occupational status categories, cross-border migrants were thus notably under-represented compared, to other migrant categories.



## INCOME LEVELS

**Table 5: Distribution of migrants' monthly income by migrant type**

Income categories (monthly, ZAR)	Proportion (%)	
	Cross border migrants	All respondents
No income	6	37
1-1000	14	35
1001-2500	25	11
2501-4500	4	5
4501-8000		3
8001-16000	2	1
16001-30000		<1
30000 plus		<1
Unknown	6	1
Refuse to answer	43	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

A notable aspect of Table 5 is that 43% of cross-border migrants refused to reveal details of their income. This is in sharp contrast to the 5% average for all respondents. This indicates that cross-border migrants were more distrustful of and less willing to co-operate with the survey teams.

A very small proportion (6%) of cross-border migrants have no income, compared to almost two-fifths (37%) of all respondents. A possible reason could be that most cross-border migrants move specifically to seek employment (see also Table 8 below).

## CROSS-BORDER MIGRANTS' DURATION OF STAY IN CURRENT AREA

**Table 6: Percentage distribution of duration of stay of cross-border migrants in current area**

Duration of stay in current area	Proportion (%)
Less than 1 year	23
1-5 years	19
5-10 years	18
10-20 years	6
20-30 years	30
30 years or longer	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Slightly more than one-fifth (23%) of the cross-border respondents have been in South Africa for less than a year, while two-fifths of the respondents have been in the country for ten years or longer (see Table 6). Notably, more than one-third (34%) of the cross-border migrants in the sample have been in South Africa for 20 years or longer.

### **CROSS-BORDER MIGRANTS' REASONS FOR LEAVING PREVIOUS AREA**

**Table 7: Cross-border migrants' reasons for leaving previous area of residence**

<b>Reasons for leaving the previous area</b>	<b>Proportion (%) confirming reason</b>
No suitable employment	67
No suitable housing	6
No suitable opportunities for a good education	9
No suitable income	49
Poverty and not enough food to eat	49
Married some-one living elsewhere	0
Divorce	0
Death/disappearance of spouse/breadwinner	1
Droughts and storms	6
No choice (forced)	6

Based on the combination of reasons reflected in Table 7 it is evident that a lack of suitable employment was the major reason for people deciding to leave. The respondents indicated that no suitable income and poverty were also important factors in their decision to leave their country of origin. Non-economic issues such as housing, good education opportunities and personal relationships did not play a major role in their decision-making.

Apart from the above probed reasons, the respondents indicated other reasons for moving, such as safety and security aspects and visiting family roots.

## MAIN REASON FOR MOVING

The best indication of the **main** reasons for moving to South Africa were provided by those cross-border respondents who had not been affected by earlier movements within the country itself.

**Table 8: Percentage distribution of main reasons for moving by migrant grouping**

Main reasons for moving	Proportion (%)			
	Cross border migrants			All respondents
	Male	Female	Total	
Employment-related issues	91	66	82	39
Economic-related issues	1		1	4
Education-related issues	8	3	7	6
Lifestyle-related issues		7	2	5
Spouse/partner-related issues				10
Family-related issues		3	1	17
Political-related issues				2
Security-related issues		20	6	3
Environmental issues				4
Housing issues				7
Religion issues				1
Transport issues				0
Health issues				<1
Other		1	1	<1
Not answered				2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

It is evident from Table 8 that the single most important reason (82%) for cross-border migration was the search for employment. An earlier HRSC study conducted in Lesotho in 2000 also found that employment related reasons were the prime motivating factor for those respondents who wished to live in South Africa (Wentzel 2000: 178-179).

The second most important reason for cross-border migration was education related (7%), while security was also relatively important (6%).

Male cross-border migrants regarded opportunities for employment as the single **main** reason for moving to South Africa (91%). The majority of female cross-border migrants also regarded opportunities for employment as the **main** reason (66%), but for them security issues also were a significant reason to move (20%). Male migrants placed a higher priority on education (8%) than females (3%). Family-related issues played no role for male migrants, but 3% of female migrants listed this as a reason. This could be due to the fact that in some instances women had accompanied their spouses/children to South Africa. For both genders, forced resettlement/political environment played no role in cross-border migration.

It is obvious from the above that male cross-border migrants were primarily attracted to South Africa by pull factors (e.g. employment opportunities accounting for 91%). Although

the female respondents indicated that pull factors were also the primary reasons for migration, push factors (such as security related issues, 20%) also played an important role.

### **CROSS-BORDER MIGRANTS' REASONS FOR SELECTING SPECIFIC DESTINATION AREA**

**Table 9: Cross-border migrants' reasons for selecting the specific destination area**

<b>Reasons for moving to specific area</b>	<b>Proportion (%)</b>
Job transfer	11
Temporary employment, contract work here	2
Best employment opportunities	76
Fastest growing economy	62
Best housing opportunities	1
Best education/training opportunities	16
Best social networks and support	6
Married some-one living here	0
No choice, forced to move	6

Based on the probes reflected in Table 9 it is evident that employment and economic growth were the major reasons for people deciding on a specific area or to move to South Africa. This should be read in conjunction with the findings of the qualitative study that the long history of movement between South Africa and the neighbouring countries created perceptions of South Africa as a country of opportunities where conditions were better than in the migrants' countries of origin. The respondents did not regard housing and social networks/support as important reasons for selecting a destination. Some of the migrants might not have had a specific area in mind when deciding to move to South Africa and might have been in the specific area at the time of the survey through circumstances rather than choice.

### **CROSS-BORDER MIGRANTS' PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF THE DESTINATION**

**Table 10: Cross-border migrants' prior knowledge of specific destination**

<b>Prior knowledge about destination</b>	<b>Proportion (%)</b>
Everything there was to know	2
A great deal	7
Enough	17
Too little	19
Nothing whatsoever	53
Don't know/cannot remember	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

It is interesting to note that more than half of the respondents (53%) did not have any prior knowledge about their destination, with only 26% taking an informed decision (having known at least "enough"). This might be surprising given the long history of labour migration from neighbouring countries such as Mozambique, Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland to South Africa. A plausible explanation is to be sought in the way the question

was phrased, namely "How much did you know about this area (district/town/city) before you moved here?" Some of the respondents might have had previous knowledge of some parts of South Africa, but not necessarily about the area where they were staying at the time of the survey.

## CROSS-BORDER MIGRANTS' INFORMATION SOURCES ABOUT DESTINATION AREA

**Table 11: Cross-border migrants' sources of information about the destination area<sup>7</sup>**

<b>Information sources on destination</b>	<b>Proportion %</b>
Not applicable/knew nothing	4
Relatives/friends/acquaintances who lived in area before	62
Relatives/friends/acquaintances who lived in area at the time	18
Radio/television/adverts in electronic media	0
Newspapers/magazines/advertisement in the print media	0
Estate agents	1
Lived in area previously	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

A vast majority of cross-border migrants (80%) indicated that their main source of information about the destination was relatives, friends and acquaintances that either lived in the area before or at the time of the decision being made. This confirms the findings of the qualitative study regarding the existence of networks that facilitates migration to South Africa. Having lived in the same area earlier, motivated 15% of the respondents to move back into the same area. The media played no role in their selecting of a destination.

<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that this table excluded the cross-border respondents who did not have any knowledge of their destination.

## CROSS-BORDER MIGRANTS' DECISION MAKER FOR MOVING TO CURRENT AREA

**Table 12: Percentage distribution of decision makers for moving to current area amongst cross-border migrants**

Decision maker	Proportion (%)
Both husband and wife	21
Spouse	6
Self	51
Self and other people	21
Job related	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

The majority of cross-border respondents in the survey indicated that they themselves had decided on the move to South Africa. Slightly more than one-fifth (21%) had decided jointly with their spouses to move to South Africa and just more than a fifth (21%) had been influenced by others. Only 6% had to follow the lead of their spouses to move to South Africa.

## MIGRANTS' SATISFACTION WITH PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES

**Table 13: Satisfaction levels with present circumstances by respondent type**

Satisfaction levels	Proportion (%)	
	Cross border migrants	All respondents
Uncertain/Do not know	0	1
Very dissatisfied	33	17
Dissatisfied	38	20
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3	10
Satisfied	24	35
Very satisfied	2	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 13 indicates the responses of the interviewees to the question: "Taking all things together, how satisfied are you with your life on the whole these days?"

No less than 71% of migrants from neighbouring countries indicated that they were "very dissatisfied" or "dissatisfied" with their present circumstances, compared to 37% of the overall group who were "very dissatisfied" or "dissatisfied" with their lives. Cross-border migrants were much more opinionated about their satisfaction levels than the other

groups, with only 3% indicating "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied". As a group, cross-border migrants are not at all satisfied with their situation in South Africa.

Due to the small number of respondents from neighbouring countries in the sample an analysis of the causes of people's dissatisfaction with their present circumstances was not viable. One can only surmise that these individuals crossed the border hoping to improve their circumstances significantly, only to be disillusioned by the actual situation encountered by them in South Africa. In this regard one can think of issues such as the over-supply of unskilled and semi-skilled labour, the xenophobic attitudes of locals and being far away from their country, family and support systems. Only about one-quarter (26%) of the cross-border migrants in the survey expressed satisfaction with their circumstances, compared to the majority (52%) of all respondents.

## **DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

The 2001-02 HSRC Migration Survey indicated that the single most important reason for cross-border migration was the search for employment which confirms the findings of a qualitative study among Mozambican and Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa. Male cross-border migrants were primarily attracted to South Africa by pull factors (e.g. employment opportunities) and although their female counterparts indicated that pull factors were also the primary reasons for migration, push factors (such as security related issues, 20%) also played an important role. Non-economic factors played an insignificant role in the decision of cross-border respondents to migrate to South Africa.

Cross-border migrants seem to find jobs relatively easily, since more than three-quarters (78%) of the cross-border migrants were employed compared to slightly more than a third (35%) of all respondents in the survey. One can argue that this is because the majority of these respondents had specifically moved to a new area to find employment. Cross-border migrants were mainly unskilled (55%) and semi-skilled (34%) workers, while only 3% were found in the upper occupational status categories of independent professionals or executives/senior managers.

Only 6% of the cross-border migrants in the sample has no income, compared to the 37% of all respondents. A possible reason to explain this is, once again, that they move to South Africa specifically to find employment. Surprisingly, more than seventy percent of the cross-border migrants were not satisfied with their present circumstances in South Africa. These individuals probably crossed the border hoping to improve their circumstances significantly, only to be disillusioned by the actual situation encountered in South Africa. In this regard one can think of issues such as the over-supply of unskilled and semi-skilled labour, the xenophobic attitudes of locals and being far away from their country, family and support systems.

A high percentage of cross-border migrants (43%) refused to reveal their income status, in sharp contrast with the 5% of all respondents. This would indicate that cross-border migrants were more distrustful of and less willing to co-operate with the survey teams.

Forty per cent of cross-border respondents in the sample have been in the country for ten years or longer, and even more than one third of the cross-border migrants in the sample have been in South Africa for twenty years or longer. This also accounts for the unexpectedly high proportion of retired persons among the cross-border migrants (24%).

The cross-border respondents indicated that their main source of information about their destination was relatives, friends and acquaintances that live or had lived in the area. This confirms the findings of the qualitative study on the importance of historical networks. Interestingly, neither the print nor the electronic media played a role in their selection of a destination.

In the preceding section the characteristics and profile of cross-border migrants in South Africa were discussed. Utilising the data of the 2001-02 HSRC Migration Survey the next section looks at the characteristics and profile of internal migrants in South Africa.

## INTERNAL MIGRANTS

### CHARACTERISTICS AND PROFILE

#### PROVINCE OF ORIGIN

**Table 14: Internal migrants by province of origin (last move)<sup>8</sup>**

Province of origin	Proportion (%)
Western Cape	11
Eastern Cape	14
Northern Cape	2
Free State	6
Kwazulu Natal	14
North West	13
Gauteng	25
Mpumalanga	11
Limpopo	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

In the HSRC Migration Survey a "migrant" was defined as someone crossing the boundary of a magisterial district or moving from one urban/rural part of a district to another. This definition should be born in mind when considering the findings on internal migration reported in this chapter.

An investigation of the origin of internal migrants by province revealed that the highest proportion of respondents (25%) had migrated from Gauteng to other provinces. Other provinces that provided the bulk of the remaining internal migrants were the Eastern Cape (14%), Kwazulu-Natal (14%) and North-West (13%).

According to the survey the Northern Cape (2%), Limpopo (4%) and the Free State (6%) are the provinces with the least out-migration. It is nevertheless interesting to note that these provinces housed the highest proportions internal migrants. This particular phenomenon seems to stem mostly from intra-provincial movements. In other words, a

<sup>8</sup> A total number of 2142 former internal migrants were included in the study.



significant proportion of internal migrants move within the same province, which is of course indicative of the role that distance plays to inhibit migration.

## SEX RATIO OF MIGRANTS

An analysis of the male/female ratio of internal migrants shows a picture of slightly more female (51%) than male migrants (49%), but this difference is clearly not significant.

## EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF VARIOUS RESPONDENT TYPES

**Table 15: Employment status of various migrant types**

<b>Migrant status of respondents</b>	<b>Currently employed (%)</b>
Non-migrants	30
Internal migrants	40
All respondents	35

Table 15 shows that internal migrants (40%) have a higher rate of employment than non-migrants (30%). This percentage difference may not be very significant but suggests that internal migrants move to improve their quality of life by securing employment where opportunities are more readily available.

**Table 16: Reasons for not working by migrant category**

<b>Reasons for not working</b>	<b>Proportion (%)</b>	
	<b>Non-migrants</b>	<b>Internal migrants</b>
Never worked	48	29
Currently unemployed & looking for work	27	31
Currently unemployed & not looking for work	7	13
Housewife/homemaker	3	5
Pupil/full time student	3	2
Retired person/pensioner	6	9
Disabled (not able to work)	3	7
Between jobs/contracts or on extended stay at home	1	1
Not wishing to work	1	2
None of the above	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

An analysis of unemployment amongst the respondents reflects a picture where a high percentage of non-migrants (48%) never worked before (see Table 16). This stands in contrast with the 29% of internal migrants who have never been employed.

## OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF MIGRANTS

**Table 17: Distribution of occupational status by respondents**

Occupational status categories	Proportion (%)		
	Non-migrants	Internal migrants	All respondents
Managerial, executive, high admin and independent professional	7	7	7
Middle and lower level professional, semi-professional and inspectional	6	11	8
White collar, sales and clerical	11	10	11
Skilled manual and supervisory	6	9	7
Semi-skilled, operator, driver	15	12	13
Unskilled manual, labourer	45	44	45
Not answered, other	10	7	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

According to Table 17, internal migrants closely follow the survey average of occupational status categories. It does seem that slightly more (11%) internal migrants are in the middle categories of white-collar occupations. Migrants seem to be able to secure a greater proportion of these occupations, by being willing to move to areas where nich jobs are available, than those not able or willing to move.

## INCOME LEVELS

Table 18: Distribution of respondents' monthly income

Income categories (monthly, ZAR)	Proportion (%)		
	Non-migrants	Internal migrants	All respondents
No income	39	35	37
1-1000	39	32	35
1001-2500	10	13	11
2501-4500	5	5	5
4501-8000	3	5	3
8001-16000	1	2	1
160001-30000	<1	<1	<1
30000 plus	<1	<1	<1
Unknown	<1	2	1
Refuse to answer	3	6	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Compared to non-migrants and all respondent proportions, internal migrants seemingly benefit from their move in monetary terms (see Table 18). The proportion internal migrants in the "no income" category is also slightly less than that of non-migrants and the survey average for all respondents. Internal migrants are therefore relatively better off.

## DURATION OF STAY IN CURRENT AREA

Table 19: Internal migrants' period of stay in current area

Duration of stay in current area	Proportion (%)
Less than 1 year	84
1-5 years	8
5-10 years	3
10-20 years	3
20-30 years	1
30 years of longer	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

The overwhelming majority of internal migrants in the sample (84%) have only been in their current area of residence for less than one year (see Table 19). Markedly, only 5% of internal migrants in the sample have been staying in their current area of residence for 10 years or more.

## REASONS FOR LEAVING PREVIOUS AREA

**Table 20: Internal migrants' reasons for leaving previous area**

Reasons for leaving previous area	Proportion (%) confirming reason
No suitable employment	57
No suitable housing	36
No suitable opportunities for a good education	23
No suitable income	41
Poverty and not enough food to eat	17
Married some-one living elsewhere	13
Divorce	1
Death/disappearance of spouse/breadwinner	2
Drought and storms	1
No choice (forced)	12

It is evident from Table 20 that economic reasons such as "no suitable employment" (57%) and "no suitable income" (40%) are major reasons for moving away from an area. Non-economic issues such as inadequate housing (36%) and education opportunities (23%) also provided an incentive in a significant number of cases for internal migrants to move away. A relatively high proportion of the respondents also confirmed poverty and not enough food to eat (17%) as having been a reason for their last move.

## REASONS FOR SELECTING SPECIFIC DESTINATION AREAS

**Table 21: Internal migrants' reasons for selecting destination area**

Reasons for moving to specific area	Proportion (%) confirming reason
Job transfer	14
Temporary employment, contract work here	13
Best employment opportunities	46
Fastest growing economy	24
Best housing opportunities	32
Best education/training opportunities	24
Best social networks and support	18
Married to some-one living here	15
No choice, forced to move	11

An examination of Table 21 shows that employment opportunities (46%) are the most frequently reason cited by internal migrants for choosing a specific destination in South Africa. Somewhat surprising though, housing (32%) also played a major role (second highest) in decisions to move to a given destination. This clearly shows that aspirations to

own or live in a better house play a significant role motivating people to move to improve their living conditions. A fast growing economy (24%) was also pointed out as a clear reason for moving and “education and training opportunities” (24%) equaled “fastest growing economy” as a reason for moving to the destination. Better education and training opportunities therefore seem important in many migrants’ minds.

## MAIN REASON FOR LAST MOVE

**Table 22: Respondents’ main reasons for moving**

<b>Main reasons for moving</b>	<b>Proportion (%) of internal migrants</b>
Employment-related issues	38
Economic-related issues	4
Education-related issues	6
Lifestyle-related issues	5
Spouse/partner-related issues	11
Family-related issues	17
Political-related issues	2
Security-related issues	3
Environmental issues	4
Housing issues	7
Religion issues	1
Transport issues	0
Health issues	<1
Other	<1
Not answered	2
<b>Total</b>	

The highest proportion (38%) of internal migrants in the survey indicated that employment-related issues were their main reason for moving. The next most prominent categories were those related to family matters “spouse/partner related issues” (11%) and “family-related issues” (17%).

## GENDER DIFFERENTIATION IN “MAIN REASON FOR LAST MOVE”

Male internal migrants cited “looking for work” (23%) as the main reason for their last move with social reasons such as moving closer to family (8%) playing a significant role. Education (6%) was considered the third largest reason for moving. Other reasons mentioned included improved housing (4%), and crime and violence (4%).

Female internal migrants moved mainly because of “getting married/moving in with a partner” or “getting separated or divorced” (13%). “Looking for work” ranked second highest (11%) as the most important reason for moving. Moving closer to relatives also

proved to be a noteworthy factor at (8%). Other reasons worth mentioning include "having to move with a spouse" (7%), "education of self" (5%), "wanting to be on one's own" (4%) and "improved or unacceptable housing" (4%).

When classifying individual reasons into "economic", "social" and "other" categories, it becomes clear that economic related reasons rate the highest in terms of both male and female respondents. However, as mentioned before, an analysis of the single underlying reasons for moving shows that a significant number of women migrate to move in with a partner or after being divorced or separated. This reflects that the location and movements of male spouses are an important determinant for women's moves, and accounts for a significant number of moves by women in general.

## **PRIOR KNOWLEDGE ABOUT DESTINATION**

**Table 23: Internal migrants' prior knowledge of destination area**

<b>Prior knowledge about destination</b>	<b>Proportion (%)</b>
Everything there was to know	3
A great deal	26
Enough	16
Too little	22
Nothing whatsoever	13
Don't know/cannot remember	20
Total	100

Table 23 shows that just less than half (45%) of the internal migrants indicated that they had at least "enough" prior knowledge of the area that they moved to. More than one third of the respondents (35%) on the other hand acknowledged that they had not taken an informed decision when deciding to move to their destination.

## INFORMATION SOURCES TO SELECT DESTINATION AREA

**Table 24: Internal migrants' information sources for the destination area**

Information sources on destination	Proportion (%)
Not applicable/ knew nothing	4
Relatives/friends/acquaintances who lived in the area before	36
Relatives/friends/acquaintances who lived in area at the time	32
Radio/television/adverts in electronic media	4
Newspapers/magazines/advertisement in the print media	2
Estate agents	2
Lived in area previously	16
Visited the area before	2
Employer or related	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Internal migrants indicated that information on the destination of their last move had come (68%) mostly from relatives, friends and acquaintances that had either lived in the area before or at the time of the decision being made. A notable proportion (16%) of internal migrants had moved back to a familiar area (36% and 32% respectively). Other potential sources of information such as the media and estate agents played virtually no role in providing information on the destination.

## DECISIONS MAKERS FOR MOVING TO CURRENT AREA

**Table 25: Decision makers**

Decision maker	Proportion (%)
Both husband and wife	9
Spouse	12
Self	47
Self and other people	3
Job related	4
Family	21
Other	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

The greatest proportion of internal migrants indicated that they themselves (47%) had decided to move. Relatives (21%) also played a role worth mentioning in the decision to move. Only in a few instances (12%) did the respondents spouse take the initiative in deciding to move.

## MIGRANTS' SATISFACTION WITH PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES

**Table 26: Satisfaction levels with present circumstances by respondent type**

Satisfaction levels	Proportion (%)		
	Non-migrants	Internal migrants	All respondents
Uncertain/Do not know	1	1	1
Very dissatisfied	14	20	17
Dissatisfied	19	21	20
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10	11	10
Satisfied	38	32	35
Very satisfied	18	15	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Interestingly, a greater proportion of internal migrants (41%) are dissatisfied with their present circumstances than non-migrants (33%) (see Table 26). On the whole internal migrants seem to be relatively content with their circumstances given that more migrants indicated being satisfied than dissatisfied. However one cannot ignore the fact that a notable proportion of respondents were dissatisfied (37%). This shows that internal migrants do not always gain satisfaction in life by moving to a new area, and that people who do not move seem to be more content or satisfied with their situation.

In an attempt to “unpack” the causes of dissatisfaction among migrants a partial Pearson correlation analysis of the weighted data in terms of “satisfaction with life on the whole these days” was undertaken with regard to the value expectancy of the current environment. For the total sample (that includes, non-migrants, cross-border migrants, other international migrants and internal migrants) only one value-expectancy dimension, “wealth and comfort” showed a significant correlation with general satisfaction (after the effects of other factors have been removed). “Urban environment” on the other hand, had a relatively weak partial correlation, but the dimensions “affiliation and morality”, “stimulation” and “services and facilities” had no significant correlation (at the 5% level).

An overview of different categories of migrants reflects a picture where “wealth and comfort” only correlates significantly with general satisfaction in the internal and non-migrant groups, but not with cross-border and other international migrant groups (but the small sample sizes for these two categories may be responsible for the non-significance).

The role of biographical factors on general satisfaction, using regression analysis showed that being either African or non-African played a significant role in being satisfied or not. African migrants were notably less satisfied with their current circumstances than non-Africans. Higher educated people, on the other hand, were more satisfied with their lives in general than less educated people. Age and gender do not play a significant role when dealing with general satisfaction.



## **DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

Internal migrants generally have a higher occupational status than non-migrants, and internal migrants seem to benefit from their move in monetary terms. A very large proportion of internal migrants have only been in their province of current residence for one year or less. It is therefore not surprising that economic considerations such as "no-suitable employment" and "income" were major reasons indicated by respondents for moving internally. Significantly, "housing" and "education" were also listed as major reasons for moving. It shows that an acceptable level of housing and a good education feature high on people's list of priorities when contemplating a move. Employment was nevertheless singled out as the most important (main) reason for moving. Whereas men mostly moved because of economic considerations, women often moved due to social considerations such as "getting married/moving with a husband or partner" and having been divorced or separated.

A notable proportion of migrants indicated that they had not known a great deal about their destination before moving. It is therefore unlikely that decisions to move were well-informed. Those migrants that did make informed decisions mostly used friends and relatives as sources of information on their planned destinations. Internal migrants usually decide themselves whether or not to move. This will most likely be the case where individuals move and to a lesser extent where entire families move because of the implications for the entire family.

Interestingly, few internal migrants gain satisfaction with their present circumstance by moving when compared to non-migrants. Non-migrants generally tend to be more content with their circumstances than internal migrants. Nevertheless, a greater proportion of internal migrants indicated that they were satisfied with their current circumstances than those being dissatisfied.

The value-expectancy dimension "wealth and comfort" has a significant partial correlation with general satisfaction in respect of all respondents. Expectations regarding "wealth and comfort" are therefore likely to play an important role in peoples evaluation of whether or not they are satisfied with their lives in a particular area.

African migrants were significantly less satisfied with their current circumstances than non-Africans. This is likely to be the result of poverty, unemployment and poor living conditions that affects African lives more than any other grouping of people in South Africa. Higher educated people also tend to be more satisfied with their current circumstances than less educated people, possibly because of their relatively higher socio-economic status, better living conditions and well-being.

In the next (final) section a comparison is made of the findings on respectively cross-border migrants and internal migrants in South Africa.

## **CROSS-BORDER AND INTERNAL MIGRANTS: A COMPARISON**

When looking at the sex ratios of the two categories of migrants it is interesting to note that more males than females migrated from the neighbouring countries to South Africa, while gender differences for internal migrants in South Africa are not significant. This should probably be explained in terms of the long history of male dominance among the contract

labourers from neighbouring countries being employed by the South African mining industry.

More than three-quarters of the cross-border migrants were employed at the time of the survey, compared to the mere two-fifths of the internal migrants. Both groups of migrants had an employment status above the sample average. This is probably because the majority of these migrants had moved to a new area to secure employment. Interestingly, a larger percentage of cross-border migrants were pensioners or retired individuals, when compared to internal migrants and non-migrants.

Cross-border migrants were mostly unskilled and semi-skilled workers. Comparatively, a much higher percentage of internal migrants fell into the managerial and middle and lower professional and semi-professional worker categories. In contrast, a large percentage of internal migrants did not have any income whereas only a small percentage of cross-border migrants had no income.

When looking at the migrants' duration of stay in their current area of residence the great majority of internal migrants have only been in their current area for less than a year. On the other hand, more than one-third of the cross-border migrants have been in South Africa for more than twenty years.

Both categories of migrants cited "a lack of suitable employment" and "no suitable income" as important reasons that had prompted them to leave their previous area of residence. A significant number of cross-border migrants indicated "poverty and not enough food to eat" as a significant reason for having left their previous areas of residence. Few internal migrants cited "poverty and not enough food to eat" as an important reason for leaving their previous area of residence. This suggests that the incidence of poverty and famine as a reason for moving is much lower in South Africa than in neighbouring countries. Internal migrants also indicated that "no suitable housing" and "no suitable opportunities for a good education" had motivated them to leave their previous area of residence.

When respondents were asked to identify the single most important reason for their last move, the majority of cross-border migrants indicated that employment related issues had been the main reason for their last move. Comparatively, internal migrants also indicated employment related issues as important but nevertheless underscored social issues, such as spouse/partner and family-related reasons, as the main reasons for their last move.

Both cross-border and internal male migrant regarded opportunities for employment as the main reason for moving. The majority of female cross-border respondents also regarded opportunities for employment as the main reason for moving, but security issues were also important to them. Internal female respondents moved mostly to "get married / move in with a partner" or having been divorced or separated. Looking for work was also an important reason for them to move.

Cross-border migrants generally had very little or no prior knowledge about their destination area. Internal migrants, on the other hand, were better informed about their destination. Nevertheless, both categories of migrants exhibited a surprising lack of prior knowledge about their destination area. Informed cross-border as well as internal migrants indicated that relatives, friends and acquaintances that had lived in the area before or at the time of their decision to move, were their main sources of information about the

destination. Both categories of migrants indicated that the media played almost no role in their selection of a destination.

When analysing the responses to the question: "taking all things together, how satisfied are you with your life on the whole these days?" it became clear that cross-border migrants were much more dissatisfied with their lives than internal migrants. Clearly, neither cross-border nor internal migrants in general derived significant life satisfaction from the move that they had made. Considering all the survey respondents, only one value-expectancy dimension, "wealth and comfort" showed a significant correlation with general satisfaction. In other words "wealth and comfort" proves to be an important consideration when people evaluate their satisfaction with life on the whole in their current area of residence. The fact that many migrants are dissatisfied shows that they have not obtained the levels of "wealth and comfort" that they aspired getting by moving. It is also important to note that African migrants in general are more dissatisfied with their lives than other population groups.

To conclude, employment related issues dictates the causes of both cross-border migration to South Africa and internal migration in the country. The incidence of cross-border migration to South Africa is hardly surprising given the country's dominant economic position in the region. The situation is not likely to change in the near future due to the poor economic conditions in the neighbouring countries. Similarly, Gauteng dominates the internal migration scene as the province with the highest incidence of in- and out-migration. In South Africa, disparities between "rich" and "poor" provinces will persist in influencing internal migration patterns between provinces such as Kwazulu-Natal and Eastern Cape on the one hand and Gauteng and the Western Cape on the other.

People, whether rich or poor, will continue with attempts to better their situation regarding "wealth" and "comfort". Migration will remain an attractive option for people to change their situations.

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