

SOUTHERN AFRICAN ISSUES

**LABOUR MIGRATION
IN
SOUTHERN AFRICA**

Alan Whiteside

THE
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Southern African Issues is the title of a new series of monographs focusing on practical aspects of regional relationships.

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It should be noted that any opinions expressed in this monograph are the responsibility of the author and not of the Institute.

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The South African Institute of International Affairs

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PREFACE

In considering the framework around which the paper could be constructed, the author was at pains to remind himself that, while South Africa is the main employer of foreign labour, it is not the only one, and there is considerable movement of skilled South African labour to the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) countries. There are of course also substantial flows of labour within South Africa, from both the 'independent' and non-independent homelands, but which are excluded from the discussion as they do not cross internationally recognised frontiers.

The topic of migration is vast and this monograph could only review the major trends in recent years and attempt to identify some of the key determinants that will influence future patterns. A fairly comprehensive bibliography is included within the Endnotes which points out additional material should the reader wish to pursue the topic.

Some of the information presented here has been or will be published in other places. In particular, early work was published in two Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) reports, entitled Labour Relations in Southern Africa, Part I, Legislation and Agreements (1985), and Part II, Economic Implications (1986).

An updated version will appear in a book by the author, to be published in 1989 by Macmillan, entitled 'Apartheid's Hostages: Foreign Migrants in South Africa'. The author was particularly grateful to be invited to address the Royal Institute of International House, Chatham House, London, in March 1988, on the topic 'Labour and Economic Interdependence in Southern Africa'. That talk and subsequent discussion form the basis of this monograph.

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INTRODUCTION

Migration of labour is by no means unique to Southern Africa. People have moved to seek employment and better opportunities for themselves and their families for millennia. In recent years there have been vast movements of Turks to West Germany, and Pakistanis, Indians and Yemenites to Saudi Arabia and the oil-rich Gulf states. Migration may be seasonal, as happens with many of the agricultural workers from Mexico to the USA, or it may be permanent, as was the case of West Indians entering the UK. Migration is not confined to the wealthy countries. In Africa, Nigeria was host to hundreds of workers from its neighbours until it expelled, or attempted to expel, them in 1986 and 1987.

South Africa is not unique in employing migrants. What is unique is that the migratory labour system has lasted so long, is so sophisticated and has become so institutionalised. There can be few corners of Southern Africa that have not felt the impact of the migration of able-bodied young men and women to the mines, factories and farms of South Africa.

This monograph will briefly outline the origins of the migratory labour system. The trends in labour movement are of particular significance and these are examined at length. Three parties are involved in any migration: the governments of the supplying and recipient countries, and migrants and their families. Each group and its importance will be discussed. Although the system has been in operation for over a century, it will almost certainly change in the next ten years. The paper attempts to predict likely changes. Finally, the paper considers movements other than those of migrants to South Africa. These include unskilled labour seeking employment in other Southern African states; the movement of skilled workers; as well as refugees and illegal immigrants.

THE ORIGINS OF MIGRATION TO SOUTH AFRICA

In 1866, diamonds were discovered in the Northern Cape - a discovery that transformed South Africa from a predominantly

subsistence agricultural economy into a modern capitalist economy. The exploitation of diamonds led to an inflow of new immigrants seeking their fortunes. It required an infrastructure and spurred the development of the manufacturing industry, which initially supplied the mines and miners.

The excitement of diamonds drew prospectors, and led to extensive exploration. Gold was discovered in the Eastern Transvaal and Swaziland, but the deposits were small and the mines were soon worked out. In 1886, two prospectors discovered gold-bearing rock on a Transvaal farm called Langlaagte - an outcrop of the vast gold reefs that are still being exploited today - gold mines that were to transform all of Southern Africa.

From the very beginning of the development of the mining sector, most of the unskilled labour was provided by the black population. Four years after the discovery of gold, some 14,000 blacks were employed on the mines and by the turn of the century there were 100,000. These workers generally came for a limited period before returning home. The migrant labour system was born. Migrants were drawn from greater and greater distances. Most migrants were housed in compounds at the place of work, and generally received lower wages than black workers in other sectors. Migration became controlled, with legislation designed to prevent workers from changing or deserting their employment.

The development of the labour supply

Labour was needed not only for the mines but also for the farms and factories. Industrialists and farmers looked to the black population for labour. It quickly became apparent that labour was not easily attracted to the new mines and industries of Southern Africa. A common fallacy put forward in some South African literature is that the first migrants were attracted solely by the benefits of 'western civilisation' and its consumer goods and came gladly to the mines to share in this bonanza, coming to 'work only for a period long enough to allow them to

accumulate the cash needed to purchase the goods that had attracted them to the area in the first place and to return home once they had achieved their target'¹ and

the particular pattern of spontaneous labour movements resulted mainly from [the] increasing desire of Africans to acquire the material and cultural accoutrements of modern life. The initial problem was therefore not limited to inadequate core areas, but later became one of coping with excessive labour supplies since the supply of workers at times exceeded the demand, once seasonal migration had become accepted practice among rural people.²

It is generally agreed that the black population was much more reluctant to seek employment in the new industries and mines than these quotes would indicate. Pressure was therefore put on blacks to force them to sell their labour to the white capitalists. This pressure took two forms: first, the black population was forced to earn money and, secondly, they were deprived of their land. The underlying rationale was that they would then, in their thousands, willingly seek employment - an idea that does not stand up to close examination.

To coerce them into the money economy, taxes were introduced by the various authorities in South Africa - a hut tax on each hut owned, a poll tax for each male older than eighteen years and, in the Cape Province, a labour tax on each male, unless they could prove they had worked for three months of the year.³ All the taxes had to be paid in cash.

In each of the neighbouring states, taxes were also imposed on the black population. All the British-ruled areas had various forms of tax. In the German and Portuguese territories, the regimes were generally much harsher and the people had either to pay high taxes or spend lengthy periods in forced labour.

The second strategy to create a black labour force was to drive people off the fertile land. According to Callinicos, this action was motivated by white farmers who wanted black squatters off their land, as well as the mine owners who felt that as long as blacks were able to live off the land, they would not offer

themselves for employment. 'The native ... cares nothing if industries pine for want of labour when his crops and home-brewed drink are plentiful'.⁴ In 1913, the Native Land Act was passed, which divided the land between the black and white populations. The blacks, who in 1911 comprised 67,2% of the population, were forced into reserves on the poorest, most marginal land, comprising less than one tenth of the total area of South Africa.

Phases in labour migration

In a seminal essay, Moller argues that there have been three distinct phases in the migrant labour system in Southern Africa. Phase One consisted of target migration, in which migrants were forced to seek a cash income by negative incentives. During this phase, 'the village life is the dominant mode of existence for labour migrants, interrupted only by some few brief spells in the work centre. The migrant career is typically of short duration and by mid-life a villager can expect to make no further trips to the labour centres'.⁵

Phase Two was the classical target migrancy, in which labour migration was firmly established as a feature of the Southern African economy. At this stage, negative motivations continued, but were supplemented by new, positive targets.

Tribal people become more accustomed to the benefits of cash wages, develop novel expectations and tastes for modern goods. At the same time, seasonal and contract work away from home is undertaken only during the non-agricultural season and during other times in which labour is not needed at home. In this way, labour migrancy dovetails with subsistence farming, and the two life styles are by and large incompatible ... The classical phase of labour migrancy is possibly the only period in which the benefits of labour migration outweigh the costs for both the supply and demand side[s].⁶

At this stage, migrants can maximise the economic benefits accruing to themselves and their families by entering and leaving the system at times that are of maximum benefit.

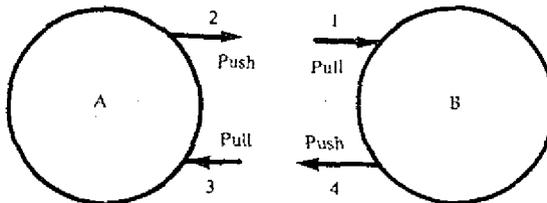
Phase Three is identified as the contemporary migration system. This phase is characterised by the rapid increase of a labour surplus in the migrant-supplying areas and the overpopulation and impoverishment of the rural base. The targets are now permanent and migration is through economic necessity. Cash income earned in the urban areas is vital for the survival of the rural family. As Moller notes, this situation would in normal circumstances lead to migrants settling permanently in the urban areas with their families. The situation in South Africa is not normal. The political system and ideology peculiar to South Africa has meant that the migrant system is now embedded in the economy, spatial organisation, legislation, and society.

The contemporary system

The system operating today has been described as oscillating migration. Migrants from all over Southern Africa are drawn to South Africa. They participate in virtually all sectors of the economy. They come without their families, who are left behind in the rural areas, to work on a contract basis and then return to their rural homes for a period, before travelling back to work, generally to the same jobs. This oscillation between home and the same job is unique.

Wilson has devised a model which merits further study and assists in the understanding of the forces at play on the migrant in the contemporary system.⁷ The model is reproduced below.

The Push-Pull Model



The first force is the pull of the urban areas. This may be demand for labour (an economic pull), or the attraction of urban life. The second is the rural or supply push. This may be due to increased poverty caused by population growth; displacement of peasants from the land; target employment brought about by the need to purchase an item or pay taxes; or an increase of agricultural production. The third force is the rural pull - people working in urban areas return to their rural roots for the security offered there. The fourth and final force is the urban push exerted by employers who do not want to pay for infrastructure in the urban areas. They are also able to pay lower wages if their employees' families have subsistence plots in the rural areas, are not totally dependent on the wage income, and provide a social security system for employees who are old or sick.

This model provides a useful framework for analysis. It should be noted that labour migrancy in South Africa is unique in some ways. Apartheid has resulted in goals that force people in different directions. Normally, the first and second forces get stronger as economic development takes place. Urban pull would increase, as would rural push, leading to increased urbanisation as people leave the land, move to town, and settle there with their families. This rural-to-urban migration has been extensively documented in much of the Third World and is often seen as a problem and a cause for concern.⁸

This pattern of development has been largely inhibited in South Africa by the policy of apartheid. The black population had their own areas of land and were only allowed to enter the white areas to work for the benefit of the white population. The role of blacks was spelled out very clearly in a government circular which states:

It is government policy that Bantu are only temporarily resident in European areas for as long as they offer their labour there. As soon as they become, for some reason or other, no longer fit for work or superfluous in the labour market they are expected to return to their country of origin.⁹

This contradicted the normal forces of development that would lead to urbanisation.

Because rural push and urban pull exert such powerful forces in the region, efforts to prevent massive black urbanisation had to take these forces into consideration. Improving rural pull includes encouraging decentralised industry, applied largely to South African blacks and generally fruitless. Urban push is applied to both South African and foreign migrants and is easier to implement through legislation.

Foreigners in the system

Migrants fall into two groups: those drawn from within the borders of the Republic (South African), and those crossing internationally recognised boundaries (foreigners). They may also be divided into those who work on the mines and those in other sectors of the economy. In general, most foreigners are employed in mining or agriculture.

Black South Africans perceive work on the mines as dangerous, badly paid and unpleasant. Living conditions are known to be poor. The result is that local blacks seek work in other sectors of the economy. The mines recruit workers from Mozambique, Lesotho and Malawi. During the 1960s, local labour provided about a third of the labour force, Mozambique 25%, Malawi 20%, Lesotho 15%, with the balance coming mainly from Botswana and Swaziland. In 1973, foreign labour accounted for nearly 80% of the labour on the mines.

Although the largest group of migrants was and is employed on the mines, there are two other migrant groups that need to be considered. Up to 1963, borders with the 'protectorates' (Basutoland, Bechuanaland, and Swaziland) were not controlled. Citizens of these countries were able to enter, find employment and settle in South Africa. These people have been joined by illegal immigrants, including citizens of Zimbabwe, Mozambique

and Malawi. Their position is often regularised and their repatriation is suspended for five-year periods. As these workers reach retirement age, the numbers are declining.

The third group of migrants are those who are recruited and legally enter the country to work in sectors other than mining. Most are employed in agriculture - a sector which the local black population also recognises as being hard, with low pay and poor living conditions. They will not work in it when other sectors are open, but as unemployment increases in South Africa, so the foreigners employed will also decline.

THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MIGRANT SYSTEM TO SOUTH AFRICA

The South African migrant labour system is unique in a number of ways and it is instructive to establish why this is so. Perhaps the key feature is that workers were not allowed to settle in South Africa with their wives and families, but were forced to return to their homes on completing their contracts. This was in the interests of both capital and state.

Oscillating migration served the interests of capital as it meant that labour was cheap. The employer was only required to pay the worker enough to keep him, and a small surplus to attract him to the mines. Of course, it should be noted that foreign migrants were often forced to seek cash employment by the taxes that were levied on them in their own countries. This was particularly the case for Mozambicans. The families of migrants generally had access to some land and so were not wholly dependent on the migrants' earnings. Migrants did mainly unskilled work, so their rapid turnover did not create problems for the production process.

Pass laws and legislation

The idea of the black workforce entering the country only on a temporary basis was in keeping with government policy, especially

after the National Party won the 1948 election and began to establish apartheid policy.

According to Giliomee and Schlemmer, in the 1920s two central principles started to become apparent in South African society:

The one was the political doctrine of 'possessory segregation', which conceived South Africa as a white man's land apart from the African reserves (later to be called homelands or national states). These reserves were regarded as the only places where Africans could own land and exercise a measure of political autonomy. Those already resident in the cities or on farms could stay, but Africans from the reserves were merely tolerated in the urban areas (deemed 'essentially the white man's creation' by the Stallard Commission of 1922) as long as they served the needs of the white population.

The other principle was that of industrial segregation, which demanded that white (or 'civilised') labour in the industrial workforce had to be protected from African competition. To implement both possessory and industrial segregation, a pass system was instituted. African male workers from the reserves were only allowed a limited time to seek work; they were prohibited from bringing their families with them; and 'redundant' workers constantly faced the threat of expulsion to the reserves.¹⁰

Legislation during the 1920s and 1930s laid the foundations for what became known as influx control. In 1945 the Native (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act, which in conjunction with the 1942 Bantu Laws Amendment Act, set the system of labour control.

This legislation prevented black people from remaining in a prescribed area for more than seventy-two hours unless they had an exemption. All urban areas were prescribed areas. Exemptions were granted to people born in the area; those who had worked for one employer continuously for ten years or who had resided lawfully in an area for fifteen years; the wife or child of such a person; or a person given permission to remain by an officer managing a labour bureau. Migrants fell into the last category. The black labour force was seen as having no permanence in white South Africa.

The effect of the legislation was to exclude South African blacks from seeking employment in or living in the urban areas unless they either did so illegally or went through a stringent set of procedures and controls. The effect for foreign migrants was that it was even more difficult for them to find employment in South Africa. They could take the same risks as South African blacks and cross borders illegally and without passes. Alternatively, they could seek to be recruited in their own country.

In 1986, the government published a White Paper on urbanisation, which led to the whole system of influx control being extensively revised. In essence, the report accepted that urbanisation was going to continue and that there should be a degree of freedom of movement. As the Institute of Race Relations noted:

The government accepted the permanence of Africans in 'South Africa': (i.e., South Africa with the exception of the TBVC [Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei] homelands), acknowledged that all citizens should enjoy political rights, while minority rights would also be protected. Influx control no longer served any constitutional purpose and should be abolished. Priority should be given to the issue of uniform identity documents for all population groups. The government said that existing measures regulated the entry of foreigners into 'South Africa' as well as their residence and employment there and their removal therefrom. These measures protected the rights of South African citizens and should be strictly applied. Action should be taken against employers who employed illegal foreigners in the country. Agreements with the TBVC authorities provided for the migration of their citizens to and from 'South Africa' for as long as they were regarded as foreigners in terms of migration legislation such as the Alien Act of 1937 and the Admission of Persons to the Republic Regulation Act of 1972. If negotiations presently under way with the TBVC authorities over the return of South African citizenship to TBVC citizens resident in the TBVC countries were successful, existing labour arrangements with these countries would be amended.¹¹

In June 1986, the Abolition of Influx Control Act was passed, repealing the various laws relating to influx control. Influx control and the pass laws limited the ability of foreign migrants

to seek employment in South Africa, as their right to remain or work in an area had to be endorsed in their passport or travel document, which permission would only be granted if they were contracted to work in South Africa by legitimate labour recruiters. They were not issued with reference (pass) books but they were subject to the same harassment as South African blacks. The abolition of the pass laws had little effect on foreigners as they remained subject to other legislation governing their right to enter and remain in South Africa.

With the repeal of influx control legislation and the pass laws, control is effected through the Aliens Act and the Admission of Persons to the Republic of South Africa Act. These Acts supposedly puts all foreigners on the same footing - they cannot enter or take up employment in South Africa unless they have permission from the Department of Home Affairs and Manpower. Obviously, where large numbers of workers are involved from the Southern African Labour Commission (SALC) countries, some form of blanket dispensation may be granted.

WAGES AND SKILLS

The result of this oscillating movement of migrants is that they have tended to occupy less skilled, manual jobs, unable to benefit from training or develop careers and, for the majority of migrants, forced to take jobs that South African blacks try to avoid. The mines and agricultural employment have been the natural home for these workers.

Migrants are generally paid less, not only because they do not have the skills they might have acquired if they were in permanent employment, but also because the only jobs open to them are those that are poorly paid. As stated earlier, one of the main reasons for recruitment of migrants is that the local black population is unwilling to work in those sectors of the economy because of poor pay.

Evidence for low pay is drawn from the mining sector, although agricultural wages are known to be low, but hard data is not easily available. Most migrants are employed in mining and information is readily available for this sector. Table 1 shows the average wages in the mining industry for selected years from 1885 to 1980. It can be seen that the real wage began to improve rapidly in the mid-1970s.

TABLE 1
Average annual cash wage, current and real, and number of blacks employed in the in the gold-mining industry (1881-86 = base year 1938 + 100; 1969-80 = base April 1970 = 100) * 12

YEAR	CURRENT RANDS	REAL WAGE (RANDS)	NO. EMPLOYED (000e)
1885	72	---	6
1889	72	84	51
1906	68	80	81
1911	60	72	190
1916	65	70	204
1921	69	58	173
1926	71	67	182
1931	69	69	210
1936	71	75	297
1941	71	67	368
1946	88	67	305
1951	110	64	299
1956	133	64	336
1961	146	64	399
1966	183	70	370
1969	199	209	371
1970	208	208	401
1971	221	209	386
1972	257	227	414
1973	350	282	422
1974	565	408	364
1975	948	602	365
1976	1103	631	361
1977	1235	634	422
1978	1420	656	456
1979	1669	675	479
1980+	1813	682	---

Notes: * Cash wages only, not including payment in kind, which forms a considerable proportion of black labour costs. In 1972, it was estimated that the value of payments in kind to black workers was R589, of which food accounted for R328.

+ First quarter grossed up to annual data.

By 1926, the pattern of migration to the mines was set and this was to remain virtually the same for the next fifty years. The main features were:

- (a) Wages paid to black miners were very low. It has been argued that wages were not sufficient for the reproduction of labour, and the family's production in the rural areas was also necessary for survival.
- (b) Because of low wages, black labour had to be drawn from a wide area, as is illustrated in Table 2 below. South Africa's own black population was able to seek employment in the better paid sectors of manufacturing, construction and services. The labour drawn from further afield had no option but to work for the mines.

TABLE 2

Total number of foreign-born blacks in South Africa by country of origin (and by employment in mining and non-mining sectors) ¹³

	1921	1936	1946	1951	1960	1969	1970	1971
Lesotho	111 773	163 838	199 327	219 965	196 996	169 682	147 400	118 856
Botswana	11 959	4 048	38 559	51 017	59 286	35 642	47 160	31 891
Swaziland	29 177	31 092	33 738	42 914	38 892	11 346	24 260	11 251
UCTS	152 909	198 978	271 624	312 996	295 174	-	-	-
Other Africa	2 926	1 879	4 990	4 129	2 499	-	1 420	-
Rhodesia	6 511	13 871	45 549	46 241	33 696	-	-	-
Rhodesia	-	-	-	-	-	5 751	11 640	5 245
Malawi	2 122	17 657	61 005	63 655	62 623	69 417	106 640	109 185
Zimbabwe	110 245	98 031	141 417	161 240	160 945	133 021	144 900	124 866
Angola	942	28	6 716	6 322	10 748	270	3 440	29
Mozambique	-	118	2 937	7 127	1 117	-	180	-
Others	4 164	3 215	22 569	2 816	5 323	8 229	1 980	8 952
Total	279 819	333 777	556 807	604 526	542 125	433 358	589 020	410 005

Recruitment and housing

The process of recruitment and transportation of migrant miners is very sophisticated and has a long history.

In 1893, the Chamber of Mines established a Native Labour Department 'with the twofold objective of assuring an adequate and regular supply of black labour by opening up sources of supply within the Transvaal and arranging for the recruiting of labourers from Mozambique'.¹⁴ In 1896, the Chamber formed a separate recruiting organisation, the Rand Native Labour Association, soon replaced by the Witwatersrand Native Labour Organisation (WNLA), which recruited for all Chamber mines outside the borders of South Africa, and was the only organisation allowed to recruit in Mozambique and Malawi.

Recruitment within South Africa and the Protectorates was carried out by the Native Recruiting Corporation (NRC). Today all recruitment for Chamber mines is done by The Employment Bureau of Africa (TEBA), formed by merging WNLA and the NRC. Other non-Chamber organisations also recruit for the mines and for agricultural labour.

All foreign recruits were and are employed on contracts that range in length from nine months to two years. They are transported from the place of recruitment to their place of work and returned home at the end of their contracts. Most migrants are housed in compounds that vary greatly in size - from small farm compounds to the vast mine compounds which house tens of thousands of men.

Much has been written about the squalid, unhealthy and unpleasant conditions in these compounds, and this is one area where there have been dramatic improvements recently. Callinicos writes of the early compounds:

Inspectors reported that the compound huts contained 20 to 50 workers, who slept on concrete bunks built one above the other like shelves. Many of the huts

had earth floors which turned muddy in wet weather. When the huts were crowded workers had to sleep on these damp floors.¹⁵

RECENT TRENDS

Four trends in the supply of migrant labour can be identified: a fall in the overall numbers of migrants; the decline in numbers of female migrants; change in employment by sector; and the changing composition of the labour force by source. Table 2 above shows the numbers of migrants employed in South Africa for selected years from 1921 to 1971, while Table 3 below gives figures from 1972 to 1988. These tables provide much of the base data which will be used in the discussion below.

Overall numbers

The number of registered foreign migrants employed in South Africa stood at over 0,5 million for most of the postwar period. In 1973, there were 485,100, of whom 9,132 were in the category 'other' (see Table 3). Between 1974 and 1982, the numbers fell to 282,272 - a decline of over 200,000.

The statistics from 1982 to 1986 need to be examined with care. In 1983, the number of 'other' migrants jumps to 70,105 from 2,512 the previous year. It is suggested that they are Namibian.¹⁶ The statistics for the other nationalities are sufficiently detailed to record that between 1985 and 1986 the number of Angolans fell from forty-four to twenty-two, so it is surprising that over 70,000 people are included in so vague a category.

If these 'others' are ignored, an interesting pattern in the total number of migrants emerges. In 1982, the numbers fell to their lowest ever level. Since then, they have increased slightly and currently stand at between 280,000 and 300,000. Nonetheless, numbers have declined considerably over the past twenty years.

Table 3

Distribution of Foreign Blacks in South Africa*

	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Angola	-	42	108	623	805	1483	341	275	291	69	120	68	48	44	22
Botswana	31960	46192	33357	37016	43159	43527	34464	32463	23200	29169	26262	25967	26433	27814	28244
Lesotho	131749	148856	134667	152188	160634	173867	156623	152023	140746	150422	140719	145797	138443	139827	138193
Malawi	131231	139714	137676	39308	12761	12412	38525	35803	32319	30602	27558	29622	29268	30144	31411
Mozambique	121708	127198	139993	150738	111257	68232	49168	61550	56424	59391	52321	61218	60407	68665	73186
Swaziland	10108	10032	9984	16380	20750	18195	14054	13005	19853	13417	13659	16773	16823	22255	21914
Zambia	-	684	703	914	766	682	843	809	918	727	787	743	1274	833	2421
Zimbabwe	-	3258	5961	8890	32716	37919	27494	21547	10377	16965	11332	7742	7492	7428	7304
Total excl. other	-	475968	462449	406074	382848	356126	320661	317485	284128	300762	279760	287430	280188	297010	302685
Other	143922**	9132	19864	8513	7162	1030	6390	9224	3102	996	2512	70105***	71072	73998	75430
Total	441148	485100	482313	414586	390010	357356	327051	326709	287230	300758	282272	358035	331260	371008	378125

* data for 1974 available

** includes Angola, Zambia and Zimbabwe

*** includes Namibia

- insignificant magnitude

Source: South African Yearbooks (1973-84). South Africa, Department of Cooperation and Development, 1984-86

Sex of migrants

A second trend is the changing composition of the labour force by sex. As shown in Table 4 below, there has been a marked decline in the number of migrant women employed.

TABLE 4 The sex composition of migrant labour (000s) ¹⁷

YEAR	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	FEMALE AS % OF TOTAL
1960 (a)	483,9	102,4	586,4	17,5
1970 (a)	442,7	46,5	489,2	9,5
1980 (b)	296,1	31,6	327,7	9,6
1984 (c)	343,8	7,4	351,2	2,1
1985 (c)	362,9	8,0	371,0	2,1

Note: a, b & c - see Endnote 17

In 1960, 17,5% of the foreign labour force was female. By 1970 it had declined to 9,5%. Currently there are about 8,000 female migrants, or 2,1%. This is government policy - the South African authorities prefer to import young males who are more easily controlled. It is also a reflection of the changing nature of the employment available to migrants, and the growing pool of female South Africans willing to take jobs formerly held by foreigners.

The lack of access to employment in South Africa has a considerable impact on foreign females, removing the option of money-earning activity and making them even more dependent on the sense of responsibility and goodwill of their men. An already marginal group has become even more marginalised, with little prospect of obtaining employment.

Employment by sector

The third shift in migrant labour has been in the sectors of the economy in which they are employed, as shown in Table 5. In 1964, only 58% of migrants were in the mines; agriculture employed 30%; and 4,7% were in manufacturing. By 1970, mining employed 77,4%; agriculture 9,9%; and domestic service 4,6%. In

1986, the figures were mining 81%; agriculture 4,6%; domestic service 3,6%; and manufacturing 3,0%.

TABLE 5 The sectoral employment of migrant labour (000s)¹⁸

	1964		1970		1977		1984(a)		1985(a)		1986(a)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Mining	281	58,0	352	77,4	288	80,7	293	83,6	307	82,8	244	80,5
Agriculture	144	30,0	45	9,9	16	4,5	12	3,4	17	4,6	14	4,6
Manufacturing	23	4,7	12	2,6	10	2,8	10	2,8	10	2,7	9	3,0
Construction	4	0,7	6	1,3	9	2,5	6	1,7	10	2,7	9	3,0
Commerce	3	0,6	5	1,1	4	1,1	5	1,4	9	2,4	4	1,3
Domestic service	8	1,7	21	4,6	14	3,9	12	3,4	13	3,5	11	3,6
Other	21	4,3	14	3,1	16	4,5	13	3,7	5	1,3	12	4,0

Note: (a) These figures exclude the category of foreign workers denoted as 'other'. They numbered 70,172 in 1984 and 73,998 in 1985.

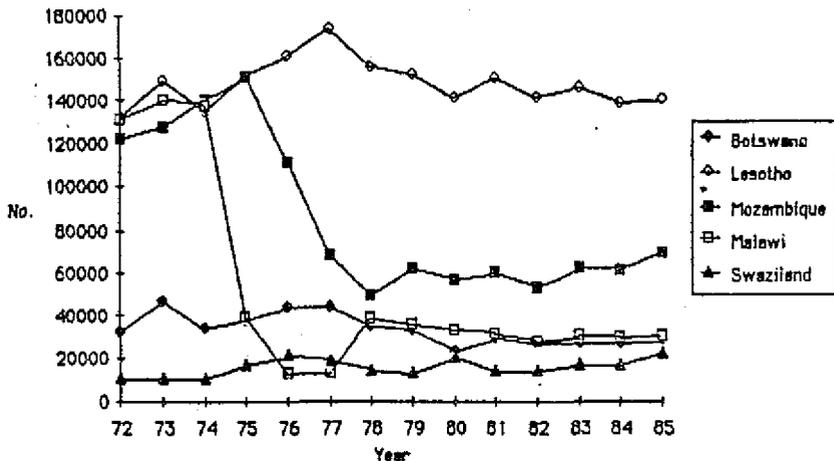
In terms of numbers, there has been a dramatic decline in the numbers employed in agriculture; miners have remained fairly constant; while all other sectors have shown a decline, admittedly from a low base.

Employment of foreigners is subject to fairly strict controls. The potential employer is required to have a permit before recruiting foreigners. It is probable that, apart from mining and agriculture, employment numbers will continue to decline as it is unlikely that permission to employ foreigners will be granted in future. Most of those currently employed in other sectors will be people who have had their repatriation suspended and, as they end their working lives, numbers will continue to decline. The option of entering South Africa for employment in most sectors is now closed off.

Origins of migrants

As shown in Table 2, migrants are drawn to South Africa from as far away as Tanzania, coming from all over the subcontinent to seek work. In 1986, migrants came from eight countries (in order of importance): Lesotho, Mozambique, Malawi, Botswana, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Angola. Of these countries, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Angola do not permit active recruitment of their citizens. As numbers from Zambia and Angola are so small, they are thus excluded from the analysis. The composition of the migrant labour force for the past fifteen years is shown in Table 3 above, and graphically illustrated in Figure 1 below.

FIGURE 1 Migrants from foreign labour suppliers to South Africa



The graph shows that Basothos have always made up the largest number of migrants, with numbers peaking in 1977, but generally holding steady at about 140,000. The most significant trends have been in the decline of Malawian and Mozambican migrants since 1974 and 1975 respectively. In 1973, there were over 139,000 Malawians. By 1976, this had fallen to about 12,000. Since then, numbers have increased again to about 30,000. The number of Mozambicans peaked at 150,000 in 1975, fell to 49,000 by 1978, and increased again to about 70,000.

A chronological examination shows the changing composition of the migrant labour force most clearly. By 1970, nearly 80% were employed on the mines and, therefore, changes in mine recruitment would have a major impact.

The first big change was in the decline of Malawians. In 1974, an aircraft carrying returning Malawian migrants crashed at Francistown in Botswana, killing all on board. The Malawian government responded by ending all external recruitment of labour on the grounds that 'it was not safe'. Evidence suggests that the real reason was that Malawi was facing a labour shortage. While the individual's decision to migrate was rational, maximising personal income from labour, the government felt that this labour could be better used at home to develop the Malawian economy. Therefore, the air crash provided an excuse to ban migration. There is additional evidence for this thesis: at the same time, large numbers of Malawians employed in Rhodesia and Zambia were also returning home, indicating that opportunities there were improving. Migrants to South Africa were paid more and therefore had to be forced to return.¹³

As 98% of Malawians worked on the mines, numbers plummeted. By 1976, there were only 12,000 Malawians employed in South Africa. In 1977, the Malawian government allowed recruitment once more, probably because they recognised that remittances from workers in South Africa played an important role in allowing capital accumulation and provided valuable foreign exchange. At present, Malawian migrants number about 30,000 - approximately 65% are miners.

The second major event was the decline in Mozambican migrants. In 1975, they numbered 150,738, of whom 78% were miners. (It should be noted that the mines increased recruitment to replace Malawians.) Paradoxically, by 1978 there were only 49,000 Mozambicans. The complex reasons for this decline are still being debated, because of a number of factors. Mozambique became independent in June 1975, following a lengthy war in the north of

the country between the Portuguese colonial powers and the marxist Frelimo liberation movement. When Frelimo came to power, they established a socialist government. At the same time, they were faced with a wrecked economy, a seriously damaged infrastructure, and the departure of most of the Portuguese, who represented much of the skilled labour force. The result was that the actual procedures involved in recruiting, processing and transporting migrants became more difficult. The Frelimo government also wished to reduce its dependence on South Africa, especially in terms of employment, as this went against its policies. In South Africa, mine management was concerned that Mozambican miners might bring what they regarded as dangerous socialist ideas into their compounds. There can be little doubt that these fears were shared by the South African authorities. These factors combined to reduce the number of Mozambican migrants.

In 1977, Lesotho was the main supplier of labour, a position it continues to hold. Mozambique ranked second, Botswana third, and Zimbabwe fourth. By 1981, Malawi had pushed Botswana and Zimbabwe into fourth and fifth places respectively. In 1987, the order was much the same, with Swaziland pushing Zimbabwe into sixth place. When Zimbabwe became independent in 1980, the government announced that it would not allow active recruitment of its citizens for employment in South Africa, although it would not prevent them from seeking or taking up employment.

The upheavals in the supply of labour during the 1970s led the Chamber of Mines to reappraise its reliance on foreign workers, who were from three main sources - Malawi, Mozambique and Lesotho - so that they faced serious problems when labour supplies from two of these countries fell. As the labour supply was 80% foreign, the mines were vulnerable, and the Chamber decided to reduce their dependence by recruiting more labour from within South Africa, particularly from the 'homelands'. They aimed for an overall labour mix of 60% from South Africa and 40% foreign.

The mix of labour by country of origin has been remarkably stable in the 1980s, but there is general agreement that this is likely to change in the near future. There are indications that certain groups will become more marginal, as will be discussed in the section on the future of migration.

Age of migrants and recruitment of novices

Although the number of migrants from the supplier countries has remained fairly constant, evidence suggests that the average age is increasing. Migrants tend to be healthy young men. Information derived from the supplier countries shows that, for Swaziland, 61% are below age twenty-nine, and 91% below forty-nine;²⁰ for Lesotho, 72% are below age forty;²¹ and for Mozambique, a sample of 146 showed that half the workers were below age thirty and over two-thirds were below thirty-five.²² Botswana found that among mine recruits, 80% are below thirty and 92 % below forty.²³

The introduction of the valid re-engagement certificate has been important. This certificate allows a miner to return to the same mine at the same level, provided he reports back to the recruitment depot within a certain period after his contract ends. Apart from enabling the mines to have a more certain supply of labour, this has encouraged migrants to view mining as a career and, as a consequence, the average age has risen, which is also reflected in the decline of novice recruitment, as shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6 Number of novices, gold mines, Chamber members ²⁴

	Yearly average			Growth rates	
	1983	1984	1985	1984/3	1985/4
Swaziland	1984	1253	1301	-36,84%	3,83%
Botswana	1024	445	230	-56,54%	-48,31%
Lesotho	1958	3393	3312	73,29%	- 2,39%
Mozambique	396	2665	5627	572,98%	111,14%

THE IMPORTANCE OF MIGRANT LABOUR

Migration is such an emotive issue that often people do not consider its importance for the individual, the recipient country, and the labour supplier. This can be looked at from two levels: at the micro level, the migrant chooses to seek employment and work outside his country of origin because it is rational for him to do so. He may not be able to find work at home and, even if he could, he can make more money by traveling. Of course, this does not consider the imperatives (the macro level) that may force him to seek employment and a cash wage in the first place.

The imposition of taxes in British-ruled Africa forced people to seek employment to earn money to pay the taxes; therefore, this migration cannot be said to be voluntary. In Mozambique, there was a system of forced labour or chibalo. The only way to avoid working in very harsh and poorly paid conditions was to seek employment outside the country. This resulted in a massive outflow of labour from Mozambique to all its neighbours, not just to South Africa. Migrants still individually decide to migrate, and their movement is important on a national scale for two reasons: first, it provides employment; and secondly, migrants send home money, providing a valuable source of income. It is worth noting that the migrant supplying countries established their own organisation - the Southern African Labour Committee (SALC), which was set up after a conference on migratory labour in Lusaka in 1978.

Employment

A feature of Third World countries is rapidly growing populations. Young adults entering the labour market is the fastest growing sector. Southern Africa is no exception. The problems of unemployment and underemployment are found throughout the region. It is against this background that the importance of migration must be examined. Migration often provides the only

cash injection into a family - a source of funds not only for survival but also for development. Not only are jobs within a migrant supplying country often lower paid, but frequently there simply are no jobs, so the opportunity to take employment in South Africa is a useful political safety valve.

The quality of statistics on the labour supply in the SADC states varies from very good to nonexistent. This section attempts to bring together all the available information and to give a picture of the labour market in each state. As will be shown, the picture that emerges is generally rather bleak and depressing.

Botswana

It is ironic that the most successful country in the region should have an employment problem. During the 1980s, it was (according to the World Bank) the most successful country in the world, measured in terms of GDP growth.

Botswana is a large, sparsely populated country - the 1986 estimate of the population is 1,131,700. Much of the country is desert or semi-desert, and the average rainfall is only 475mm, unevenly distributed and erratic. Nonetheless, the majority of the people live in the rural areas and depend on agriculture for their livelihoods.

The economy and its growth has been fuelled by the mineral sector - in particular, the discovery and exploitation of diamonds. The main producer of wealth in the agricultural sector is cattle raising. This accounts for almost 80% of the gross output within the sector, although, as was found in the late 1970s, 45% of rural households owned no cattle. Almost half the national herd was owned by the top 7%.²⁵ The predominant feature of Botswana's economy is that the majority of its people are excluded from the wealth-creating activities that have given it such impressive economic growth.

The mining industry is capital intensive and employs comparatively few people; cattle are owned mainly by the rich; and with six years of drought in the 1980s, arable agriculture is clearly not a viable option for the majority of the people, who nonetheless live in rural areas. This has resulted in consistent government emphasis on employment creation. Some idea of the magnitude of the problem can be seen in Table 7, which shows the projected manpower supply and requirements.

TABLE 7 Projected manpower supply and requirements 1981-2001 ²⁶

	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001
Manpower supply					
Educated	230 600	317 000	445 000	597 000	778 000
Uneducated	186 400	199 000	172 000	139 000	99 000
TOTAL	417 000	516 000	617 000	736 000	877 000
Manpower required					
Formal	97 400	137 700	193 700	276 400	397 600
Traditional	98 000	137 700	193 700	276 400	397 600
Informal	35 500	50 200	70 600	100 700	144 900
TOTAL	230 900	295 700	382 100	505 900	683 300
Labour imbalance					
	186 100	220 300	234 900	230 100	193 700

The Sixth National Development Plan projected that the increase in domestic employment and self-employment opportunities would be about 11,500 per annum. By contrast, the increase in the labour force would be about 21,000 per annum. Thus, there would be a net addition to the pool of unemployment of about 9,500 people each year. With the expansion of education, there is virtually universal primary schooling, and enrolment for secondary education is expected to double in the plan period from 31,000 to 60,000. The workseekers will be increasingly better educated and more ambitious.

The number of Batswana in paid employment in Botswana is 117,100 and the number registered in South Africa is about 28,000. This

means that nearly 20% of Batswana in formal sector wage employment work outside national borders.

The National Migration Study of 1982 stated that:

In the short run, efforts must be made to maintain the levels of recruitment of labour by mines despite the many deleterious aspects of such flows. It is clear that the impact of a sudden decline in movement would have severe and concentrated impacts on segments of the society ... given the difficulties of creating alternative domestic employment and income-generating opportunities for mine workers, efforts should be made in the short run to maintain the levels of recruitment by the South African mines. Direct negotiations with the Chamber of Mines and its recruiting arm, TEBA, are possible.²⁷

Other studies indicate that it is the poorest people who migrate - those without access to other income-earning activities or cattle. Clearly, for these people, the opportunity is very important.²⁸

Lesotho

Of all the SALC countries, Lesotho is the most dependent on migrant labour. Up to 1963, much of the migration was permanent, as migrants settled in South Africa. The supply of labour in Lesotho is vast and the opportunities for employment very limited. Only 13% of the land is arable and there are few natural resources.

Lesotho's labour supply is shown in Table 8. As the figures show, in 1985, of 888,600 people in the labour force, about 140,000 were migrants. The number of formal sector jobs was 40,000. The balance of the population was absorbed by agriculture, self-employment or remained unemployed.

TABLE 8
Estimated and potential labour force - migrants as a percentage
of the labour force, 1974-85 ²⁹

Year	Male	Total labour force		Migrants (official)	Migrants as % of total
		Female	Total		
1976	271 200	262 500	533 700	160 634	30,0
1980	310 900	300 300	611 200	140 746	23,0
1981	318 500	307 200	625 700	150 422	24,0
1982	326 100	314 700	640 800	140 719	22,0
1983	333 700	321 600	655 300	145 797	22,2
1984	342 100	329 200	671 300	138 443	20,6
1985	349 900	338 700	688 600	139 827	20,3

Figures produced after the Third Plan estimated the total labour force to be 514,704, of whom 396,192 (77%) were employed. The employed category included both wage employment and self-employment (including agricultural workers). Unemployment was estimated at 118,512 (23%) - people who were neither in paid employment nor self-employed, although they were available and looking for work.³⁰

The Third Plan states:

Even high growth rates in employment will add only relatively few new jobs during the plan period. It is apparent that modern sector growth, even at 6 per cent annually, will provide only 13 per cent of the required jobs. Even if no migrants return, the modern sector is not likely to absorb more than 20 per cent of the jobseekers.³¹

Cobbe estimates that the numbers entering the labour force will be rather higher. He writes:

About 30 000 young people enter the market annually at present, two-thirds or more of them with full primary education. Perhaps three to four thousand of them may become migrant mine workers. If the trends of the recent past continue, two or three thousand may find cash wage jobs in Lesotho. The remaining 23-25 000 will have to be absorbed by agriculture or the informal sector. Very few will be able to support themselves by farming since land is so scarce, and as the Land Act is implemented, fewer than ever expect to be given any allocation. Hence there is potential for a major unemployment crisis especially for young men and women.³²

If Basothos did not have the opportunity to migrate, the country would either need massive and continual handouts of aid or experience starvation.

Malawi

With a population of 7,7 million and only about 31,000 people employed in South Africa, employment opportunities in South Africa are clearly not important. Malawi could probably reabsorb the migrants without great difficulty as considerable agricultural potential exists. Nevertheless, migrant earnings are a source of much needed foreign currency.

Mozambique

It is difficult to obtain accurate figures for Mozambique. In 1978, it was estimated that the country had a surplus of some 493,000 workers.³³ A clear indication that unemployment remains a serious problem was given in 1983 with the launching of 'Operation Production', which involved expelling the unemployed from cities to work on state projects or in agriculture in the rural areas. Very large numbers of Mozambicans have also crossed into the Eastern Transvaal illegally to seek work on farms. Finally, there are long queues at the migrant recruiting depots in Mozambique. In 1986, a sample of recruited miners showed that of sixty-six men taken on for a mine, 23% had waited less than three months, 50% had queued for from three to six months, while 12% had tried for over six months.³⁴ The willingness of people to wait for such a lengthy period is a clear indication of the employment crisis in Mozambique.

Swaziland

The position in Swaziland can be summarised by quoting directly from the Fourth Development Plan, which stated:

Over the Third Plan period it is estimated that an average of 2 230 new jobs were created annually in the formal sector of the economy. However, the estimated net

additions to the labour force were in the order of 6 400 persons per annum. Thus, approximately 3 170 persons per year have been absorbed into non-formal employment, or else were unemployed during the Third Plan period. In relative terms, the formal sector's share of employment has decreased compared to the non-formal sector over the Plan period.

Due to high population growth rate and the youthful age structure of the population, the demand for formal sector jobs will continue to outstrip the supply of formal sector jobs. Based on present demographic trends applicable to the Fourth Plan period, the estimated gross additions to the labour force will be in the order of 8 500 persons per annum.

It has been forecast that unless there are additional major new investments over the Fourth Plan period, formal sector employment will grow by 1,7 per cent per year, or by 1 300 positions. An additional 1 200 will be employed through replacement (retirement, death, etc.); and a further 1 200 will be employed as novices (first time employees) in the South African mines and an additional 700 will become self-employed.

Thus, on average during the Fourth Plan period, 4 400 people will find employment in the formal sector. The result is an estimated average increase in the numbers seeking formal sector employment and not finding it of 4 100 per annum. Hence, if the elasticity of employment with respect to GDP were to remain at the Third Plan level of 0,72 the real economic growth rate would have to increase to 8,3 per cent per annum, to absorb all the available labour over the Fourth Plan period. This is clearly not possible.³⁵

Swaziland is unique in that it has projected that recruitment of novices will continue in the future. There has also been an increase in numbers employed on the mines. About 25% of the labour force in formal sector employment is on the mines.

Zimbabwe

Of the countries reviewed in this section, apart from Lesotho, Zimbabwe probably faces the greatest unemployment problem. The level of employment in 1983 was the same as it had been in 1976. Over the same period, the population grew and it has been estimated that between 1973 and 1981 the percentage of the adult population employed in the formal sector fell from 33,5% to 26,5%, and has since fallen further.

In Table 9 below, the estimated unemployment rate is given. Based on the 1982 census, the figures show that, excluding communal farmers, 15% of males and 17% of females were unemployed.

TABLE 9 Unemployment in Zimbabwe ³⁵

Category	(%) Including communal farmers	(%) Excluding communal farmers
Blacks	11	19
Whites	3	3
Other races	10	10
People with no formal education	10	20
primary school	12	21
secondary/tertiary	8	10
Males	11	15
Females	11	27

When Zimbabwe became independent in 1980, there was an expansion of social services. Nowhere was this more marked than in education, where Form 1 enrolments leapt from 22,201 in 1980 to 83,491 in 1981 and 138,904 in 1984. In 1987, there were some 90,000 school-leavers entering the labour market with four or six years of secondary education. The available jobs numbered 29,000. In the same year, the Director of the MBA programme at the University of Zimbabwe warned that over the next five years '1.1 million school-leavers would enter the labour market - a number greater than the total labour force currently employed in the formal economy'.³⁷ He went on to say:

... given Zimbabwe's population growth rate and age structure, and the explosion of secondary and tertiary education since 1980, we are facing an acute crisis of unfulfilled expectations. Indeed, the so-called 'misery index', calculated by adding together the country's inflation and unemployment rates, has virtually doubled from around 15 per cent in 1980 to at least 30 per cent this year.³⁸

Zimbabwe's economy has grave difficulties and there seems little prospect that the imaginative reforms needed for recovery will be made. There will be a growing number of educated unemployed in the urban areas, and for most Zimbabweans, the option of seeking employment in South Africa has been closed off.

Labour supply increases

This section sets out to measure the supply of labour in Southern Africa. While in some instances it is difficult to obtain the necessary data, it is evident that the subcontinent is facing increasing problems of unemployment. The labour supply is growing steadily and becoming ever more educated. The number of formal sector jobs is either constant or, in some countries, has actually fallen. Even where employment has grown, it cannot absorb the increase in the labour force, let alone catch up with the backlog.

In the past, South Africa provided jobs. The labour forces of the SALC countries were able to seek work in the mines, industry and on farms in South Africa, and they were generally employed. It is acknowledged that this was a mixed blessing and partly the cause of the problems facing the region today. Nonetheless, migration did provide employment. Today, with growing unemployment in South Africa itself, this avenue is increasingly closed off. Not only are SALC citizens unable to seek work in South Africa, but their governments are having to deal with returning migrants who seek wage employment.

Earnings

Migration does not only provide employment - through remittances, migrants also provide valuable income for the migrant supplying countries. In 1976, payment to the supplier countries through TEBA alone amounted to R100 million, increasing to R375 million in 1983, and reaching R501 million in 1986.³⁹ In 1984, the Chamber of Mines estimated that, when all other avenues of

transferring income and goods are taken into account, about R1 billion found its way into the labour supplying countries. This figure includes remittances within South Africa to the so-called 'independent states'. Another estimate, by the Africa Institute, gives a figure of R820 million for 1985, remitted to Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. For 1983, they estimated R537 million, and for 1980 R311 million.⁴⁰ Whichever way one looks at it, the total cash inflow to the sender economies is quite substantial.

To gain a more accurate understanding of the impact of this flow, it is necessary to ascertain the proportion of remittances in national incomes and, if possible, of household incomes for the countries concerned. Before doing this, however, it is useful to gain some idea of where the remittances originate. In essence, the migrant has two channels for sending money home - the first is formal and the second informal. Therefore, the first is measurable, while the second can only be estimated.

Formal payments are made through recognised channels - banks and post offices. The main mechanism is through TEBA. Once again, the remittances are divided into two types. First, migrant miners from Lesotho, Malawi and Mozambique are required to send at least 60% of their salaries to their country of origin, known as deferred pay and transferred by TEBA. The second method is for workers to send money home as remittances. This is open to workers from all countries and miners who have to defer pay may also have remittances deducted and sent back home, again done through TEBA or the Post Office. Evaluating the informal sending of money is difficult, as migrants may send cash by mail or with friends. On their return home, they may take cash, as well as goods to take with them or mail home.

In assessing the importance of income to the supplying countries, the researcher immediately runs into problems of establishing accurate figures. Those for TEBA remittances and deferred pay are usually easy to obtain and accurate, but not all migrants are

miners, nor is all money sent via formal channels. Official statistics often vary widely between the different sources; therefore, it is important to bear in mind that any aggregate figures are bound to be inaccurate.

It should also be remembered that migrants often come from specific groups - the poorest people with the least access to factors of production - therefore, income is of disproportionate importance to their families. Their remittances offer the only opportunity to break out of the poverty trap and to begin accumulating some kind of wealth-generating resources. Secondly, remittances and deferred pay are of particular importance to Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. All three countries face severe shortages of foreign exchange and, even though the rand has fallen in value, it is still a freely negotiable currency and very welcome.

Remittances as a percentage of GNP are shown in Table 10. As might be expected, Lesotho is most dependent on migrant remittances. Nearly half their GNP comes from migrant remittances and deferred pay. Estimates show that 60 to 70 per cent of rural income in Lesotho is from remittances.

TABLE 10 Remittances, deferred pay & national economies
(in million US\$) ⁴¹

	1983	1984	1985	1986
Botswana GNP	999,4	960,0	n/a	n/a
Remittances	4,9	41,6	25,9	25,9
as % of GNP	4,7	4,3	n/a	n/a
Lesotho GNP	841,4	795,7	500,6	561,0
Remittances	392,5	385,3	286,7	334,8
as % of GNP	47,0	48,0	48,6	47,5
Malawi GNP	1390,0	1224,0	1135,0	1133,0
Remittances	18,3	16,6	17,1	21,0
as % of GNP	1,3	1,4	1,5	1,9
Mozambique GNP	1600,0	1260,0	1050,0	n/a
Remittances	49,3	36,0	35,9	n/a
as % of GNP	3,9	3,4	3,1	n/a
Swaziland GNP	547,4	485,5	n/a	n/a
Remittances	7,7	6,8	n/a	n/a
as % of GNP	n/a	1,5	n/a	n/a

With the exception of Lesotho and, to a lesser extent, Mozambique, it would seem that the labour supplying countries have reduced their 'dependence' on remittances as a source of national income since the peak in 1975-77, which correlated with increased wages in mining. The same cannot be said of household dependence on remittances. Although figures are difficult to obtain, it is generally accepted that the recent drought severely diminished agricultural production; therefore, alternative incomes have been reduced and migration has become extremely important, especially to the rural poor.

OTHER LABOUR MOVEMENT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

There have been a number of movements of labour in Southern Africa other than those to South Africa. Unfortunately, little data is available, therefore this section is rather impressionistic. Three distinct groups of people are involved: unskilled and skilled labour, and refugees.

Unskilled labour

The main movement of unskilled labour has been from Malawi to Zimbabwe, and from Mozambique to Zimbabwe and Swaziland. Estimates reveal that in 1972 there were 249,000 Malawians employed in Zimbabwe, chiefly in the agricultural sector.⁴²

In 1975, Zimbabwe's Closed Land Act reserved certain occupations for its own citizens. At this point, 214,021 people (23% of the labour force) was estimated to be foreign, of whom 68,900 were affected - including 23,600 Mozambicans and 36,700 Malawians. In terms of the Act, only the agricultural and mining sectors were open to all nationalities. If the percentages were the same for all nationalities, this means that there were probably about 70,000 Mozambicans and 110,000 Malawians in Zimbabwe. (As previously mentioned, Malawians were encouraged to return from Zimbabwe at the same time as recruitment from South Africa was halted.)

No recent estimates for foreign workers in Zimbabwe are available. In 1982, a figure of 493,000 foreign residents was given, but without a breakdown into age or sector of employment. It is clearly difficult to identify foreigners if they are absorbed into local communities and, where there are ethnic similarities, this can easily happen. It seems that many Malawians and Mozambicans have settled in Zimbabwe. This settlement may be regarded as permanent if the Zimbabwean government allows them to remain. Nevertheless, the era of relatively free movement across national borders is over. The region's governments will ensure that their own citizens have first option on any employment. It is likely, therefore, that borders will be increasingly controlled and the nationalities of employees will be monitored.

The only other country in the region which has experienced an inflow of unskilled foreign labour is Swaziland. During periods of prosperity in the 1970s, Swazi labour avoided employment in the sugar plantations, preferring instead to seek work in urban areas and in South Africa. Their places were taken by Mozambicans who generally crossed the border illegally. These workers were easily identified and deported when jobs became scarce.

Skilled workers

The main source of skilled workers is South Africa and, as many South African firms have subsidiaries in the SADC countries, this eases the movement of labour. Again, it is difficult to obtain accurate figures. There is no data on contract staff leaving South Africa - only for emigrants - therefore, the only source of information is data on entrants to the recipient countries, which is often of poor quality.

Data from Swaziland shows that in 1985, 249 residence permits were granted to economically active people. Of these, 137 were South African. A similar pattern is recorded for all previous years. Zimbabwe received 502 South African immigrants in 1985,

but no breakdown in age or occupation is available. Botswana recorded that there were 4,200 expatriates in the country in 1983, but did not break this down according to nationality.

From visits to SADCC countries, it is evident that there is a significant presence of South African-based employees in the private sector - not only South African citizens, but also other nationalities who are permanently resident in South Africa. In general, governments and parastatals are staffed by contract personnel from Europe, North America and Asia. The private sector has close links with the Republic and draws much staff from here. While governments prefer not to have South Africans in sensitive posts, they have no objections to them in the private sector as they make a considerable contribution to the economies of their host countries.

In considering the movement of skilled personnel, mention should be made that the SADCC countries are losing large numbers of trained people to the homelands. No figures are available, but it is known that the governments of Lesotho and Botswana in particular are concerned by the loss of people to Bophuthatawana, Transkei and Ciskei.

Refugees

Africa has four million refugees. In Southern Africa by early 1987, there were 210,000 in Malawi; 133,600 in Zambia; 65,000 in Zimbabwe; 5,180 in Botswana; 12,650 in Swaziland; 4,000 in Lesotho; and 15,000 in South Africa.⁴³ This movement of people should be considered as they have to be fed, housed and, if they remain in the country, assimilated.

Mozambique is the major source of refugees in the region. (Ironically, in the immediate post-independence period, it generated a large labour movement after many Portuguese settlers fled to South Africa.) Swaziland had 25,000 Mozambican refugees by early 1988, with 200 arriving each month, the majority of whom

were under the age of thirteen. The Times of Swaziland has warned that the country could not go on absorbing these people. There have been reports of Swazi peasant farmers employing Mozambicans on their farms in exchange for food.

Illegal immigrants

By the very nature of their illegal status, there can be no certainty on the number of illegal immigrants in any country. With little doubt, South Africa is the main target for illegal immigrants. In recent years, as the West has threatened increasing sanctions, one of the counter-threats made by South African politicians has been that South Africa would expel the 1,5 million foreigners employed in the country. As there are 300,000 legal migrants, this argument posits that there are approximately 1,2 million illegal immigrants. This figure is patently absurd, as the South African government is efficient enough to be able to control illegals to some extent. In probability, the number of illegals may be about half that of legal migrants, so that a reasonable estimate gives a figure of about 150,000. Most of these people are employed in agriculture.

It is obvious that there are not as many illegal immigrants as the South African government sometimes argues. Nonetheless, the status of illegal immigrants is doubly marginalised. They break the various laws governing migrant labour and are therefore open to exploitation by employers.

THE FUTURE OF MIGRANT LABOUR

The division of labour in Southern Africa is undergoing a period of change. The prediction is that the number of foreign migrants will fall in the future. There are three crucial factors: the South African demand for labour; the supply of labour; and how these may be reconciled.

Demand for labour

The main user of migrant labour in South Africa is the mining industry. Any changes in its employment pattern will have an immediate and major effect on migration. In part, the reason for the fall in numbers of migrants since the mid-1970s has been an active attempt by the mines to reduce their dependence on foreign labour. The policy of the Chamber of Mines is to employ 60% from within South Africa and the 'national states', and 40% from other countries.

It is likely that the demand for mine labour will remain constant for at least the next decade, even increasing slightly. At the Chamber of Mines' 1985 annual meeting, the outgoing President said that the industry was to invest R12 billion in new projects over the next five years, creating 6,000 skilled and 40,000 unskilled jobs.⁴⁴ Ultimately, it is the mine managers who decide, within company policy, how many will be employed from each country. The key issue for the SALC states is what their role will be in meeting this demand.

The demand for labour in other sectors will depend on the economy's performance, which will include such factors as investment, the role of the unions, and the capital/labour mix. The number of migrants employed in these sectors has declined steadily. In 1984, migrants employed outside the mining industry totalled about 58,000 people (16,4% of the foreign labour force). This decline will continue as people leave their jobs voluntarily or retire, and are replaced from local sources. It is unlikely that non-South Africans will be allowed to take up employment in sectors other than mining and agriculture.

The supply of labour

The problems of providing employment in the SADC countries have already been described. It would be no exaggeration to say that Southern Africa is facing an employment crisis. The problem is

not confined to SADC countries, but is also experienced in South Africa.

The South African labour market does not lend itself to traditional analysis because of unique political and administrative factors. The standard economic concepts of supply and demand are confronted by conditions that are peculiar to the South African situation. Black unemployment is very high and is increasing rapidly - a state of affairs not ignored by the politicians. As early as 1970, the then Prime Minister, B.J. Vorster, said that 'the biggest challenge in South Africa today is not terrorism, but unemployment'.

The most realistic figures for South African unemployment were produced by University of Cape Town economist, Charles Simkins, and are shown in Table 11. In 1985, he estimated unemployment at 24,1%.⁴⁵ Unemployment has continued to rise in 1986 and 1987.

TABLE 11 Labour supply, employment & unemployment 1970-1981 (000s)⁴⁶

Year	Labour supply	Employment	Unemployment	
			No.	%
1970	7 112	6 274	838	11,8
1971	7 312	6 383	929	12,7
1972	7 519	5 414	1 105	14,7
1973	7 729	6 701	1 028	13,3
1974	7 938	6 901	7 033	13,1
1975	8 150	7 033	1 117	13,7
1976	8 368	7 113	1 255	15,0
1977	8 588	7 125	1 463	17,0
1978	8 811	7 096	1 715	19,5
1979	9 030	7 173	1 866	20,6
1980	9 276	7 351	1 925	20,8
1981	9 497	7 493	2 004	21,1

By any standards, the labour force's rate of growth clearly exceeds that of job creation. A Human Sciences Research Council study estimated that during the period 1980-85 the labour force would grow at a rate of some 290,000 persons per annum. Even if the GDP were to grow at a high rate of 4,5% per annum, with the

present capital/labour mix, there would be only 134,000 new jobs per year.⁴⁷

All the region's countries have a large and growing pool of unemployed and underemployed people. As has been the experience in much of Asia, these people are increasingly well-educated and more able to express their dissatisfaction. Anecdotal information tells that over the past few years, TEBA has no longer needed to recruit workers actively. Groups of men camp at the gates of all the depots, waiting in the hope of obtaining a job. The region's unemployment crisis is likely to get worse rather than improve, as South Africa could fill all the jobs held by foreigners with its own citizens, subject to them acquiring the necessary skills.

The key for the future of labour migration is how the demand for labour will be matched to the supply within the context of Southern Africa, which will be examined in the next section.

Determining the trends

Over the past fifteen years, South African citizens (including those from the homelands) have been given first preference for jobs in sectors other than mining and agriculture. At the same time, controls over foreign blacks have made it difficult for them to enter the country and find employment legally. Not only is the individual likely to be fined or jailed and deported, but employers face sizeable fines as well. Therefore, fewer foreigners will be employed in most sections of the economy, and this trend will continue.

The two sectors in which foreign migrants are able to find employment are mining and agriculture, although even the latter is becoming more inaccessible. South Africans are reluctant to take employment in these sectors if other jobs are available. In the Eastern Transvaal, Mozambicans may continue to find employment in agriculture, but numbers are again likely to drop.

Mining remains the main employer of foreign migrants and the trends here will determine general trends for migration. At present, individual mine managers decide on the mix of labour they wish to employ on their mines and request the necessary recruitment to maintain the mix. It therefore seems likely that the mining houses and the government will seek to play an increasing role in determining the mix of labour. The guidelines laid down by major companies are likely to change in the light of a growing sense of responsibility to the people of South Africa. Because of this, the first group to go will probably be the Malawians, who are the most expensive to employ in terms of the distance they must be transported. The next group to be affected will be Mozambicans, followed by Batswana and Swazis. Lesotho will probably always be regarded as a special case.

South African government officials are not united on the issue of migrants. On the one hand is a group which regards them as crucial in maintaining economic dependence on South Africa and therefore argues for their retention; on the other, some insist that South African unemployment must be reduced first - the quickest way being to replace foreign workers. The likely outcome would be for numbers to be reduced somewhat, for instance, 10,000 from each country, with the exception of Lesotho.

The Centre for African Studies at Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo has argued that there is a changing division of labour at South African mines. It suggests that at the top of the hierarchy would be a smallish group of permanent skilled workers who will be housed on the mines and can expect to move up along a career path. These workers would be drawn from South Africa. The next and largest group of semi-skilled workers would commute and would be drawn mainly from South Africa, with some migrants from neighbouring states, especially Lesotho. Finally, a reserve of supplementary labour would be called on during times of crisis or shortage of labour, drawn from Malawi and Mozambique.⁴⁸

Policies of the labour supplying countries

If the South African government is not united on the issue of migrants, neither are the labour supplying countries. The coordinating body, SALC, was established as a result of a conference on migratory labour held in Lusaka in 1978. The member states are Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The resolutions establishing SALC charged it with:

- (a) finding ways and means of eliminating the migratory labour system;
- (b) ensuring that all migrant workers are withdrawn from South Africa;
- (c) coordinating policies aimed at eliminating the migratory system;
- (d) implementing the terms of the Charter of Rights for Migrant Workers in Southern Africa adopted by this Conference.⁴⁸

SALC's main function has been to provide coordination and a forum for discussion among its members. It has not made any progress towards drawing up plans for withdrawal. While it might be the group's wish to withdraw labour from South Africa, each country would lose a great deal if it were to do so.

One problem the SALC governments have not faced is whether they object to migration to South Africa as a social evil or because of the apartheid system. Would they want their workers to remain in South Africa under a majority government? If, as seems likely, SALC does not object to the migrant system but to apartheid, then they should agitate for improvement of the conditions under which their migrants live and work rather than advocating withdrawal.

SALC has played an important role in making those concerned with migration face the problems of the region, even though it has not produced much material benefit or concrete actions. This is due in part to the membership of countries which do not send migrants to South Africa, such as Tanzania and Zambia, which do not fully appreciate the problems facing the labour suppliers. Because of

this, the organisation lacks real bargaining power. The SALC countries are unlikely to gain a better bargaining position and probably will do little to influence the pattern of events in Southern Africa.

CONCLUSION

South Africa dominates the movement of labour in Southern Africa. Generations of foreigners have sought work in the mines and industries of the Republic, and have sometimes settled there. In recent years, numbers have decreased as it becomes more difficult for foreigners to find work - in particular, the percentage of female migrants has dropped considerably. The most important trend is the changing composition of the migrant population, as shown by the dramatic decline in the number of workers from Malawi and Mozambique. Even though numbers have dropped, in financial terms their importance has probably increased, as wages have risen substantially. Migrants continue to be a vital source of revenue and foreign exchange.

Population growth in the region, coupled with economic mismanagement and destabilisation, has caused an employment crisis. This is not confined to the SADCC countries but is also severe in South Africa. Pressure has been applied to alleviate unemployment by reducing the number of foreign migrants employed. This is linked to other trends: increasing mechanisation; sanctions and reduced demand for South African products; stabilisation of mineworkers; and growing union pressure - all work towards a decline in the number of foreign migrants.

Political pressure may result in a small but nonetheless significant number of migrants from each country being retained as bargaining chips (although Lesotho is and always will be an exception). It seems certain that in the next fifteen years, Malawians and Mozambicans may be phased out altogether, while the numbers of Batswana and Swazi migrants will be drastically reduced, in accordance with the changing division of labour.

Three categories of labour will evolve - permanent workers, commuters and supplementary labour. The implications of this reduction of employment opportunities, with the consequent termination of remittances to supplying states, need to be examined closely. To date, there has been little contingency planning and, although SALC has no power to change things, it should begin to prepare for the inevitable decline.

If some form of political accommodation should come about in South Africa and an acceptable majority government takes power, economic development and an increased demand for labour may be possible again. The position of migrants will unfortunately remain the same - indeed, there would be even greater pressure to provide employment for South Africans.

The movement of skilled workers from South Africa to the SADCC states has been important and will end as localisation takes place. There have also been major movements of unskilled workers between some of the SADCC countries, but the institution of stricter controls and growing local unemployment makes this a thing of the past. At present, the major movement of population is refugees, a problem likely to remain until the Southern African conflicts are settled.

This paper would not be complete without a mention of the disease AIDS. It is sweeping through Central and Southern Africa and will effect on the labour supply, the pattern of development, and the movement of labour throughout the subcontinent. Its implications are profound, but at this stage, one can only speculate as to what these will be.

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