

LABOUR MIGRATION IN SWAZILAND: RECENT TRENDS AND IMPLICATIONS

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Introduction

Southern African migration literature has been inclined to relegate Swaziland as the subordinate case of the "BLS" composite. Ostensibly common geographical and historical characteristics, combined with migration research having been almost exclusively restricted to Lesotho and Botswana, has ipso facto led to Swaziland being treated as a parallel case, differentiated by degree only. Assimilation into the "common" migrant labour problem has generally been justified on the grounds of superficial evidence (e.g. South African mine recruitment) in the purported absence of more substantive data.

Recent work, largely inspired by the 1976 ILO Swaziland Migration Project, (1) will hopefully put Swaziland's case in a better perspective: not only are the contemporary flows structurally very different (at least spatially) to Lesotho and Botswana, but historical processes significantly divergent (Booth, 1981). Limited

by scope, this paper seeks to highlight the basic features of post-independence labour migration and briefly to consider its impact and policy considerations. Granted the paper largely addresses itself to current flows, it hopes to avoid falling into the neoclassical pitfall of ahistorical statics. Though not explicitly examined here, the evidence suggests an internal process of underdevelopment which has affected Swaziland's rural homestead population in ways not dissimilar to that of the more extreme labour reserves contiguous to South African industry. Thus, despite impressive macroeconomic performance, the rural exodus of labour, comparable to that of Lesotho, points to serious internal structural distortion.

By emphasising the importance of country case studies, and by implication the need for country specific policy recommendations, we should of course not decry the desirability of consolidating migrant supplier state efforts through the Southern African Labour Commission (SALC) (2) to exert greater bargaining leverage and focusing on truly common labour issues such as migrant worker rights and conditions. (3)

The Deployment of the Workforce

The directional flow of labour in terms of internal and external employment shows an almost inverse relationship between Lesotho and Swaziland. About half of Lesotho's adult males are employed in South Africa and external migration is said to exceed internal employment by a factor of 6 - 8 (Cobbe, 1981). Swaziland, on the other hand, is alleged to have the highest domestic rate of labour force employment in "developing" Africa (US AID, 1980).

Census results for 1976 found that 41,4 per cent of the resident African labour force was engaged in income generating activity, (4) the remainder being classified as "not employed". The domestically "active" workforce (as interpreted by the census) is skewed by disproportionate male participation: as a percentage of resident African labour force, there are twice as many men (58 per cent) as

women (28 per cent), rising to a ratio of three to one in full-time wage employment. Yet, the proportion of men with no education is marginally less than women, and those with secondary school education only slightly more. (5)

Wage employment is dominated by primary agriculture and linked to industry. The category "agriculture and forestry" (largely foreign controlled sugar, citrus, pineapple, and forest plantations) absorbs almost 40 per cent; while agricultural processing accounts for 85 per cent of manufacturing employment. Combined, agriculture and agro-based industry generate about half of total domestic wage employment. Once quite evenly diversified, modern agriculture has become increasingly overshadowed by sugar production, exposing the labour force to the inherent fluctuations of an open monocrop economy.

Absentees in 1976 were officially recorded as 25,650 of which 95 per cent were of working age and almost all were located in South Africa; absentees tend to be young (40 per cent fell within the 20 - 29 year age cohort), and men out-weighted women by the same proportion as in domestic employment. The census admits the strong likelihood of under-reporting and conservatively estimates the absentee figure to be in the region of 32,000, implying that a little more than one-tenth of the de jure labour force were based outside the country. Assuming that all those of working age in the upward estimate are employed, (6) almost half (47,7 per cent) of the de jure labour force was engaged in an income-generating activity but heavily lop-sided by males.

Dimensions and Characteristics of Labour Migration

i) External Migration:

Mine recruitment figures excepted, data on external migration is at best contentious. Swaziland census figures for absentees are widely divergent from numbers relating to foreign Swazis in South African censuses (see Table 1). Such discrepancies can in part be

explained by the clandestine nature of some flows, definitional amendments, misguided impressions of "temporariness", (7) etc. Empirical ambiguities notwithstanding, significant trends can be gleaned from the data: since the turn of the century, external migration, though increasing absolutely, has slowly declined in relation to total population; but, more importantly, absentees as a proportion of domestic employment have dramatically fallen. (8) Much of the decline can be attributed to the acceleration of domestic income generating opportunities, rising from 13 per cent of the resident African labour force in 1956, to 34 per cent in 1966, and 41 per cent in 1976 (see Table 1), but over the past two and a half decades legislation amending the status and mobility of BLS workers has been particularly discriminatory against the entry of women from the BLS states. (9) Reflecting the difficulty of re-employment in South Africa following temporary repatriation, about two thirds of the female absentees were said to be absent for more than one year compared with little more than a third for men. (10)

Although the 1976 census attempted to categorise the sectoral distribution of the absentees, little was added to the current fund of knowledge as almost half (49 per cent) were categorised as "other", with the remainder working on the mines (43 per cent) or "farms" (8 per cent). The enigmatic "other" would include thousands of workers from border catchment areas (11) working on nearby plantations and related industry where influx control measures do not appear to be strictly enforced. (12) Survey evidence also suggests that many more absentees are involved in skilled employment and professional services than is generally assumed. (13)

Accurate mine recruitment figures have not only provided a reliable barometer of external flows, but have allowed for quantitative analyses of variables influencing migrant decision-making. Mine recruitment up to 1977 was relatively free of exogenously imposed restrictions of flow; mine work was generally open to any Swazi male of sufficient age, weight and height. (14) Since 1977, when reacting to an overwhelming supply response to

higher wages and intensified recruitment campaigns, gold mines imposed restrictions on foreign recruitment and Swazi participation was dramatically reduced from the previous peaks of the mid-1970s (see Table 2), effectively precluding further trend analysis for free flow migration models.

The absolute number of Swazis recruited to the South African mines from the 1930's to mid-1970's has remained remarkably constant over the long run, averaging between 7,000 - 8,000 per annum; (see figure 3 in de Vletter, 1978), with short-term fluctuations induced primarily by the vicissitudes of agricultural production (Doran 1977; Booth 1981).

Unlike most labour reserve areas in Southern Africa, labour migration from Swaziland is not the export of a redundant labour surplus with no alternative option: during the most intense period of economic development (late 1940's to mid-1970's) Swaziland was plagued by labour shortages in certain sectors (see Booth's paper in this edition). Doran's simulation and regression studies demonstrate that a key determinant in the decision to work on the mines is the real Swaziland rural / South African mine income differential. His multiple regression analysis over 1970-76 (15) found that 96 per cent of the variation in recruitment was explained in terms of rural income (the push factor) and mine wages (the pull factor), with the relative importance of the pull factor outweighing the push factor by a factor of 3. This suggests that the foreign labour supply to South Africa is much more wage elastic than was imagined prior to 1976, (16) and explains the virtual doubling of recruitment over a short two year period (1974-76) - an upward trend stopped only by forced retrenchment (see Table 2).

External migration was felt by many local employers to be largely responsible for internal labour shortages which in turn was partially filled by Shangaan labour from Mozambique (de Vletter, 1978). The implication was that a large number of workers preferred work on the South African mines rather than at least some forms of domestic employment. Survey results (de Vletter 1978, 1981b) found, not surprisingly, that the majority of interviewed outgoing miners

preferred to work in Swaziland given the right conditions. Asked whether they were willing to work as manual workers on farms or forestry, citrus, and sugar plantations - areas suffering labour shortages at the time of enquiry - most responded negatively to each category, citing low wages and hard work as the principal reasons. (17) It was also found that 90 per cent of novice recruits had held previous domestic jobs, with more than 40 per cent leaving because of low pay. (18)

The skill range of Swazi miners is diverse, but they are particularly highly regarded for their abilities as drillers. Although many Swazis are career miners, the average Swazi recruit has a much more intermittent contract pattern than the Basotho or Mozambicans who generally regard mine work as a fairly long term source of income. (19) Before recruitment restrictions were imposed, Swazis were found to have the shortest average contract lengths with the mean number of previous contracts being 4,5 (2,8 median). Only 12 per cent of non-novices had worked on the mines ten or more times (de Vletter, 1981b).

ii) Internal Migration:

The dominant flow of labour migration is internal, primarily from the rural homestead base to wage employment opportunities. Census data provides some insight, but is limited to inter-censal "snapshots" of population movements, useful for the purposes of illustrating the spatial effects of unbalanced development, but giving no information about oscillatory patterns.

The preliminary results of the Swaziland Rural Homesteads Survey (20) (de Vletter, 1981a) corroborated and elaborated earlier survey evidence from the ILO Migration Project on labour movements and habits. It was found that one-quarter of the rural homestead population is normally absent, of which 80 per cent were in employment (as found by the 1976 census, employed males outnumbered females by a ratio of 3 to 1). More than two-thirds (67,6 per cent) of the homesteads had absentee workers (averaging more

than two per homestead). Including those homesteads who have resident (commuter) workers, it is estimated that 80 per cent of all rural homesteads have members earning off-farm income.

The majority of homestead absentees gravitated towards domestic activities: more than three quarters (77,5 per cent) remained in Swaziland, and of this internal flow, two thirds moved to "urban areas" defined to include company towns. Only 17,4 per cent of the absentees were known to be in South Africa of which 8 per cent (or 13,3 per cent of adult male absentees) were on the mines and 9,4 per cent in other activities (proportions similar to those for absentees in the 1976 census).

Growth of urban population, as registered up to 1976, has been surprisingly slow, but would be explained by Doran's model in terms of the "safety valve" of South African employment opportunities. Overall urban population growth during the 1966-76 inter-censal period was 3,5 per cent per annum, only marginally higher than the total national annual growth of 2,8 per cent. The fastest growth of 6,5 per cent was registered in the Manzini peri-urban area influenced mainly by the development of a new industrial area. However, since the 1977 mine recruitment restrictions were imposed, there has been visible evidence of rapid urban influx and subsequent open unemployment.

The migrant's agnatic position in the homestead was found to be important in determining the place of work and the remittances patterns. Senior members or those with strong family commitments are inclined to find local work while external migrants were generally younger with considerably fewer dependants. (21) Internal migrants, although on average earning less than external mineworkers, remitted more regularly and in greater amounts to their homesteads. The majority of nationally-based workers maintained close contact with their homestead base, visiting their families at least monthly. Mine workers in 1976 were found to average a period of 7-8 months away from their homes and an inter-contract home stay of 3,4 month (de Vletter, 1978; 1981b).

The Economic Impact of Labour Migration (22)

i) Homestead Labour Resources (23)

The effect on the homestead based labour resources is striking: almost one-third (31,6 per cent) of the homestead adult labour force (including those above 65 years) is physically absent, while one-tenth of the adults, though not absent, are engaged in wage employment near the homesteads, leaving no more than 58 per cent of the homestead adults (including the old and infirm) available for homestead based activities. Furthermore, this residuum is preponderantly female: only 42 per cent of the adult males appear not to be directly involved in off-farm activities versus almost three-quarters (72 per cent) of the adult females. About one-quarter (22,1 per cent) of the homesteads have their homestead head absent and 13,7 per cent are without all adult males.

ii) Homestead Cash Income (24)

The shortfall in labour inputs is generally compensated for in the form of money or in-kind transfers. The pervasive incidence of migration and the concomitant injection of cash for homestead expenditure underscores the degree of wage sector dependence. Half the homesteads indicated that they received remittances from absentee workers on a regular basis (usually monthly) averaging E40.2 per month or E482,4 per annum (Emalangen and Rands are interchangeable). More than one-third (38,7 per cent) had homestead-based workers, aggregating an average of E117,4 per month or E1,408,8 per annum.

By contrast, income from crops, except for only 14 per cent earning more than E500 per annum, was for most of the 41 per cent selling crops, an insignificant amount derived from residual surpluses. Similarly, livestock was sold by one-third of the homesteads and contributed an average of only E206 per annum. Non-agricultural homestead-based activities such as beer-brewing,

and traditional medicine was second only to migrant remittances as a source of cash, being engaged in by nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) of the homesteads who averaged E213 per annum.

It should be borne in mind that just as the real value of agricultural production will be underestimated by not taking into account the imputed value of consumed crop and livestock production, the contribution from migrant workers has not considered the value of goods purchased and transferred home; substantial spending on building material; (25) the numerous cattle purchased by returning mineworkers (see iv below), and irregular remittances.

iii) Cropping Patterns

Homestead production in the BLS states and indeed most of Southern Africa consists predominantly of staple food crops with few homesteads opting for viable cash crop alternatives. Barriers to more "progressive" cropping systems are in terms of deficiencies in knowledge and the constraints of traditional attitudes. Rural development strategies therefore tend to be variations of a combined package of extension services, input facilities and resettlement schemes.

As part of the ILO migration project, Low (1977) undertook a micro-economic analysis of homestead cropping and the effect on or from labour migration. Together with Fowler, he has since synthesized his findings with the theoretical support of a labour allocation model (Low and Fowler, 1980: RDA MEU, 1980). The model was used to explain seemingly paradoxical trends observed in the homestead sector of Swaziland as well as Lesotho. Whereas the adoption of new technology, especially of hybrid maize, and tractors, was high in the Rural Development Areas of Swaziland, the desired shift to cash cropping was not forthcoming; furthermore, the number of deficit maize producing homesteads appears to have risen causing maize imports to increase at alarming rates in recent years, while cultivated lands have diminished.

On the basis of the labour allocation model, these trends can largely be explained in terms of relationships between the high purchase price of maize (staple food), the comparatively low cost of growing maize, the returns to wage labour and yields of cash cropping alternatives. Present differentials in these variables indicate that cash crop yields are not competitive with wage employment nor would it be rational in terms of the opportunity cost of buying maize to switch from staple food production to cash cropping.

Increasing returns to wage employment combined with higher rates of school enrolment (itself a function of wage levels) has explained a diminishing homestead labour force and consequent reduction in cultivated land. This trend has been exacerbated by rapid adoption of hybrid maize which has allowed for reduced labour inputs to grow the same quantities of food as previously but which has had the effect of releasing labour for wage employment instead of for cash cropping as envisaged. The greater use of tractor hire facilities has also encouraged labour outflow. As the return to wage employment increases relative to the purchase price of maize, so one can expect a greater outflow of labour and subsequent reduction in staple food production.

iv) Homestead Differentiation

The commonly assumed dichotomy between "farming" homesteads and migrant supplying homesteads does not appear to exist in Southern Africa. (26) Instead of a negative relationship between homestead agricultural income and off-farm earnings (a relationship implied by the "poorer homesteads are forced to migrate" pundits), a positive correlation was found in recent data and postulated 20 years ago. (27) An analysis of wealth and income distribution based on "wealth points" (28) gave a highly skewed stratification with a lorenz curve gini ratio of 0.462 (de Vletter, 1979). Although further research is needed, preliminary investigation shows a correspondence between homestead size and welfare (29) and that

migrant remittances constitute an important component of the overall incomes mix in wealthier homesteads (de Vletter, 1981a). The role of migration in the homestead "development cycle" (Spiegel, 1981; Murray 1980) requires further rigorous examination and should unveil new dimensions on the dynamics of homestead evolution.

v) Agricultural Investment

Exposure to a more cosmopolitan environment and new ideas during the course of off-farm employment will transmute some aspects of traditional homestead lifestyle, particularly via expenditure patterns. In Mozambique, migration to the mines appears to fit into a fairly distinct life-cycle pattern: after some 20 years of minework many migrants manage to accumulate surpluses to be invested in small businesses (often reflecting a skill learned while on the mines such as tailoring, carpentry or welding) or cash cropping (e.g. cashews or palms). (30) In Swaziland no identifiable transition is apparent, except perhaps in the purchase of cattle. Expenditure predilections between internal and external migrants showed interesting and significant variation: for most homesteads, migrant earnings were primarily used for family support. This was particularly evident from the response given by internal migrants, indicating that they spent money mainly on food, clothing, household goods and education, leaving little surplus for agricultural investment. External migrants also emphasised the importance of family support, but at least equal emphasis to the purchase of cattle - at least half of the interviewed mineworkers explicitly stating their intention to buy cattle. The importance of buying cattle was a trait conspicuously differentiating the external mineworker from the internal migrant, largely explained by the mineworkers' ability to accumulate wages and fewer family commitments. (31) Cattle, from the individual's perspective, are not only easily acquired but, in terms of expected yields, their purchase is an attractive investment. (32) But, from a national point of view, further stocking is detrimental as cattle density is

already the highest in Africa and overgrazing serious.

Although external migrants were found to spend more on agricultural inputs, the expenditures were relatively insignificant. Thus, rather than migration being a channel through which to infuse new ideas and capital for agricultural expansion, the net effect from a macro perspective would appear to be negative. The growing importance of cash income appears, however, to have had a positive influence on educational expenditure and housing improvement. (33)

vi) Skill Drain

The magnitude of the skill drain has been a continuing bone of contention but unfortunately has not been subjected to serious quantification. Results from the school tracer survey (Sullivan, 1981) offer some - albeit limited - insights indicating that a rough "maximum" of 12 per cent of Form 3 and Form 5 school leavers had worked in South Africa. As mentioned earlier, there are indications of many skilled professional Swazi working in South Africa.

To date, the skill drain has probably not merited undue concern, but developments in the South African labour market and the pattern of control adjustments over foreign labour flows (e.g. amending the status of "BLS" migrants in 1958, the prohibition of female migrants in 1963 and restrictions on mineworker recruitment since 1977) could, in the light of the severe shortages of skilled black labour in South Africa (Bloch, 1978), foreseeably lead to a situation where foreign skilled black workers are encouraged through wage incentives while the number of unskilled foreign workers, in the face of mounting South African black unemployment, would be progressively curtailed through adjustments in influx control measures.

vii) Factor Use Distortion

Complacency by government in the labour market, particularly

towards employment creation has probably been due to rapid economic growth over the past 30 years and the "safety valve" option for mine work in South Africa. However, in the span of a few years, Swaziland has reversed from a position of labour shortage to rapidly worsening unemployment, influenced by several contributory factors, namely: a slowing of economic growth in the late 1970's, a restricted flow of external migration since 1977, and the adoption of perverse technologies.

Capricious labour movements influenced particularly by concurrent outflows of Shangaan and Swazi workers, led to the introduction of labour-displacing capital for plantation work such as cutting and harvesting on the then existing sugar plantations, and sophisticated new technologies for the recently established Simunye Sugar Estate. (34) This trend has been exacerbated by government incentives such as generous capital cost allowances. Consequently, the adoption of such excessively capital intensive technologies has meant that employment growth, especially in sugar has not been increasing in proportion to total output.

viii) Domestic Working Conditions

External migrant reactions to some domestic employment alternatives suggests that accusing fingers pointed at South African conditions may be somewhat misdirected, and should perhaps first concentrate on putting the domestic house in order. Reliance by many plantations on cheap pliant imported labour and the seasonal employment of women (and sometimes children) has led to the oppressive conditions and low pay. The labour squeeze of the mid-1970's however, triggered both capital intensification (labour displacement) and heightened competition for labour through wage hikes and substantial improvements in worker housing. This trend was nevertheless soon tempered in the wake of the 1977 mine recruitment restrictions and subsequent domestic labour surplus.

Though much of the labour force are indeed "men of two worlds" - earning wages for family support while, by choice or

necessity, maintaining usufructory rights to land through the homestead - there is evidence that working conditions on many establishments intensify migratory oscillations. A comparison of two companies in the same industry showed that the company, where most workers were housed in isolated single-worker compounds with a minimum of facilities, suffered from very high rates of turnover and absenteeism; while the other, offering centralized family housing with diverse facilities, maintained a remarkably stable labour force (de Vletter, 1981b). It would appear that many men are not migrant workers by choice, but are willing - as a result of the prevailing primogeniture system of inheritance (see Rosen-Prinz and Prinz, 1978), changing attitudes, and land rights (if married) which can be exercised at a later stage - to move to the place of work with their families.

Repression of trade union activities coupled by serious staff shortages in the department of Labour (35) and abetted by growing unemployment, has relieved employers of much of the pressure needed to improve pay and conditions.

Policy Implications (36)

It has been officially recognised that growing unemployment, concomitant urban congestion, and increasing dependence on staple food imports (despite the explicit policy objective of self sufficiency by 1983) are among the most pressing economic problems currently faced by Swaziland and the following brief discussion of policy implications will be considered in the light of them.

It is assumed that migrant labour-related policies would fall within the framework of a regionally encompassing strategy adopted by the Southern African Labour Commission (SALC). Such a strategy would be expected to stabilise external migration flows in a predetermined pattern which, in turn, would allow individual countries to draw up meaningful national employment policies with specific labour absorption targets. A SALC initiated stabilization policy could follow one of a variety of possible actions ranging

from the 15-year withdrawal programme of the hypothetical "Association of Home Countries of Migrants" (AHCM) (Bohning and Stahl, 1981) to bilaterally (SALC Chamber of Mines) negotiated quota agreements.

Whatever strategy chosen, events over the past few years have made it clear that external and internal employment opportunities have been and will continue to be outstripped by a rapidly growing labour force. Hitherto unbalanced development patterns must therefore be reversed through conscious policy focusing on land as the only realistic alternative for suitable income generating activities.

i) Widening the Perspective of Rural Development

Agricultural production is sharply dichotomous; staple crops being mainly grown by the homestead or "subsistence" sub-sector and commercial crops by foreign controlled plantations and private farms. The commercial sub-sector, linked with agro-based industries dominates the economy in terms of value of economic output, foreign trade and wage employment.

Despite the strong interdependence between the two sub-sectors (primarily through wage employment), the realm of government formulated rural/agricultural development policy is clearly delineated, focusing on the homestead as a microeconomic unit rather than an integral component of a macroeconomic system. Thus, the homestead is viewed by planners as a knowledge and input-deficient production unit; whereas an analysis of labour utilization by cross-sectoral and international options, would see it more as an income-maximizing family base. The commercial sector, on the other hand, is judged, endorsed or often collaborated with by government on purely financial considerations.

As long as government isolates the two sub-sectors, the current imbalance of agricultural development will prevail, accompanied by continued homestead out-migration. The effect of rural development will at least be ad hoc and fragmentary, with homesteads

manipulating available services and inputs to maximize the benefits from all possible labour-use alternatives.

ii) Incomes and Pricing Policy

Short of direct physical controls, out-migration and urban drift will continue in spite of growing unemployment. Todaro's (1969) migration model, elaborated by Doran (1977), demonstrates that as long as "expected" (37) urban income exceeds real rural income, labour will continue to seek wage employment, and, as observed elsewhere in Africa, will often continue regardless of massive unemployment and urban squalor.

Swaziland's rural-urban income disparity has widened (38) and foreseeable trends underline the urgency for some form of incomes policy. Existing wage structures show considerable inter-sectoral variations (largely reflecting relative capital intensity) (Bevan and de Vletter, 1977) and, although earlier discussion implied that improvements were probably necessary on some plantations, inter-sectoral wage standardization should be considered. Free access to the South African mines has previously inhibited wage restraints, but the 1977 recruitment restrictions and perceived SALC strategies should allow greater wage structure independence, at least for unskilled and semi-skilled categories. Low (1977) demonstrated that by imposing taxes on South African mine earnings (currently exempt) the income incentive for the mine would be reduced, followed by a regional redistribution of mine recruitment and wage income with subsequent improvements in cropping techniques. (39)

The income differential concept is further refined by the Low/Fowler (1980) labour allocation model, arguing that the ebb of rural out-migration is conditional upon the right balance between wages, staple food prices and cash crop yields. Government agricultural pricing policy, might however require some amendments to the Southern African Customs Union Agreement.

iii) Commercialization of the Homestead

Many homesteads will have access to sufficient resources and suitable conditions enabling viable cash cropping systems; most, however, are faced with land area, soil fertility and climatic constraints, precluding any possibility of total reliance on agriculture. Outside of costly extensive irrigation projects on Swazi Nation Land, perhaps the only possible alternative would be radically to change the concept of the homestead. Currently, the homestead is effectively a producer of labour dispersed into a variety of activities (generally a combination of staple food production, wage employment, non-agricultural homestead activities and occasionally cash cropping) to maximise homestead income. With the employment option disappearing, smallholder plantation cropping could well provide a suitable alternative. The Vuvulane Irrigation Scheme, comprising of homesteads on carefully apportioned lots producing mostly sugar cane for a nearby mill, has proved very successful, as have other similar schemes. (40) Transforming large-scale sugar plantations (which are inappropriately capital intensive) into smallholder schemes requires some fundamental changes in government planning procedures, specifically, changing from commercially biased evaluation methods to socially adapted analyses (e.g. allocating more realistic shadow wage rates to labour (41)). With large shares of the sugar industry having fallen into the hands of government and the Swazi Nation, (42) such re-orientation should be easier. (43)

iv) National Employment Policy

A national employment policy embraced by a regionally imposed SALC strategy would not only be timely (in fact very overdue) but, with effective propaganda, psychologically important. Such a policy would be multi-pronged, encompassing various aspects of manpower utilization. Firstly, it would have to reverse hitherto luke-warm attitudes towards employment creation by focusing on unacceptably

high rates of capitalisation and low labour/output ratios. However, only a fraction of the growing labour force (probably no more than one-half, in the most optimistic of circumstances (44) can be absorbed by the formal sector. The second, and perhaps most important component, would therefore be the promotion of productive rural activities by means of a more coherent rural development strategy, incomes and pricing policies, and smallholder schemes, etc. Thirdly, in recognition of the close interdependence between homestead welfare and the wage sector, it is necessary to monitor closely dubious labour practices in commercial agriculture, especially during times of labour surplus, to provide greater security to dependant homesteads otherwise under the constant threat of capricious employer behaviour. (45) Finally, the national employment policy would have to tackle such emerging problems and issues as rising secondary school unemployment, curriculum development and industrial decentralisation.

Footnotes

- 1 The findings of the ILO project were published in five working papers - Deran (1977); Low (1977); Rosen-Prinz and Prinz (1978); de Vletter (1978); and de Vletter (1980) - the last paper being mostly reproduced as de Vletter (1981c). The main findings of these papers were summarised in two chapters (de Vletter 1981b and c) of the recent ILO book Black Migration to South Africa edited by W.R. Bohning. Follow-up and related work include: Funnell (1977); Low and Fowler (1980); RDAMEU (1980); and de Vletter (1979 and 1980a).
- 2 Following the 1978 Conference on Migratory Labour in Southern Africa (Lusaka), the Southern African Labour Commission was established, now comprising of Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. Although potentially effective and meeting regularly, apart from some administrative matters, it has not yet agreed on any notable regional policy relating to migrant workers in South Africa.
- 3 See de Vletter (1981c) for a fairly comprehensive discussion of policy recommendations relating to foreign black workers on the South African mines.
- 4 The 1976 census separated those in income-generating activities into 3 categories "full-time employed", "part-time employed" (i.e. those who worked for less than 12 months in the previous year) and "self-employed", respectively accounting for 25.2%, 6.7% and 9.5% of African residents aged 15 years or over.
- 5 The 1976 census found that 42% of the male resident labour force had no education vs. 45.5% for females; and that 16.7% of the male resident labour force had form 1 or higher education vs. 14.6% for females.
- 6 Realistically, a fair proportion of the absentee females are likely to be dependants.
- 7 It is likely that reporting on the part of the South African census may reflect wishful thinking as many of their defined "Swazis" are, from the viewpoint of Swaziland, permanent emigrants.
- 8 As a proportion of domestic employment, absentees fell from more than 200% in the 1930's to 30% in 1976, and probably 25% in 1980. Considering definitional changes in the term "absentees", this trend was probably more dramatic in reality.
- 9 From July 1963 no women or families could be recruited from the BLS countries nor could they accompany recruited husbands (Breytenbach, 1979).
- 10 It seems likely that many of these women are married dependents, returning to Swaziland for periodic visits.
- 11 See figure 7 in Volume 1 of the 1976 Census Report.
- 12 Personal communication in 1977 with Swazi labour and police officers in these areas indicated that it was easy to cross the border illegally and that it was regularly done. Furthermore, there was evidence of South African employers carting Swazi labour back and forth in lorries on a weekly basis.
- 13 A survey of secondary school students indicated that more than half had relatives or friends in South Africa. The three most frequently mentioned sectors were services (34%) manufacturing (16%) and mining (16%). Many of the vocations mentioned were at the skilled or professional levels (de Vletter, 1978).
- 14 Age is often difficult to prove so more reliance is given to height and weight.
- 15 Trend analysis could not be extended prior to 1970 because of inadequate data relating to the government sector as well as Swazi Nation crop production data. Furthermore, changes in statistical recording procedures in 1969 made pre-1970 private sector data unreliable.

- 16 Stahl (1974) attempted to calculate approximate wage elasticities of foreign black labour flows to South Africa, but subsequent events imply that his estimates were too low.
- 17 When asked why they went to the South African gold mines, the predominant reason was high wages, but one-third of the respondents mentioned the inability to find work. But, "work" would appear to imply suitable work as between 50-60% said they would not consider manual work in the four Categories mentioned, where labour shortages were being experienced.
- 18 It is generally assumed that a wage differential between Swaziland and South Africa is largely responsible for external migration. However, a wage study (Bevan and de Vletter, 1977) found that sectoral wage rates were similar (e.g. mining in Swaziland was competitive with South Africa), but that inter-sectoral differences (e.g. South African mine wages being considerably higher than Swazi agricultural wages) were responsible for labour shortages in the agricultural sector.
- 19 Van der Wiel (1977) found that the average length of time the Basotho migrant workers (mostly miners) spend outside Lesotho is between 13 years (for those on the Mountain zone) and 16 years (for those from the Lowlands). The Mozambique study (Universidade Eduardo Mondlane 1977) found that the worker-peasants on average spent 42-49% of their working lives on the mines with only about one-quarter spending less than 30% and another quarter spending nearly two-thirds of their working lives on the mines.
- 20 The survey sample covered 1 150 homesteads proportionately distributed in the four main topographic areas over the period 1978-79.
- 21 The average age of domestically-based workers (31.5) years was 3 years greater than for miners and the former had an average number of dependants of 6.9 (median 5.8) vs. 4.5. (median 3.4) for miners (de Vletter, 1978).
- 22 For a more comprehensive discussion, see de Vletter (1978; 1981b).
- 23 These findings were derived from de Vletter (1979; 1981a).
- 24 See note 23.
- 25 Over the past decade or so there has been a noticeable increase in the number of "permanent" structures (made of cement bricks) found in rural homesteads. This in itself is worth further investigation as it casts doubts on the argument that communal land tenure inhibits capital expenditures on agriculture due to the inherent insecurity.
- 26 See for example findings from Guma and Gay (1978) and van der Wiel (1977).
- 27 Although Hughes (1964) originally hypothesized a dichotomy between better farmers and migrant--dependant homesteads on examining his data, he found that homesteads producing larger amounts of maize also tended to have higher wage incomes.
- 28 "Wealth points" were made up of selected variables considered to be easily quantifiable by weighting and important in the contribution of homestead welfare e.g. cash income, cattle and goats owned, vehicles, sewing machines, etc. (see de Vletter, 1979).
- 29 Available evidence shows that larger homesteads tend to have a greater range of income earning activities and a more substantial wealth base. Thus they are often found to be comparatively progressive farmers, have larger numbers of cattle and more members in off-farm employment. However, preliminary analysis shows that wealth and income do not rise proportionately to homestead size (i.e. per capita "wealth points" are negatively related to homestead size). (Unpublished Rural Homestead Survey results).
- 30 See Universidade Eduardo Mondlane (1977) for a detailed discussion of post-mine work investment behaviour.
- 31 Virtually all Swazi miners opted for the deferred pay system, meaning that apart from a nominal monthly stipend (averaging between E 10-20 in 1976), wages are saved up until the end of the contract.

- 32 Calculations by economists with the Swaziland Development and Savings Bank have shown that the real rate of return on cattle is in the region of 15% per annum.
- 33 Educational expenditure is now pervasive and homesteads appear to consider it as a social (if not economic) necessity. Expenditures do not seem to be income or "wealth point" elastic (unpublished results from the Swaziland Rural Homestead Survey).
- 34 The new sugar mill is expected to employ workers at a capital cost of about E 65 000 per head, and the plantation will generate employment at a proportionately much smaller rate than existing plantations.
- 35 The past few annual reports of the Department of Labour have complained about serious staff shortages which have prevented the Department from efficiently conducting its stipulated duties.
- 36 See de Vletter (1981b) for a wider range and more comprehensive discussion of recommendations.
- 37 "Expected" urban income is determined by the probability of finding urban employment (a function of the level of unemployment, and one's experience in the job market) and the average level of income earned by those economically active. In other words, a very rough approximation of "expected" urban income is the probability of employment times the average wage level.
- 38 Funnel (1977) and Doran (1977) have estimated that real rural income at best has probably only managed to keep pace with the growth in population while modern sector incomes, particularly on the gold mines have risen dramatically.
- 39 Low argues that following a tax on miners, external labour would be proportionately higher than before in relatively labour abundant rural areas, meaning that income distribution would further favour areas such as the Middleveld and Highveld at the expense of the Lowveld. This adverse tendency would have to be weighed against subsequent improved cropping methods.
- 40 The Vuvulane scheme was initiated in 1963 by the Commonwealth Development Corporation and comprises of approximately 260 small-holders. A similar scheme has recently been initiated by government but further expansion has met resistance from traditional authorities (see note 43).
- 41 Low (1977) demonstrated that, on the basis of the seasonality of traditional cropping, the opportunity cost of external migration is virtually zero as mining contracts (previous to 1977) could be timed to complement agricultural input requirements. Current opportunity costs of rural out-migration would be somewhat higher, but, nevertheless a realistic shadow wage rate would be much closer to zero than prevailing wage levels.
- 42 The Tibiyo Fund (the trust fund for the Swazi Nation), in addition to its other interests (banks, major hotels, mines, agriculture, etc.), has a half interest in the Mhlume Sugar Company; a 40% share of Ubombo Ranches (sugar) and, in conjunction with the Swaziland Government, a 55% share of the S̄munye Sugar Company.
- 43 Traditional authorities appear sceptical about leasehold schemes, feeling that they would tend to undermine the chief's authority and foster rural elites. One way of overcoming the latter has been to reduce leasehold terms to 25 years on one scheme.
- 44 At an economic growth rate of 7% it is estimated that between 3-4 000 of the annual growth in the labour force of 7 000 could be absorbed by modern sector employment. Currently, however, the economic growth rate is about 3% and only between 1 300 - 1 700 new employment opportunities are being created annually (Department of Economic Planning and Statistics, 1981).

- 45 Two examples of labour abuses which apparently occur on plantations are: (a) many workers are hired seasonally with terminal contracts with no allowance for continuity or credit for previous work when applying for work in the following season; (b) task and bonus work on sugar plantations have resulted in various forms of exploitation, such as workers bringing in families or sub-contracting work to children at appalling rates of pay.

**DEMOGRAPHIC DATA RELATING TO EXTERNAL MIGRATION FROM
SWAZILAND AND SOUTH AFRICAN CENSUS RESULTS**

Year	Swaziland censuses						South African census				
	de jure African population	Absentees	Absentees		Absentees as % of population	Domestic employment	Absentees as % of domestic employment	Absentees (5)		Absentees	
			Male	Female				Male	Female		
1911	104 533	5 800(1)	5 700	100	5.6	-	-	-	-	-	
1921	110 295	5 990	5 839	151	5.43	3 094	193.6	29 177	17 285	11892	
1936	153 270	9 561	9 451	235	6.23	3 354	285.1	31 092	21 311	9781	
1946	181 269	8 677	8 254	423	4.78	4 835	179.5	33 738	21 768	11970	
1956	229 744	11 728	10 569	1159	5.10	13 404	87.5	42 914(6)	26 721	16193	
1966	381 687	19 219	12 817	6402	5.03	60 116	32.0	38 892 (7)	23 402	15490'	
						(36 815)(2)					
1976	520 184	25 650	18 903	6747	4.93	104 250(3)	24.6				
						(76 942)(4)					

(1) The 1966 census gives a figure of 8 500 for "estimated" absentees, whereas the official 1921 census figure is 5 800. (2) According to the Manpower Information Unit employment in Swaziland at December 1966 was 36 815 as against 60 116 in the 1966 census. (3) This figure includes those categorised as "self-employed", "irregular employees" and "full time employees" in the 1976 census. (4) The Annual Wages and Employment survey (Central Statistics Office, 1977) gave this figure for the total employment in 1976 of which 66 215 were in wage employment. Given the nature of this survey, these figures are likely to be less than the actual numbers (more accurately reflected by the census). (5) "Absentees" in this table refers to Swazi nationals present in South Africa at the time of enumeration. (6).1951. (7). 1960.

TABLE 2

RECRUITMENT OF SWAZI MINERS FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOLD AND
PLATINUM MINES BY THE CHAMBER OF MINES
1960 - 1981.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Recruits</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Recruits</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Recruits</u>
	(contract & AVS)				
1960	7 894	1968	7 505	1975	16 272
1961	8 468	1969	7 941	1976	20 634
1962	8 838	1970	9 035	1977	14 917
1963	6 671	1971	6 653	1978	12 153
1964	6 157	1972	6 901	1979	11 297
1965	5 844	1973	7 859	1980	9 367
1966	6 420	1974	9 350	1981	10 284
1967	5 978				

Source: TEBA (Swaziland)

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