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HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY DIMENSIONS OF MIGRATION BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA AND ITS NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

Unpublished paper delivered at HSRC migration workshop Pretoria 17-20 March 2003

MARIE WENTZEL

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INTRODUCTION

The number of migrants coming to South Africa, particularly those originating from the African continent, has increased since the early 1990s, and more so after the first democratic elections in 1994. The migrants primarily come from South Africa's traditional labour supply areas, which include countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), e.g. Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Lesotho and Malawi. However, migrants have also come from other African countries, e.g Nigeria, Zaire, and Kenya. It is widely accepted that the flow of migrants from the SADC countries and beyond has grown remarkably in a relative short period of time.

This article aims to give an historical overview of cross-border migration to South Africa and to discuss findings on present-day cross-border migrants in the country. In this study cross-border migration is defined as migration from Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana and Namibia to South Africa. Drawing on literature, three streams of movement to South Africa are identified: contract mine migration, other categories of migration and refugee migration. This is discussed in the first part of the paper. In the second part of the paper, following the historical background, attention is given to cross-border migrants (i.e migrants from Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana and Namibia) currently in South Africa. For this discussion data on the recent national HSRC migration survey was utilised. Issues such as country of origin, employment status, occupational categories, reasons for moving to South Africa, reasons for selecting specific destination areas, prior information about the destination area and migrants' satisfaction with their present circumstances are discussed.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

CONTRACT MINE MIGRATION

Early labour migration

Migration is by no means a new phenomenon in southern Africa. During the latter half of the nineteenth century the discovery of diamonds and gold, coupled to the accompanying industrialisation, lured thousands of migrant labourers from the southern African region to the mining and industrial centers of South Africa.

However, the discovery of diamonds and gold was not the beginning of labour migration in the region. By the time of the discovery and mining of diamonds in the Kimberley area in the late 1860s labour migration had already been established. As early as the 1840s, but more so in the following three decades, Pedi males had worked on farms and public works in the Cape Colony. In the same period Sothos had worked on farms in the Orange Free State. According to Delius (1983) the Pedis participated mainly in migrant labour to obtain cash to buy guns since they experienced external military threats (i.e. from the Zulu, Swazi and the Colonists)

and for hunting purposes. The money was also used for bride wealth and to buy agricultural implements. The Sotho mainly participated in labour migration to buy guns and agricultural implements although the importance they placed on bride wealth should not be underestimated (Turrell 1987: 22).

Since the 1850s the Tsonga (also known as Shangaan) had been traveling from the Delagoa Bay area to Natal to work for wages and in the 1860s Mozambicans (from the Gaza, Inhambane and Lourenco Marques districts) worked as seasonal workers on farms in the Western Cape (Katzennellenbogen, 1982: 37). According to Turrell (1987:23) the Tsonga workers engaged in labour migration because internal and ecological processes threatened the material base of their society. Their rural economy suffered from a re-orientation of the trade routes, the hunting-out of game, ecological upsets, warfare and colonial powers into their areas. Wage labour emerged as a means to improve a young man's chances within the web of kinship relations. Thus, in order to earn wages for bride wealth and consumer goods, the Tsonga participated in wage labour.

The opening of the Kimberley diamond fields in 1870 created a huge demand for unskilled labour. As a result large numbers of workers streamed to the diamond mines. By 1874 there were approximately 10 000 African mine workers on the mines. The majority were migrant labourers working on the mines for periods of three to six months (Van der Horst: 1971: 77). Although the migrant workers came from all over southern Africa, the Pedis, Tsongas and South Sotho were by far the majority on the diamond fields. Apparently the reason for this was that all three groups had already been involved in migrant labour prior to 1870 as indicated previously (Turrell, 1987: 21).

The change in mining methods from open-cast to underground extraction in the early 1880s necessitated a stable skilled labour force. To achieve this, the Kimberley mine owners provided housing for mine workers in closed compounds (Turrell, 1987: 149-150).

By introducing compounds on the diamond fields mine owners ensured a continuous, controlled and cheap labour force. Besides the obvious short-term benefits for the mine owners, there were also long-term economic and political advantages. Over time the migrant labourer became an experienced yet affordable worker, whereas the possibility of an organised black working class being established in a white urban area remained slight. This pattern of large-scale utilisation of cheap labour and the control of labour by means of pass laws and the compounds was the beginning of a system that dominated migrant labour in South Africa for more than a century (Wessels and Wentzel, 1989: 6-7).

In 1886 gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand. This led to the establishment of the migrant labour system on a much larger scale than in Kimberley. Since gold reefs in South African mines are very deep, production cost are quite high. Consequently, strong capital reserves and adequate cheap labour were necessary to make mining a viable business. The adequate supply of cheap labour was obtained through the launch of a very extensive recruitment campaign, especially in neighbouring countries. Limited working opportunities existed in the neighbouring countries and therefore labourers were willing to work for a lower wage than the South African labourers (Van der Horst, 1971).

In 1896 the Chamber of Mines established the Rand Native Labour Association to co-ordinate the recruitment of labourers and eliminate competition. Following restructuring in 1900, the Association was renamed the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA). However, since independent recruiters and recruiting companies remained active in the field neither the WNLA nor its successor, the Native Recruiting Corporation (NRC), could achieve a labour recruitment monopoly (Jeeves, 1985:13). In 1912 the Chamber of Mines once again attempted to co-ordinate labour recruitment by establishing the Native Recruiting Corporation (NRC) to organise recruiting in South Africa and the protectorates (Bechuanaland, the present Botwana, Basutoland, the present Lesotho and Swaziland) (Wilson, 1972:3). The WNLA, however, continued to recruit in the former Portuguese East Africa (currently Mozambique) where it had a recruitment monopoly. It was also recruiting workers for the South African mines in the Tropical Territories (Malawi, the former Njassaland and Zambia, the former Northern Rhodesia). By 1920, the NRC/WNLA had eliminated all competition regarding the recruitment of mine labourers. Recruiting stations were established throughout the region and modern transport systems (road, rail, ferry and eventually air) set up to recruit mine workers (Crush 2000: 14).

Between 1890 and 1899 the total number of Africans employed on the gold mines rose from approximately 14 000 to 97 000. Although labourers from all over southern Africa and further afield went to the gold mines, most came from the former Portuguese East Africa (Van der Horst: 1971: 136). On the eve of the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) about 60% of the unskilled labourers on the gold mines were Mozambicans. A labour agreement between the Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR) and the authorities in the former Portuguese East Africa was signed in 1897 and was operative for more than a century (Jeeves, 1985: 187-188). Since Portuguese East Africa was deemed a very important labour supply area the 1897 labour agreement was reconfirmed in 1901 even before the end of the Anglo-Boer War by the signing of the so-called *Modus Vivendi* between British officials and the Portuguese authorities in Mozambique (Van der Horst, 1971: 161).

Why did men migrate over sometimes very long distances to work in mines on the Witwatersrand? According to Katzenellenbogen (1982: 37,38) men in the region migrated because they needed to earn money and could secure the highest wages on the mines. Cash was needed due to changes in the economic structures of communities, forced labour laws and restrictions on the use of land that made independent subsistence farming virtually impossible as well as colonial taxation. However, it was also important to earn cash to pay lobola (bride wealth). Furthermore, men were frequently encouraged to migrate by African chiefs who, in many instances, co-operated with recruiting agents who paid them a fee for each recruit.

Supplier countries: 1920-1990

During the period 1920-1990 virtually every country in the SADC region has, at one time or another, sent migrants to work on the South African mines. Crush (1997) identified three types of supplying countries:

- Long-standing supply countries such as Mozambique, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland;

- Episodic supply countries such as Malawi and Zimbabwe; and
- Occasional supply countries such as Zambia, Tanzania and Angola.

For many decades Mozambicans were the main source of labour on the South African mines. As mentioned earlier, a labour agreement between the ZAR and the authorities in the former Portuguese East Africa was already signed in 1897. Other labour agreements followed. When Mozambique gained independence in 1975 the labour agreements between South African and Mozambique were left unchanged. In November of that year the number of Mozambican mine workers reached a high of 127 000. However, due to increasing unemployment in South Africa, the South African authorities started to implement a policy of preferential employment of South African workers on mines in the middle of the 1970s. This, as well as other factors, resulted in a drastic decline in the number of recruited migrant mine workers from Mozambique. By April 1977 the number was only about 35 000 but gradually increased thereafter (Van Aswegen & Verhoef, 1982: 154-154). In 1997 the official figure for in-service Mozambican mine workers was about 83 000 (De Vletter, 1998: 12).

Workers from the present-day Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland were involved in labour migration even before the discovery of diamonds and gold. However, before 1973 official labour agreements were not signed with these countries. Labour relations and arrangements between the South African authorities and these former British High Commission Territories were governed by the informal inter-territorial undertakings that existed since colonial days. In 1973 South Africa signed bilateral labour agreements with Botswana and Lesotho respectively. A similar agreement with Swaziland followed in 1975 (Breytenbach, 1979: 17-25).

Until 1963 there was no statutory differentiation between black workers from Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland and South African indigenous blacks. In that year the first migratory labour control measures differentiating between workers from the High Commission Territories and South African workers came into effect. Since that time workers from these areas had to carry passports from their countries and enter South Africa via border posts.

Since 1977 Lesotho is the main supplier of labour for South African mines. In 1990 about 108 000 Basuto workers were employed on the South African gold mines and about 100 000 in 1995 (Crush, 2000: 15).

Although workers from Botswana and Swaziland always had worked on South African mines, it was not in large numbers (especially when compared to countries such as Mozambique and Lesotho). For example, in 1965 about 23 600 Batwanas were employed on the South African gold mines and about 12 700 in 1995. In 1990 17 800 Swazi's were working on South African gold mines and 16 700 in 1995 (Crush, 2000: 15).

Initially Southern Rhodesia (later Rhodesia and presently Zimbabwe) prohibited the employment of Rhodesian blacks outside the country. This policy resulted in numerous Rhodesians resorting to clandestine migration to South Africa. By 1966 between 50 000 and 75 000 black Rhodesians were known to be employed in South Africa. This compelled South Africa and Rhodesia to enter into an agreement

regarding the administrative arrangements for, amongst others, travel documents, recruitments, repatriations and ports of entry regarding the Rhodesian migrant. It was agreed that South African employers would not recruit black Rhodesians, although an employer could re-engage a person employed previously. However, a 1974 agreement between the Rhodesian government and WNLA lifted the prohibition on the recruitment of Rhodesians for South African gold mines (Breytenbach, 1979: 32-33). After Zimbabwean independence in 1980 the government announced that it would not allow active recruitment of its citizens for employment in South Africa, although people would not be prevented from seeking or taking up employment in South Africa (Whiteside: 1988: 20).

As early as 1904 arrangements were made between WNLA and the colonial authorities in Njassaland (presently Malawi) regarding recruitment of workers for the South African gold mines. In that year 5000 Malawians went to work on the South African mines. In 1913 the Union government prohibited the recruitment of any Africans from areas north of 22 degrees south latitude due to their high mortality rate caused by pneumonia and other lung diseases. This ban on the recruitment of labourers form Tropical Territories was lifted in 1937 (van der Horst, 1971: 221). In 1938 an agreement between WNLA and the authorities in Malawi on the recruiting and employment of workers from Malawi on the South African mines were formalised. The most Malawians working in South Africa in any single year was in 1973 when there were almost 140 000 workers (Breytenbach: 1979: 30). However, after a WNLA plane crash in 1974 killing 72 Malawian workers, the Malawian government ended all external recruitment of labour on the grounds that it was not safe (Whiteside: 1988: 19). Consequently, the number of Malawian labourers in South Africa dropped dramatically. In 1977 recruitment in Malawi was again allowed, but stopped in 1988 after a dispute over HIV testing (Crush, 2000: 16).

Countries, such as the present day Zambia, Tanzania and Angola, never contributed a large proportion of foreign migrant workers to South Africa. After the independence of both Zambia (1966) and Tanzania (1967) the countries ended all labour migration to South Africa (Breytenbach: 1979: 29). Since the middle of the 1970s Angolans also stopped working in South Africa (Crush, 2000: 15).

Main characteristics of the migrant labour system to South Africa

One of the main characteristics of the migrant labour system was that foreign workers had traditionally been denied permanent rights to work or residence in South Africa, regardless of the overall length of their employment under succeeding contracts, or their established familial connections or social ties. Migrants were compelled to return to their countries of origin upon completion of their contracts, if only to negotiate new contracts for the same employment. The migrant labour system was, however, in the interests of both capital and the state.

The idea of a black labour force entering the country only on a temporary basis was in accordance with the South African government's policy to prevent any settlement of black people in urban areas. This principle was amongst others captured in a number of laws, for example, the Native (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act (Act 25 of 1945). Pass laws were used as influx control mechanisms to apply the conditions stipulated by the laws (Wentzel, 1993: 3).

In 1986 influx control was abolished and blacks were permitted to settle in urban areas. However, the migrant labour system continued to exist, as foreign workers were not entitled to residential rights in South Africa and many South African workers from rural areas preferred to leave their families in their home areas.

The migrant labour system also benefited the South African state in the sense that the social and economic costs normally associated with the support of a productive workforce was externalised with regard to the foreign workers (International Labour Office, 1998: 9-10).

Oscillating migration served the interests of the mining industry as it meant that labour was cheap. Normally the employer only had to pay the worker enough to keep him and to have a small surplus in order to attract him to the mines.

Participation in the South African mining economy came to be of major importance to the domestic economies of several countries in the region. For example, the system of compulsory deferred payment (and voluntarily deferment of wages) constituted a significant proportion of the foreign exchange earnings of Mozambique and Lesotho. In the 1980s remittances from Basotho labour working in South Africa accounted for about half of the country's gross national product (GNP). By 1994 about 40% of the Basotho male labour force was employed in South Africa and remittances accounted for a third of the GNP. In 1997 mine workers' remittances contributed to 32% of the GNP (UNDP, 1998: 29).

Remittances have a major impact on home societies. Households with migrant incomes are often much better off than non-migrant households as was confirmed by a study by Sechaba consultants (1997: 5-6) in Lesotho in 1997.

Much research has been done on the negative effect of out-migration of young men in the sending countries on rural development. Such patterns of migration had resulted in considerable social costs to local households and communities, as families had been fragmented and women and children left with the burden of traditional work.

The occupational health consequences and costs of migration, particularly the long term illnesses and progression of disabling injuries have been a major cost to labour sending countries. Sometimes ill health may only emerge after employment contracts have ceased and migrants returned home. This results in rural households and the public health systems of the sending countries bearing the medical costs (International Labour Office, 1998: 34) associated with such ill-health.

Since the late 1970s patterns of migration to the mines "stabilised" by miners becoming professional mine workers. According to this system trained and skilled mine workers are continuously employed on the mines and returning home for a fixed period of annual leave. Normally the mine workers are also working at one particular mine throughout their working career (Wentzel, 1993:4). While most Mozambican mine workers still go home only once a year, Basotho miners are close enough to make more frequent visits home (De Vletter, 1998: 3).

In 1995 the South African government offered permanent South African residence to mine workers from other countries who had been working on the mines since 1986

and who voted in the 1994 election. Only about half of the eligible miners applied for the amnesty. Two studies by the Southern African Migration Project amongst miners and their wives in Mozambique and Lesotho (De Vletter, 1998; Sechaba Consultants, 1997) explain the reasons for this. Apart from ignorance about the amnesty and confusion and misinformation about the consequences of permanent residence on a variety of issues, for example, pensions, taxes, visas, land rights, recruitment procedures and deferred pay there were also other reasons for not applying for amnesty. It seemed that miners with resources in their home countries did not want to become permanent South African citizens while those who did apply did it as a strategic option for acquiring certain benefits, for example permanent residence would allow miners to seek other employment in the event of retrenchments or job dissatisfaction. Importantly, both Mozambican and Lesotho miners are still very attached to their home countries, even if some have spent many years working in South Africa, and do not want to become South African citizens.

Throughout the twentieth century at least 40% of the mine workforce was non-South African. This figure peaked in the early 1970s at over 80% and more recently 50% of the mine workforce are foreign (Crush, 2000: 15-16). Thus, over the years, hundreds of thousands of male migrants from the southern African region have spent most of their working lives in South Africa.

OTHER CATEGORIES OF CROSS-BORDER MIGRATION

Overview

Apart from contract mine migration, other categories of cross-border migration between South Africa and its neighboring countries were also identified. The following broad "other" categories of cross-border migrants can be identified:

- Skilled immigrants (mainly highly skilled, professional, semi-professional, managerial and technical people);
- Documented migrants (temporary residents in possession of visitors, business, study or medical permits; skilled migrants who enter legally as temporary residents with work permits);
- Undocumented or unauthorised migrants (migrants who entered South Africa clandestinely without proper or any documentation, or acquired false papers before or after entry; migrants who entered South Africa legally, but whose permits have expired and therefore become prohibited persons in terms of the former Aliens Control Act of 1991 (as amended in 1995); contract workers who stayed on in the country after the expiry of their contracts); and
- Refugees (Refugees are being dealt with in the next section).

Skilled immigrants

In the late 1980s, a "brain drain" of skilled and professional migrants to South Africa and Botswana from the region gathered pace. During this period South Africa and Botswana were the only regional countries that could offer real growth in income for

the higher skilled occupations, hence professionals were keen to move to these two countries.

Neighbouring countries accounted for an estimated 30-40% of all skilled and professional legal immigration to South Africa between 1982 and 1988, with Zimbabwe contributing 90% of South Africa's immigration from Africa during the early 1980s (the result of post-independence white emigration). Despite South Africa's tightening of immigration criteria for professional immigrants, in the early 1990s Zimbabwe continued to account for 30% of legal immigration into South Africa while Lesotho accounted for 10% and Swaziland for 5,5% of legal immigration to South Africa. More than half of these immigrants are professionals and semi-professionals, with another 19% in clerical and sales occupations (International Labour Office, 1998: 12).

In absolute terms the number of professional immigrants from the region fluctuated from 361 in 1988, to 233 in 1992 and to 259 in 1994 (Commission to Investigate the Development of a Comprehensive Labour Market Policy, 1996: 3).

In 2001 the number of documented immigrants to South Africa was 4832 of which 538 (11%) were from South Africa's neighbouring countries. 61% of the documented immigrants from neighbouring countries came from Zimbabwe, 22% from Lesotho, 7% from Mozambique, 6% from Swaziland, 4% from Botswana and less than a half percent from Namibia (Stats SA, 2002: 20-21).

Interestingly only 13% of the immigrants from the above-mentioned neighbouring countries were economically active. 56% of those economically active immigrants were in the professional, semi-professional and technical occupational group while 27% were in the managerial, executive and administrative occupational group and 7% in the clerical and sales occupational group (Stats SA, 2002: 20-21).

Documented migrants

Since 1990 there was a dramatic increase in legal cross-border movement within the Southern African region, from less than 500 000 in 1990 to 3,3 million in 1995. The bulk of this cross-border traffic consisted of people moving temporarily to South Africa for various non-work related reasons, for example tourism, visiting relatives, medical attention, shopping and education. Only a small portion of these entrants was in possession of work permits. However, some of those people did work illegally or engaged in informal sector and other trading activities once inside in the country (International Labour Office, 1998: 11).

Various studies[1] have found that many migrants from neighbouring countries exhibit circular movement patterns between South Africa and their home countries. Some migrants come for a relative short period of time to South Africa, e.g. women involved in cross-border trading. In general they do not stay longer than one month in South Africa before returning home to their countries of origin. Other migrants enter South Africa for a prolonged period of time before returning home. Although these persons come to South Africa in search of economic opportunities, many have no intention of settling permanently in the country (Wentzel & Bosman, unpublished;

[1] See for example Wentzel, M. & Bosman, M. (eds.) unpublished; Reitzes, M. 1997; McDonald, D. (et al). 1999.

Reitzes, 1998; McDonald, (et al). 1998). Many of these migrants have dependants in their countries of origin to whom they send remittances, as well as consumable commodities that they have bought in South Africa. The legal status of these migrants can either be "documented" or "undocumented".

Undocumented / unauthorised migrants

Initially the term "clandestine emigrant "applied to any African who went to work outside their country without securing official permission (Katzenellenbogen, 1982:108). Since governments were generally more interested in monitoring the movement than controlling it, passes were relatively easy to obtain. There were no borders and people crossed wherever they wanted. Although most migrants went to urban areas to look for work some also found employment on commercial farms.

South African recruiting organisations could officially recruit males in the region, but the official recruiting of females was not allowed. Women from the neighbouring countries that worked in South Africa were regarded as "clandestine workers". Women did, however, migrate more and more to South Africa on their own accord and not because they were simply following their spouses and partners. Cockerton (1997) indicated in a study on the migration of Bechuanaland women to South Africa that Tswana women's migrancy in the post -1920 period differs substantially from previous trends. "Not only were the numbers of those involved completely unprecedented but the earlier pattern of married women accompanying or joining husbands or moving short distances to work on white farms was completely transformed. Perhaps the most important feature of this era was the emergence and consolidation of new categories of female migrants. These were the divorced, the deserted, the widowed, the childless and the single woman migrant." (Cockerton, 1997: 49). The Tswana women was predominantly motivated by economic reasons to travel to South Africa and in particular to the Witwatersrand.

It is commonly assumed that South Africa's democratization has encouraged increased migration to the country from the region, both legally and illegally. The abundance of undocumented migrants had a two-fold impact. Firstly, employers in the temporary work sector had a ready supply of foreign labour without having to enter into a cross-border recruiting mechanism. Secondly, because of the "illegal" status of these workers, many were open to exploitation and abuse. Many of the undocumented migrants worked in the agricultural sector, construction industry, transportation services and the tourism industry.

Since earliest times workers form the present-day, Mozambique, Lesotho, Botswana and Zimbabwe entered South Africa to work as seasonal workers on commercial farms in the country (Van der Horst, 1971: 288). Initially non-South African farm workers were formally recruited and came to South Africa on contract. However, since temporary farm workers became increasingly accessible to employers in South Africa, recruiting became unnecessary and farmers employed undocumented workers from countries such as Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Lesotho. Consequently the Department of Home Affairs put special arrangements in place to regularize the status of undocumented farm workers by allowing post-hoc registration and the issuing of temporary residence and work permits under Section 41 of the Aliens Control Act of 1991. These special arrangements applied primarily to certain farming areas in Mpumalanga and the Northern Province (Crush, 1997, 16-17). Many

farmers did not utilise this system and did not register their workers, mainly because many farms had a high labour turnover and the chances of prosecution were very slight. In these circumstances registration was not an attractive option (International Labour Office, 1998: 13).

One of the most contentious issues in the migration debate in South Africa is the number of foreign nationals living in the country. Official figures of "legal" border crossings are readily available, but it is not clear how many people are "illegally" in the country. There is, however, no reliable research methodology for determining the actual number of immigrants in South Africa (McDonald, 1999:17).

REFUGEES

Although several thousand refugees arrived in South Africa in the 1990s from Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other countries further afield in Africa, the vast majority of South Africa's refugee population is Mozambican as a result of the civil war in the country in the 1980s. However, during the middle of the 1970s Portuguese colonists in Mozambique and Angola fled to South Africa when Portuguese colonial rule ended in those areas and independence was granted to them. During that time many Angolans and Mozambicans were granted rights of citizenship and permanent residence in South Africa. It is difficult to determine the exact number of emigrants from those countries during that time. However, nearly 7 000 of the Mozambican refugees who entered South Africa were formally accepted as immigrants between 1974 and 1976 (RSA, 1976, 1977).

A virtual civil war between the Mozambican government (FRELIMO) and an opposition group (RENAMO), aggravated by famine and drought, resulted in an immense influx of Mozambican refugees into Malawi, South Africa and Zimbabwe during the mid-1980s and later. The majority of refugees to South Africa settled in areas near the border and, in particular, in the former homelands of Gazankulu and KaNgwane. From 1985 onwards the two homelands issued the refugees with temporary residence permits. Mozambican refugees outside Gazankulu and KanNgwane were, however, frequently arrested and deported (De la Hunt, 1997: 2).

The South African government of the time refused to recognise the Mozambicans that had fled into the country as refugees, and thereby deprived them of international assistance. This action forced thousands of refugees to become economically active. In many instances the refugees worked illegally on commercial farms in Mpumalanga and in urban areas. In some instances refugees even went to Gauteng to work in mainly low-skilled jobs, for example on construction sites.

Although FRELIMO and RENAMO signed a peace accord in October 1992, drought and food shortages continued to drive Mozambicans to South Africa. In 1993 the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that there were 250 000 Mozambican refugees in South Africa. At the end of March 1995 when the UNHCR's repatriation programme ended, only 32 000 of these Mozambicans had been officially repatriated (Hough & Minnaar: 114-115).

The Department of Home Affairs estimated that there were at least 90 000 documented Mozambican refugees in 1996 in South Africa. An estimated 60 000 permits were issued to Mozambican refugees, allowing them to work on farms close

to where they settled (Commission to Investigate the Development of a Comprehensive Labour Market Policy, 1996). Many refugees did not want to return to their country and remained illegally in South Africa. An HSRC study found that some of the refugees who returned to Mozambique after the war decided at a later stage to return to South Africa mainly because their families were killed, they could not find employment and they were familiar with the situation in South Africa regarding employment, accommodation, etc. (Wentzel, M. & Bosman, M. (ed.), unpublished). These former refugees form part of the category of migrants that came legally or illegally without contracts to South Africa as discussed in the section above.

Only in September 1993 did the South African government sign an agreement with the UNHCR to establish procedures for the determination of refugee status and to grant asylum to certain refugees. In 1996 the South African government signed and ratified both the 1951 United Nations Convention on Refugees and the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention regarding the protection and treatment of asylum seekers and refugees (De la Hunt, 1997: 1). The South African parliament passed the Refugees Act (Act No 135 of 1998) in 1998 to formally adhere to international principles and standards relating to refugees, to provide for the reception of asylum seekers into the country, to regulate applications for and recognition of refugee status and to provide for the rights and obligations flowing from such status (RSA: 1998).

In 1996 the South African government offered amnesty to SADC country citizens. According to this amnesty permanent South African residence was offered to people who had, amongst others, been living in South Africa before 1991, had a South African partner, spouse or had children born in South Africa and had engaged in gainful economic activity for five years. The Department of Home Affairs received just under 200 000 applications, of whom the vast majority were Mozambican refugees who did not return to Mozambique after the war ended in their country (International Labour Office: 1998, 14).

In the first part of the paper a historical overview of cross-border migration between South Africa and its neighbouring countries was given. Utilizing the national HSRC migration survey the second part looks at various characteristics of cross-border migrants currently in South Africa.

MIGRATION FROM NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES: PATTERNS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MIGRANTS[2]

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

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

Country	% Of Respondents
Botswana	10
Lesotho	49
Mozambique	9
Namibia	2
Swaziland	28
Zimbabwe	2
Total	**100**

When looking at the migrants in the cross-border category, the following picture emerges regarding country of origin: 49% of respondents came from Lesotho, 28% from Swaziland, 10% from Botswana, 9% from Mozambique and 2% each from Namibia and Zimbabwe.

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

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

According to the survey 49% of the respondents came from Lesotho, in recent times the main supplier of migrant workers for South African mines.

The survey also indicated that 97% of the cross-border migrants in the survey originated from rural or peri-urban areas.

[2] The research is based on the findings of the recent national HSRC survey on migration and only on the most recent moves of the cross-border respondents. Only those respondents that came directly to South Africa from the neighbouring countries are classified as cross-border migrants. The internal migration category also includes those international and cross-border migrants that might have moved to South Africa earlier.

MIGRANT MALE/FEMALE RATIO

Traditionally more males than females migrated from neighbouring countries to South Africa. This tendency was also reflected in the results of this survey, with 72% of the cross-border migrants being male and 28% female.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF VARIOUS RESPONDENT TYPES

Table 2: Percentage distribution on employment status of various respondent types

Migrant status of respondents	Currently employed (%)
Non-migrants	30
Internal migrants	40
Cross-border migrants	78
Other international migrants	27
All respondents	35

Seventy-eight percent of the cross-border migrants in the survey were employed, compared to 35 % of all the respondents in the survey. Both the cross-border and the internal migrants had an employment status above the survey average. One can argue that this is because the majority of these respondents had moved to a new area to find employment (see Table 8.)

Table 3: Percentage distribution of reasons for not working by migrant category

Reasons for not working	Proportion (%)			
	Non-migrants	Internal migrants	Cross border migrants	Other international migrants
Never worked	48	29	31	75
Currently unemployed & looking for work	27	31	29	
Currently unemployed & not looking for work	7	13		
Housewife/homemaker	3	5		9
Pupil/full time student	3	2	8	
Retired person/pensioner	6	9	24	16
Disabled (not able to work)	3	7	8	
Between jobs/contracts or on extended stay at home	1	1		
Not wishing to work	1	2		
None of the above	1	1		
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Thirty-one percent of the cross-border respondents in the survey that did not work at the time of the survey, had never worked, compared with the 29% of internal migrants. Other international migrants stood out with 75% in the "never worked" category.

In the category "unemployed at the time of the survey and looking for work" cross-border migrants, internal migrants and non-migrants all showed a similar commitment to finding a job.

Interestingly, 24% of the cross-border group that were not working, were pensioners or retired individuals, compared to the only 9% of the internal migrants and the 6% of the non-migrants.

OCCUPATIONAL STATUS CATEGORIES

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

Occupational status categories	Percentage (%)				
	Non-migrants	Internal migrants	Cross border migrants	Other international migrants	All respondents
Managerial, executive, high admin and independent professional	7	7	3	41	7
Middle and lower level professional, semi-professional and inspectional	6	11		6	8
White collar, sales and clerical	11	10	4	53	11
Skilled manual and supervisory	6	9	4		7
Semi-skilled, operator, driver	15	12	34		13
Unskilled manual, labourer	45	44	55		45
Not answered, other	10	7			9
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

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

INCOME LEVELS

Table 5: Percentage distribution of monthly income according to broad categories grouped by migrant type

Income categories (monthly, ZAR)	Proportion (%)				
	Non-migrants	Internal migrants	Cross border migrants	Other international migrants	All respondents
No income	39	35	6	17	37
1-1000	39	32	14	37	35
1001-2500	10	13	25	7	11
2501-4500	5	5	4	7	5
4501-8000	3	5		4	3
8001-16000	1	2	2		1
160001-30000	<1	<1			<1
30000 plus	<1	<1		<1	<1
Unknown	<1	2	6		1
Refuse to answer	3	6	43	28	5
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

A notable aspect of Table 5 is that 43% of cross-border migrants refused to reveal details of their income, while 28% of international migrants also refused. This is in sharp contrast to the 5% average for all respondents. This would indicate that international migrants, and especially cross-border migrants, were more distrustful of and less willing to co-operate with the survey teams.

When comparing internal migrants to non-migrants it is apparent that there is no obvious difference in income levels between the two groups. Only 6% of cross-border migrants have no income, compared to the 39% of non-migrants and the 35% of internal migrants. A possible reason for this could be the fact that cross-border migrants move specifically to find employment (see Table 8 below).

CROSS-BORDER MIGRANTS: DURATION OF STAY IN CURRENT AREA

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

Duration of stay in current area	%
Less than 1 year	23
1-5 years	19
5-10 years	18
10-20 years	6
20-30 years	30
30 years or longer	4
Total	**100**

Twenty-three percent of the cross-border respondents have been in South Africa for less than a year, while 40% of the respondents have been in the country for ten years or longer. Notably, more than one-third (34%) of the cross-border migrants in the sample have been in South Africa for 20 years or longer.

CROSS-BORDER MIGRANTS: PROBING INTO REASONS FOR LEAVING AREA

Table 7: Cross –border migrants: reasons for leaving previous area of residence

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

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

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

MAIN REASON FOR MOVING

The cross-border respondents provided the best indication of the main reasons for moving to South Africa, as their reasons have not been affected by earlier movements within the country itself.

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

Main reasons for moving	Proportion (%)			
	Internal migrants	Cross border migrants	Other international migrants	All respondents
Employment-related issues	38	82	27	39
Economic-related issues	4	1	11	4
Education-related issues	6	7	11	6
Lifestyle-related issues	5	2	4	5
Spouse/partner-related issues	11		31	10
Family-related issues	17	1	5	17
Political-related issues	2		6	2
Security-related issues	3	6		3
Environmental issues	4		5	4
Housing issues	7			7
Religion issues	1			1
Transport issues	0			0
Health issues	<1			<1
Other	<1	1		<1
Not answered	2			2
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

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

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

For those classified in the survey as internal migrants and international migrants (according to their last move) family/spouse-related issues and the search for employment were the most important reasons for moving.

Of the three groups, only the internal migrants listed housing as an issue.

CROSS-BORDER MIGRANTS: GENDER DIFFERENTATION IN MAIN REASONS FOR LAST MOVE

Male cross-border migrants regarded opportunities for employment as the single main reason for moving to South Africa (91%). The majority of female cross-border migrants also regarded opportunities for employment as the main reason (67%), but for them security issues also were a significant reason to move (20%). Male migrants placed a higher priority on education (8%) than females (3%). Family-related issues played no role for male migrants, but 3% of female migrants listed this as a reason. This could be due to the fact that in some instances women had accompanied their spouses/children to South Africa. For both genders, forced resettlement/political environment played no role in cross-border migration.

It is obvious from the above that male cross-border migrants were primarily attracted to South Africa by pull factors (e.g. employment opportunities, 91%). Although the female respondents indicated that pull factors were also the primary reasons for migration, push factors (such as security related issues, 20%) also played an important role.

CROSS-BORDER MIGRANTS: PROBING ON REASONS TO SELECT THIS SPECIFIC DESTINATION AREA

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

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

Based on the probes reflected in Table 9 it is evident that employment and economic growth were the major reasons for people deciding on a specific area or to move to South Africa. The respondents did not regard housing and social networks/support as important reasons for selecting a destination. Some of the migrants might not have had a specific area in mind when deciding to move to South Africa and might have been in the specific area during the survey through circumstances rather than choice.

CROSS-BORDER MIGRANTS: KNOWN PRIOR INFORMATION ABOUT AREA

Table 10: Cross-border migrants: prior knowledge about specific area

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

It is interesting to note that approximately half of the respondents did not have any prior knowledge about their destination, with only 26% taking an informed decision (knew at least "enough").

CROSS-BORDER MIGRANTS: INFORMATION SOURCES TO SELECT DESTINATION AREA

Table 11: Cross-border migrants: sources that provided information about the destination area

Information sources on destination	%
Not applicable	4
Relatives/friends/acquaintances who lived in area before	62
Relatives/friends/acquaintances who lived in area at the time	18
Radio/television/adverts in electronic media	0
Newspapers/magazines/advertisement in the print media	0
Estate agents	1
Lived in area previously	15
Total	**100**

Cross-border migrants indicated that their main source (80%) of information on their destination was relatives, friends and acquaintances that either lived in the area before or at the time of the decision being made. Having lived in the same area earlier, motivated 15% of the respondents to move back into the same area. The media played no role in their decision in selecting a destination.

CROSS-BORDER MIGRANTS: DECISION MAKER FOR MOVING TO THIS AREA

Table 12: Cross-border migrants: percentage distribution of decision makers for moving to current area

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

The majority of the cross-border respondents in the survey indicated that they decided themselves on the move to South Africa, while 21 % decided jointly with their spouses and 21% were influenced by others. Only 6% had to follow the lead of their spouses to move to South Africa.

Interestingly, only a minute proportion (1%) had indicated that their work compelled them to move.

SATISFACTION WITH PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES

Table 13: Satisfaction levels with present circumstances by respondent type

Satisfaction levels	Proportion (%)				
	Non-migrants	Internal migrants	Cross border migrants	Other international migrants	All respondents
Uncertain/Do not know	1	1	0	0	1
Very dissatisfied	14	20	33	28	17
Dissatisfied	19	21	38	10	20
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10	11	3	29	10
Satisfied	38	32	24	24	35
Very satisfied	18	15	2	9	17
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

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

No less than 71% of migrants from neighbouring countries indicated that they were "very dissatisfied" or "dissatisfied" with their present circumstances, compared to 37% of the overall group who were "very dissatisfied" or "dissatisfied" with their lives.

An analysis of the value-expectancy component is currently being done. It is anticipated that this analysis will provide further insight into the reasons for people's dissatisfaction with their present circumstances. At this stage one can only surmise that these individuals crossed the border hoping to improve their circumstances significantly, only to be disillusioned by the actual situation encountered by them in South Africa. In this regard one can think of issues such as the over-supply of

unskilled and semi-skilled labour, the xenophobic attitudes of locals and being far away from their country, family and support systems.

Cross-border migrants were much more opinionated about their satisfaction levels than any of the other groups (with only 3% indicating "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied").

Only 26% of the cross-border migrants in the survey expressed satisfaction with their circumstances, compared to the 47% of internal migrants and 56% of non-migrants.

CONCLUSION

Migration is by no means a new phenomenon in southern Africa. During the latter half of the nineteenth century the discovery of diamonds and gold, coupled to the accompanying industrialisation, lured thousands of migrant labourers from the southern African region to the mining and industrial centers of South Africa. Throughout the twentieth century at least 40% of the mine workforce was non-South African. More recently 50% of the mine workforce in South Africa are foreign.

Apart from contract mine migration other categories of documented and undocumented cross-border migration were identified such as the movement of skilled immigrants to South Africa, temporary residents in possession of visitors, business, study or medical permits, migrants who entered the country clandestinely without proper documentation, migrants whose permits have expired, contract workers that stayed on in the country after the expiry of their contracts and refugees.

The HSRC survey on migration in South Africa indicated that the single most important reason for cross-border migration was the search for employment (82%). Male cross-border migrants were primarily attracted to South Africa by pull factors (e.g. employment opportunities, 91%). Although the female respondents indicated that pull factors were also the primary reasons for migration, push factors (such as security related issues, 20%) also played an important role. Non-economic issues played an insignificant role in the decision of cross-border respondents to migrate to South Africa.

Interestingly, seventy-eight percent of the cross-border migrants were employed compared to only 35% of all respondents in the survey. One can argue that this is because the majority of these respondents had specifically moved to a new area to find employment. Cross-border migrants were mainly unskilled (55%) and semi-skilled (34%) workers, while only 3% were independent professionals or occupied executive/senior management positions.

Only 6% of cross-border migrants have no income, compared to the 39% of non-migrants and 35% of internal migrants. Surprisingly, 71% of the cross-border migrants were "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" with their present circumstances in South Africa while 41% of internal migrants were "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" with their circumstances. While awaiting further analysis of the data one can only surmise that these individuals crossed the border hoping to improve their circumstances significantly, only to be disillusioned by the actual situation encountered by them in South Africa. In this regard one can think of issues such as

the over-supply of unskilled and semi-skilled labour, the xenophobic attitudes of locals and being far away from their country, family and support systems.

Forty percent of cross-border respondents in the sample have been in the country for ten years or longer. Notably, more than one third of the cross-border migrants in the sample have been in South Africa for twenty years or longer.

Approximately half of the cross-border respondents did not have any knowledge about their destination. The cross-border respondents indicated that their main source (80%) of information about their destination was relatives, friends and acquaintances that had lived in the area. Interestingly, neither the print nor the electronic media played a role in their selection of a destination.

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