© Kamla-Raj 2001
PRINT: ISSN 0971-8923 ONLINE: 2456-6756

J. Soc. Sci., 5(3): 139-152 (2001)
DOI: 10.31901/24566756.2001/05.03.01

Sub-Saharan Africa: Is Regional Economic Integration a Relevant Factor Affecting the Changes Taking Place in International Migration?

Dominic Milazi

Department of Sociology, University of North West, Mafikeng, South Africa

KEY WORDS Economic integration; migration; factors; structural network.

ABSTRACT The paper in question focuses on Sub-Saharan Africa as a terrain of study. Within this terrain, it seeks to address the issue of regional economic integration and the related question whether such integration is a relevant factor affecting the changes taking place in international migration: The paper presents the ensuing discussion within the general framework of migration and development on the sub-continent and further examines the following dimensions: internal and external influences on international migration in terms of theoretical perspectives, or schools of thought. This is followed by a brief discussion of sub-continental or regional economic integration in relation to Sub-Saharan "centres of development" which correlate with urbanization and inter-territorial rural-to-urban migration. The inter-governmental efforts towards the management of international migration under the rubric of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) are examined in greater detail. The argument is made that as the starting point, and for the central purposes of the study, South Africa, as the hub of the sub-continent's structural networks and economic activity, provides the vantage point for addressing the issues in question. As test cases for regional integration and its causal effect on international migration, the case studies of Malawi, South Africa's Afrikaner "trekkers" and Lesotho are discussed at length.

INTRODUCTION

There are various internal socio-economic and political factors that have been responsible for migration in Africa. Some of the internal factors are Africa's adverse socio-economic, political, and environmental conditions. External factors that have exacerbated migration in Africa include slavery, colonialism and foreign intervention. There are also combinations of internal and external influences, such as in the case of outside powers playing a role in supporting internal powers in order to maintain their geo-political strategic interests. However, some of the most important migrations are those generated by processes of regional economic integration leading to inter-territorial expansion of trade and commerce and the movement of labourers.

The colonial growth points had a significant impact on migration patterns in sub-Saharan Africa - thousands of Africans were displaced as Europeans and Asians emigrated to Africa. Thus, by the 1960s nearly 300 000 Europeans had settled in Rhodesia and Zambia; and nearly 100 000 in East Africa (Hance, 1970). In addition, there were around 300 00 Asians in East Africa and 621 000 in South Africa (Richard, 1979).

For Africans, migrant labour became the leading cause of migration to colonial growth points, as colonial powers competed in the marketplaces for cheap labour, mineral resources and other raw materials. These matters are addressed in greater detail elsewhere in the paper. Suffice it to say that international migration may be viewed from several perspectives. These perspectives are summarily captured below.

PERSPECTIVES ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

Depending on one's ideological school of thought, the economic effects on international migration can be analyzed differently. For the classical theoreticians, the argument is that migration has a positive impact upon migrants, particularly in the long term, because they become economically better off in their country of destination (Gebresellasie, 1993). This kind of approach generally considers international migration as "an equilibrating response to spatial inequalities, as essentially voluntary in nature, as a rational attempt by migrants to maximize utility and as a vehicle for upward social mobility" (Ogaden, 1984: 35).

The Neo-Marxist approach is different.

Marxists see international migration as self-destructive. They believe that international migration destroys self-reliance, and promotes dependency and under-development. Marxists regard international migration as "part of Marx's reserve army of unemployed at the beck and call of capitalist entrepreneurs, and suffering deprivations to sustain the living standards of the indigenous population of the advanced countries" (Jones, 1983: 278).

The social structural approach, by contrast, regards migration as breaking family, social, regional, and national ties - bringing about hardships and grief, particularly when it is forced. As Jones (1984: 278) points out,

> "in a society where permanent settlements are the norm, the movement of persons from one place to another results in the severing of most significant social bonds and ties. Emigration entails disruption of the established social structure in the communities of origin. But immigration also plays its part by introducing new and often times conflicting ethnic and cultural elements into the social groups at the place of settlement. Thus migration makes social adjustments inevitable on the part of both the groups losing members and those receiving additions".

Having noted the various theoretical positions from which international migration may be viewed, the next treatment is the regional economic integration and international migration.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

The starting point, for purposes of this project, is South Africa as the hub of the subcontinent's structural networks and economic activity and its recent joining of several multilateral organizations functioning in Africa - regional economic and other functional groupings targeted towards regional economic c-operation and integration. The prospects for a fuller understanding of the major issues in this regard, especially of the complexity of economic dependence and interdependence among member states, are limited. This becomes clear in the section below.

As the countries of the north tighten their borders and immigration laws against the influx of immigrants from developing countries, including sub-Saharan Africa, the need for regional cooperation to promote intra-regional migration becomes even more pressing.

Mfono (1998) defines the new international migration scenario confronting South Africa as characterized by weakened control of immigration. The most outstanding features of the scenario can be summed up as follows:

- increased outmigration of skilled white manpower;
- massive in-migration of unskilled foreigners, most of who came into South Africa illegally, thus making it difficult to estimated the scale of in-migration;
- the new government's desire to honour international agreements on migration and recognize the human rights of immigrants without compromising its commitment to raising the living standards of the black masses in South Africa;
- the deterioration of data quality on international immigration into South Africa. This critical situation is further exacerbated by the new South Africa facing the burden of inflows from former bantustans (four formerly "independent" states and six dependent homelands) in addition to in-migration from neighbouring states in the region. A broader perspective shows that while Africans (blacks) from 76 percent of the population, they accounted for 93 percent of migrant workers (Adegboyega, 1998). A preponderant proportion of the migrant worker were males, outnumbering females by a proportion of 2 to 1. Unemployment rate among the migrant workers was estimated at 16 percent compared with various national estimates of between 20 and 30 percent which constitute a stimulant for internal migration.

Of the estimated 260,000 who moved across the provincial boundaries, 36 percent moved to Gauteng and 18 percent to the Western Cape - the two most industrialized provinces in the country. A further 13 percent moved to Eastern Cape and 11 percent to KwaZulu/Natal - these being the most populous provinces in the country, along with Gauteng.

Economic and social characteristics of migrant labour are also worth noting. About 84 percent of the male migrant workers were reported as employees compared with a figure of 64 percent for females; 10 percent of males and 27 percent of the females were also reported as self-employed (Adegboyega, 1998). It is, however, possible that a significant proportion of the male migrant workers who reported themselves as self-employed may indeed be seeking for work.

Regionally, Adepoju (1998) speaks of the need to reconceptualize international migration in its positive dimension as contributing significantly to social and economic transformation and change in Sub-Saharan Africa. He points out the new trend in intra-regional migration especially between resource-poor but skill-surplus countries and resource-rich but skill-shortage, small countries (in terms of population size) like Botswana and Namibia and the opening up of the Republic of South Africa in the last decade as examples of attractive destinations for migrants.

A preview on key role-players, (Botswana, Malawi, and Lesotho) along with South Africa, in the net immigration in-flows within the region is in order, First, the case of Botswana. Rapid economic development in that country in the 1980s had remarkable effect on the pattern of international migration in sub-Saharan Africa. By 1990 Botswana had become one of the most attractive places for high-skill migrants in the sub-continent. The offer to expatriate employees of attractive salaries and benefits were unparalleled throughout most of the continent. For instance, expatriates are permitted to remit 100% of their end-of-contract gratuities. A massive salary increase in 1991 established this country as the most attractive place on the continent for high-skill immigrants. This position is now changing due to massive salary increases in South Africa and Namibia (Campbell, 1998).

The bulk of labour migrants from Botswana are poorly educated and cannot compete for employment in Botswana where a reasonable amount of education is required in order to earn wages similar to what they receive from working in South African mines.

Malawi, by contrast, is faced with influxes of Mozambicans (demonstrated by the growth of the population during the intercensal period 1901-11, and 1926-31 (Milazi, 1984) and more recently an influx of refugees from Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia and Zaire. However, literary writings from Malawi have imbedded in them the "southern African connection": ex-labour migrants who have worked in Zambia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa under WENELA, so far emigration (and its regional aspect) has gained greater emphasis than immigration through the latter was more important to foreign researchers.

As for Lesotho, which will be dealt with in greater detail later on, it is characterized as a country with no natural resources except water; lack of natural resources has, in part, influenced labour migration to South Africa, with about 45% of the economically active male population said to be employed on the South African mines. Consequently there is dependence of the economy of Lesotho on the South African economy and also dependence of households on migrant remittance. In 1996, these remittances alone contributed 24,2% of the GNP (Tsietsi, 1998).

With the political independence of South Africa in 1994 under the ANC government, foreign investors who have been operating in Lesotho as well as new investors to southern Africa are now opting to invest in South Africa and this has contributed to the high unemployment and increased emigration, of both skilled and unskilled workers to South Africa, for better job opportunities.

By regional standards, South Africa is well-off, with a gross national product per head of 3 160 US dollars; that is 36 times greater than neighbouring Mozambique's. South Africa's gross domestic product of 130 US billion dollars is 20 times that of Zimbabwe (6 billion US dollars), the next richest country in the Southern African Development Community. As the United States tightens controls (especially on Latin Americans) as does Western Europe (especially on North Africans), South African government is working out how to limit the human flow. Reasons for stemming the flow of migrants are both domestic and regional.

In terms of domestic reasons, South Africa has increasingly put forward its own unemployment and economic problems as influential factors. During last year (1997), over 30,000 workers were retrenched, and a further 10,000 dismissed in the gold mining industry (Business Report, 1998). The prospects are for an acceleration of this retrenchment process

(Business Report, 1998). The unions forecast a further fall in employment of between 50, 000 and 100,000 this year 1998. Against this background, employer-employee relations have reached conflict proportions. On the one hand, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) - the militant vanguard of the working class - is concerned that employers are using the gold price as an excuse to lay off workers, as they mechanize the industry, in the pursuit of profit maximization - suggesting that the interest of workers, their families and the communities they return to are of secondary importance.

On the other hand, if retrenchments are not part of the hidden agenda of employers, then they are decided upon without proper research into alternatives. This calls for mitigation of hardships caused by the retrenchments and even preventing retrenchments from happening at all. The Chamber of Mines is of the view that the causes of retrenchments lie in the ore depletion, the gold price, and rising costs.

For this reason, NUM has adopted what appears to be a constructive approach - a gold mining summit, involving all major stakeholders, to seek solutions out of the crisis. NUM wants to re-emphasize that the minerals underground are a national asset. Private mining companies are mining these minerals, in the first instance, on behalf of the country. Mining should, therefore, be conducted in such a manner that profit maximization is subordinate to the national interest.

NUM is also reactivating its previous call for strategic social plan for the mining industry, where provision is made, well before workers are retrenched, for the future well-being of retrenched workers and society. It is envisaged that the social plan must be an integral part of the long-term management of downselling in the industry, as opposed to the current ad hoc approach by employers.

In terms of regional pressures, integration has bought with it less desirable consequences. Not only is there a growing resentment towards most foreigners in South Africa, but there is a "positive correlation" between illegal immigration and crimes such as prostitution, drug abuse, money laundering, sale of counterfeit goods, illegal arms traffic, and car hijackings for cross-border markets. Deportations and repatriations have, as a result, escalated since 1990. A schematic scenario over the period is as follows:

1990	-	293
1992	-	83,109
1995	-	157,695
1996	-	181,230

Source: *The Star*, 13 February 1998, p6.

Although most of the illegal aliens deported or repatriated were from Southern Africa, there were also large numbers of other people from elsewhere in the world, for example, 6420 people from the UK had transgressed their temporary residence status in 1997, followed by 6,011 Germans, 2,494 French, 2,256 Americans, 2,068 Dutch and 1,247 Indians.

According to Mangosutho Buthelezi, 'millions of aliens' have entered South Africa illegally - as a result he has - as minister responsible for 'home affairs' - commissioned a green paper on international migration (Africa Confidential, 18 July 1997, pp5-6). The green paper distinguished three types of immigration:

- would-be permanent migrants which South Africa can pro-actively recruit, with skills, expertise and resources to make a contribution to development;
- refugees seeking asylum, for whom the commission proposes a "simple, practicable, and manageable" system of protection; sharing the burden with other SADC 14 countries;
- migrants, "many of whom are not authorized to be here". Others would be bona-fide job-seekers from SADC countries for whom legalization is recommended. New restrictions should be properly enforced, with full safeguards for migrant rights.

The basic assumption here is that, while South Africa remains much richer than its neighbours, immigration will take place and, "if managed and regulated properly but flexibly", can benefit the country. The transformation process in place is geared towards a system of temporary admissions for SADC workers, giving migrants full rights to due process, administrative review and information.

South Africa has become a natural magnet for those fleeing poverty and persecution. While critics of the ANC-led government appear to view the government's position as soft on immigrants accusing it of "politically correct ambivalence", increasingly the battle lines have been drawn between those who want stiffer penalties and tougher controls and those who seek "to resolve differences through broader, long-term regional strategies and solutions". Proponents of the former option suggest the use of the electric fence on the country borders with Botswana, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe to stop illegal immigrants. The 2, 220km fence operated on lethal power from its construction in 1986 to 1990, killing many wild animals but few of the ANC fighters it was meant to execute. Indeed, recent reports (Africa Confidential, 18 July 1997,p6) point out that two-thirds of illegals have been identified as coming from Mozambique; 289,114 Mozambicans, 32,00 Zimbabweans and 8,234 Lesothans were arrested and deported in 1995-96. Others were deported to distant Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda, with a few to India. In 1993, South Africa sent 96,600 illegal immigrants away.

THE INDUSTRIAL HEARTLAND (GAUTENG): CONVERGENCE OR REGIONAL DISINTEGRATION

Rural families, as well as families outside South Africa's borders, send their "brightest and best" to find their fortunes in the City of Gold (Johannesburg). However, while some families do not find work in the Gauteng province, they nonetheless perceive their children to stand a better chance of getting a job in the province than in their hometowns. Indeed, observers (e.g. Reeve, 1998) describe the influx of people into Gauteng as an unstoppable trend for at least the next 10 years while neighbouring provinces battle to improve their economies. It is estimated that in the first December/January period after South Africa's April 1994 elections, 200,000 people entered Gauteng, signalling the opening of the floodgates into the province.

However, job prospects are dim, more so because, the key provincial employer, the gold mining industry, is under tremendous strain. Its employment levels peaked over a decade ago and some 51,000 jobs were shed in 1997 (The Star, 11 February 1998, p.16). Because of the fall in the gold price, 12 mines are currently operating at a loss and a further two are deemed marginal. At risk are 110,000 jobs.

Furthermore, the gold mining industry appears to be in its twilight years. This is particularly so in regard to retrenchments that are unavoidable because of the downscaling of operations. The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has urged the working class "to stand up and fight for its rights" but also demands a total moratorium on retrenchments by gold mines.

In light of these factors, the controls over foreign workers have been tightened, largely because of the country's unemployment crisis. This ensures that foreign workers would no longer be allowed to be employed in positions which could be offered to locals. Such stringent controls have resulted in the onus being placed on employers to ensure that their foreign recruits hold valid work permits at all times - implying that there is acknowledgement of the need for skilled professionals who possessed knowledge and experience not readily available in South Africa.

REGIONAL CASE STUDIES ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

Several of the insights from co-operative and integrative studies are relevant here. We shall focus particularly on Malawi, white South African migration, and Lesotho - in that order.

MALAWIAN INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

According to a World Bank report (Mtukulo, 1996) pervasive poverty is the number one problem in Malawi, where more than half of the population is considered poor. For this reason, Malawians have continued to look at migrant labour as the only viable solution to their problems. Most of those who went to work in South African mines came from rural areas. About 90 to 95 percent of Malawi's population live in rural areas and it is the rural masses who have been hit hard by inflation, currency devaluation and, in general, economic depression. These pressures have unleashed emigration flows to the southern African states, especially South Africa.

Despite strong historical links between Malawi and South Africa, largely due to the fact that the latter was an integral and indispensable source of income for thousands of Malawians as far back as the turn of the century, a series of events has led to a gradual collapse of international migration. The first event was the stoppage of the Wenela scheme under former President Banda, following the death of 72 Malawians aboard a Blantyre-bound plane that crashed at the Francistown Airport. Under the recruitment programme, more than 130,000 Malawians were gainfally employed in the mines and other sectors of the South African economy.

In 1977, the Temporary Employment Bureau of Africa (TEBA) resumed the exportation of manpower to the South African gold and diamond mines. This event caused Malawians once again to flock to the mines in thousands. However, the journey to the wealthy southern tip of the continent was only to be short lived. In 1989, TEBA was closed.

Malawians who continued to go to work in South Africa encountered countless bottlenecks - and much less swift integration. Most of those who managed to slip through the fingers of the law had a tragic end. They were surveiled and upon being caught deported to Malawi where they landed in gaols for "tarnishing the good image" of their government and leadership. The situation in the 1990s appears to be less favourable for Malawian migrant workers in the region generally and especially in South Africa.

Thus, although Malawi and South Africa are members of SADC, migrant labour to South Africa is not encouraged. The reasons for this seem clear. In the words of Crewe-Brown, the South African High Commissioner to Malawi: "it would be surprising if they (South African Chamber of Mines) will need more foreign workers because of unemployment in South Africa (Mtukulo, 1996: 27). Meanwhile the situation in Malawi is being aggravated by soaring unemployment currently estimated at more than 40 percent. Of the country's 10.4 million people, four million comprise the potential workforce against the available one million jobs - implying that 400 jobs will have to be created everyday to attain an equilibrium. However, this is unlikely to become a reality if the World Bank/IMF recommendation to the Malawi government to retrench about 50,000 of the 105,000 civil servants (1992 census) is anything to go by. Working against such a background, it is evident that unemployment rates in Malawi will not be reduced.

There are, furthermore, structural pressures that may accentuate the out-migration: in part, population growth and environmental degradation play a key role. The basic argument here is that environmental degradation currently under way in Malawi, and for that matter in other parts of Africa, can be linked directly to population growth and pressure on land as a result of deforestation, overgrazing, overuse of land for subsistence, and government development strategies that favour large-scale agricultural development (Kalipeni, 1992).

Apart from such studies on regional migration streams as reflected in the Malawian context, there is also white South African migration which has regional economic (and political) orientation. The extent to which this migration flow has integrative consequences for the sub-region is an issue to which this study how turns.

WHITE INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION FROM SOUTH AFRICA: AN ECONOMIC INTEGRATIVE FORCE

While international migration affects mostly blacks, whites also are affected; a significant number of these have packed up and left for greener pastures, mainly in Europe and Australasia. The constitution of the country enshrines in its Bill of Rights the right of every person in South Africa to leave the country, hence the brain-drain. The dawn of democracy and the celebration of human dignity notwithstanding, years of racial oppression have left citizens with a situation in which some 90 percent of the nation's wealth is in the hands of some 10 percent of the people. The reality that the "haves" are white and the "have-nots" are black carries with it a time bomb whose explosion is likely to unleash even more international migration of both refugees and emigrants.

SOUTH AFRICAN EMIGRATION (TO MOZAMBIQUE)

As already pointed out, international migration is not simply a practice prevalent among blacks only. Whites also participate, both historically and in present times. One hundred and sixty years after the "Great Trek" of Afrikaners from the Western Cape into the interior, a small, more bizarre, trek is under way. Under government sponsorship, Boers are moving north of the Limpopo to introduce large-scale farming. This Afrikaner trek, whose settlers have made home in the Niassa province of Mozambique (which has been devastated by almost 30 years of warfare, but is potentially rich) aims to create a "food corridor" from Angola to Mozambique with Afrikaner agri-business investing heavily in commercial farming, food processing, and eco-tourism.

About 12 African countries have been targeted as far north as Zambia, Zaire, and Congo, with the majority accepting the "Second Great Trek". While the criticism of settling Afrikaner farmers in other countries has been severe, as in the case of the Toronto-based Southern Africa Report (arguing that the settling of Afrikaner farmers in other countries means "exporting apartheid"), in other quarters comments have been highly positive. General Viljoen is reported as saying:

> "settling Afrikaner farmers would stimulate the economies of neighbouring states, would stem the flow of illegal immigrants in South Africa, mostly from Mozambique". 17 Officially, there are 2-4 million illegal immigrants in South Africa, mostly from Mozambique, but there may be more - and they are controversial. The interests of South Africa's neighbours seem to be served by the "Second Great Trek". Local committees hope that jobs, schools, clinics, and other basic amenities will follow the"trek".

The other development aid strategy relates to the recent efforts targeted at boosting Southern African economies - efforts which have brought improvements to the economic fortunes of the region, particularly for Mozambique. The Maputo Corridor, as the project is called, will have a major impact upon the infrastructure of both countries. The port of Maputo itself is ideally located for trade with the East. Besides being an exporter of power and an important contributor to the power post, it is a huge and largely untapped market for the countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), especially Lesotho, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe.

For the South Africans, the Maputo Corridor will serve both political and economic purposes: President Mandela may openly use the project as a gesture of solidarity with one of the countries which suffered against apartheid. The underside of this is that investment in Mozambique may be perceived not only as a way of finding a convenient 'dumping ground' for South Africa's technology as its industries modernize, but also as a way of creating a buffer zone against the new item in Pretoria's list of headaches: the influx of economic refugees (Mbeki, 1996).

SACADA: ITS EFFECT ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

The regional project of "settling Afrikaner farmers in South Africa's neighbouring countries" is supported by SACADA (South African Chamber of Agricultural Development) which embraces the Transvaal and Free State agricultural unions and is backed by funds from the European Union earmarked by Brussels for South Africa's Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). The driving force in SACADA is South Africa's right-wing political party, the Freedom Front (FF), led by General Viljoen.

In what appears to be more of a global co-operation rather than a regional co-operation strategy, SACADA has endeavoured to bring its policies in line with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. It is set to become an international development agency (Africa Confidential, 1997: 4) with a mandate to contract with donor institutions and carry out "foreign aid programmes" on their behalf. Indeed, in 1994, when the Congo government and the South Africa Development Corporation (SADEVCO) agreed on 99-year leases for Afrikaner farmers, President Mandela called on African nations "to accept the migrants as a kind of foreign aid"

As Afrikaner farmers move in the direction of the north, there is, on the one hand, the ANC-led government that cautions that the interests of South Africa's neighbours must be considered. Here, in fact, the ANC is keen to relieve pressure on the land in South Africa, where redistribution, as in Zimbabwe, is moving painfully slowly. On the other hand, there is severe criticism. For some, the settling of Afrikaner farmers in other countries means "exporting apartheid" - implying that peasants will lose land, that small-holders will become labour tenants, that the Freedom Front is racist and that a "Food Corridor" could uproot and displace small farmers over an extensive area, increasing poverty. South African farmers would bring their own managers, foremen, tractor operators and technicians with them and operate their new farmers as part of their South African business.

Others argue that the SACADA project matches World Bank objectives, that under the guise of "foreign aid", Western donors are helping to extend apartheid into neighbouring countries. National territories will be carved up into concessionary areas. The criticism goes on to claim that in addition to granting rights to Afrikaner agri-business in Mozambique as well as the possibilities including agriculture (beans, maize, fruit), cattle ranching, a "nature farm" (wild life ranching), large-scale mining of gold, diamonds and coal, huge forested areas, tourism and fishing, the Boers also have their eyes on agricultural areas along the Zambesi and Limpopo rivers, as well as on the road and railway facilities linking Niassa (Mozambique's largest potentially richest but underdeveloped province - about the size of England) to the deep sea port of Nacala. Rural townships will provide low-paid labour for the South African farmers, who will escape the demands of black agricultural workers in South Africa.

Thus, beyond these global factors, South African Boers will increasingly invest in Africa but only in those areas where they can take advantage of appropriate labour relations and cheap labour costs and where infrastructure is good enough to support a sophisticated profit-making operation. International migration among South Africa's whites is not only towards the northern states of the sub-continent, but equally beyond and towards overseas countries. A brief note on this variant of current emigration of manpower is in order.

WHITE SOUTH AFRICAN EMIGRATION

This is the emigration that continues to drain South Africa's dwindling pool of key specialist skills and top management personnel. With this brain drain on the increase, the country finds itself facing a skills shortage as a result of emigration of top and middle management personnel. Heading the list of employees who resigned to emigrate are computer programmers, financial managers, and directors, geologists, product line managers and senior academics. The most popular destinations for emigrants are the United Kingdom, Australia, United States, Canada, New Zealand and Israel.

For the seemingly unabated emigration of specialist emigration, a majority of those who leave blame a series of disintegrative pressures including crime, violence, and better employment opportunities abroad. Efforts by government to halt the emigration of top management and middle management as well as key specialist staff have stressed the importance of an attractive political, economic, and social environment. Not only are manpower losses devastating for the economy in transition which needs all the help it can get, but this can also have the effect of sabotaging economic growth dissuading would-be entrepreneurs from taking the plunge into new ventures.

It now remains to address the issue of Lesotho's migration and the extent to which regional economic integration affects the country's emigration. Such migration, in turn, impacts on the manner in which, it will be argued, economic and political integration may be in tandem.

LESOTHO'S MIGRATION AND PROSPECTS FOR INTEGRATION

As one of the least developed nations of Africa, Lesotho has been brought to its knees by the worst drought in 40 years. A grim picture is portrayed by Thulo Hoeane (1998: 35).

"Agricultural production has continued to decline qualitatively and quantitatively since independence and rampant soil erosion has resulted in the loss of approximately 50% of the country's arable land ... The current drought brought about by the El Nino effect is adding to the problems".

The vulnerability of Lesotho's political economy was also evident during the recent saga: "The King (Letsie) versus the state" (Pitsane, 1994: 14). The crisis in Lesotho had brought about the unprecedented alliance between one section of the trade union movement in South Africa, and the government. The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) called on mine management to immediately suspend the remittance of wages paid to the 130,000 Basotho migrant labourers working at the South African mining industry. Such a measure could have dealt a severe blow on the economy of Lesotho, which derives more than 32 million US dollars per year (about 50 percent of its GDP) from the labour exports to the South African mines.

Currently, the retrenchment of miners from South Africa's troubled gold mining industry has worsened Lesotho's economic woes. Many Lesotho families depend for their assistance on miners' remittances from South Africa. Crime, such as armed robbery, is also on the increase as the youth gets more desperate. A radical solution is urgently needed to reverse this decline (Hoeane, 1998: 35).

As a possible solution, there is a growing support for the integration of Lesotho into the new democratic South Africa. This might help the economy make more sense but neither Maseru nor Pretoria are ready to take the plunge. The debate is between opposing poles.

On the one hand, many Basotho are suggesting that incorporation of their landlocked country, whether by federal arrangement or by becoming a new province of South Africa, may help their staggering economy and political system. On the other hand, those Basotho advocating continued independence from South Africa are still the majority but Pretoria's proposals to abolish the migrant labour system make some new thinking from Maseru more urgent.

For this reason, it is South Africa's economic might, not Maseru's political squabbles, that seem to concern the Basotho most. Thus, migrant workers in mines who send home a large part of their earnings are the mainstay of the economy and make up over 80 percent of the country's wage labour. The Lesotho government makes big profits from the system of deferred payments under which miners' wages are deposited in the state-controlled Lesotho Bank and released in instalments at agreed intervals. However, the migrants remain outside South Africa's welfare system and must go home once their contracts end.

Given South Africa's political and economic transformation, the underlying argument is about whether there is any reason for Lesotho to remain a separate entity. Those arguing for integration point out that Lesotho, separated from South Africa and placed under British "protection" more than a century ago, was in practice exploited mainly as a reservoir of cheap labour for South African mines. Now, the apartheid monster has collapsed and South Africa has reincorporated its own bantustans into a unitary state. Lesotho's integration into South Africa is made imperative by the country's growing economic dependence on its big neighbour. That dependence rests not only on migrants' remittances but also on receipts from the Southern African Customs Union, contributing 60 percent of government revenues, membership of a common monetary area with South Africa and, most recently, on the sale of water from Lesotho's Highlands for South Africa's mines and factories.

The integrative pressures are there and while the Lesotho government does not like the idea of losing many of its citizens and much of its revenue to South Africa, integration into the Republic is an issue that cannot be deferred for much linger. Modifying Lesotho's status as a sovereign nation, by retaining its own monarchy and a degree of independence, is a possibility given the fact that the country has its conquered Sotho territory now within the Republic. There is also little point in maintaining structures derived from apartheid and colonialism, when neither exist any more.

Thus, a dilemma confronts Basotho migrant mine workers in the context of the changing labour migrancy patterns in Southern Africa. On the one hand there has been, in recent times, critical transformation of the migrant labour system occasioned by the South African government to grant some foreign miners residency permits. While the decision may be good for the miners, (it accords them a right to choose their place of abode, a right denied them for along time especially during the heyday of apartheid) it nonetheless has a great potential of hitting very hard on the fledgling economy of Lesotho, which depends on miners' remittances.

On the other hand, there is the possibility of miners responding differently to the offer of permanent residence permit-taking up South African identity documents only to maximize survival opportunities, without relocating to South Africa as such. In this regard, Matlosa (1996) speaks of the class nature of migrant miners debilitating against easy mobility, that as worker-peasants migrant miners own some petty property in the countryside (e.g. land and livestock) and that they are still strongly tied to a spider-web of socio-cultural networks that may inhibit their mobility.

However, it will be observed that in the case of Lesotho, international migration is both age and sex selective (most emigrants are young men between 15-54, while female emigrants, mainly domestic servants, are in age group 20-44). In terms social and marital statistics, in 1976, 89.31% of the married emigrants were males between the ages 24-44, in 1986, this percentage has increased to 92.90%. However, it dropped to 87.40% in 1996 (Tsietsi, 1998). If these statistics are anything to go by, then the disintegrative forces within family and kinship systems may stimulate and even facilitate mobility for those affected Basotho migrants.

Mixed reactions and group formation to the integration process via granting and acceptance/ rejection of residency permits pose challenges to the small land-locked country in the context of regional and global changes: the first group "will comprise miners who might opt to obtain permanent residence status without relocating to South Africa". These are workers with long-term investment and strong socio-cultural links at home. The second group of migrant workers will take up permanent residence permits, relocate to South Africa and apply for citizenship after five years.

Overall, Lesotho is compelled to rethink its survival strategies and regional identity given the declining aid flows and the uncertainty of the labour migrancy system as well as the uncertainty surrounding the future of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU). To date, South Africa is engaged in reconstructing and restructuring Lesotho's labour reserve - thereby re-ordering its relations with Pretoria. It would seem that Lesotho stands to gain immensely through closer integration into South Africa.

To this end, the framework that Lesotho needs includes 'clear strategies' and sustainable 'negotiating position', and movement towards a de facto economic union with South Africa, which at the minimum would allow Basotho workers access to jobs in South Africa. Lesotho is, afterall, already more integrated with South Africa economically and politically through SACU, CMA (Common monetary Area), the Highlands project, the guarantor security arrangements, and a myriad of routine economic, social, and political transactions. In the circumstances, Lesotho is now a 'test case' of a free regional labour market. The planning and managerial mechanism for such an arrangement, a bilateral joint commission, is already encouraged within the SADC framework. Notwithstanding this, Matlosa (1996: 169-170) points out that the protocols on free trade, energy, transport, and communication as well as illicit drug trafficking were signed whilst the one on free movement of persons was postponed to an unspecified date. He attempts to explicate SADC's apparent reluctance to sign a protocol on free movement of peoples as follows:

> "It is not difficult to explicate SADC's apparent reluctance to sign a protocol on free movement of peoples. First and foremost, migration in the region - particularly undocumented migration and movement of refugees - is perceived as a security, rather than a developmental issue. The security mythology thus clouds the migration issue and leads to costly efforts by the states to put in place elaborate border controls, etc. Second, the uneven development in the region makes the relatively advanced countries reluctant to accede to a protocol on free movement of persons for fear of shouldering the larger slice of the migration problem. Third, xenophobic attitudes and the nation-building project seem to clash with the

formation of an integrated regional labour market and a regional reconstruction and development programme. Finally, and most importantly, unilateral actions taken by powerful regional players on the migration issue frustrate multilateral efforts needed for this problem to be adequately addressed. The granting of permanent residency permits to foreign migrant miners by the new South African government, although a welcome move, is one such unilateral action by the region's dominant power".

Notwithstanding the reasons above, President Mandela granted permanent residency permits to about 90,000 foreign miners in October 1995 - taking by surprise the affected governments of the neighbouring labour supply states. In fact, many of these governments were preoccupied with concern and anxiety over the likely massive retrenchment of foreign miners in South Africa to make way for rapid employment creation envisaged in the government's economic policy - the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP).

There are indications, however, that the situation may radically change. The statistics of poverty in South Africa are a persuasive call for such a radical change. About 53% of the country's people earn less than R301 per month, which amounts to just 10% of total earnings. About 74% of the poor live in rural areas (The Star, 3 March 1998: 15).

The process of retrenchments has started, albeit at snail's pace. Central Statistical Service figures show that between 1996 and 1997, public sector staff numbers have fallen by about 4,000 from 1.92 million to 1.88 million. A similar trend is evident at provincial and national government level with staff having declined from 1.28 million in 1996 to 1.26 million in 1997. Underlying these declines are the impact of voluntary retrenchment packages, the combat of "ghost worker" phenomena and the out-sourcing of non-essential services (Sunday Times Business Times, 15 February 1998: 27). Some analysts have suggested that a complement of 800,000 for national and provincial governments would be more appropriate. This could be achieved by natural attrition, forced retrenchments and outsourcing of non-essential services. A racial breakdown of the public sector in 1997 shows that almost exactly half (947,000) were black, 422,066 white, 186,000 coloured and 25,000 Indian.

From the foregoing discussion, particularly over the case study areas (i.e. Malawi, Mozambique and Lesotho), it is evident that a more leading role of the national governments would be endorsed by migrant workers and their unions. Key areas of possible intervention are those in relation to agricultural and rural development, public works programmes and entrepreneurship.

Traditionally, development has been envisaged in terms of economic growth, as distinct from socio-political factors. A new paradigm should seek to view development as the quality of life that can be enjoyed by a people, in terms of an increasing and widening distribution of life-sustaining goods, a substantial improvement in the standard of living of the majority, and the reduction of socio-economic inequalities. Concern may, and should be, given to humanistic cultural, and political issues (Forest, 1988). Merging these criteria with the capacity of the state to create an enabling environment has become a necessity.

The developmental states, equated with states armed with "democratic good governance" (leftwich, 1995) have played a major part in encouraging the emergence and growth of private economic institutions. Malawi government, in particular, introduced measures facilitating access to land for private ownership, promoting agricultural estates and exporting production. During former President Banda's rule most of the estates production was owned by himself and his circle of close supporters. It was, as Ambert (1997) put out, in effect, a mere "presidential fiefdom".

The policy of developing the urban elite, coupled with a discriminatory attitude towards non-Chewa regional ethnic groups (Ambert, 1997) has also adversely affected the socio-economic status of the Malawian population. The bias in favour of access to public resources such as education and health care, resulted in severe imbalances in standards of living, which were aggravated by the rise in poverty. All this translates into a serious disablement of human resources and the consequent flight into the neighbouring countries of migrant labourers.

There is, in addition, the lack of production incentives and heavy taxation imposed on the peasantry engaged in the cultivation of staple products which meant that its lack of productivity was to have devastating effects upon the social welfare of the entire population. Furthermore, the fact that the Malawi elite lacked integrity and followed personal economic interests had a negative effect on the economy and the capacity of the state to promote development.

At the more regional level, SADC countries may need more economic cooperation and more cohesion in bilateral transactions. As already pointed out, Lesotho is more integrated with South Africa economically and politically through SACU and CMA and the Highlands Project. A de facto economic union with South Africa will, at the minimum, allow Basotho workers access to jobs in South Africa. The case for more equitable arrangements is even stronger for Namibia and Swaziland, in addition to Lesotho since all belong to the CMA with South Africa and all have currencies pegged to the rand. Beyond the constraints imposed by SADC membership, they have surrendered control of their national monetary policies to the South African Reserve Bank (Weisfelder, 1997) and cannot manage their own foreign exchange holdings.

This arrangement might prove beneficial if the rand were a source of stability. On the contrary, however, South Africa has experienced a continuing "randslide", with its currency depreciating against the dollar from approximately 2.6 in 1990 to 3.6 in 1995 and 4.7 in 1996. Even the Botswana pula, though formally distinct, has had to be devaluated sharply in tune with the rand to keep Botswana's exports competitive in the South African market. For all of the BLNS states, externally imposed devaluations cause serious inflationary pressures, reduce real incomes by increasing the cost of goods imported from outside SACU, and enhance the stranglehold of South African products within the entire market area. Unlike its other partners, whose exports become more competitive globally, Lesotho gains virtually nothing since its sole significant exports, labour and water, go to South Africa. For the BLNS states to renegotiate SACU with South Africa without simultaneously addressing the problems of CMA makes little sense.

Within SADC, the format recognizes the "disparities, imbalances, and variable geometry of the region" (Matlosa, 1996) and seeks to turn this potential. Unfortunately, large exporters of labour to South Africa like Malawi and Mozambique would hardly lobby to secure for a single member a labour force privileged position at their own expense. This situation applies particularly to Lesotho and its claims to special treatment. States with stronger economies, like Botswana and Namibia, have little incentive to accept special consideration for Lesotho within SACU to their own disadvantage. Lesotho will have a very difficult time persuading its SADC partners that any separate arrangements or benefits negotiated with South Africa will eventually open the door to enlarging that initial experiment through the region. Piecemeal arrangements would lessen the urgency for South Africa to address SADC's broad agenda. On the other hand, SADC is too big and its problems too substantial for South Africa to accommodate the whole group without diluting its own reconstruction and development (Weifelder, 1997).

In sum, the three member states of SADC, Mozambique, Malawi and Lesotho have, in varying degrees, a labour reserve economy where a considerable amount of the GNP derives from the remittances of migrant workers. However,, there are growing signs of disappearing jobs and citizens as political and economic integration takes its toll. Thus, as anticipated, recruitment of Lesotho's workers is declining sharply as preference is being given to South African citizens. South Africa's readiness to make unilateral decisions on an issue so critical to Lesotho, the state most dependent on access to employment in South Africa, was less clearly foreseen. The first instance was the decision to grant permanent residence status to foreign workers who had lived in the Republic since 1986, notwithstanding the potentially devastating impact upon Lesotho's revenues, human resource base and social structure should large numbers of miners leave permanently.

Finally, whether a restrictive immigration policy will be any more effectual than influx control under the apartheid regime remains to be seen. However, there are some indicators particularly if it is considered that South Africa recently imposed visa requirements on holders of passports from Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, and Swaziland for visits exceeding 30 days. Pretoria has also been successful in blocking adoption of a SADC protocol which would have phased in a free market for labour, tourism, goods, and services over a 10-year period. Growing paranoia about crime, drugs, violence and unemployment has focused public attention, particularly in South African urban areas, on foreign workers and illegal immigrants as the purported primary culprits, despite persuasive evidence to the contrary (Solomon, 1996). Indeed, in the South African context, "economic refugees" have been blamed for falling wages and rising rents, for joblessness and housing shortages, not to mention the escalating crime rate (Milazi, 1996).

Not all foreign nationals on the sub-continent are unwelcome in South Africa. Like regional states, South Africa has a voracious appetite for "desirable" immigrants, who bring expertise and scarce skills. Both the private and public sectors in South Africa compete to meet their affirmative action ("transformation") objectives by hiring talented foreigners, especially those who speak English as well as an indigenous southern African language and can easily blend into the local milieu (Weisfelder, 1997).

Within such a free market context, it is difficult to see how social capital investment in qualified and skilled manpower - engineers, physicians, nurses, university faculty, and experienced administrators - could not be severely depleted by the burgeoning brain drain. The impactis much greater upon Lesotho and to a lesser extent Mozambique and Malawi, than on more affluent states like Botswana, Swaziland, and Namibia.

REFERENCES

Adegboyega, Oluwole. 1998. "A Preview of Internal Migration in South Africa," paper prepared for the Regional Meeting on International Migration in Africa at the threshold of the XXI Century, Gaborone, Botswana, 1-5 June.

Adepoju, Aderanti. 1988. "International Migration in Africa South of the Sahara," *International Migration Today*, 1: 78.

____. 1998. "An Overview of International Migration in Sub-Saharan Africa at the threshold of the 21st Century," paper prepared for the Regional Meeting on International Migration in Africa at the threshold of the XXI Century, Gaborone, Botswana, 1-5 June.

Aduwo, Gibson and Rose Obudho. 1989. "Urbanization and Housing in the Southern Africa Development and Coordination Conference (SADC) Countries," *African Urban Quarterly* (Nairobi), 4 (3 & 4): 207-217.

Africa Confidential. 1997. 25 April, 38 (9): 3-4

Africa Confidentia. 1997. 18 July, 38 (15): 5-6.

African Markets. 1991. "African Efforts Need Much Stronger Global Support," *The African Economic Review*, October, p.4.

Ambert, Cecile. 1997. "Development, the State and its Leadership in Malawi and Madagascar: The Neoliberal Paradigm Revisited," *Africa Insight*, 27 (1): 44-53.

Annan-Yao, Elizabeth. 1996. "Economic Migration: Poverty, Unemployment, Income Differentials, Population," in Aderanti Adepoju and Tomas Hammar (eds.), *International Migration in and from Africa: Dimensions, Challenges and Prospects*. Senegal, Dakar: Imprimerie Saint-Paul.

Business Report (The Star), 25 February 1998, p. 2.

Business Report (The Star), 27 February 1998, p. 1.

Cronin, Jeremy. 1998. "Neo-colonials and Mint Imperials," *Mail and Guardian* (Johannesburg), 13-19 March, p. 20.

Campbell, Eugene. 1998. "Botswana: Country Migration Profile," paper prepared for the Regional Meeting on International Migration in Africa at the threshold of the XXI Century, Gaborone, Botswana, 1-5 June.

Esterhuysen, Pieter. 1994. *South Africa in Sub-equatorial Africa: Economic Interaction, A Factual Survey*. Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa.

Forrest, John. 1988. "The Quest for State 'Hardness' in Africa," *Comparative Politics*, 20: 423-430.

Gebresellasie, Yohannes. 1993. "International Migration in Africa: An Overview," Refuge (12) 8: 2-6.

Hance, William. 1970. *Population Migration and Urbanization in Africa*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Hoeane, Thulo. 1998. "Lesotho: Double Headed Monster Stalks the Land," *African Business*, 228: 35.

Jones, Roy. 1983. *A Population Geography*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers.

Kalipeni, Ezekiel. 1992. "Population Growth and Environmental Degradation in Malawi," *Africa Insight*, 22 (4): 273-282.

Leftwich, Andrew. 1995. "Bringing Politics Back in Towards a Model of the Developmental State," *The Journal of Development Studies*, 3: 405-418.

Matlosa, Khabele. 1996. "Disappearing Donors: Bargaining for Aid," unpublished paper in absentia at the Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, San Fransisco, 23-26 November, pp. 1-30.

____. 1996. "The Future of Basotho Migrant Miners in a Post-apartheid South Africa: Re-thinking Lesotho's Regional Identity," *Lesotho Law Journal*, 9 (2): 169-191.

Mbeki, Mooletsi. 1996. "The 'Benevolent' Nation," *SAPEM*, 10 (1): 16-17.

Mfono, Nomza. 1998. "International Migration in South Africa in the 1990s," paper prepared for the Regional Meeting on International Migration in Africa at the threshold of the XXI Century, Gaborone, Botswana, 1-5 June.

Milazi, Dominic. 1984. *The Politics and Economics of Labour Migration in Southern Africa: What are the Key Issues?* Maseru: Lesotho Printing and Publishing Company.

_____. 1996. "Low Intercontinental Emigration from Sub-Saharan Africa: A Sociological Investigation," (pp. 89-112) in Aderanti Adepoju and Tomas Hammar (eds.), *International Migration in and from Africa: Dimensions, Challenges and Prospects.* Senegal Dakar: PHRDA/CEIFO.

Mtukulo, Angels. 1996. "Malawi: The Migrant Labour Legacy," *Political and Economic Monthly* (Harare), 9 (3 & 4): 26-27.

Muzorewa, Basil. 1997. "Scope for Viable Regional Intergration," SAPEM, 6: 27.

Nevin, Tom. 1997. "African Cities at Bursting Point," *African Business*, February, pp. 14-15.

Nkandawire, Richard and Khabele Matlosa (eds.). 1993. *Food Policy and Agriculture in Southern Africa.* Harare: SAPES Books.

Nwanna, Gladson. 1986. *ECOWAS and Labour Migration in West Africa.* Morgan State University, Baltimore, Maryland, USA (Mimeo).

Ogaden, Philip. 1984. *Migration and Geographical Change.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pitsane, Keneiloe. 1994. "Lesotho: The King versus the State," *Southern Africa Political and Economic Monthly (SAPEM)*, 7 (17): 14-15.

Reeves, Jacqui. 1998. "The Move from Slums to Suburbs," *Saturday Star*, 21 February, p. 9.

Richard, John. 1979. *Africa: A Study of Geography of Advanced Students.* Essex, Harlow: Longman.

Ruffini, Antonio. 1997. "Putting Mining in Africa into Perspecctive," *African Mining*, 3 (1): 22.

Solomon, Hussein. 1996. "From Uncertainty to Confusion: The illegal Immigrant Question in South Africa," unpublished paper presented at the second ACDESS conference. Johannesburg, 24-27 January.

Thompson, Carol. 1991. *Harvests Under Fire - Regional Co-operation for Food Security in Southern Africa.* London and New Jersey: Zed Books.

Tsietsi, Matsotang. 1998. "Migration Profile for Lesotho," paper prepared for the Regional Meeting on International Migration in Africa at the threshold of the XXI Century, Gaborone, Botswana, 1-5 June.

Weisfelder, Richard. 1997. "Why Lesotho Needs a Distinctive Diplomatic Strategy?" *Africa Insight*, 27 (1): 32-43.