DSPACE

https://dspace.org/

The reduction of Mozambican workers in South African mines, 1975-1992: A case study of the consequences for Gaza Province - District of Chibuto

Gaspar, Napoleão

2008-05-16T12:37:00Z
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/4839

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

Chapter II. Antecedents: Historical Background

II.1. The beginning of Mozambican migration to South Africa

The migration of workers from Mozambique to South Africa started before the discovery of diamonds and gold in Kimberley and on the Witwatersrand respectively.[22] A few thousand workers mainly from southern Mozambique travelled to Natal, where they were employed in sugar and other estates from the 1850s. A smaller number of Mozambican workers also travelled from southern Mozambique to the Cape Colony to seek work on wool farms. The migration of the Pedi, from the Eastern Transvaal, and the Basotho show that Mozambicans were not alone in the migrant labour movements before the development of the mines.[23] The discovery of diamonds in Kimberley in the second half of the 1860s attracted more workers and it is estimated that there were up to 12,000 Mozambicans working in South Africa in 1879.[24] As is argued later in the Chapter, the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand and its consequent exploitation significantly accelerated the presence of Mozambican workers in South Africa.

As already noted above, the migration of workers from Mozambique to South Africa started before the 1860s. There were several reasons that led Mozambicans into the system of migrant labour; such as climate changes, economic conditions and a turbulent

[22] See Harries, 'Kinship, …' pp. 142- 153 ; Harries, Work, Culture… pp. 18- 29 ; C. Walker, 'Gender and the Development of The Migrant Labour System c. 1850- 1930', in C. Walker *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*. Cape Town: David Philip, 1990, pp. 168-177; V. Allen, *The History of Black Mineworkers in South Africa, Vol I: The Techniques of Resistance, 1871-1948*. Keighley: The Moor Press, 1992, pp. 33-36

[23] Kimble, 'Labour Migration…' pp. 119- 141; Delius, *The Land belongs…*, pp. 68- 69 and Passim.

[24] Harries, 'Kinship…', p. 144

political and social environment. António Rita-Ferreira, cited by Gool, described the ecology and climatic conditions of the regions between the Save and Limpopo rivers and pointed out that they were characterised by irregular rainfall and prolonged droughts, and the population density contributed to the exhaustion of this soils.[25] These ecological conditions contributed to the insecurity of agricultural production and pasture. The droughts also affected other economic activities such as hunting because wild animals such as elephants, giraffe, zebra, and so on became increasingly rare.[26] These factors contributed to the decline of the local economy which contributed to the development of the migrant labour system. Other important reasons for the integration of people from southern Mozambique, the Tsonga, were the need to accumulate hoes and, later, sterling to invest in bridewealth and in commodities such as clothes and liquor.[27]

Elements of ideology and status within the rural communities of southern Mozambique also promoted the participation of males in migrant labour. Harries pointed out that in the 1890s young men who were from the mines were treated with new respect "as *gayisa*, those who have returned from the mines and are source of wealth. Red-coats, smoking jackets, hats and trousers bought on the mines were the symbol of the new status".[28] In opposition to this status, men "who remained at home were denigrated as *mumparras*,

[25] Gool, S. *Mining capitalism and Black Labour in the Early Industrial Period in Southern Africa: A Critique of the New Historiography*. Sweden Studentlitteratur Lund, 1983, pp. 49
[26] Harries, 'Kinship…' p. 144- 146; Allen, 'The History of Black…', pp. 47- 48
[27] Harries, 'Kinship…', p. 144- 153; see also Walker, 'Gender and the development…',p. 173
[28] Harries, 'Kinship…' p. 158

narrow-minded and ignorant provincials".[29] The necessity to achieve the first status led some young men to South African mines even in later periods.[30]

The decline of the local economy mainly because of the effects of local climate changes can be seen as the principal internal cause of the migration among the Tsonga of southern Mozambique. This motivation is significantly different from the main motives of migration of other people from southern Africa, at least as the initial cause. The participation of the Pedi in the migrant labour dates back to the 1840s and this involvement deepened in the 1850s and the 1860s. In this period, the principal destinations of the Pedi were Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Natal and later mainly Kimberley and the Rand. The Pedi migrants brought back various commodities such as ammunition, blankets and cattle; however one commodity can be seen as the main cause of migration among the Pedi, the gun. The desire to accumulate guns appears to have been a factor of decisive importance to this migration. As Delius pointed out, "the beginning of substantial Pedi participation in labour migration in the early 1850s coincided with a period in which the Pedi were under severe threat from the Zulu, the Swazi and the Trekkers".[31]

Among the Basotho, the migratory movement began in the first half of the nineteenth century. The need for guns seemed to be the principal motivation of the increased numbers of Basotho into migrant labour. Kimble cited one magistrate who confirmed the

[29] Ibid.
[30] Interview with Antonio Tivane, Chibuto, 13/07/2005, conducted by N. Gaspar
[31] Delius, *The Land belongs…* , p. 68

necessity of the guns for Basotho society: "the chief Molapo was the first who sent large groups of men to work at the diamond fields, and it was openly said by the natives that he had ordered them not to return without guns and ammunition, which order they scrupulously obeyed".[32] It is therefore possible to argue that while the need to acquire military equipment (guns/ ammunition) influenced the earlier migration of the Pedi and the Basotho, socio-economic pressures explain the migration of the Mozambicans.[33] However, it would be hazardous to argue that the motivations originating migration were necessarily those leading to its continuation, or that the causative factors were entirely divergent across the region; for example, socio-economic factors also influenced the migration of the Pedi and the Basotho in later periods.

The Mpondo, from northern Transkei, and the Swazi came into the migrant labour system later than the Pedi, the Basotho and the Tsonga of Mozambique. A local environment of economic prosperity and self-sufficient agriculture among the Mpondo and the Swazi explains the late entry of the people into the migration system.[34] An interesting system of recruitment was established among the Mpondo, the cattle, or, later, cash or goods, advance system.[35]

---

[32] Kimble, 'Labour Migration..', p. 132
[33] Allen, 1992, p. 47
[34] For details about migrancy of the Mpondo and the Swazi, see C. *Bundy The Rise and fall of the South African Peasantry*. University of California Press, 1979, p. 110; Walker, 'Gender and the Development…' p. 175; and Beinart, *The Political Economy…*, pp. 54- 55
[35] For details about the cattle system, see for example Beinart, *The Political Economy…*, p. 56

The discovery of minerals, especially those on the Witwatersrand in the second half of the 1880s, accelerated the participation of Mozambican workers in the migrant labour system. From that time the numbers of workers from Mozambique increased significantly and at the end of the nineteenth century they were about 60,000 on the Rand alone.[36]

[36] Harries, 'Kinship…', p. 144

II.2. Accords between South African and Portuguese authorities

An analysis of Portuguese capitalism and colonialism helps to explain Portuguese policy toward migrant labour from Mozambique to the South African mines. After the Conference of Berlin (1884-1885), Portugal started to occupy Mozambique effectively. However, its economic capacity was limited and it struggled effectively to control and to exploit the vast territory of Mozambique. Thus, from the end of the 1880s, the Portuguese conceded rights to exploit a large part of the country to concessionary or monopolistic companies, in which foreign capital was dominant. These companies had administrative rights, including the issue of currency, collection of taxes and the establishment of economic enterprises, and they had military force to deal with internal resistances. The main monopolistic companies were the Niassa Company (northern Mozambique) and the Mozambique Company (in provinces of the centre of the country). They were financed by French, German, Belgian and especially British capital. These companies used local labour for plantations and other enterprises.[37]

The picture was different in southern Mozambique. The fact that the powerful interests of British imperialism were threateningly near in this region impelled the Portuguese authorities to engage in official negotiations and agreements with this giant. The weakness of Portuguese capitalism conditioned the character of its colonialism, which was violent internally, and dependent on British and other foreign interests. In this

[37] See for example, C. Serra (Dir) *História de Moçambique Vol I: Primeiras Sociedades Sedentárias e Impacto dos Mercadores, 200/300- 1885*. Maputo: Livraria Universitária, 2000, pp. 201- 247, 302- 347 and M. Newitt, *A History of Mozambique*. London: Hurst, 1995, pp. 361- 374

context, they were not able to invest and to retain the labour force in southern Mozambique. When the Portuguese concluded the military conquest of the Gaza state (1897) and, subsequently, their effective political and military control of southern Mozambique took hold, they established agreements with South African governments and the mines, through the Chamber of Mines, in a successful attempt to derive advantages from the already existing migrant system.[38] This system was important to the interests of the Portuguese colonial regime because it contributed significantly to its economic survival, even during the period of *Estado Novo* (from c. 1930), when the production of crops was intensified and the monopolistic companies were abolished in Mozambique (see the next sub chapter).

In order to further their control of the movement of workers from Mozambique to South Africa, the colonial government enacted the Regulations for Employment of Native Mozambicans in the South African Republic (Transvaal) in November 1897. Through these regulations, the registration of migrant workers from Mozambique came under the control of Portuguese colonial officials.[39]

In 1899, the Anglo- Boer war started which had negative effects on the mining industry; for example a significant number of mines interrupted their activities and thousands of mineworkers were repatriated to Mozambique. In December 1901 an accord between the Transvaal and the Portuguese governments was signed, the *Modus Vivendi*. This was

[38] First, *Black Gold.*..pp. 13- 15; see also Newitt, *A History of Mozambique*., pp. 500- 503
[39] First, *Black Gold.*.., pp. 17, 212; Covane, *As Relações Económicas.*.., pp. 35- 39

signed in Lourenço Marques by the general governor of Mozambique and by Fritz Crowe who represented the British High Commissioner, Lord Milner. The *Modus Vivendi* included agreements in three economic sectors – migrant labour, railways and ports, and trade. Twelve months was established as a maximum term of contract of Mozambican workers in South African mines. The contract could be renewed if it was the wish of the worker. The *Modus Vivendi* also established 13 shillings as the fee that the Portuguese government received from each worker to cover the costs of passports, contract, supervision, registration, and so on. In the same context, an agreement between Mozambican authorities and the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WENELA) was signed in 1901, in which the WENELA was authorised as the sole recruiter in Mozambique.[40]

The colonial government of Mozambique and the government of Transvaal signed the first convention in Pretoria in 1909. It replaced the so called *Modus Vivendi* of 1901.

The first article of the 1909 Convention stated:

> Under this Convention the Government of the Province will permit recruiting within the territories under its direct administration, of native labourers for the mining industries of the Transvaal: Provided that such permission will not be effective within areas the natives of which are subject to obligation under local laws at present in force or under legal contracts now existing with the government of the Province, if those obligations would be interfered with by any recruiting operations.[41]

[40] Serra (Dir) *História de Moçambique…* pp. 390- 394; First, *Black Gold…*, pp. 212- 213; Covane, *As Relações Económicas…*, pp. 52- 55

[41] *Boletim Oficial*, 13, 1909 – 'Convention between the Government of the Transvaal and the Government of the Province of Mozambique', Supplement, 10 April 1909, Article I

The duration of the contract continued in the same form as that established by the *modus vivendi* but the issue of re-engagement was revised, as Article VI shows:

> No labourer shall be engaged in the first instance for a longer period than one year, but at the end of the first period he may be re-engaged for a further period or periods, but so that such period or periods, together with the first period, shall not, without the special permission of the Portuguese Curator hereinafter referred to, exceed two years.
>
> Any labourer who fails to return to the Province of Mozambique at the expiration of this period of service, including any period of re-engagement, shall, unless he shall have obtained special permission from the Curator, be considered a clandestine immigrant for all the purposes of this Convention.[42]

The government of the Transvaal had resolved one of the main worries of the Portuguese government – the issue of repatriation of Mozambicans when the contract expired. Repatriation facilitated Africans paying hut and other taxes, lessened to the internal shortages of labour, and enhanced rural purchasing power in southern Mozambique. Additionally, the 1909 Convention guaranteed that no pressure should be put on the Mozambican workers to renew their contracts.[43]

Like the *Modus Vivendi* of 1901, the 1909 Convention included agreements concerning railways and ports as well as commercial intercourse and customs. These two matters were the subject of complaints by the authorities and businessmen of Natal and Cape because they argued that the Convention was advantageous to Lourenço Marques rather than their ports. Even before the 1909 Convention, the content of the *Modus Vivendi* was

[42] Ibid, Article VI
[43] Ibid, Article VII

criticised by the Cape and Natal governments and business community and, in the context of the 1903 South African Customs Union, the Transvaal government reduced the commercial privileges of Portugal in 1904. The formation of the Union in 1910 led to an increase of the protests against the 1909 Convention. The fact that 50% of the traffic from the Transvaal was guaranteed to the port of Lourenço Marques was one of the most unpopular aspects in Cape and Natal and, in the early 1920s, the government of Smuts was pressed to denounce the Convention. The privileges of the Portuguese in areas of transport and trade were cut by the government of the Union in 1923. However, there were almost no changes in the section dealing with labour supply.[44]

The 1928 Convention signed by the government of the Union of South Africa and the Portuguese government solved some of the problems and gaps that existed in the section of Mozambican labour in South African Mines. The study explores two aspects in this regard – the duration of the contract and deferred pay. The 1928 Convention established 12 months as the duration of the contract, and it could only be renewed for six months. After this period the worker had to go back to Mozambique and to stay there for a period of six months, at least, before he returned to South African mines for re-engagement. Secondly, deferred payment, which had been established in 1909 as voluntary, was instituted as compulsory in the Convention of 1928. A significant part of the wages of

[44] See L. Vail and L. White, *Capitalism and colonialism in Mozambique: A Study of Quelimane District.* London, 1980, p. 208; J. Lang, *Bullion Johannesburg: Men, Mines and the Challenge of Conflict.* Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 1986, p. 329; and Covane, *O Trabalho Migratório.…*, p. 105

Mozambican mineworkers was now to be paid in Mozambique in escudos, the Mozambican currency.[45]

This agreement brought considerable advantages to the Portuguese colonial state, which are examined in the next sections. Like the previous accords, this Convention included the issues of ports and railways, and commercial relations between the two states. For example the government of the Union guaranteed that 50- 55% of the goods imported by sea to Pretoria, Springs, Vereeninging, Klerksdorp, Welverdiend, and Krugersdorp were done through the port of Lourenço Marques.[46]

[45] Convenção de 1928 in Covane, *As Relações Económicas...*, pp. 104- 116
[46] Convenção de 1928, article XXXII in Covane, *As Relações Económicas...*, pp. 110- 111

II.3. The evolution and dynamics of the system of migrant labour from Mozambique to South Africa

As we have seen issue of recruitment of Mozambican workers to South African mines has a long history. One key aspect was the monopoly of recruitment achieved by WENELA in the areas where the recruitment was allowed. WENELA, an agency of recruitment of the Chamber of Mines, was formed in 1887 and, as it was noted above, it signed an agreement with the Portuguese authorities in 1901 in which it was assured the monopoly of recruitment of workers from Mozambique to South African mines. Even though this monopoly of WENELA was threatened in the first decade of the twentieth century when J.B. Robinson tried to establish agreements with the Portuguese to recruit workers in Mozambique,[47] it remained in place until the middle 1960s. WENELA began to operate in Mozambique in 1902. From 1913 these activities were limited to southern Mozambique (south of parallel 22) because it was believed that people from the tropics were not able to adapt to the altitude and climate of the Rand.[48] Three recruitment agencies – Albano Domingos (ALGOS), Agência de Trabalhadores para a África do Sul (ATAS) and Companhia Angariadora de Mão de Obra Nacional (CAMON) - were allowed to recruit in Mozambique through the agreement of 1965; however, unlike WENELA, these new recruitment agencies were licensed to supply labour to mines not affiliated to the Chamber of Mines and to other economic sectors such as agriculture.[49]

[47] For more details about this issue, see Gool, *Mining Capitalism.…*, pp. 189- 211
[48] Interview with Senhor Carlos, Official of TEBA, Maputo, 18/07/2005, conducted by N. Gaspar
[49] First, *Black Gold.…* pp. 23-24; Interview with representatives of Ministry of Labour of Mozambique, Maputo, conducted by N. Gaspar, 13/09/2005

The issue of labour from southern Mozambique was the subject of almost permanent debates among the Portuguese colonial authorities. At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries the Portuguese government was convinced that it was easier and more profitable to accept and to control already existing migrant labour to South Africa than to attempt to interrupt it**.** As Ruth First noted, and as is argued earlier in the chapter, the Portuguese colonial system and its capitalism were weak and unable to organise production using local labour resources.[50] However, from the second decade of the twentieth century, some voices, especially among the white settlers, started to complain about government policies towards African labour. They argued that the state protected trade and public services but it did not make the same effort to protect the farmers who were affected by the lack of labour in the production of sugar, rice and so on.[51] The settlers argued that "migrancy to the Rand resulted in serious diseases amongst the African population, that it led to homosexuality and that it destroyed family life".[52] They proposed the reduction of the recruitment of Mozambican workers to South African mines in the early 1920s.

The proposals to develop agriculture and to reduce the number of Mozambican worker going to South African mines preoccupied the South African governments and mines. Two examples illustrate this fact. First, Manuel Brito Camacho, High Commissioner of Mozambique, attempted to acquire a loan of 5 million pounds from the international money market for J.P. Hornung, a British businessman who headed the Zambézia

[50] First, *Black Gold…* p. 13
[51] Covane, *O Trabalho Migratório…* pp. 144-150
[52] Vail and White, *Capitalism and Colonialism*, p. 207

Company (an agric business company), in 1922. The intervention of Jan Smuts blocked this loan. Secondly, the Portuguese authorities tried to obtain 12 million pounds from the British financial institutions for sugar and other estates of southern Mozambique, but the President of the Chamber of Mines of Transvaal appealed to the British government to oppose this loan. The reasons advocated by South Africa to oppose the loans were similar – the loans could allow the development of agriculture in southern Mozambique and it could promote a rivalry between white farmers from Mozambique and the South African mines in terms of Mozambican labour; and it also could affect the subordinate role of Mozambique in the relations between the two states.[53]

The crisis in the relations between the Portuguese and the South African governments in the 1920s was solved through the 1928 Convention, referred above. At almost the same time a new government come into power in Portugal through a coup d'etat (1926) and it adopted a new constitution as the called *Estado Novo* (New State). This new government promulgated a whole series of measures to establish '*Nacionalismo Económico*' (economic nationalism) in its colonies. António Oliveira Salazar was a key figure in this government and he headed it from the early 1930s. The government centralized politico-administrative powers, it ended the activities of the companies that exploited the centre and north of Mozambique, and the production of cotton was promoted as a 'forced cultivation'. The result of these and other measures was an intensification of the economic relations between Portugal and Mozambique and a growth of income from

[53] Ibid, pp. 209-211; Covane, *O Trabalho Migratório…*, pp. 144- 150; see also S. Katzellenbogen, *South Africa and Mozambique: Labour, Railways and Trade in the Making of a Relationship.* Manchester University Press, 1982, p. 2

agricultural exports. The latter outstripped that from transport and even from migrant labour in the balance of payments of Mozambique from the middle 1930s, and this pattern continued until the end of colonialism in Mozambique. Even though the government of Salazar developed agriculture in Mozambique, it continued to support the already existing migration system, and signed new agreements with South African authorities concerning the supply of labour from the south of Mozambique and other components such as transport and commerce. The Portuguese government was aware that this system was useful for the colonial economy.[54]

The Salazar regime intensified the 'forced cultivation' and forced labour systems in the colonies and these practices contributed to a continuous workers' involvement in the migrant labour system. J.T. Bettencourt was nominated as the new general- governor of Mozambique in 1940 and during his leadership the colonial government promulgated and implemented coercive laws whose objectives were to intensify the forced production of cotton, rice and other agricultural products. For example, Bettencourt promulgated the Circular 818/D-7 that advocated that "all the natives who were able-bodied males, between 18 and 55 years old, are obliged to prove that they lived through their own work".[55]

[54] See for example D. Hedges, A. Rocha and A. Chilundo, 'O Reforço do Colonialismo, 1930- 1937' D. Hedges (Coordinator) *História de Moçambique: Moçambique no Auge do Colonialismo, 1930 – 1961*. Maputo: Imprensa Universitária, 1999, pp. 35- 39. The nature and form of implementation of these new policies were promulgated through the Acto Colonial (Colonial Act) of 1930. (See Boletim Oficial, Governo Geral da Provincia de Moçambique, I, 43 -Decreto 18:570, Acto Colonial, 25/10/1930 pp. 503-506)

[55] Governo Geral da Provincia de Moçambique, Circular 818/ D-7, 7 /10/ 1942, Article I

This Circular determined that those Mozambicans who could not prove that they lived through their work would be considered '*vadios*' (idle/ lazy) and they would be subjected to forced labour in public services for a period of six months per year. The conditions needed to prove the status of 'worker' were difficult to meet and a significant number of Mozambicans opted to emigrate as a way of avoiding forced labour. Concerning migrant workers, the Circular defined that they were considered '*vadios'* six months after they returned to Mozambique.[56] This kind of legislation constituted the coercive dimension of the migrant labour from southern Mozambique.

Even though many workers were thus obliged to emigrate to South African mines, this kind of labour was better paid than working in public services or in private plantations within the country. Most of the interviewees in this research recognised that there were some jobs available in a significant number of sugar cane, sisal and other plantations throughout southern Mozambique but the salary and work conditions were relatively poor. They agreed that a mineworker could acquire sufficient bridewealth to marry a woman in less than three years, but a worker who was employed in the plantations need more than seven years to do the same thing.

As already stated the Mozambican labour component in South African mines was clearly significant in terms of numbers from the beginning of the mining industry to the middle 1970s. However, it was subject to some oscillation throughout this period. For example,

[56] See Governo Geral da Provincia de Moçambique, Circular 818/ D-7, 7 October 1942

the great economic depression of 1929-1934 had considerable consequences for the South African mining industry. The depression negatively affected almost all the sectors of the South African economy but gold mining was an exception. Investment and production increased. But the crisis in the sectors referred to above led to an increase in the number of South African workers who sought work in the gold mines which led to a reduction of Mozambican workers in these mines. The South African mines received 66,094 and 75,866 Mozambicans in 1927 and 1928; however, the number of Mozambican recruited by mines fell in the following years to 54,077 (1931), 39,129 (1932) and 41,398 (1933).[57] These reductions had negative consequences for the Mozambican economy which was already hard hit because its exports depended significantly on agricultural products, and the international prices for crops such as maize, sugar, sisal and peanut dropped considerably.[58]

In 1934 the Portuguese and the South African governments revised the 1928 Convention and fixed 65,000 workers as a minimum number of Mozambican workers to be recruited annually.[59] The revision of the 1928 Convention in 1934 and the end of the economic crisis led to a significant increase in the number of Mozambicans employed in South African mines in the following years – the numbers increased from 41,398 (1933) to 70,092 (1936).[60]

[57] Crush, Jeeves and Yudelman, *South Africa's Labour…* pp. 232-233
[58] Hedges, Rocha and Chilundo, 'O Reforço do Colonialismo…'pp 36- 41
[59] Boletim Oficial, I, 43, 19/11/1934 (Suplemento) 'Revisão das cláusulas da Convenção entre o Governo da República Portuguesa e o Governo da União da África do Sul', pp. 659- 661
[60] Crush, Jeeves and Yudelman, *South Africa's Labour…* pp. 232-233

In its turn, the mineworkers' strike of 1946 led to an increase in the number of workers recruited from southern Mozambique. This strike was organised by the African Mineworkers Union (A.M.W.U.) and the main demand was a raise of wages by 10 shillings. The strike started on 12 August 1946 and 70,000 black mineworkers participated during a period of four days. The government intervened through the violent actions of the police, and there were 9 deaths, 1,200 injuries and 1,000 arrested. Strike leaders were also arrested and seventy men were dismissed[61] – the objectives of the AMWU had failed. One of the consequences of the failure of this strike was an increase in the exodus of South African workers from the mining industry to the secondary industries. It is important to note that this exodus began during the period of World War II when the secondary industries expanded significantly. These industries were prepared to pay better wages and provided better working conditions as well as greater opportunities for advancement. Therefore, "dissatisfied mineworkers now had a much wider range of employment choices".[62]

Thus, a significant number of South African workers left the mines and it allowed an increase of the foreign labour component, including Mozambican labour. A comparative analysis of South African and Mozambican workers shows that national labour clearly dropped while the Mozambican labour component employed in South African mines rose from 1946/47 to the end of the 1950s.[63] They did not follow South African workers into

---

[61] F.Wilson, *Labour in the South African Gold Mines 1911- 1969*. Cambridge University Press, 1972, pp. 78- 79; Crush, Jeeves and Yudelman, *South Africa's Labour…* pp. 58- 59
[62] Crush, Jeeves and Yudelman, *South Africa's Labour* p. 59
[63] Ibid, pp. 234- 235

secondary industry because their contracts were dependent on accords between two states. This probably was the main reason that led mine owners to increase the number of Mozambicans in the mines in the years after the 1946 strike, as is shown in table 1.

Table1: Mozambican workers received by mines, 1920 – 1975 (selected years)[64]

	Mozambicans	Total of miners received by mines	(%)
1920	76,370	211,838	36
1928	66,094	200.202	33
1929	60,831	199,704	30
1930	56,258	230,892	33
1932	39,129	210,341	19
1934	50,665	243,212	21
1936	70,092	308,860	23
1942	74,507	310,406	24
1946	74,117	297,231	25
1947	78,308	295,486	27
1949	82,636	328,042	25
1951	89,243	325,834	27
1954	86,103	349,454	25
1959	81,673	425,378	19
1960	79,065	426,951	19
1970	93,773	357,972	26
1973	74,759	352,362	21
1974	86,324	319,974	27
1975	113,484	451,514	25

Source: Crush, Jeeves and Yudelman, *South Africa's Labour*, pp. 232-233

Although the participation of men was unquestionably most common, migrant labour from southern Mozambique to South Africa was not exclusively for men. There were also

[64] Through this selection is possible to analyse the oscillations in recruitment in the period of economic crisis of the early 1930s and in the period that followed the 1946 strike.

women involved in this migration. Unlike men, women were not recruited to work underground in the mines but they worked as domestic workers and prostitutes and they were also involved in 'illegal' liquor brewing, at least in the 1930s. Covane points out more than 150 women, at least, from southern Mozambique were on the Witwatersrand in the first decade of the twentieth century and most of them became prostitutes in areas surrounding the mines on the Rand. He also adds that by 1922 there were 800 women, from this region, who were working as prostitutes in Johannesburg only.[65] It is possible that Mozambican women dominated the 'illegal' activities on the Rand and in other regions of Transvaal before the Basotho women controlled these activities from the late 1920s.[66]

It is important to note that even though some of Mozambican women were repatriated, a significant number of them established themselves in South Africa permanently. There were several reasons that led these women to South Africa but the economic and social motives can be seen as the most important reasons. The high level of deaths because of diseases and accidents in the mines among the mineworkers, including Mozambicans, left a number of women (wives, daughters and so on) without economic and social support and some of them opted to seek work in South Africa. In general women have been seen as practising a more permanent migration[67]; thus, even though there are no exact figures,

[65] Covane, *O Trabalho Migratório…*, p. 104
[66] P. Bonner, 'Desirable or Undesirable Basotho Women? Liquor, prostitution and the migration of Basotho women to the Rand, 1920- 1945' in Walker, C. *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, Cape: David Philip, 1990, pp. 227- 228

[67] Bonner, 'Desirable or Undesirable Basotho Women?', pp 224- 225;and Walker, 'Gender and Development…' pp. 159- 196

it is probable that a significant number of Mozambican women who emigrated did not return home.

Even though South Africa was the main destination of migrant workers from Mozambique, this was not the unique destination of Mozambican workers. Those who travelled to work in South Africa were principally, but not exclusively, from the south of the river Save and those were from centre and north of the country had other destinations such as Rhodesia, Tanganyika and São Tomé. The weak capacity of Portuguese colonialism to invest and to use local labour resources in profitable and well-paid enterprises seemed to be the main cause of these migrations once again.[68] Agreements were made with Rhodesia from 1913 and renewed several times, and in 1946 South Rhodesia created the Rhodesian Native Labour Supply Commission (RNLSC) whose objective was to recruit Mozambican workers in Tete, central of Mozambique. Mozambicans, especially from the north of the country, worked in Tanganyika and it was reported that at the end of the 1950s there were about 20,000 Mozambicans working in the plantations of Tanganyika.[69]

The supply of labour to South African mines had both costs and benefits for Mozambique. The white farms of southern Mozambique were probably the most disadvantaged sector as a result of migration of Mozambican workers to South African

---

[68] See for example, Newitt, *A History of Mozambique*, pp. 514- 515

[69] D. Hedges and A. Rocha, 'Moçambique durante o Apogeu do Colonialismo Português, 1945- 1961: A Economia e a Estrutura Social' in D. Hedges (Coordinator) *História de Moçambique: Moçambique no Auge do Colonialismo, 1930 – 1961*. Maputo: Imprensa Universitária, 1999, pp. 157- 159

mines. Farmers were only prepared to pay low wages and they could not compete with the wages paid in the mines.[70] It was a regional issue.[71] The advantages of this system of recruitment were that it benefited both the South African economy and colonial state of Mozambique. It assured an organised and cheaper source of labour for South African mines and contributed to the stability and profitability of this sector. In terms of benefits for the colonial state of Mozambique, this system brought vitally important revenue from recruiting, licence and passport fees. It was also allowed for the higher taxes levied on Mozambicans in southern Mozambique. There was in addition revenue from customs dues from goods that these workers brought home from South Africa; income from railways freights and transit duties on commodities passing through Lourenço Marques from and to the Transvaal.[72]

Additionally deferred payment, established in 1928, benefited the colonial economy twofold. Firstly, the state received the deferred payment of migrant workers in pounds or in gold but it paid the migrant workers in local currency (*Escudos*), which allowed the state to accumulate foreign currency. Secondly, the fact that the migrant workers were paid in local currency and in Mozambique led to the growth of the local market which was dominated by Portuguese commodities, or at least goods sold by Portuguese traders, such as wine, clothes, hoes and so on. The opportunities of employment in southern Mozambique were clearly limited and dependent on plantations and public services

[70] Katzenellenbogen, *South Africa and Mozambique…*, pp. 2-3

[71] Farmers from Transvaal and from other regions were complaining because of the issue of shortage of labour – See for example Delius, *The Land Belongs…*, pp. 147- 153; and W. Beinart and P. Delius, 'Introduction', in W. Beinart, P.Delius, and S. Trapido, *Putting a Plough to the Ground: Accumulation and Dispossession in Rural South Africa 1850- 1930*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986, pp. 1- 55

[72] Katzenellenbogen, *South Africa and Mozambique…*, p. 2

where the wages were low and the work conditions were poor[73]; thus, workers and their families benefited significantly from the system of migrant labour because it allowed them to obtain higher income in the mines (see Chapter IV).

Although the picture above shows that migrancy was important to rural communities, it is important to note that this system can not be seen as a paradise even before 1975. It had costs to rural communities. It led to a whole series of individual as well as family problems. The hard and dangerous nature of work in the mines and the almost total lack of safety in the work place led to a significant number of injuries, sickness as well as deaths among mineworkers including those who were from Mozambique; and, as a result, a number of rural families lost the contribution of their adult male members in several economic and social activities. Diseases especially tuberculosis affected some workers and when they were back home they infected other members of their families.[74] It is possible that long absences of a significant number of adult male in rural areas affected family agriculture negatively through the reduction of the quantity and quality of work force in this economic activity that in general was not mechanised and, therefore, highly dependent on human resources. These negative effects on the rural economy are analysed in Chapter IV through an examination of the case of Chibuto.

---

[73] See for example; Katzenellenbogen, *South Africa and Mozambique…*, p. 2 and Gool, *Mining Capitalism...*,p. 53

[74] Interview with José Maposse, Jossias Tivane and Matchuquetane Macuacua, Chibuto, 14/07/2005; Interview, Afonso Bila, Chibuto,13/07/2005 and 14/07/2005, all conducted by N. Gaspar

However, the dependency on migrancy was unquestionable. Even when the Portuguese developed secondary industry in Mozambique, especially in Lourenço Marques, from the middle 1960s, workers from southern Mozambique continued to migrate to South African on a large scale. As a result, when Mozambique became independent (June 1975), the South African mines remained the main employer of workers from southern Mozambique. But this state of affairs was about to change dramatically.