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# 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**

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# Chapter IV. Consequences of the reduction of Mozambican workers in South African mines for the district of Chibuto

## IV.1. Geographical characterisation of Chibuto

Chibuto is a district located in the province of Gaza, one of the three provinces of southern Mozambique. This province is positioned to the north of Maputo province, southwest of Inhambane province and south of the central province of Manica; and it abuts South Africa and Zimbabwe on its western border. The district of Chibuto is 5,878 square kilometres and it is constituted by six '*postos administrativos*[136] - Malehice, Chaimite, Godide, Chibuto, Alto Changane and Changanine.[137] The climate of Chibuto is tropical and the precipitation is irregular. It is hot and sometimes wet between September and March, and it is cold (less hot, at least) and dry in the rest of the year.

According to the population census of 1980, there were 230,000 people in the district of Chibuto and it was estimated that the population of this district was 158,000 people in 1994. According to the United Nations, the main reason for the reduction of the population who lived in the district was the civil war that led to an increase in internal migration as well as migration to neighbouring countries such as Swaziland and South Africa.[138]

[136] In Mozambique, the province is divided into districts, which composed of several localities known as *Postos Administrativos*.
[137] Interview with Nataniel Tembe, the former Administrator of Chibuto, Chibuto, conducted by N. Gaspar, 12/07/2005
[138] United Nations, 'Perfis de desenvolvimento distrital: distrito de Chibuto'. Maputo: ACNUR/ PNUD,1997, p. 3

As already referred to above, the district of Chibuto is constituted by six *postos administrativos* of which five are classified as rural areas. The centre of Chibuto is the only area that has urban characteristics and it is different from the other localities of this district. Most of the interviews for this research were done in Alto Changane, 56 kilometres away from the centre of Chibuto. It is important to note that the civil war, transport and road problems made permanent contacts between the centre of Chibuto and Alto- Changane and other localities of the district difficult, especially between 1983 and 1992 when the civil war between the government and of RENAMO affected this region severely.[139]

In terms of the economy, agriculture has constituted the main activity of the population of the district of Chibuto. Family agriculture is dominant and it involves the majority of people in this district. The main agricultural products cultivated are maize, beans, peanuts, sweet-potatoes, cassava, cashew nuts, several different types of vegetables and, in some areas of the district, cotton and sugar cane. There are a significant number of cattle and poultry in the district – It was estimated (in the middle 1990s) that 68 per cent of rural households of Chibuto have poultry especially chickens; 20 per cent and 18 per cent of households had pigs and oxen respectively.[140] Other economic activities, such as crafts, trade, beer brewing, hunting and fishing, have been carried on throughout the

[139] Interview with Nataniel Tembe, the former Administrator of Chibuto, Chibuto, conducted by N. Gaspar, 12/07/2005
[140] United Nations, 'Perfis de desenvolvmento…', p. 6

twentieth century.[141] There were a few people who worked in public service and in shops in the centre of the district as well as in the rural areas.

[141] Field work allowed me to observe the main economic activities; see also United Nations, 'Perfis de desenvolvmento…', pp. 5- 7

### *IV.2. Chibuto and the migrant labour system*

The participation of men from rural areas of southern Mozambique, including Chibuto, in the migrant labour system was the main source of income for their households. In general, a household was constituted by a man and his wife (or wives) and their children (normally more than five). They had a house and arable land nearby or in more distant lands. Many households also included other relatives. The most common situation in Chibuto was the inclusion of three or four generations (grandparents, parents and paternal uncles, and children – including young males). They built separate houses in an enclosed place but they cooked in common. Such a household could include young women from other households who moved in because of marriage. A young man was allowed to marry a woman when their household classified him as adult and, as elsewhere in southern Mozambique, the wife moved to live with her husband's household. In this process the household of the husband had to pay money or commodities as a form of bridewealth – the wife's parents and grandparents received, especially, clothes and cattle. Thus, in general, when a young male was about eighteen he went to the mines to acquire enough money to marry and establish his household. According to Afonso Bila, households have become less complex and smaller in recent years, especially since the early 1980s when civil war reached this district.[142]

The pre colonial economy of Chibuto (until the 1890s) was, in many aspects, similar to that of the other regions of southern Mozambique. Local details about the evolution of

[142] Interview with Afonso Bila, Chibuto, conducted by N. Gaspar, 13/07/2005 and 14/07/2005

the economy of Chibuto are scarce but my interviews and the available literature suggest that agriculture was the principal economic activity in the early nineteenth century. Maize and sorghum were the main products cultivated, primarily for household consumption. It is reported that these products were used to pay taxes and as form of payment of state officials (soldiers and messengers) when Chibuto was under Gaza Kingdom rule (1820s-1890s). Pastoralism was practised and cattle were important even in previous centuries. Hunting was an activity that allowed the development of trade in this region. Ivory was exchanged for cloth or firearms brought by Arab and Portuguese traders, and wild cat skins were exported to Swaziland and Zululand. Later in the nineteenth century, the ivory trade came to be a monopoly of the Gaza aristocracy. There was limited fabrication of iron products such as hoes.[143]

The beginning of the participation of men from Chibuto in the system of migrant labour is not significantly different from that of other districts of Gaza province. There are no numbers available but, through field work, it possible to conclude that many men from this region walked to Natal where they were employed in sugar and other plantations, from the middle nineteenth century. When the diamonds and especially gold mines started to operate in South Africa, in the last third of the nineteenth century, a number of workers from this district went there. Most of the interviews with older people (former mineworkers) indicated that a number of male members of previous generations had travelled on foot to South Africa to work in sugar cane estates.[144]

[143] See for example, C. Serra (Dir) *História de Moçambique Vol I* pp.87- 100; Newitt, *A History…*, pp. 147-166

[144] Collective interview with José Maposse, Matchuquetane Macuacua and Jossias Tivane, Chibuto,14/07/200; Interview with José Mandava Mathe, Chibuto, conducted by N. Gaspar, 15/12/2005

The district of Chibuto fell under the control of the Gaza Kingdom during the nineteenth century. The internal conflicts resulting from the succession dispute between Mzila and Mawewe after Sochangane's death in the late 1850 and the 1860s directly affected this district owing to its proximity to Manjacaze (Mandlakazi), the capital of the state. Many hundreds of young men are said to have abandoned the district to avoid incorporation in the army and migrated to what is now South Africa.[145] The population of Chibuto was also involved in war when the Portuguese colonialists began their attempts to establish military control of the country. The Portuguese attacked the state of Gaza in the middle 1890s. A whole series of battles ensued, one of which was inside the district of Chibuto: the battle of Chaimite, in 1895, in which the king, Ngungunhane, was taken prisoner by Portuguese troops, headed by Mouzinho de Albuquerque. The conquest of this territory in 1897 by the Portuguese resulted in the impositions of hut and other taxes and accelerated migration to South Africa, especially to the mines on the Witwatersrand.[146]

The implementation of new legislation promulgated by the government of '*Estado Novo'* in Mozambique affected the way of living in many regions of the country including Chibuto. The government intensified the implementation of *xibalo* (forced labour) and established the compulsory cultivation of crops such as cotton and rice from the late 1920s and the early 1940s respectively. In Chibuto, the population was forced to produce one of these two crops on their land, depending on the ecological conditions of each area. The colonial regime bought the harvested crops at low prices and the population had to

[145] Interview with Paulo Maposse, Chibuto, conducted by N. Gaspar, 15/12/2005
[146] Covane, *O Trabalho Migratório...*, pp. 95- 104

use a significant part of their income from these crops to pay the high taxes established by the colonial authorities. Those who refused to produce the crops and those adult men who were unable to pay these taxes, were incorporated into *xibalo*.[147]

In general terms incomes from the compulsory crops were so low that the families preferred their male members, especially young men, to seek to work in the South African mines where the incomes were higher than those from agriculture; additionally, as mentioned in Chapter II, legislation, including Circular 818/D7 of October 1942, decreed that migrants were exempted from *xibalo* for six months after their return. From the 1930s onwards, these factors constituted an important incentive or form of coercion that accelerated the integration of men from Chibuto to the mines in South Africa; as Moisés Chongoane points out, "it was far better and more profitable to work in the mines than to be taken to *xibalo* or to participate in the production of cotton. *Xibalo* was hard and inhuman and the income from cotton was almost nothing".[148]

Even though colonial policies assured the continuity and acceleration of migration from Chibuto to South Africa during the colonial period, household or personal desires were crucial factors leading to the massive movement of workers from this district of Gaza province. Jaime Cuinica, a former mineworker, is one of the many examples that show the importance of household imperatives in the process of integration into the migrant labour system. He was born in Alto Changane, Chibuto, in 1931. He started to work in

[147] Interview with Moisés Chongoane, Chibuto, conducted by N. Gaspar, 12/07/2005; See Governo Geral da Provincia de Moçambique, Circular 818/D7, 7 October 1942
[148] Interview with Moisés Chongoane, Chibuto, conducted by N. Gaspar, 12/07/2005

Springs, Witwatersrand in 1949 and he says that the poverty of his household and the need of bridewealth were the main motivation for joining the migrant labour system:

> I migrated from here (Alto Changane – Chibuto) because of poverty. My family was very poor and my father had already died at that time. I was young but I had to work to help my mother, my two younger brothers and three sisters. First, I worked in Lourenço Marques as a domestic worker from 1945 and, in 1948, I went back to Chibuto. When I was 18 (1949), I went to this station of WENELA (Alto Changane) and I was contracted to work in the mines of South Africa… Other reasons that led me to the mines was my need to marry a woman. A lot of men who came from the mines had enough money to marry one or more women and I needed to do it but I had no money; thus I decided to go to South African mines. I worked eighteen months and I married my first woman in 1951.[149]

The need to accumulate income (hoes, sterling, cattle and/ or other commodities) to invest in bridewealth seemed to be an important motivation that pushed many young men into South African mines during the colonial period. Young men depended on their parents in terms of material possessions and it was difficult for them to acquire their own possessions such as cattle or money and or other type of commodities required for marrying. The South African mines were seen by young men as the opportunity for gain independence from their parents as well as an important opportunity to acquire possessions to establish their own households through marriage. Many miners and former miners, who started to work in the mines in the 1950s and 1960s such as Júlio

[149] Interview with Jaime Cuinica, Chibuto, conducted by N. Gaspar, 12/07/2005

Chilengue, José Mapossse, Matchuquetane Macuacua and others, present this aspect as the prime factor that led them to the mines.[150]

Even though this factor was important as an individual goal to the integration of young men into the migrant labour system, the collective or household objectives were also important in this regard. The need to accumulate income to invest in household or subsistence agriculture and to ensure that hut and other taxes would be paid can be seen as the household goals that encouraged the releasing of young male members of these household from agriculture to work in the mines.[151]

As already emphasised in this research, agriculture primarily for household consumption has been the main economic activity in Chibuto. Thus, in an attempt to guarantee successful results in agricultural production, the internal organisation within households was crucial. Because agricultural implements were in general scarce and difficult to acquire through income from agriculture, many households opted to release adult men from this activity and to allow them to go to the South African mines. This process constituted an interesting form of livelihood strategy for many households because wages from the mines were used to buy important agricultural implements such as hoes, cattle, and ploughs. It is important to note that many workers preferred to purchase these implements from Portuguese or Indian shops in Mozambique (including Chibuto) where, according to most of the interviewees, the prices or costs of these implements were lower

[150] Collective interview with José Maposse, Matchuquetane Macuacua and Jossias Tivane, Chibuto,14/07/2005; interview with Júlio Chilengue, 13/07/2005, all conducted by N. Gaspar
[151] For example, interview with Júlio Chilengue, Chibuto, conducted by N. Gaspar, 13/07/2005

than in South Africa, at least from the 1940s.[152] It seems that in the case of ploughs, it was too expensive to acquire these important agricultural implements in South Africa because of the costs of transportation from there and the high duties imposed on them at the Mozambican border.

The interaction of the different dimensions of causation in the migrant labour system is well illustrated by an interview with Jaime Vilanculos:

> I went to South Africa in 1961. Firstly, I worked in the coal mines during two years and then I started to work in EPRM' mines on Rand until the 1990s. I renewed my contracts many times…My father decided to release me from domestic activities to work in the mines because he was too old and our production in agriculture was not enough to assure food for all our family (we were 12 persons) and it was almost impossible to provide us in clothes and different kinds of services like health and education… I accepted the decision of my father because I also needed to acquire beautiful shoes, trousers and t-shirts similar to those brought by other men here in Alto Changane…when I started to work in gold mines on the Rand (1963), it was possible to send clothes, blankets and other commodities to my family and (from the middle 1960s) I began to send money that was used to buy ploughs and especially cattle. You know, I bought more than six heads of cattle in few years… these were important in our family farm, where our production increased significantly. The mines helped me to change my life as well as the life of my family…[153]

The important role played by ploughs and cattle in family agriculture in Chibuto is clearly illustrated in this and other interviews. These as well as cultural and educational

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[152] For example, interviews with Jaime Cuinica, Júlio Chilengue, Moiséis Chongoene and so on; see also Covane, *O Trabalho Migratório…*, pp. 128- 132

[153] Interview with Jaime Vilanculos, Chibuto, conducted by N. Gaspar, 13/07/2005

factors are mentioned as reasons for migrancy in interviews. Wages from the mines allowed many households to purchase ploughs in Chibuto especially from the 1930s. These ploughs allowed these households to cultivate larger areas of land in reduced periods of time and with fewer people. As notes Júlio Chilengue, "one woman and child could manage a plough easily and it released other members of family for other activities in agriculture or in other sectors".[154]

A plough could be used by several households and it helped the productivity of many households and increased the possibilities of greater production for the market. In Alto Changane, members of different households helped each other in cultivation and especially at harvest-time, and it became possible for households with ploughs to loan them to poor household. It is important to note that the introduction and generalisation of ploughs since the 1930s did not mean that the hoes were no longer useful in household agriculture. These continued to be extremely important not only as complimentary implements but also as basic implements for a significant number of households in Chibuto even between 1975 and 1992.[155]

The plough was drawn by oxen. In general one or two oxen controlled by two people, were enough to draw a plough. Cattle were also important for the local economy especially for the economy of households because they provided them with milk, meat and skin as well as fertilisers (cattle dung was used as fertiliser in Chibuto). Cattle were also important for intra and intra households' relations because their ownership was seen

[154] Interview with Júlio Chilengue, Chibuto, conducted by N. Gaspar, 13/07/2005
[155] Ibid

as a symbol that defined the status of the household in the society or the position of a member within households. Cattle were also used as bridewealth. Households with members working in the mines had enhanced possibilities to purchase and accumulate a significant number of head of cattle and consequently to achieve a respectable economic and social status within the community.[156]

As mentioned earlier, the cultural dimension also played a key role in the process of integration of men in the migrant system. Young males observed that youths from the mines gained greater social status when they were back in Chibuto. These young miners were relatively well-dressed, they were able to speak other languages and they talked about distant experiences and histories lived or heard while they were on the Rand. Thus, in the 1950s and the 1960s, youths like Jaime Vilanculos, desired to be amongst this privileged group and as soon as they reached the age of 18 they tried to go to the mines.[157]

Despite the fact that wages were classified as low on the mines before the early 1970s, the households' objectives, such as the need to accumulate income to invest in agriculture, and especially individual objectives like the need to accumulate income to invest in marriage were often achieved in less than a dozen of years; however, these workers remained over two decades in the mines. There were several economic, social and even political reasons for this pattern. These included the need for long term subsidy

[156] Ibid; Collective interview with José Maposse, Matchuquetane Macuacua and Jossias Tivane, Chibuto, 14/07/2005
[157] Interview with Jaime Vilanculos, Chibuto, conducted by N. Gaspar, 13/07/2005

of household agriculture especially in bad harvest years and the necessity to guarantee the payment of colonial taxes and the lack of alternative employment in the region. As pointed out in Chapter 2, Circular 818/D-7 of 7 October 1942 determined that all adult males had to prove that they lived through their work and those who were unable to prove it were subjected to forced labour in the public service for six months. The Circular stipulated that those migrants who remained for more than six months in Mozambique could also be subjected to *xibalo*.[158] The colonial authorities recruited many adult men for the construction of roads that linked the centre of Chibuto and other localities and to the plantation of cashew trees in Alto Changane in the 1950s and the 1960s. The local chiefs were agents of the colonial authorities and they reported those mineworkers who stayed too long in Alto Changane, at least. Moisés Chongoane explains this situation:

As soon as we arrived home from the mines, the local authorities obliged us to pay '*Pound ya Xinkwa'*[159] and if you had no money you had to give them commodities such as blankets and clothes or you had to give them a goat or sheep that they called '*mpossane'*; Do you know what '*mpossane*' was? Do you know? …It was 50 Escudos…

If you stayed here (Alto Changane – Chibuto) for a long period of time you were recruited to xibalo because they classified you as a lazy man. They could incorporate you in the constructions of roads and or the plantations of these cashew trees that proliferate now in Alto Changane and that you can see…If you needed to stay here freely you had to corrupt the local chiefs through beautiful trousers or other types of clothes…the local chiefs did not work in South Africa, they waited for us to take our money and things that we brought from the Rand…they stayed here with our women…[160]

[158] See Governo Geral da Provincia de Moçambique, Circular 818/D7, 7 October 1942

[159] Xinkwa means, in some local languages, South African bread and almost all mineworkers brought this bread. Thus, Pound ya Xinkwa (or 'Pound ya Mugayisa') means the tax that they had to pay to local chiefs.

[160] Interview with Moisés Chongoane, Chibuto, conducted by N. Gaspar, 12/07/2005

Many mineworkers, like Mr Chongoane, preferred to continue to work in the mines, where the material conditions and wages were reasonable, rather than establish themselves in Chibuto where they could be recruited to the cashew plantations or road construction or, to labour on sugar and sisal plantations. The local alternative sources of employment were extremely scarce even in the late period of the colonial regime and they were limited to the limited local public services, the local shops and the estates on the Limpopo river banks such as those that belonged to the coloniser remembered as Fialho who paid low wages. Almost all mineworkers in this period had limited education which made it difficult for them to find employment in the public service as well as in other more or less well-paid professions.[161] Therefore, once again, the colonial context as well as the lack of opportunities in the local employment market 'forced' workers from Chibuto to engage in many long-term contracts in the South African mines before 1975.

The commercialisation of commodities in Chibuto increased significantly during the colonial period principally because of the remittances from the South African mines. The system of deferred payment allowed a significant fraction of wages of mineworkers to be made available in rural areas. Mineworkers or their families in Chibuto received their wages in Escudos in Ressano Garcia or especially in Xai-Xai (less than one hundred kilometres from Chibuto). These remittances strengthened the purchasing power of many household and led to the expansion of the local market throughout this district.

[161] Collective interview with José Maposse, Matchuquetane Macuacua and Jossias Tivane, Chibuto, conducted N. Gaspar, 14/07/2005

Portuguese commodities such as cotton clothes, soap, vegetable oils, sugar, wines, and agricultural implements, sold in shops, were bought by the population regularly through remittances**.** In the 1960s and the early 1970s shops mushroomed in all localities of the district of Chibuto. These shops (which belonged mainly to Portuguese traders and to a few Indians) also purchased agricultural products such as cereals, cashew nuts and cotton from the local peasantry to resell in larger outside markets like Xai-Xai and Lourenço Marques.[162]

In short, individual and household objectives alongside colonial pressures led a large number of adult men from Chibuto to the South African mines before the independence of Mozambique. The process of recruitment of workers was extremely simple and it was easy for them to be recruited because the demand for migrant labour from Mozambique for the South African mines was extremely high in terms of numbers of workers. Both recruitment depots established by WENELA in the district (centre of Chibuto and Alto Changane) recruited a "significant number of workers all weeks and their officials had to blow the '*xipolopolo'*[163] in their attempts to seek more recruits".[164]

The participation of these workers in the migrant labour system made it possible for them and their households to invest in clothes, health and especially in the main economic activity in the district, agriculture, through the purchase of cattle, ploughs, hoes, fertilisers

[162] ibid
[163] 'Xipolopolo' is a local or traditional musical instrument made through a horn that makes a loud noise. This instrument is used as way of calling for people for important meetings, at least in rural areas of southern Mozambique.
[164] Interview with Paulo Gaza Maposse, Chibuto, conducted by N. Gaspar, 15/12/2005

and so on. With the generalisation of some of these agricultural implements, family agriculture became more productive and it led to major economic as well as social stability of a large number of households. The remittances from migrant labour allowed households to fulfil their social obligations such as the payment of colonial taxes and the continuity of inter-household relationships, as for example in the payment of bridewealth. These remittances also strengthened the purchasing power of households in Chibuto especially in the early 1970s, when the wages of miners rose in South Africa, and led to the expansion of the local market.[165]

This research does not intend to present the migrant system as a paradise. It had negative aspects and some of them, such as the hard and dangerous nature of work, the high level of deaths and disease in the mines, were explained in the last part of Chapter II. The dependency of southern Mozambique on migrant labour was itself a negative aspect for the rural economy of this region. Firstly, it is agreed that wages earned in the South African mines were low until the early 1970s and through them it was almost impossible to promote local investments significantly, except through the purchase of agricultural implements. Equally, because this system was a guaranteed source of income, people from rural areas were not concerned to promote and develop skills and small projects; they were convinced that employment was abundant in the mines.

[165] For example, Collective interview with José Maposse, Matchuquetane Macuacua and Jossias Tivane, Chibuto, conducted N. Gaspar, 14/07/2005

Secondly, households did not invest in formal education for their children significantly because they believed that a high level of education was not important to work in the mines. It encouraged people in Chibuto to rely on low levels of schooling and, as a result, the local capacity for skills development and creativity remained weak. Additionally, the colonial authorities did not prioritise the expansion of schools and African entrepreneurship in the district while the state still benefited from the deferred payment.[166] Thirdly, the fact that recruitment to the mines was limited to males gave them economic hegemony that was crucial to the intensification of their dominant position in gender relations. Some women, who spent more time at home and experienced local problems regularly, became more submissive, despite their importance in agriculture.[167]

Therefore, the system of migrant labour did not encourage people to be economically dynamic. The local economy became in some ways more limited and increasingly dependent on foreign remittances. But at the same time the migrant labour system provide a dependable source of income which helped to sustain the local economy and society and offered considerable protection against economic shocks. In the following sub Chapter, the same society in the context of the reduction of Mozambican workers in South African mines will be analysed.

[166] For example, interview with Jaime Cuinica, Chibuto, conducted by N. Gaspar, 12/07/2005
[167] Some interviewees such as Nataniel Tembe, Teresa Chichongue and JaimeVilanculos argued this view implicitly

## IV.3. Chibuto under the reduction of Mozambican workers in the South African mines, 1975- 1992

Soon after the independence of Mozambique, the majority of WENELA recruitment depots were closed throughout southern Mozambique including both depots in the district of Chibuto – Alto Changane and Chibuto.[168] This situation led to a whole series of changes in the following years. First, more than twenty people, officials and agents, were employed in these two WENELA depots until 1975 and these closures meant that they became unemployed workers. Paulo Gaza Maposse was one of these officials who lost his job. He was born in Chaimite (Chibuto) in the early 1930s and was a cattle herder during his childhood. He worked in the South African mines between the late 1940s and the late 1950s. Then, he moved to Alto Changane and he was employed in the WENELA depots in this locality where, according to him, he earned enough money to sustain his household. This depot was closed in August 1975 and Mr Maposse became unemployed. His household became dependent only on agriculture and their lives became hard especially in the poor harvest years like 1977/1978 and 1982/1983.[169]

Secondly, the process of recruitment became much more complex. Men from Chibuto had to travel to Xai Xai or even to Maputo to be contracted to the mines. They had to spend money on travel and living costs in an attempt to be contracted. Worse still, the demand for novice workers reduced dramatically and only a few of them were recruited. This was the first and main change in the migration process that took place in the district

[168] See UEM-CEA, "Os Mineiros…", p. 6; First, *Black Gold.…*, p. 58

[169] Interview with Paulo Gaza Maposse, Chibuto, conducted by N. Gaspar, 15/12/2005

of Chibuto: before 1975, it was extremely easy to work in the South African mines and almost any adult man could work there; from 1976 it became very difficult to be contracted to these mines and a significant number of adult men tried unsuccessfully to be contracted.[170]

In the context of the big reductions in recruitment of workers to the mines a large number of adult men strove to be among the few who were recruited by adopting a number of strategies. It was reported that groups of young males pooled their economic resources and travelled to WENELA's depots in Xai Xai and or Maputo in attempts to get a contract on the mines. They spent long periods of time in those recruitment depots and, while they waited to be contracted, they survived by resorting to alternative jobs like barber, shoe repairer, porter and so on. A few were recruited by the mines but most of them did not get jobs. Some went back to Chibuto; but, according to interviewees, from the late 1970s the majority opted to seek employment in Maputo or even to go to Swaziland or South Africa illegally. Attempts to cross the boundary to South Africa illegally were extremely hazardous and some of these men died principally because of the landmines located around the South African boundary and attacks from wild animals, especially lions.[171]

The reductions that took place did not significantly affect those workers who were already employed in the mines. Many of them continued working there and renewed their

[170] ibid
[171] Collective interview with José Maposse, Matchuquetane Macuacua and Jossias Tivane, Chibuto, 14/07/2005; Interview with Nataniel Tembe, former Administrator of Chibuto, Chibuto, 12/07/2005; and so on, all conducted by N. Gaspar.

contracts several times. However, some of these experienced mineworkers from Mozambique abandoned the mines soon after independence for different reasons. Firstly, some workers came back because, they argued, the obligation to pay colonial taxes was over and they had achieved the objectives that led them to the mines. Afonso Bila, for example, left the mines because he had constructed a house, married, purchased clothes as well as ploughs and cattle by 1970. According to him, he was "still working in the mines because a mineworker who stayed so long in Chibuto was subjected to *xibalo*".[172] Secondly, the other group, in which António Tivane is included, left the mines because they understood that the policies of FRELIMO were against Mozambican migrant labour in South Africa and they believed that the new government of FRELIMO had urged workers to abandon the mines.[173] Most of these workers tried to renew their contracts later but were rejected by mining companies.

These reductions in demand for workers in Mozambique severely affected young men, the novices, who sought contracts in the first time. As already mentioned above, most of them were not recruited and they had to engage in undesirable job alternatives. However, a number of them were employed in the mines of South Africa. It is possible to divide the latter group of workers into three groups in terms of the strategies adopted to be contracted by these mines. A number of lucky workers were recruited through the normal procedures in depots of WENELA. A second group of men had to resort to corruption to be contracted especially in the WENELA depots in Maputo. It was reported that in the early 1980s some WENELA officials overlooked men who were well-positioned in the

[172] Interview with Afonso Bila, Chibuto, conducted by N. Gaspar, 13/07/2005 and 14/07/2005
[173] Interview with António Tivane, Chibuto, conducted by N. Gaspar, 13/07/2005

queue in favour of new-comers who paid them to get jobs.[174] A third group of workers were recruited to replace their fathers because of injury, sickness or death. A significant number of cases in which mining companies accepted sons to replace their fathers in the 1980s and the 1990s were reported in Alto Changane by most of the interviewees.[175]

It is agreed that a large number of youths were unable to work in the mines linked to the South African Chamber of Mines. However, the field work for this research concluded that a large majority of these youths still left Chibuto in the period under analysis because the opportunities of employment were scarce. Some of them established themselves in big cities such as Xai Xai and especially Maputo where they worked in different areas. Because the majority of men from this district had little education, and because the level of unemployment was so high in Mozambican cities, at least in the early 1980s onwards, most of them participated especially in 'informal' business. Those who preferred to cross the South African and the Swaziland borders had different experiences. In South Africa for example they could be employed in low-paid jobs such as labouring on white farms, domestic service, and labour on mines that were not affiliated to the Chamber of Mines. They saw these jobs as a way to accumulate money and to go on to get better jobs. Most important to this research is that a significant number of these workers established themselves in South Africa permanently and most of them cut the links with their

[174] Manghezi, 'History and Organisation…', pp. 20- 23

[175] Representatives of the Ministry of Labour of Mozambique also confirmed that some mining companies have replaced fathers by sons in special cases such as deaths – interview, Maputo, conducted by N. Gaspar, 12/09/2005 and 13/09/2005

households in Chibuto**,** probably because they acquired well paid jobs and married in South Africa.[176]

A few years after independence, the local economy deteriorated. A considerable number of Portuguese shops that had mushroomed throughout the district of Chibuto closed because their owners abandoned the district. The reduced number of shops that were still there belonged to Indians known in the district as '*Baneanes'*. At the same time, the new government of Mozambique promulgated socialist policies such as the centralisation of commerce through the establishment of institutions to control the commercialisation of products in rural areas.[177] This situation made the normal commercial relations between shop owners and peasantry more difficult. In other words, households had by law to sell their agricultural products such as cashew nuts and maize to state organisations and not to local shops. Additionally, the number of households that still received remittances from the mines reduced significantly in the late 1970s onwards because of the reduction of workers on the mines and this led to the fall in the purchasing power in the district. Therefore, commercial networks that were expanding, from the 1950s, suffered and the local market declined. It is important to note that an economic crisis affected Mozambique from the later 1970s and mineworkers often had to purchase commodities in South Africa, including basic products like food and clothes.

[176] Informants confirmed this tendency – for example, collective interview with José Maposse, Matchuquetane Macuacua and Jossias Tivane, Chibuto, conducted by N. Gaspar, 14/07/2005

[177] See for example Cravinho, 'Frelimo and the Politics of Agricultural Marketing…', pp. 93- 114

With the dramatic reductions in recruitment of men from Mozambique for South African mines came a change in the local people's attitude towards formal education. Children were no longer traditionally and culturally prepared for the mines. Before 1975, households dedicated considerable period of time preparing their children according to the following premises – "male children had to eat too much to be strong because they had to go to the mines; and, female children had to learn to look after their husbands, the children and the home".[178] As the work in the mines was seen as hard, male children were prepared for this task from their earlier years. Most of them were cattle herders from about five or six years old and had to execute hard tasks, such as cutting down trees, hunting and so on. The number of schools was very low in Chibuto and limited for primary level. But my research suggests that most of households did not prioritize formal education because, they argued, "a man did not need formal education to work in the mines but he needed power and determination".[179]

This picture started to change when massive recruitment for these mines stopped. A significant number of young male were unable to go to the mines and it became difficult for them to get well-paid jobs because of their low academic levels. Many parents began to change their perceptions about the importance of education for their children and households started to send their children to school. At the same time, the government of FRELIMO developed an educational policy that allowed the expansion of schools throughout the country including Chibuto.[180] Many primary schools were established as

[178] Interview with Jaime Cuinica, Chibuto, conducted by N. Gaspar, 12/07/2005
[179] Interview with Jaime Cuinica, Chibuto, conducted by N. Gaspar, 12/07/2005
[180] For more details about policy the expanding of education in Mozambique, see J. Marshall 'Making Education Revolutionary', pp. 155- 210

well as a considerable number of intermediary schools that taught level five and six in rural areas as well as a high school in the centre of this district between 1975 and 1992.[181] These developments allowed households to opt for formal education for their children.

During the colonial period local authorities had an active role in the management of the migrant labour system. Local colonial authorities and especially local chiefs were involved in the process of the recruitment of workers through their collaboration with agents of WENELA in issues such as propaganda and the promotion of facilities in specific regions. They also indirectly pressured the returned mineworkers to establish new contracts to return to the South African mines rapidly through the threat to incorporate them in forced labour. Those authorities received payments or fees from local WENELA offices and, when mineworkers returned to the district, local chiefs required specific taxes.[182] In contrast, the role of local authorities seemed insignificant after 1975. The structure of local authorities changed after independence and the closure of the local stations of WENELA (Chibuto and Alto Changane) in the second semester of 1975. The recruitment of workers ceased to be local and the new authorities did not inherit an active role in this process. Additionally, the new government classified the taxes imposed on returning workers by local chiefs as a form of exploitation and as illegal.[183]

[181] Interview with Nataniel Tembe, the former Administrator of Chibuto, Chibuto, conducted by N. Gaspar, 12/07/2005

[182] Interview with Paulo Maposse, Chibuto, conducted by N. Gaspar, 15/07/2005

[183] Interviews with Teresa Chichongue and Paulo Maposse, Chibuto, all conducted by N. Gaspar, 15/07/2005

According to officials of the Administration Chibuto district, from 1975 the authorities not only had no role in the recruitment of local workers to the South African mines but also earned no sums or taxes from the returned workers. The administrative authorities did not have a register of the number of local workers who worked in the mines and they only knew that there were many thousands of local workers in South Africa because of their habitual contacts with the population in rural areas as well as the high and unusual movement of cars and people returning during the Christmas period.[184] The administrative procedures linked to the payment of compensation because of the death or injury of local miners was the only active role that the Administration of the district now played in this process. It identified the worker or his family and paid them the compensation sent by the company in which the miner was employed through TEBA. Teresa Chichongue, the head of labour sector in the district, estimates that the number of cases (deaths, injuries and sickness) was been between twenty and thirty each year and she points to accidents and illness resulting from tuberculosis and AIDS as the main reasons for death amongst these workers.[185]

As already argued, wages from the South African mines constituted an important income for a large number of households in Chibuto. This income was extremely important for the productivity of the principal economic activities of these households, for example agriculture. Migrant workers bought cattle, ploughs, hoes, etc that were clearly useful for the improvement of the level of agricultural production. They were also able to acquire

[184] Interview with Nataniel Tembe, former Administrator of the district, Chibuto, conducted by N. Gaspar, 12/07/2005
[185] Interview with Teresa Chichongue, Chibuto, conducted by N. Gaspar, 15/07/2005

blankets, clothes and other kinds of commodities that were important for their households. For the young migrant workers, it was a great opportunity for them to obtain their own cattle for marriage. As a result, through this income, these households solved whole a series of social and economic problems. Thus migrant labour and remittances greatly influenced the social organisation of the community. The reduction of this income, because of the diminution in recruitment of Mozambican workers in the South African mines, affected these households and originated changes in both inter-household and intra-household relationships.[186]

We can analyse the effects of this reduction by exploring household dynamics and cleavages of gender and generation in the district of Chibuto. The large labour market for Mozambican workers in the South African mines, until the middle 1970s, made it possible for young males to become economically independent. They were able to marry wives and to constitute their own households after two or three contracts on the mines - my interviews suggested that most of men married when they were between 20 and 23 years old. When the mines stopped contracting novices members of this generation who remained in this district became generally more economically dependent on their parents.[187]

The almost complete absence of alternative, paid, jobs that could allow them to earn income to invest in bridewealth and other economic materials deepened this dependence.

[186] For more details about the concepts of intra and inter household relationships, see Murray, 'Changing Livelihoods:…', pp. 115- 142

[187] Interviews with Afonso Bila, 13 and 14/07/2005 and Laurinda Langa, 16/12/2005, all in Chibuto, conducted by N. Gaspar

This can be applied to the young females as well. Most of them became more dependent on their mothers-in–law because, even though they were married, they still lived in the same homes as the parents of their husbands. They had to obey the orders of their mothers-in-law concerning domestic tasks including agriculture. As a result generational cleavages deepened. My interviewees reported that some married young women accused their mother-in-laws of being witches and the latter classified the former (married young women) as rebels and lazy women who did not like working. As a result, some of these young women convinced their husbands to move away from their relatives' homes.[188]

In terms of gender, informants gave the impression that when almost every man of the rural areas of southern Mozambique, including Chibuto, went to the South African mines, women played a key role within the households. They controlled the agricultural production and other household activities. From the late 1970s this situation changed because, even though limited, a number of men did not move away from the district and these men played the role that the women had played before the reduction. They performed agricultural tasks on a full time basis, headed and controlled the division of labour within households and the distribution of harvest and so on. This research suggests that this situation did not result in a generalisation of internal (within household) tensions of gender. It was because even though those women lost this crucial role, in this district, a man is recognised as head of household. But, it is accepted, there were a limited number of cases in which the women did not respect their husbands or abandoned them because their men stayed at home, and they had no additional income apart from agriculture.

[188] For example, interviews with Afonso Bila, 13 and 14/07/2005 and Laurinda Langa, 16/12/2005, all in Chibuto, conducted by N. Gaspar

Who controlled remittances within the household? The answer to this question was not simple because this role depended on the structure and rules of each household. In general this role was played by the main wife or relatives of the mineworker. Even though in almost every household this member was defined, sometimes there were tensions. The habitual conflict was between the miner's wife and his mother (if the miner was young and still lived at his relatives' home). This conflict can be seen as a key source of generational tensions. The control of remittances also created tensions when a miner died. Teresa Chichongue, head of the labour sector in Chibuto, explains that when a worker died in the mines the family received compensation from the mining company through the local administration. In general, argues Teresa Chichongue, the widow was accompanied by, at least, a member of her husband's household, often her brother-in-law.[189] It can be understood as an attempt of the household to control the use of that money. These tensions seemed to be intensified from the late 1970s because a limited number of men had access of these wages from the mines.

Those men who succeeded in working in the mines benefited from the increases of wages in the South African mines from the early 1970s, as mentioned in the Chapter 3. A significant number of them were able to build solid houses, to buy agricultural implements, including ploughs, and some of them bought cars.[190] My interviewees suggest that even during the 1980s (when local shops had almost nothing to sell), most of mineworkers' households had access to clothes and food from South Africa. They

[189] Interview with Teresa Chichongue, Chibuto, conducted by N. Gaspar, 15/07/2005
[190] For example, Manuel Chauque was one of those who brought cars.

became a local elite because of their economic status, a position that they shared with other salaried groups in rural areas like teachers, nurses and local authorities.

It is important to note that the majority of men who did not work in the mines left Chibuto on a temporary basis or even permanently. A considerable number of the men who went to South Africa illegally and worked in non-mining companies did not return to the district regularly. They married South African women and some of them maintained two wives, one in South Africa and another in Chibuto, and spent most of the time in the foreign country. Others abandoned the district and their households and established themselves in South Africa entirely. In the latter case women had to play a double role, as father and mother, in the education of their children, in economic activities and in other issues of households. The example of Laurinda Langa shows this situation:

My husband worked in the mines when we married in 1977 but the company that he worked for did not renew his contract in 1979. He tried to get a job in Mozambique unsuccessfully and he decided to cross the border to South Africa in 1981. During the first three years he visited us twice and he told me that he was working as a motor mechanic in Johannesburg. However, he has not visited nor even sent any news from 1985. Some people who worked in South Africa told me that he is still alive but he is married with a South African woman…I had to look after our four children alone. It was difficult because I had to do a lot of things for my children in a context in which life is hard. I worked too hard to give education, food, clothes, etc for my kids. I decided to combine agriculture and some business. I had to buy clothes and other products in Maputo to resell in several localities of Chibuto and other districts. And, it happened in the high period of civil war in Mozambique…I was exposed to great danger on the roads…Now, my first son is

studying at university in Maputo; my second child, a girl, is married; and others are studying in Xai- Xai and Chibuto. I am glad about that…I do not need a man for anything…[191]

A considerable number of women, like Laurinda Langa, had to guarantee the social and economic stability of their household through hard work and courage. Many women, abandoned by their husbands, stayed in the district and developed household agriculture, and participated in communal and salaried activities in an attempt to guarantee an additional income for their children. Some opted for 'long- distance' commerce - a dangerous activity in the context of civil war – because they had no land rights and they had to cultivate land that belonged to their (absent) husbands' households. These women travelled to Maputo or to foreign countries illegally to buy commodities and these were re sold in Chibuto or elsewhere.[192]

However, in some cases, the deterioration of the stability of households is attributed to the weak capacity of separated or abandoned women to control the education of their children. Some of the interviewees argued that the respect within many households and in the community was affected by what they call the action of 'free women'.[193] They supported the idea that most abandoned women have been unable to provide effective socialisation for their children and this led to accelerated deterioration of traditional values within households and to a lack of respect of youths for elders and the rest of the

[191] Interview with Laurinda Langa, Chibuto, conducted by N. Gaspar, 16/12/2005
[192] Interviews with Afonso Bila, 13 and 14/07/2005, Teresa Chichongue, 15/07/2005, and Laurinda Langa, all conducted by N. Gaspar in Chibuto
[193] Interview with Filipe Mojavangue, Chibuto, 14/12/2005; Interview with Paulo Maposse, Chibuto, 15/12/2005, all conducted by N. Gaspar

community. As Filipe Mojavangue emphasises, "nowadays youths do not like to marry; many young males get their girlfriends pregnant but they refuse to marry them".[194] Even though this is not the focus in this study, it is important to note that would be simplistic to consider 'free women' as mainly responsible or 'guilty' for the deterioration of traditional values. On the one hand, wider developments such as the civil war and changes in the structure of the national and local economy have to be seen as crucial in this process. On the other hand, there were women who organised successful education of their children in Chibuto.

Household agriculture was negatively affected by the dramatic cut in numbers of workers recruited in the mines. Remittances from the mines had been useful for the development and productivity of agriculture of almost all Chibuto households before the independence of Mozambique because they constituted an income that allowed investments in terms of agricultural implements, especially in fertilizers, seeds, hoes and ploughs. From the second half of the 1970s, the level of agricultural production of many households fell significantly in the district, especially in those households where the adult male members were unable to work in the South African mines.[195]

They needed a significant number of people to work in household farms and they were unable to cultivate large areas in reduced period of time because of the lack of implements such as ploughs. Additionally, natural disasters affected the region intensely in the first years of the independence. The floods of 1977 that affected the low-lying

[194] Interview with Filipe Mojavangue, Chibuto, conducted by N. Gaspar, 14/12/2005
[195] For example interview with Afonso Bila, 13/07/2005 and 14/07/2005

areas of Chibuto created a crisis in agricultural production; and the households referred to above had no other alternative sources of income to minimise this crisis. The drought of 1982 and 1983 led to bad harvests and severe famine, and the consequences were much more severe for the households that did not have access to remittances from the South African mines.[196]

It is important to note that the civil war that directly affected the district from 1983 had whole a series of consequences for the economy of the district, in particular for the agriculture of households. Even former miners who had purchased ploughs and cattle and developed prosperous household agriculture encountered difficulties between 1983 and 1992, as the following extract from an interview with Filipe Mojavangue suggests:

> I bought ploughs several cows and oxen through money that I earned when I was a mineworker. They reproduced and I had much more than 10 beasts in the early 1980s. They drew ploughs in my farm and in other farms…I produced maize, cassava, beans, rice and so on…I sold some of these products and I earned money to buy other products like oil, soap as well as clothes…when the war affected Alto Changane the situation became difficult for me and my family… we lost everything in few years. They took away my cattle…now I am a poor man.[197]

It is important to point out that there were still some thousands of workers from this district that worked in the South African mines in the 1980s. It is difficult to present the real number of these workers because of the lack of reliable statistical data showing the exact origins of Mozambican workers who worked in those mines. However, using a

[196] Ibid
[197] Interview with Filipe Mojavangue, Chibuto, conducted by N. Gaspar, 14/12/2005

survey of International Labour Office, it is possible to see that about 5145 workers from this district had labour contracts in South African mines in 1986. This survey estimated that 17.1 per cent of the population was dependent on mine wages in this district in that year.[198] Because the national numbers of workers in the mines did not change significantly, the research assumes that the picture of the district throughout the 1980s was not so different from that of 1986. The higher wages paid in most of the affiliated mines allowed some of miners to buy cars, to construct big houses and so on. But, once again, the civil war made the contacts between mineworkers and their households extremely difficult, and prejudiced the normal agricultural production of these households.

In terms of coping mechanisms or strategies adopted by those households that had no (or lost) remittances from the mines, it is important to note that they continued to practise agriculture and tried to engage in other activities that could provide an additional income. Chibuto had almost no jobs to absorb the massive number of unemployed workers provoked by the dramatic reduction in recruitment of workers in the mines, and it led many workers to seek work outside the district including in foreign countries, much as in earlier times, but now, especially, in non-mining jobs. Some of these workers earned money that was useful for their households as an additional income to agriculture. Other families opted to send their members to work in farms that belonged to prosperous peasants especially amongst those workers that still worked in the mines.[199] The cutting

[198] International Labour Office, 'Reintegration of Mozambican Miners', Draft report of an interagency mission to Mozambique, 23 March- 6 May 1987, Geneva, 1987 p. 29

[199] The household of Matchuquetane Macuacua adopted the strategy mentioned – in interview conducted by N. Gaspar, 14/07/2005

and selling of firewood also constituted a source of income for many households, at least in Alto Changane. Previously existing economic activities such as hunting and fishing as well as traditional liquor brewing were practised intensively and, especially from 1987,[200] many more turned to the market.[201] The commercialisation of cashew nuts between November and February every year continued to guarantee some income for almost all families of the rural areas of the district, especially in Alto Changane.[202] Therefore (even though at reduced levels), several economic activities were adopted by the households in an attempt to respond to the difficulties created by diminishing access to wages from the mines.

[200] In 1987, the Economic Readjustment Programme was introduced in Mozambique. It led to the liberalization of the economy and consequent increase of living costs throughout the country.
[201] Interview with Afonso Bila , Chibuto, conducted by N. Gaspar, 13/07/2005 and 14/07/2005
[202] It is interesting to note that these cashew nuts that have been an important source of income for almost all families in Alto Changane are from those trees grown as a result of colonial policies involving compulsion in the 1950s and the 1960s.