

# Scenes of change: visions on developments in Swaziland

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Henk J. Tieleman, editor

Papers presented at the seminar  
'Social Sciences in Swaziland'  
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## *Preface*

Most of the papers in this volume were originally presented in February 1986 at the Free University Seminar on Social Sciences in Swaziland. The seminar was attended by researchers from Swaziland, England, Italy, The Netherlands, Switzerland and the USA, representing many different disciplines: anthropology, economics, history, sociology, political sciences.

The editor owes special thanks to some of the contributors for their willingness to review their papers so as to make them suitable for this edition, and to others for the patience they showed awaiting the final publication of the book. The time lag between the seminar and the date of publishing should be seen as a good sign: it is mainly due to the difficulties involved in communication and correspondence with a group of researchers characterized by an active academic life and a correspondingly high degree of mobility all over the world.

I gratefully acknowledge the permission of the Editorial Board of the *Review of African Political Economy (ROAPE)* to reprint a paper (chapter 3) that earlier appeared in ROAPE, no. 35 (May 1986), and of the Editorial Board of the *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* for its permission to reprint the figures in chapters 8 and 10.

I very much appreciate the willingness of the Africa Studies Centre to publish this volume in its series of African Research Reports, and I thank the ASC secretariat, especially Ms. Adrienne van Wijngaarden, Ms. Ria van Hal and Ms. Mieke Zwart for their diligence and patience in the preparation stages of this volume and for typing the manuscript.



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Inference may be as exact and dispassionate as logic can make it, but it is a wise philosopher who knows the source of his premises.  
R. H. Tawney, 1929.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Social science research in Swaziland is facing the challenge of coming to grips with rapid and radical change in many domains of social reality. In the first place Swaziland is part of turbulent Southern Africa, a region where the era of colonialism - now labelled 'apartheid' - still continues. For political and historical reasons this type of colonialism appears to be more firmly established here than was the case elsewhere in Africa. The struggle for self determination and independence by the black peoples of South Africa is of course a dominating perspective for the whole region, especially as white South Africa can and of course does assert a strong influence on political and economic developments in the surrounding countries.

However, it is not only the geo-political situation that determines the special landscape for social science research in Swaziland. The country itself is undergoing processes of profound and rapid change which seem to have been accelerated since King Sobhuza II's death. The death of the king in 1982 appears to have marked the end of the relative unproblematic and seemingly self evident stability that were characteristic of the traditional order. The tensions which, in recent years, became manifest on the national political level may have been spectacular and vivid illustrations of the legitimacy crisis of the traditional order. However, they might just as well be seen as the reflection of a whole complex of changes which concerns and pervades all of Swazi society.

On the national and regional level many contradictions can be felt which result from the dual government system. The traditional hierarchy that has dominated Swazi society for one and a half centuries contrasts unavoidably with the modern bureaucracy which has accompanied the rise of the modern state, in Swaziland as well as elsewhere in Africa. Both government systems are supported by very different ideologies. The traditional order legitimizes itself in terms of national unity, history and tradition. The managers and technocrats of the modern bureaucracy refer to what are commonly seen to be the up to date exigencies of modern development: economic growth, bureaucratization, technical modernization, etc. Both government systems meet at the top, where the personality of the king is supposed to reconcile the rather divergent orientations and so to accomplish a coherent policy. As recent history suggests it is almost inevitable that this configuration leads to power struggles around the throne, unless the kings' position and personality are strong enough to keep the inherent tensions of the system under control.

These contradictions, between the 'traditional order' in the general sense of the word and 'modern developments' - which of course are by no means unique for Swaziland: they occur throughout the continent - manifest themselves in very different ways and on various levels. They have their impact on the political sphere at the national and regional levels, on relationship patterns within families and between generations. And they surely undermine what otherwise might have been the obvious outcome of many a decision on the homestead level.

Clearly, at the traditional homestead many decisions are being taken continuously, such as those regarding the employment of available labourtime to homestead agriculture or to wage labour, the allocation of cash resources for schoolfees or investments and agricultural inputs, and the allotment of land for cash crop production or subsistence agriculture. In all of these decision processes different interests of the various persons belonging to the homestead (old, young, men, women, oldest son, other children) are at stake. Therefore these decision processes may incorporate profound actual or potential conflicts of interest. For, whatever may be the global economic merits of decisions with regard to investments, schoolfees, wage labour and personal career building of individual

homestead members, these issues are unavoidably seen by different people from very different perspectives. Outlooks that are influenced by personal background, situation, status, sex, age, educational level, etc. : as different orders and ideologies co-exist, there are bound to be also different time perspectives, priorities and personal considerations. The very occurrence of rapid social change and the ensuing co-existence of different perspectives and outlooks inside families and households account for a whole range of new aspects and dimensions to the decision making process on the homestead or on the family level which does not exist in a relatively static society.

In a way this same variety in perspectives that is created by the co-existence of different ideologies - such as the values of the traditional order versus the idiom of modernization and development - necessarily accounts for new dimensions of pluriformity in Swazi society, which is reflected also in a colourful religious complex shaped by traditional religion, independent churches and the established branches of worldwide congregations. These are not only manifestations of different worldviews, but also express newly emerging stratifications and their corresponding ideologies.

All of this adds up to the rapidly changing scenery on the stage where social science research has to define its priorities, set up its hypotheses and determine assumptions and appropriate approaches, in order to fulfil its purpose, that is to come up with reliable sketches and worthwhile reconstructions of this social reality.

### *Theoretical debates*

Social reality is not the only continuously changing element. Theory itself and the various theoretical debates on development and change in Africa are a theatre of lively scenes with frequent changes of perspectives and focus. The prevailing orthodoxy of neo-classical economics has lost much of its appeal for many social scientists (including many development economists) although it still survives in many textbooks and also as the basic pattern of thought in many 'development bureaucracies' on national and international levels. Meanwhile, much effort is made to design new theoretical models in order to do justice to the historical, political and cultural context on the various levels of analysis. Many of the recently developed paradigms are partly or wholly worked out on the basis of or in reaction to some form of marxist or neo-marxist inspiration. The first category of theoretical models presented as an alternative to neo-classical development economics, the so-called 'dependencia' paradigm, was more or less imported from Latin America in the 1960's. It had a great impact on the perception of processes of socio-economic change and led to the now widely accepted recognition that national developments both politically and economically are very much influenced by the international political economy.

The problem, however, remains that the theoretical link between national developments and the household level is still an underdeveloped field of research and theory formulation. Generally speaking the analysis of change processes on micro-levels had a late start. During the boom of theory formulation on economic development in the 1960's economic anthropology was caught up in a controversy on paradigm and methodology, the famous formalism/substantivism debate. Formalism, the branch which corresponded with neo-classical economic theory, basically looked for confirmation on the micro-level of a western philosophy and world-view which was believed to be universally valid. It triggered strong reactions among social scientists. The countermovement, later to be called substantivism and *grosso modo* corresponding with the institutionalist approach in economic theory, represented in fact an important step towards recognition of the specific properties of economic change in different cultural and historical contexts. However, in the end neither of the two approaches could be really satisfactory, as both remained on a very empirical level and in some way lacked a sound theory of change which would be vital for any attempt at understanding and explaining the great variety in registered development processes.

The 1970's saw the rise of a new paradigm, the so called articulation-of- production approach. This was the result of Africa based research and was first developed by French anthropologists. It accounts for one of the very rare efforts so far to create a conceptual framework encompassing various different aspects of social change (economics, politics, ideology). Although nowadays, a decade and a half after its inception, nobody would deny that this new variety of neo-marxist analysis has contributed substantively to the understanding of development and change processes, the debate on the new approach has certainly not yet resulted in an undisputed new paradigm. Looking back at the discussions over the last decade, it seems fair to say that many controversies can be blamed on the apparently inherent tendency to some kind of determinism which is so characteristic of much marxist and neo-marxist theorizing. Illustrative of this determinism is the present debate on whether the peasant mode of production is or is not bound to disappear.

Whatever may be the ultimate outcome of the debate, the discussions over the last fifteen years have clearly shown social scientists that the complexities in the processes of change and 'development' are more than their conceptual designs can handle. No doubt much insight has been gained as a result of the various debates briefly referred to in the above but still there is a long way to go. The main challenge remains to incorporate political and cultural concepts in the predominantly economic development theories and so to regain, if only partly, the positive aspects of the holistic approach that used to be the social sciences' hallmark. In both the neo-classical and the orthodox marxist thinking on development a 'tradition' has grown to isolate economic from other aspects of change, an approach that reflects a Newtonian-Cartesian type of thinking that is basically both eurocentric and ethnocentric. It should be added, though, that this sin is committed by African scholars and expatriates alike.

However, when it comes to efforts to describe and analyse the complexities of development processes, it is probably realistic to conclude that neo-marxist thinking is the more successful school in this field, if only because at present it represents the most elaborated attempt to bring various interrelated aspects of development and change under one conceptual framework. If only because of the lively debates it triggered both in circles of its apostles and its opponents it may well be considered to have given the most fruitful contribution to the urgent task of developing instruments for interdisciplinary research.

***Policy and research: on the margin between theory and ideology***

Much more research in social sciences has been conducted recently than ever before, but not necessarily research of an equally high standard. Many research projects lack a solid theoretical base. On the other hand one of the frequently heard complaints about research, and the neo-marxist theorizing in particular, is the contrast between its elaborate theoretical frameworks and the modest empirical foundations. This, for a long time, has certainly been one of the weaker aspects of the paradigm. However, there is also the reverse problem which may be considered to be more serious indeed. I refer to the impressive amounts of research and data collecting that goes on without any explicit and well worked out theory at all. Many cupboards and computer files in offices of research institutes and public authorities' can testify how much data is collected and finally stored without being properly processed, let alone analyzed. This happens, not only because simply too much data has been collected but also because the data collecting too often is not preceded by a well thought out theoretical design with clearly defined problems and hypotheses for the study. The objection, of course, to this way of planning a research project is not only the resulting surplus of data and the nuisance and over-interviewing of respondents. The more scientific objection is that a seeming absence of theory ('seeming', because every selection of data implies some theory, including hidden or unconsciously operated assumptions and hypotheses) more often than not leads to a silent crossing of the borderline between theory and ideology. Social scientists are the very ones with a duty to respect this borderlines and, in addition to that, to indicate them most clearly. This, of course, cannot be done by claiming to be objective or unbiased oneself, but only by being

very clear and explicit on the choice of conceptual frameworks and theories one prefers to use.

During the seminar at which the earlier versions of most of the papers in this volume were discussed, one of the topics for discussion has been the various challenges facing many research institutes who are eager to safeguard their scientific integrity and independence. It certainly is difficult for them to adhere to their aim of promoting critical thinking, which implies a good deal of theorizing, as at the same time they depend on contracted research paid by donor agencies and public authorities. These agencies and authorities are not necessarily interested in contributing to theoretical debates and critical thinking. What they really want, usually, is project designs in order to be able to allocate their funds, or else they just look for the social scientists' sanction of their already adopted policies. The growing share of this type of contracted studies in the total of scientific research, and their financial appeal for the otherwise not highly paid local university staff, is not always the best stimulus to contribute to greater insight into the complexities of social change. However flattering it may seem that ever more policy makers call in researchers and research institutes, the same trend undeniably poses its own problems for the quality of scientific research.

One of the main problems is, of course, that policy oriented research is supposed to come up with policy suggestions and guidelines that are basically in line with the existing social and political framework. In other words, the problems put forward are often formulated from the specific perspective of the contractor, which may result in quite different priorities than an independent and scientific approach might generate. In addition to that, it is the irony of our time that while most researchers no longer support the illusion that social reality lends itself to social engineering, policy makers increasingly expect from researchers sanction and support for their declared policies.

A second category of problems lies in the circumstance that a variety of policy visions and philosophies exist, all of which are inevitably worded in the positive but often empty fraseology of 'progress', 'modernization' and 'development', although still representing thoroughly differing views and objectives. The researcher, then, for reasons of self-respect, cannot avoid passing his or her own value judgements, the alternative being the option to silently adopt the contractors values. Not many researchers, however, like to state their own value judgements; dissociating themselves from value judgements continues to be the most popular attitude, notwithstanding how doubtful it is from a scientific point of view. In other words, the myth of unbiased research is still very much alive, possibly not least because researchers consciously or unconsciously seek to mask their embarrassment, as they often feel they cannot afford to explicitly state their personal views or to bother their contractors with critical assessments of theirs.

A third type of problem is that the agencies contracting and paying for research (in most cases public authorities) often have various interests or objectives to serve which may be incompatible. Such is frequently the case where the demand for more research results from inconclusive discussions about which policy should be adopted. The requested study may then, above all, represent a strategy to postpone difficult decisions. Particularly international donor agencies are supposed to maintain their status of independence on the one hand while on the other hand they are often obliged to adopt national policies almost uncritically. A popular escape from this dilemma is to continuously ask for new studies with terms of reference frased so as to consider all the different feelings and sensibilities. It goes without saying that in many such cases the terms of reference for the study represent above all the outcome of diplomatic tight rope walking, much more than an independent assessment of given situations.

Last but certainly not least, it should be recognized that also researchers have their specific interests which may sometimes be difficult to reconcile. On the one hand there is the aspiration of continuity in the research program and the need for further research contracts, and also the undesirability of scientific 'shifting cultivation', which may caution

researchers not to be too critical in their reports and writings, because otherwise they might either endanger the extension of research permits or the renewal of contracts. Whereas on the other hand, for obvious reasons, researchers may desire to maintain their scientific integrity, their acceptance by colleagues and their reputations in larger professional circles. Depending on which of the mentioned elements is felt most strongly researchers may adapt their research items, their theoretical orientations and their framing of conclusions and recommendations.

### *The dialectics of ideology and development*

Social change sets in motion many things. The economic aspect of social change is the most studied and best mapped elements, often with the implicit assumption that it is economics and technology in the first place which determine and change social reality. Not only marxist social scientists but also neo-classical economists have a strong tendency to adopt this materialist view of social reality and, by the same token, to systematically underestimate the complexities and the multifaceted character of change processes. However, political and ideological change cannot be considered as mere derivatives of economic developments. The question of the relative autonomy of political and ideological processes in many African situations, e. g. processes of state formation, accounts for a rapidly growing debate among political scientists.

One of the important aspects of changing social realities is constituted by the fact that people and institutions have to adjust to new patterns of relationships. Social relationships are changing, kinship structures are affected by newly emerging attitudes and ambitions, power structures are influenced by changing economic and political realities and traditional values are given new meanings and interpretations. Many people are engaged in the necessary process of continuous reorientation in a changing world and, therefore, are more or less forced to work out corresponding new worldviews, self-images and visions of society. Half a century ago the sociology of knowledge (Mannheim) has generalized Marx' idea of the social conditioning of all knowledge. Most social scientists nowadays will agree that peoples' ideas (ideology) are determined by social circumstances and position. 'Circumstances and position' include not only a persons' specific situation (old/young, man/woman, social rank, level of education, etc. ) but also her or his personal history and life experiences, and the whole range of internalized ideas that result from the upbringing, education and the various other continuous processes of indoctrination and socialization.

These processes of ideological change accompany the above mentioned processes of new class differentiation, the emergence of new types of leadership, the materializing of new attitudes towards kinship relations and changing notions of solidarity and individualism. After all, this whole range of change processes are far from self evident: on the contrary, they are continually in need of suitable legitimations, formulation in familiar terminology and ritualization in acceptable forms. Precisely this process of what may be referred to as ideological change accounts for a very lively scene of political playing on public opinion, the creation of new ideologies on various levels and the colorful religious reactions to the changing worldviews. If one takes for granted the relative autonomy of the ideological domain and a dialectical relation to politics and economics, implying an influence of ideology on the political and socio-economic development on both macro and micro levels, the conclusion is self-evident that here lies a very interesting area of research that deserves more of social scientists' attention than it usually gets. This relatively neglected area in the usual research programmes of social sciences institutes forms a potential field for contributions from the departments of humanities. For, it is only by way of seriously sketching the whole interplay of political, ideological and economic change on the various levels, that we can hope to achieve more profound understanding of the complexity of development processes which, by their very nature, require interdisciplinary research.

The challenge may be clear, but it seems that not many institutes have so far been able to design research programs that are truly interdisciplinary in this sense. The main reason

most probably is that the relevance of including the latter type of topics in the research programs has not yet been generally acknowledged in the circles of decision makers on research programs and budgets. It may also be that issues of ideology and religious change are left out because they are considered to be too sensitive and politically touchy. And finally, of course, it could be that they are still seen as the 'soft' and therefore irrelevant sector of development questions. That, of course, is a very serious mistake as can be seen in almost all of Africa, and indeed throughout the whole third world.

*This volume: an arrangement of papers.*

The collection of papers in the present volume, of course, does not reflect the whole field of social science research in Swaziland, but still it comprises a fair representation of the variety in research programs being in operation at present. The arrangement of the papers has been done in the well articulated anthropological awareness that all reality, including a series of research papers, can be appropriately classified and systematized in many different ways. Classification according to the disciplines, for one thing, would be difficult for well over half of the present papers. Moreover, many of the papers treat interactions between spheres - politics, economic and social change, traditional order, ecological developments, etc. - which would qualify them for incorporation in very different thematic categories.

The first paper (Coppens, Pommee and Vreman) focuses on the national economy of Swaziland and its dependence on economic developments and decisions in the neighbouring Republic of South Africa. It seems logic to continue with an interpretation and appraisal of the historical genesis of this political and economic dependence, as is presented in the papers of Booth, on the history of the quest for Swazi labour, and Daniel and Vilane, on the emergence of the present political economy of Swaziland.

Of course the main constituents, at present, on the social scientists' research agenda are what is usually referred to as topics of 'rural development'. This is also reflected in the present volume with a high proportion of papers in this field. De Vletter's study portrays the ups and downs of a series of smallholder irrigation schemes on Swazi Nation Land, a type of project that one would expect to be seriously handicapped by customary land laws and communal land tenure. However, as De Vletter concludes, it is rather technical and economic problems than the land tenure system that impedes their advancement. The paper by Neocosmos and Testerink discusses the odds of outgrower schemes in an african context in general before focusing on the case of the famous Vuvulane Irrigated Farms scheme in Swaziland.

Typically, many studies in the sphere of rural development concentrate on initiatives taken by governmental bodies or so-called development agencies. However, it should not be forgotten that, fortunately, to a great extent rural developments have their own momentum and do not depend on bureaucratic initiatives. The paper of Barendregt and Brouwer deals with the impact of wage labour on the rural economy on the basis of their study of spending behaviour among migrant workers, and links up the study of the economy on the household level to Chayanov's seminal study on the 'Peasant Farm Organization' (1925). And Funnell's study of 'silent innovators' illustrates, that contrary to common thinking inside development agencies, economic developments in rural areas are not dependent on bureaucrats' creativity and that rural people fortunately do not wait and see what initiatives civil servants will come up with to help them.

The setting, of course, for all socio economic developments is too a large extent determined by what is usually referred to as the informal sector in all its dimensions and diversity, belonging or not to the traditional social and economic order, whether or not shaped by traditional custom or kinship relations. In three papers it is aimed to shed light on various aspects of the informal economy. Matsebula aims at an overall economic appraisal of the so-called informal sector. The paper by Sandee and Weijland describes the marginalization of female trades to the background of a dual sector for production and

marketing of vegetables in Swaziland. And Kappers reports on women's informal savings and credit organisations of which a great variety exist throughout the country.

Astuti's paper on the position of women in traditional Swazi society highlights the Swazi system of control over women, revealing a value system that will necessarily affect women's situation for a long time to go, whatever social economic change processes may unfold. Traditional order and its ideology also is of paramount significance for the growing problems of soil erosion and the urgent need for soil conservation policies, as the traditional power base is closely linked to the system of communal land tenure. Reij portrays issues and options in this field.

A key notion in the ongoing discussions on the future of peasant's economies is the question whether or not peasants have a choice or simply are the victims of proletarianization through the penetration of modern (capitalist) economic relationships. In her paper Russell takes up a few open ends in the present discussion on peasant's economic behaviour.

Amsterdam, July 1987

HJT



## 2. SWAZILAND: LIFE ON THE SLOPE OF A VOLCANO

*Huub Coppens, Marcel Pommée, and Alex Vreman*

### 1. Introduction and overview

The Swazi people are in for continuing hardship. After the adverse effects of the international economic recession and severe natural disasters in recent years had added a stagnating economy to the political turmoil following King Sobhuza's death, Swaziland now faces a lavastream of problems tumbling down on it from South Africa's political volcano.

In this chapter we will only deal with Swaziland's past experience and the changes it underwent before landing in the present grim situation. We intend to do two things: to present an overall picture of the origins and evolution of the dependent development of the Swazi political economy, which may serve as a general introduction to this book, and to highlight certain aspects of this development that receive a more detailed treatment in the other chapters.

To begin with, paragraph 2 will provide a brief sketch of the early stages of capitalist penetration and the ensuing economic and institutional relationships with South Africa during the period of British rule over Swaziland. The remaining paragraphs 3 and 4 will then concentrate on the period of Swaziland's formal independence after 1968.

In paragraph 3 an attempt is made to review available time series of statistical data revealing the evolving structure and performance of the Swazi economy in general. After a discussion of the main trends to be observed in the national account statistics, special attention is given to the development of Swaziland's external relations. This includes a detailed analysis of the changes in the various balance of payments items, in the debt situation, and in both the commodity composition and geographical distribution of exports and imports. The paragraph concludes with a survey of the main institutional arrangements Swaziland participates in with South Africa and with other countries.

Paragraph 4 is devoted to some special topics pertaining to the role of the state in Swaziland. Introducing the peculiar dual institutional structure of its national authorities, this paragraph also presents information on the major items of central government revenue and expenditure. The employment situation in the formal sector and sub-sectors will be examined next, and some data available on wages and personal income distribution will be added. The final section will focus on the agricultural sector, showing several features of its increasing dualism, winding up with a discussion of the ways in which government is attempting to modernize traditional farming.

A summary of the various impressions and conclusions in the following paragraphs would suggest that in the past Swaziland's experience has been mixed. On the positive side, for example, its economic performance which compared favourably with developments in many other states in black Africa for a considerable number of years should be mentioned. No doubt this is to a large extent attributable to the special status Swaziland has vis-à-vis South Africa, but the Swazi leaders should be given credit for their ability to take advantage of that status whenever possible. On the negative side, however, attention should be drawn to the meagre trickling down, if not inequalising effect, both this performance and the favours obtained from external relations have had. The government's failure to alter this situation, or its lack of interest to do so is to their discredit. Moreover, during recent years the balance between positive and negative developments has probably shifted in the direction of the latter.

A variegated past and mixed conclusions like these can only lead to rather open-ended speculations as to what might happen in future. The forthcoming events in South Africa add further uncertainties to this. In the past, Swaziland managed to live rather comfortably under this volcano. In the near future it may again be able to reap some advantages, serving as an escape-hatch for international measures against Apartheid. But in the end it seems doomed to suffer badly from the latter's final eruptions.

## **2. The evolution of dependency relations, 1845 - 1968**

### **2.1 The beginning of capitalist penetration, 1845 - 1902**

The period of land-concessions, from 1845 until 1902, marked the beginning of capitalist penetration in Swaziland. Under the pressure of increasing European interests, the Swazi elite (the monarchy) gave concessions in exchange for money. European motives were both political and economic.

The Boers who founded the 'Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek' (Transvaal) in 1853, and the Briton tried to enlarge their influence in this area for strategic reasons. "The conflict between Boer and Briton arose out of the desire of the South African Republic for an independent outlet to the Indian Ocean and out of differences in and attitudes towards 'Native Policy' in Southern Africa between the two" (Fair et al, 1969, 24).

The discovery of gold in 1879 and the use by Transvaal farmers of meadows in Swaziland for winter grazing for their sheep resulted in a rush to obtain concessions. On the one hand the Swazi elite exchanged concessions for money because the Boer were allies in the struggle against the Zulus. On the other hand the Swazi elite was prepared to give concessions because the concept of concessions had a fundamentally different meaning in Swazi tradition than in European law. According to Swazi tradition the king gives land, by means of chiefs, in usufruct to the people. Land always remains in the hands of the king, who holds it 'in trust' for the the nation. European concepts such as 'private property' and 'ownership' were unknown. By the time the British as well as the Boers were going to make permanent usage of the concessions, the Swazi elite saw their economic legitimation undermined and claimed the land back. "The Swazi maintained that Mbandzeni had not ceded the land, only leased it, and that in any event the king had no constitutional right to alienate the land" (Booth, 1983, 20). The result, however, was the substitution of European practices for traditional ones over large areas of the country.

The struggle for land between Briton and Boer also reflected conflicting economic interests. The British aimed at exploiting the rich mineral resources of the country and developing trade relations. The Boers were searching for winter pastures and fertile, arable lands. These conflicting interests led to increasing tensions between the two parties and, finally, resulted in the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902).

### **2.2 The colonial period, 1902 - 1968**

After the Anglo-Boer War, in which the British took over rule in the Transvaal, Swaziland came under British protection. This lasted until 1968. Though the victory of the British over the Boers brought an end to the political domination of Swaziland by Transvaal (Pretoria), the basis of dependency relations with South Africa was laid. In the Witwatersrand area, industrial activities had been developed which were based on great numbers of labour migrants supplying low-paid, unskilled labour. Functioning as a source of cheap labour, Swaziland became part of the periphery of the central industrial region of South Africa.

To settle the unsolved question of the land-concessions, Britain proclaimed, in 1907, a landlaw which highly protected the interests of the settlers. "But in fact, with the establishment of British protection, the land issue had gone beyond the Swazi question of legitimacy. The permanent settler population was nearing 1,000 and its overriding concern was the capital development of Swaziland. Two preconditions were essential. There had to be unquestioned freehold tenure of the concessioned land. There also had to be created an abundant and reliable source of cheap labor" (Booth, 1983, 20). The Land Partition Proclamation of 1907 resulted in an allotment of 37% of the total area of Swazi land to the indigenous population, the so-called Swazi Nation Land (SNL). The remainder of the area became partly English Crown Land and partly property of the concessionnaires. Thus, the Swazis were to a large extent deprived of their most important means of production: land. As a consequence of the land expropriation and the introduction of different kinds of 'Native Tax', the Swazis were forced onto the labour market.

Until 1945 the uncertain political future of Swaziland impeded the economic development. At first Britain intended to delegate the rule over Swaziland to South Africa. After the Second World War, however, when South Africa formally introduced its apartheid policy, the British decided that Swaziland had to maintain its political status as a British protectorate.

The major economic activities of both Boers and British were maize growing, cattle-breeding and the cultivation of cotton and tobacco which are both labour intensive crops. By 1941 problems of overpopulation and overstocking on SNL had become so serious that King Sobhuza, king of Swaziland from 1921 until his death in 1982, petitioned the British king in Parliament for redress. The British consented and Colonial Welfare and Development funds were used for the repurchase of European-held lands and Crown Lands. By 1968, 56 per cent of the total area of Swaziland was in Swazi hands. Title Deed Land (TDL), largely owned by European settlers, covered the remainder of the area and Crown Lands disappeared after independence in 1968.

Due to greater certainty about the political status of Swaziland, the years following the Second World War were also characterized by a substantial influx of foreign investments: "... the kingdom became the theater of massive penetration and development by foreign capital. Those events occurred on settler holdings and specially earmarked Crown Lands, not on Swazi-held territory" (Booth, 1983, 31). In 1947, a South African consortium, backed by British capital, established a commercial forestry complex in the north of Swaziland, which, qua hectarage, has become the second largest in the world. In 1950, the Colonial Development Corporation invested in an extensive network of irrigation projects in the Middleveld and Lowveld. Within a decade a major citrus and sugar industry developed on these territories. The Anglo-American Corporation obtained interests in the timber and pulp venture and specialized in the development of the extractive industry (iron ore and coal). Foreign investments on settler holdings and Crown Lands resulted in a fast expanding, modern, export-oriented sector.

Between 1960 and 1967 exports steadily increased from E 12.05 mln. to E 40.13 mln. (IMF, 1985a, 586). Table 2.1 shows the considerable change in the composition of exports between 1958 and 1967. However, although the production of iron ore, sugar and forest products grew markedly, the economy remained heavily dependent upon the export of primary products. Between 1960 and 1967 GDP rose from E 21.7 mln. to E 54.9 mln., while GDP per capita rose steadily from E 67.8 to E 140.8 (IMF, 1985a, 588).

*Table 2.1: Value and Composition of Exports, 1958 and 1967, Millions of Rands*

	1958	%	1967	%
Iron ore	-	-	11.32	27.2
Sugar and molasses	0.11	1.5	10.06	24.2
Forest products	0.75	10.0	6.88	16.5
Asbestos	4.26	56.6	5.86	14.1
Cattle and animal products	0.74	9.8	2.69	6.5
Cotton (raw, lint and seed)	0.35	4.7	1.79	4.3
Citrus	0.01	0.1	1.40	3.4
Other commodities	1.30	17.3	1.62	3.8
total	7.52	100.0	41.62	100.0

*Source:* Fair et al, 1969, 33.

In contrast to all this, SNL remained behind in its development. Peasants on SNL were faced with an increasing man-land ratio. In 1921, there were only 11 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> of SNL. In spite of the expansion of SNL area between 1941 and 1968, this number increased to 36,6 in 1976 and 45,5 in 1983 (CSO, 1983, 8). In addition, the advantages of mechanization and the introduction of new seeds and fertilizers mainly benefited large scale commercial farming on TDL. Until 1965, when the Swaziland Credit and Savings

Bank was established, it was almost impossible for peasants on SNL to obtain credits from foreign owned banks. Although this local bank aimed to assist the indigenous sector, lack of funds was one of the causes why its impact on this sector was negligible. These factors prevented the large increases of productivity and production from taking place on SNL, which had characterised TDL after the Second World War. Swazis increasingly engaged in wage labour which appeared much more profitable than embarking on commercial farm production (Low, 1982). Thus, in this period, a distinctly dual economy developed.

### 2.3 *The labour exporting peasantry*

The Land Partition Proclamation of 1907 constitutes the basis for an explanation of the labour migration to South Africa, as well as the internal migration to European held lands. From this date onwards the Swazis were forced into wage labour. The Partition Proclamation reduced the total area available for Swazis (the Native Areas) to only 37% of the total area of Swaziland. This traditional sector increasingly lacked self-sufficiency which, in turn, increased the need for cash income. This need had been fortified by the introduction of 'Native Taxes'. "All were taxed at the highest rates of any 'native' population in Southern Africa" (Booth, 1982, 40). Swazis who, after the Partition Proclamation, continued to reside on European held lands were forced to pay taxes and, in this way, compelled to perform (wage) labour. In addition, mines in the Witwatersrand area pursued an active recruitment policy often based on coercion. This was done through the Native Recruiting Corporation which had started its activities in Swaziland in 1913. Table 2.2 shows the numbers of absentee Swazis in the period 1911 to 1966.

*Table 2.2.: Absentee Africans in Swaziland (total numbers) at Successive Censuses*

Census	Males	Females	Total
1911	8.400	100	8.500
1921	5.839	151	5.990
1936	9.451	110	9.561
1946	8.254	423	8.677
1956	10.569	1.159	11.728
1966	12.817	6.402	19.219

*Source:* Booth, 1983, 109.

In addition to external migration which played an important role until 1976, internal migration was substantial. "By the mid-1920s local migration from the Native Areas to settler ranches and cotton and tobacco fields was also becoming a significant supplement to the tenant labor already residing on European lands" (Booth, 1983, 27).

From 1938 to late 1950s the labour surplus of the previous period decreased and became a labour shortage as a consequence of the developing economy (opening of the asbestos and gold mines), and the considerable, although decreasing, percentage of absentee workers (largely employed in the South African mines) in the total active population. This labour shortage resulted in a rise in domestic wages.

However, the shortage of the late 1950s was short-lived and turned into a labour surplus again in the early 1960s. (A more detailed description of variations in working conditions and wages, for the period before the Second World War until the early 1960s, is given by Booth elsewhere in this volume). From this period onwards, the over-supply of labour resulted in unemployment and depressed wages and benefits.

## **2.4 The Customs Union and the Rand Area**

During British rule Swaziland's dependence on the economy of South Africa had been strengthened and later institutionalized through two mechanisms.

1. In 1910, a Customs Union was established between South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland (the B.L.S. countries). It contained, amongst others, the following arrangements: Firstly, the free interchange of goods between the member countries. Since 1925, South Africa's strategy had been to protect her own manufacturing industries through the application of protective tariffs and import restrictions. However, the Agreement of 1910 prevented the protection of infant industries in the B.L.S. countries. Thus "South Africa protected herself not only from British and other European markets, but also gave B.L.S. little chance of building up their own secondary industries and market potential" (Isaacs, 1982, 36). Secondly, it instituted the distribution of Customs revenues levied at South African borders on imported goods. Shares of the revenue pool were determined by South Africa, resulting in a combined share of the B.L.S. countries in the common revenue pool of 1.3 per cent. This share was based on unreliable import figures of 1907/8 and remained fixed until the new agreement of 1969.
2. The Rand Area: Since the 1920s, Swaziland's monetary system has been informally integrated in that of South Africa's. After the establishment of the South African Reserve Bank in 1921, the South African pound became the sole circulating medium and legal tender in Swaziland. In 1960, South Africa replaced the pound with the rand which, until 1974, was the only legal tender in Swaziland. Furthermore, there were no internal restrictions on payments or on the circulation of notes and coins within the Rand Area.

This meant that, in terms of policy, Swaziland had virtually no control over internal and external commercial and monetary conditions. The money and credit supply, interest rates, the exchange rate and exchange control policies were determined exogenously.

The only commercial banks operating in Swaziland were branches of the United Kingdom based Barclays and Standard banks which adjusted their credit policies only to meet the needs of the modern sector. "The very conservative lending policies of the long established commercial banks often resulted in acute shortages of credit for specific local needs" (Collings, 1978, 117). In 1965, however, the Swaziland Credit and Savings Bank was established to assist the indigenous sector. However, for small-scale local farmers and entrepreneurs it remained almost impossible to obtain credit.

## **3. The structure, development, and external relations of the Swazi economy after independence**

### **3.1 Introduction**

In this paragraph we shall present available data with regard to some structural aspects of the Swazi economy as they have developed since independence. Data will be taken from the sources which illustrate the topics dealt with for the largest possible number of years. As these sources differ with respect to currencies, definitions and concepts employed, this procedure may create some problems of comparability and consistency between the sub-paragraphs. Unable to do better, we can only offer our apologies for this.

In the following we will provide an insight into the national accounts statistics, the balance of payments, the commodity structure, the geographical distribution of exports and imports, and Swaziland's main external institutional arrangements, in that order.

## 3.2 The national accounts statistics

### 3.2.1 Basic indicators

The World Bank estimated GNP per capita in 1983 at US \$ 870 (WDR, 1985, 232) which ranks Swaziland among the more prosperous countries in Africa and among the lower middle-income economies of the world. However this figure is rather misleading due to the dualistic character of the economy. Most of the high level economic activities are in the hands of non-Swazis while the majority of the Swazis still live in rural homesteads under communal land tenure. More than 90 per cent of the GDP is produced in the modern sector (CSO, 1983, 83) which employs about 25 per cent of working age population (4th National Development Plan, 1986, 79). Although some 70 per cent of the Swazi are supported by subsistence farming, nearly every homestead has someone employed for wage income who provides financial support.

Average annual real growth rate of GNP per capita was estimated for the period 1965-1983 at 2.6 per cent (WDR, 1985, 232), but estimates in the World Atlas report a percentage of 0.0 per cent for the period 1973-1982 (World Atlas, 1985). These averages however, conceal wide fluctuations on a year to year basis, as will be demonstrated below.

In the period 1970-1982, GNP and GDP developed, generally speaking, along the same pattern. Between 1970 and 1981, negative net factor income from the rest of the world resulted in a lower GNP than GDP (U.N.,1985, 1361). In 1982 net factor income from the rest of the world was slightly positive, mainly due to a sharp decline in entrepreneurial, property income and workers remittances going abroad (CSO, 1983, 82). This resulted in a GNP higher than GDP for the first time since 1970.

Table 3.1 presents the GDP per capita in Emalangeni for the period 1968-1983, based on data reported by IMF. A rough indication of real growth since 1971 is presented in table 3.2, which provides estimates of the Central Statistical Office of Swaziland of GDP at constant prices of 1980 in millions of Emalangeni. To the extent that these estimates are reliable, they give a clear picture of the extremely unstable character of Swaziland's economic performance in this period.

*Table 3.1: Gross Domestic Product at market prices 1968-1983 (millions of Emalangeni, current prices), population (thousands) and GDP per capita (Emalangeni).\**

	GDP	Population	GDP/cap.		GDP	Population	GDP/cap.
1968	53.4	400	133.5	1976	237.3	500	474.6
1969	57.0	410	139.0	1977	263.5	510	516.7
1970	81.0	420	192.9	1978	323.3	530	610.0
1971	97.6	440	221.8	1979	372.9	540	690.0
1972	112.8	450	250.7	1980	465.5	550	846.4
1973	152.5	460	331.5	1981	553.9	570	971.8
1974	179.8	480	374.6	1982	571.1	590	968.0
1975	211.3	490	431.2	1983	650.6	610	1066.6

\* quotient of GDP and population, calculated by the authors.

Source: International Financial Statistics, IMF, 1985a, 588-589.

Although there are no data on annual rates of population growth in Swaziland over this period, a rough impression of what this real GDP growth meant in terms of per capita growth, can be obtained by using estimates made in 1966, 1976 and 1983 (4th National Development Plan, 1986, 33). In 1966 the population growth was estimated to be 2.75 per cent per annum. By 1976 this estimate was increased to 3.40 per cent per annum. Since then, population growth is expected to have increased further to 3.41 per cent per annum. Intrapolating these estimates for the years

*Table 3.2: Gross Domestic Product at factor cost, 1971-1983 (millions of Emalangeni, constant prices of 1980), and annual growth percentages.*

	GDP	Growth rate		GDP	Growth rate
1971	257.1		1978	353.5	10.9
1972	267.1	3.9	1979	354.2	0.2
1973	293.0	9.7	1980	356.9	3.3
1974	296.5	1.2	1981	396.1	8.2
1975	299.6	1.0	1982	407.9	3.0
1976	306.9	2.4	1983 (p)	400.5	-1.9
1977	318.7	3.8			

(p) = provisional.

*Sources:* The National Accounts of Swaziland 1976-1982, CSO, 1984, for 1971-1982. Annual Statistical Bulletin, CSO, 1983, for 1983 (p).

mentioned in table 3.2 and comparing them with overall GDP growth rates in respective years, reveals that seven of the twelve years in this table show a net GDP per capita decrease, while on average there was an increase of less than 0.5 per cent per annum.

Swaziland's population growth of 3.41 per cent in 1983 outstripped the weighted average of the same in the lower middle-income countries during 1973-1983, this being 2.5 per cent per annum (WDR, 1985, 210), and it is even expected to rise slightly in the future. Life expectancy at birth rose considerably from 48 years in 1970 to 55 in 1982, but is still somewhat lower than the average life expectancy at birth of the lower middle-income countries, which was 56 years in 1982 (WDR, 1984, 218). Infant mortality remained high at 130 in 1982 (146 in 1970) (World Atlas, 1985). Incorporating assumptions that the birth rate remains constant and the mortality rate falls the population in Swaziland will double in 20 years and will be over 1.1 million people by the year 2000 (4th Nat. Dev. Plan, 1986, 33).

With only 15 per cent of the population recorded as urban in 1976, Swaziland was, by both African and international standards, one of the least urbanized countries in the world. Reliable statistical information is not available for the period since 1976, but indications are that the rate of urbanization has increased, if not to the extent characteristic of other developing countries. In 1982 the average of the urban population in the total population in the lower middle-income countries was 34 per cent (WDR, 1984, 260).

Eighty-one per cent of the primary school age population attended school in 1982. This figure is high in comparison with other lower middle-income countries (4th Nat. Dev. Plan, 1986, 38).

As in other lower middle-income countries, environmental sanitation diseases are the leading causes of death, both for children and adults. In 1981, it was estimated that 60 per cent of child deaths (aged 0/14) and 16 per cent of adult deaths were from such diseases. In the same year it was estimated that an average of 26.6 per cent of school children were suffering from bilharzia (4th National Development Plan, 1986, p. 224).

### **3.2.2 Expenditure on Gross Domestic Product**

Table 3.3 and figure 3.1 provide an insight into the structure of, and changes in expenditure on the GDP, for the period 1968-1983. Some structural changes should be noted here:

Firstly, the rising deficit on the balance of trade accentuates the extreme openness and external vulnerability of the Swazi economy. Until 1977 the trade account of the balance of payments was positive (except 1972), but since then there has been a fast growing deficit. This, however, was not caused by sluggish exports

Table 3.3: Expenditure on GDP, at factor cost and current prices, 1968-1983, in mln. E. and in percentages

	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
Exports 1)	41	43	56	65	73	95	87	155	179	173	187	221	285	375	379	417
Government Consumption	7	7	11	14	13	18	21	37	43	54	70	75	104	134	150	187
Gross Fixed Capital Formation	11	11	19	23	25	28	36	40	53	68	145	142	148	140	142	145
Change in Stocks	-1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-2	2	3	-3	6	24	15	20	23
Private Consumption	30	36	44	59	77	105	119	103	120	147	181	273	314	378	416	510
Less: Imports 1)	-35	-41	-48	-63	-75	-93	-85	-121	-160	-182	-257	-345	-409	-489	-537	-631
GDP	53	57	81	98	113	153	180	211	237	264	323	373	466	554	571	651
Exp. - Imp.	6	2	8	2	-2	2	2	34	19	-9	-70	-123	-124	-114	-158	-214
<i>Percentages of GDP 2)</i>																
Exports 1)	78	76	69	67	65	62	49	74	76	66	58	59	61	68	66	64
Government Consumption	13	13	14	14	12	12	12	17	18	21	22	20	22	24	26	29
Gross Fixed Capital Formation	21	19	23	22	22	18	20	19	22	26	45	38	32	25	25	22
Change in Stocks	-2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-1	1	1	-1	2	5	3	4	4
Private Consumption	56	64	54	61	69	69	66	49	51	56	56	73	67	68	73	78
Less: Imports 1)	-65	-72	-60	-65	-67	-61	-47	-57	-68	-69	-79	-92	-88	-88	-94	-97
Exp. - Imp.	9	-	-	-	-	1	1	16	8	-3	-22	-33	-27	-51	-28	-33

- = negligible

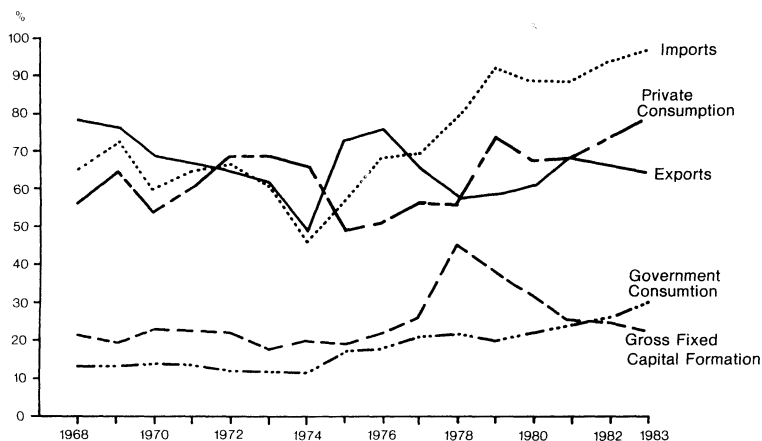
1) Goods and non-factor services

2) Percentages calculated by the authors.

Source : International financial Statistics, IMF, 1985, 588-589.



Figure 3.1: Distribution of expenditure on the GDP at factor cost, 1968 - 1983, current prices (percentage of GDP).



Source : based on percentages given in table 3.3.

(except 1977). Over the period 1977-1983 the value of exports increased at an average rate of 15.9 per cent per annum, while imports grew 23.0 per cent per annum, reaching almost 100 per cent of GDP in 1983.

Secondly, the share of government consumption in GDP increased steadily from about 13 per cent in the early seventies to more than 25 per cent after 1982. On the other hand private consumption showed a considerably fluctuating share along a slightly increasing trend.

Thirdly, the share of gross fixed capital formation reached a peak in 1978, the second year of the trade deficit period but has decreased rapidly since then. At the same time the shares of both government and private consumption maintained their rising trends.

### 3.2.3 Distribution of GDP by sectors of origin

Table 3.4 shows the relative contribution of the main sectors to the Swazi economy in the period 1977 - 1983.

At first glance, table 3.4 appears to indicate that the Swazi economy is relatively diversified, showing no large changes in the shares of its main sectors. On average, the manufacturing sector contributed about 22 per cent of the country's GDP, agriculture and forestry contributed about 25 per cent and services 45 per cent. However, a closer look at these figures is called for as they mask a number of different facts and trends that are important.

1. The one quarter share of the manufacturing sector in the Swazi GDP appears to compare favourably with that of highly industrialized societies. However, this does not imply a high level of industrialization in Swaziland. A significant proportion of this manufacturing consists of basic processing of the two major primary products sugar and timber (Davies, 1985, 21). These are included in the industrial census under the categories of food and beverages and wood and wood products and are in the analysed period respectively the largest and the second largest of Swazi exports.
2. In terms of contribution to GDP, agriculture and forestry form the second largest sector of the economy, but within this sector a strong dichotomy exists between freehold and communal tenure crop production. In this period communal tenure SNL, though covering 56 per cent of the total land area, contributed an average of

Table 3.4: GDP by sectors of origin, 1977 - 1983 in percentages of GDP at constant prices of 1980 (factor cost, mln. of Emalangeni).

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
SNL crop production	3.3	4.3	3.1	4.1	3.9	2.1	1.2
TDL crop production	12.4	12.4	12.2	14.4	15.4	15.6	16.2
Other agriculture	6.1	6.3	6.9	5.7	5.6	5.4	6.4
Forestry	1.6	1.5	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.5
Agriculture and forestry	23	25	24	26	26	25	25
Mining	5	4	4	4	4	3	3
Construction	4	8	7	4	5	5	4
Services	48	43	45	44	43	44	45
Manufacturing	20	20	20	22	22	23	23
GDP	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Sources; based on: National Accounts of Swaziland, 1976-1982, CSO, 1984, table 9 and Annual Statistical Bulletin, CSO, 1982 and 1983, table 03.

just over three per cent to GDP. This contribution has been decreasing steadily for the last three years. On the other hand, individual tenure farms on TDL accounted for - on average - about 14 per cent of GDP, showing a rising trend from 1980 onwards. Other agriculture (mainly livestock) remained fairly stable in the period 1977-1983, accounting for approximately 6 per cent of GDP. Although less than 20 per cent of the national herd is owned by farmers on TDL, their contribution to commercial off-take, is generally in excess of 50 per cent (4th National Development Plan, 1986, 160).

3. Services include wholesale and retail, finance and banking, government administration, public services etc. The tourism sector is also included which is a rather new and growing industry but is recently facing trouble due to the economic and political crisis in the Republic of South Africa.
4. Mining (and quarrying) have declined in both absolute and relative terms. Their share in GDP fell from 5 per cent in 1977 to only 3 per cent in 1983 due to the decline and closure of mines. In the 1960s this share still amounted to 10 per cent (de Vletter, 1984b, 4). Whereas the mining sector experienced a depression during the period 1978-1982, the value of mineral sales rose sharply in 1983. This was primarily due to improved asbestos prices and a 60 per cent increase in the sales volume of quarry stone (Prime Minister's Office, 1986, 32).
5. The construction sector has been volatile, reflecting the lumpiness of the government expenditure programme. It currently contributes some 4 per cent of GDP.

### 3.3 Balance of payments

The balance of payments for the period 1974 to 1984 and data on the development of Swaziland's external debt are given in table 3.5. It must be noted that all figures are given in US \$ and, as a consequence, are not comparable with trade data given in table 3.3.

The growth in merchandise imports was more rapid than that of exports in the period 1974 to 1980 and the net result was a substantial deterioration in the balance of trade. From 1978 onwards the trade balance shows a structural, though fluctuating, deficit. While from 1981 onwards the dollar value of merchandise exports was steadily decreasing, imports fluctuated, although, on average, they declined more rapidly than exports in this recent period. The differences between these more recent trends in trade data and the trends observed in table 3.3 can largely be explained by the rapid depreciation of Swaziland's lilangeni (plural: emalangeni) vis-à-vis the US

Table 3.5: Balance of payments and debt data, in millions of US \$, 1974-1984

	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Merchandise exp. fob	178,8	197,0	193,4	183,9	198,7	241,6	368,4	387,8	339,3	309,8	271,8
<u>Merchandise imp. fob</u>	<u>-117,7</u>	<u>-139,6</u>	<u>-155,8</u>	<u>-171,1</u>	<u>-246,6</u>	<u>-361,0</u>	<u>-522,2</u>	<u>-512,3</u>	<u>-439,6</u>	<u>-474,8</u>	<u>-350,6</u>
Trade Balance	67,1	57,5	37,6	12,8	-47,8	-119,5	-153,8	-124,5	-100,3	-165,0	-78,8
Other Goods, Serv.&Inc.: Credit	27,4	38,1	41,4	49,4	58,8	70,7	78,6	105,7	85,8	99,6	101,8
<u>Other Goods, Serv.&amp;Inc.: Debet</u>	<u>-67,6</u>	<u>-63,0</u>	<u>-57,3</u>	<u>-64,4</u>	<u>-90,7</u>	<u>-104,2</u>	<u>-122,7</u>	<u>-156,5</u>	<u>-134,9</u>	<u>-114,2</u>	<u>-95,0</u>
Service Balance	-40,2	-24,9	-15,9	-14,6	-31,9	-33,5	-44,1	-50,8	-49,1	-14,6	6,8
Private Unrequited Transfers	0,4	0,8	0,1	0	-1,8	-1,7	-2,4	0,6	0,5	-1,9	0,1
<u>Official Unrequited Transfers</u>	<u>15,9</u>	<u>11,1</u>	<u>-1,0</u>	<u>13,5</u>	<u>33,7</u>	<u>53,4</u>	<u>82,3</u>	<u>36,0</u>	<u>72,9</u>	<u>75,2</u>	<u>60,7</u>
Balance Current Account	43,3	44,5	20,8	11,6	-48,0	-101,2	-118,1	-138,7	-76,0	-106,2	-11,3
Direct Investment	3,5	14,5	7,4	20,0	21,7	55,5	16,4	33,6	28,4	6,2	-0,7
Portfolio Investment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-0,1	-0,1
Other Long-Term Capital	3,8	5,5	7,9	7,9	47,3	34,6	18,7	13,3	20,3	24,5	17,4
<u>Other Short-Term Capital</u>	<u>-23,3</u>	<u>-1,5</u>	<u>14,7</u>	<u>-3,3</u>	<u>4,9</u>	<u>4,3</u>	<u>5,8</u>	<u>-2,7</u>	<u>-0,9</u>	<u>19,0</u>	<u>2,2</u>
Balance Capital Account	-16,0	18,5	30,0	24,6	73,3	94,4	40,9	44,2	47,8	49,6	18,8
C'part to Valuation Changes	1,6	-7,1	1,0	-0,3	-1,2	8,0	19,1	-32,3	-14,4	-11,6	-31,4
Liab. Const. Fgn. Author. Res.	0,1	-	0,1	0,3	2,6	-0,4	-2,2	0,6	-0,2	1,2	-1,7
<u>Net Errors and Omissions</u>	<u>-17,4</u>	<u>-23,3</u>	<u>-24,2</u>	<u>-14,8</u>	<u>-8,5</u>	<u>-3,6</u>	<u>102,7</u>	<u>63,8</u>	<u>22,7</u>	<u>72,9</u>	<u>13,9</u>
<u>Total Change in Reserves</u>	<u>-11,7</u>	<u>-32,1</u>	<u>-27,8</u>	<u>-21,4</u>	<u>-19,0</u>	<u>-0,2</u>	<u>-45,0</u>	<u>62,4</u>	<u>20,2</u>	<u>-5,9</u>	<u>-11,7</u>
Total Public and											
Publicly Quaranteed Debt	36,2	33,7	40,8	52,3	105,2	147,9	165,6	161,9	170,4	182,7	..
Total Debt Service	4,4	3,3	1,9	2,2	4,0	7,5	12,2	15,5	18,2	18,7	20,9e
Total Debt Service as % of Exp.											
Receipts of Goods and Services 1)	2,1	1,4	0,8	0,9	1,6	2,4	2,7	3,2	4,3	4,6	5,6e

- = Negligible.

.. = Data not available

e = estimated.

1) Calculated by the authors.

Sources: International Financial Statistics, IMF, 1985a, Yearbook, 586-587.

World Debt Tables, The World Bank, 1985, 106 (1974, 1976, 1978-1984).

World Debt Tables, The World Bank, 1981, 69 (1975, 1977).

dollar. As is shown in table 3.6 the lilangeni lost around 70 per cent of its value against the US dollar between 1980 and October 1985.

*Table 3.6: Exchange rates (US \$ per E; 1980-1984: annual average; Oct. 1985: monthly average).*

1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	Oct. 1985
1.2854	1.1491	0.9245	0.8991	0.6954	0.3850

*Source:* IMF, International Financial Statistics, 1985a, Dec, 441.

This has made Swaziland's exports to countries outside the RMA more competitive, alleviating to some extent and for some of the country's main export commodities the difficulties stemming from the recently depressed world markets. On the other hand there are also negative effects of the depreciation: foreign debt is becoming more expensive, and the country's high propensity to import has led to significant increases in the cost of living (Prime Minister's Office, 1986, 16).

The service balance shows a fluctuating structural deficit during the whole of the period 1974 to 1983. However, from 1982 onwards this deficit rapidly diminished, resulting in a surplus in the service balance of 1984. This improvement was due largely to a sharp reduction in the outflow of dividend payments to outside investors as a consequence of reduced company profitability.

Official unrequited transfers have served to partly compensate for the large unfavourable trade and service balance from 1978 onwards. These transfers consist largely of SACU receipts and international aid transfers. The decrease in these transfers in 1981 was due to a sharp drop in Customs Union receipts in that year.

After 1974, Swaziland experienced a growing surplus in the capital account, which reached a peak in 1979 but decreased considerably in 1980 as a consequence of a sudden drop in direct investments and other long-term capital. Direct investments decreased rapidly from 1981 onwards as a result of South Africa's deconcentration policy which provides incentives to establish industrial plants in the Bantustans (Transkei, Ciskei) and adjacent areas.

In spite of the considerable outflows implied by the negative figures for net errors and omissions, Swaziland's total reserves increased continuously from 1974 to 1979. Its reserves increased also in 1980 and again in 1983, years in which the deficit on the current account was more than double the surplus on the capital account. However, this time reserves increased mainly due to large positive net errors and omissions, a change for which we have not found an explanation.

External public and publicly guaranteed debt increased from US \$ 36.2 mln. in 1974 to US \$ 182.7 mln. in 1983. However, while this debt quintupled in this period, interest payments increased more than eight times from US \$ 1.0 mln. in 1974 to US \$ 8.5 mln. in 1983, reflecting, amongst others, a change in the composition of this debt (World Debt Tables, 1985). Therefore, although this had not yet become a major problem, total debt service and debt service as a percentage of export receipts were steadily on the rise. In the period 1976 to 1984 debt service rose from US \$ 1.9 mln. to US \$ 20.9 mln., and debt service as a percentage of export receipts increased from 0.8 to 5.6.

Finally a memo item to be added is that Swaziland's reliance on foreign concessional loans and grants has been increasing from 3.3 per cent of its GNP in 1970/71 to 5.3 per cent in 1982/83, including net ODA receipts from DAC, OPEC and multilateral sources. Yet, compared with both Lesotho and Botswana, Swaziland's dependence on foreign assistance was still relatively low; the former's increased from 12.6 to 15.7 per cent and the latter's decreased from 17.5 to 13.6 per cent in the same period (OECD/DAC, 1985, 128).

### ***3.4 Commodity structure and geographical distribution of imports and exports***

Changes in the commodity composition of total imports and exports are shown in table 3.7 and 3.8 respectively.

Over the whole of the period 1975 to 1983, Swaziland does not show drastic changes in the overall structure of its imports. Although such changes did occur half way through this period for several items, most of them returned to previous levels in the end. Only beverages and tobacco were consistently lower in the second half. Minerals, fuels and lubricants were higher in the second half, which may however level off again because of the recently declining oil prices.

In the composition of exports more significant changes have occurred. Minerals have declined markedly, falling from 15.1 per cent of total export value in 1975 to 6.6 per cent in 1983. On the other hand, the share of chemical exports increased rapidly from 0.1 per cent in 1975 to 13.2 per cent in 1983. Unfortunately, however, the fertilizer factory, Swaziland Chemical Industries, was declared insolvent in 1984. Canned fruit and citrus accounted for 5.6 per cent of total export value in 1975 and this share has more than doubled in 1983. Manufactures also became more important. Nevertheless, Swaziland still is dependent on a few primary commodities, especially sugar and woodpulp, which reveals the vulnerability of the economy to external factors.

As can be seen in table 3.9, the share of Swaziland's imports originating in, or coming through, South Africa remains huge, although there is a notable downward trend. On the other hand, South Africa was only a minor outlet for Swaziland's exports in the past, partly because of the nature of these exports. This outlet is, however, growing rapidly surpassing the share going to the United Kingdom, which until 1979 was the largest single buyer of Swaziland's exports. Meanwhile the exports to other areas are also of growing importance.

*Table 3.7: Imports by commodity section in percentages of total imports (in Emalangeni), 1975-1983*

Commodity	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
Food and live animals	8.6	8.0	8.2	7.0	5.3	5.9	7.8	8.6	9.8
Beverages and tobacco	5.0	4.6	4.1	3.0	1.3	1.3	1.2	0.9	1.3
Crude materials, inedible	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.4	1.1
Minerals, fuels, lubricants	10.5	10.9	12.1	9.5	13.0	16.7	14.2	14.7	14.4
Animal's and veg. 's oils/fats	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2
Chemicals	9.0	7.4	8.0	8.7	11.7	10.7	8.3	15.3	11.6
Manufact. items by material	11.0	10.4	10.1	10.4	18.7	17.1	11.4	8.7	10.4
Machinery/transport equipm.	26.1	30.9	20.0	25.0	16.7	16.3	22.0	21.8	31.2
Miscell. manufactured items	9.7	9.0	8.9	7.3	15.4	14.6	12.2	10.6	6.1
Commod. not classif. by kind	19.1	17.8	27.8	28.3	17.3	16.8	22.2	18.8	13.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

*Source:* Calculated from table G5, Annual Statistical Bulletins, 1979 and 1983, CSO.

*Table 3.8: Exports by commodity section in percentages of total exports (in Emalangeni), 1975-1983.*

Commodity	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
Foodstuffs and tobacco	5.3	6.9	5.5	5.0	5.7	4.4	3.2	5.0	3.7
Canned fruit and citrus	5.6	6.3	9.2	9.1	9.5	6.1	6.8	10.1	11.5
Sugar	55.7	34.7	37.2	34.9	36.1	46.0	39.1	32.8	37.9
Raw materials	4.1	3.2	5.5	6.3	4.7	2.3	5.4	2.7	2.7
Woodpulp	13.5	23.7	19.8	20.9	19.8	17.9	19.4	17.5	17.4
Minerals	15.1	17.3	17.6	15.6	13.0	7.2	6.5	5.2	6.6
Chemicals	0.1	0.3	1.8	3.9	5.1	8.5	11.4	16.6	13.2
Manufactures	0.6	7.3	3.2	4.2	5.9	7.6	8.1	9.9	6.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

*Source:* Calculated from table G3, Annual Statistics Bulletins, 1979 and 1983, CSO.

Table 3.9: Swaziland's main trading partners (percentages of total import and export values, in millions of Emalangeni), 1975-1983.

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
Imports from South Africa	93	90	96	90	91	93	83	83	84
Exports to South Africa	14	21	20	24	23	30	34	37	32
Exports to the United Kingdom	49	30	32	34	27	20	15	8	22
Exports to others	37	49	48	42	50	50	51	55	46

Source: Calculated from table G3, Annual Statistical Bulletins, 1979 and 1983, CSO.

For an explanation of these diverse trends in Swaziland's external trade relations we may look at the institutional arrangements it is participating in.

### 3.5 External institutional arrangements

#### 3.5.1 Southern African Customs Union and Rand Monetary Area

South Africa's almost exclusive position as the supplier of Swaziland's imports must, of course, be attributed to the latter's enclave character and its membership of the *Southern African Customs Union* (SACU). Formally established in 1969, SACU represents a continuation of the essential features of the original agreement: the free movement of goods between the member countries, the application of common customs and excise duties, and the central pooling and distribution of the revenues collected among the member countries. The new agreement deviates from the former in only two important respects. Firstly, it provides for a more equitable distribution between the member countries of the customs and excise duties collected. The B.L.S. countries' shares are by now equal to the value of their most recent imports and dutiable production multiplied by the average rate of duty of the Customs Union as a whole. Whereas until 1969, the combined share of the B.L.S. countries in the common revenue pool remained at a fixed percent tage of 1.3 per cent, the new calculation resulted in a combined share of the B.L.S. countries of 15 per cent in total pool collections in 1982/83 (4th Nat. Dev. Plan, 1986, 55). Secondly, this share is multiplied by a factor of 1.42, which introduces an element of compensation for the disadvantages of participating in a customs union where not all members are of equal size or at the same stage of economic development. In effect this meant that customs and excise revenues for Swaziland increased from E 2.0 mln. in 1968 to E 7.5 mln in 1969, when the new agreement was established (Isaacs, 1982, 42).

Although this agreement offers new benefits to the B.L.S. countries, old disadvantages continue. In the new agreement, infant industries are allowed protection, through the imposition of additional tariffs, but "South Africa already had such a tremendous head-start on her Customs Union associates in every economic sector that any new projects attempted by BLS under the protective policy afforded by the Agreement would have, more often than not, met with tremendous difficulties" (Isaacs, 1982, 37). Added to this is the fact that tariff protection, over 100 per cent in some cases, of South African industries means that, in some cases, prices are higher than those in the world market for similar products, much to the detriment of the B.L.S. countries. This, for example, was one of the factors leading to the bankruptcy of Swaziland's major fertilizer plant. On the one hand, South Africa subsidized its own fertilizer producers and on the other, it raised the (common) tariff on fertilizer inputs.

The other institutional link with South Africa's economy is the *Rand Monetary Area*, established in 1974. This arrangement resulted, amongst others, in the following provisions: Firstly, the South African rand was declared to be legal tender throughout the Rand Monetary Area (RMA). However, as the agreement also allowed for the issuing of local currencies in the smaller countries, Swaziland issued its own currency, the lilangeni, on 6 September 1974, and its value was kept on par with the rand. Secondly, during the previous informal arrangement complete freedom of transfer of funds resulted in an outflow of funds generated in the B.L.S. countries to South Africa. After 1974 restrictions concerning the transfer of funds were allowed for investment or liquidity requirements prescribed for banks and financial institutions. This form of exchange control restricted to some extent the outflow of funds to South Africa and allowed Swaziland to mobilize resources in the interest of development. Thirdly, one of the disadvantages of the former informal currency-sharing agreement was that income derived from the issue of the rand and the holding of foreign reserves accrued only to South Africa. "Under the new agreement the principle was accepted that the compensation they (Lesotho and Swaziland: authors) should receive for using the rand and pooling external reserves would be based upon an estimate of the income that would accrue if they held reserves equal to the amount of currency circulating in their territories wholly in income-earning assets" (Collings, 1978, 107). Compensatory payments from South Africa are determined by the following formula: two-thirds times the estimated amount of rand notes and coins in circulation in Swaziland times the annual rate of long term domestic South African Government stock. "The two-thirds was agreed to on the assumption that it would be approximately the weighted average earnings on an appropriate mix of long- and short-term foreign reserve assets" (Collings, 1978, 108). These payments accounted for 1.2 per cent of total government revenue in 1982 (CSO, 1983, 77).

### 3.5.2 *The Lomé Convention*

Swaziland joined the ACP - EEC Convention of Lomé at its creation in 1975. This is an agreement between the EEC and, at present 66 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, covering preferential trade, aid, economic co-operation and common institutions. In the current, third, Convention running from January 1, 1986, to the end of 1990, more trade barriers have been lowered and rules of origin considerably simplified. Through this Convention Swaziland received 155,8 mln. ECU in the form of grants and loans during 1979 - 1984 (ACP - EEC Convention of Lomé, 1980 - 1984). Its best-known instrument, the stabilization of export earnings scheme (STABEX), provides financial compensation (grants in the case of Swaziland) for losses of earnings of specified exports. Between 1978 and 1983, Swaziland received almost 15 mln. of emalangeni under this scheme (IMF, 1985b, 778). The EEC also undertakes to import, at guaranteed prices which are mostly much higher than world market prices, an agreed quantity of 116,400 metric tons of raw sugar and 19,700 metric tons of white sugar each year from Swaziland. This covered about one third of the latter's total sugar exports in 1982 (CSO, 1983, 29). In 1979, this share was more than 50 per cent, but declined rapidly as a result of Swaziland's increased sugar exports. Finally, the Convention contains a Joint Declaration between the EEC and Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, concerning the special position arising from the existing Customs Union of the latter three and South-Africa. For more information on sugar see the following paragraph.



### **3.5.3 Sugar arrangements**

Sugar has gained a rapidly increasing share in Swaziland's exports. Starting from hardly anything in 1958, it obtained 24.2 per cent in 1967 (table 2.1), reached a peak of 55.7 per cent in 1975, and fell again, with some fluctuations, to 37.9 per cent in 1983 (table 3.8). During these years Swaziland was able to sell a large part of these exports under favourable preferential trading arrangements. The Lomé sugar arrangement mentioned above was preceded by the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement (signed in 1951), which allowed exporting members an annual "negotiated price quota" in the UK at roughly stable prices exceeding (residual) world market prices by 200 to 300 per cent in several years. In 1969, for instance, Swaziland's quota covered 65.1 per cent of the value of its exports (Fukuda, 1973, 81). In addition to this Swaziland obtained, from 1965 onwards, an annual quota based on the US Sugar Acts which offered prices that were also several times higher than free market prices of most years. In 1980 the US joined the International Sugar Agreement (ISA), as Swaziland already had in 1968, but still maintained a special quota for imports from Swaziland. These were subsumed under the ISA-quota allocated to it, at prices which were more than four times as high as the free market prices in 1984 (Cohen, 1985, 2).

However, special favours create special risks. Whereas in 1981 51 per cent of Swaziland's sugar exports (volume) were shipped to the US protected market, in 1983, after the preferential sugar quota was reduced to 48,000 metric tons in 1982 (UNCTAD, 1982), this percentage had declined to only 10. Due to this dramatic decline, and the fact that sugar quotas guaranteed by the Lomé Convention remain quantitatively fixed, Swaziland is becoming increasingly dependent on the world market. In 1983 more than 50 per cent of its sugar exports (volume), had to be sold on this recently deeply depressed market with quotations in London and New York falling to their lowest levels in fifteen years (GATT, 1985, 40).

### **3.5.4 Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC)**

In 1980, the independent states of Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe established the SADCC. The priorities of this organization include: the reduction of economic dependence (especially on South Africa), the establishment/improvement of independent transportation systems and communications networks and the security of food supplies. As Swaziland is also a member of SACU, it is one of the countries in the region least committed to economic liberation from South Africa. This has resulted in an ambiguous role in SADCC affairs. SADCC principal goals are in conflict with the interests of the Swazi State, which recently tightened formal connections with South Africa. Examples of these closer connections are the recent integration with South Africa's modern rail infrastructure and the establishment of more formal trade links, which provide for an exchange of trade representatives having rights and privileges equivalent to those of diplomatic personnel (EIU, 1985, 67).

### **3.5.5 Preferential Trade Area for East and Southern Africa (PTA)**

The PTA has 15 member states and embraces countries in eastern and southern Africa. The PTA plans to liberalize trade, encourages cooperation in industry, agriculture, transport, communications and aims at creating a common regional market. The progressive liberalisation of intra-PTA trade commenced on July 1, 1984, with the adoption of a common list comprising 209 commodities. A Multilateral Clearing Facility began operations on February 4, 1984. A PTA monetary unit of account (UAPTA), equivalent to the SDR, is used to settle inter-state debts every two months and the balance is payable in US dollars.

Due to its recent establishment no indications are available about the real and potential economic impact of PTA on Swaziland (EIU, 1985, 67).

#### 4. Government structure and selected domestic problems and policies in Swaziland since independence

##### 4.1 Government institutions and the national budget

###### 4.1.1 The role of the monarchy

At independence, King Sobhuza II became the absolute monarch over Swaziland. Besides holding SNL 'in trust' for the Nation, the king obtained control over Swaziland's mineral resources: royalties were paid directly to the king. In 1968, *Tibiyo* was created by royal charter to manage the Swazi Nation's assets (see next paragraph). The term 'Swazi Nation' refers to ethnic Swazis primarily engaged in subsistence agriculture and is distinguished from the 'Government of Swaziland', which refers to the modern administrative institutions of the state. This had led to a dual administration of the country's finances and resources. Both institutions, however, are presided by the monarchy.

The monarchy consists of the king and the "*elders of the nation*" who are hereditary heads of the major clans of Swaziland. Below the elders stand the *Indunas*, councillors and administrators appointed by the king, and the *Chiefs*, who have jurisdiction over the ± 170 chieftancies in Swaziland. "Together with certain chiefs, some of the more prominent *Indunas* are grouped together in an advisory council to the monarchy, known as the *Liqoqo*" (Davies, 1985, 41). Shortly before his death, in 1982, Sobhuza issued a decree which gave constitutional recognition to the *Liqoqo* as the 'Supreme Council of State'.

Although a parliament was established in 1978, real power remained vested in the king. By means of a heavily restricted electoral procedure the Swazi monarchy exercises strict control over the composition of parliament and cabinet. Thus, the king is advised by the cabinet of ministers and the *Liqoqo*.

This political dualism, together with the dual administration of the country's finances and resources, provided a basis for personal and factional struggles after the king's death. "The main factions can be seen as on the one hand those sections of the Swazi traditional aristocracy and petty bourgeoisie who had a stake in the capitalist sector through such institutions as *Tibiyo*, and on the other hand those sections of the Swazi petty bourgeoisie supported by a minority of the traditional aristocracy favourable to capitalism but themselves without such an institutional stake" (Davies, 1985, 51). After 1982, the dominance of the former faction resulted in an attitude favourable to close relations with South Africa.

###### 4.1.2 *Tibiyo*

Originally, *Tibiyo* was established to manage Swaziland's land and mineral resources in order to facilitate the development of the Swazi Nation. However, it increasingly extended its domain beyond the traditional sector through its shareholdings in ventures undertaken in all the major sectors of the economy.

In 1975, funds from mineral royalties were placed under a new organization, *Tisuka Taka Ngwane. Tibiyo* began to act as an investment corporation financed by dividend payments from its shareholdings in foreign undertakings in Swaziland, and from income generated in various other projects. It has, for instance, shares in the following companies:

- Havelock Asbestos Mines (40% share), owned by the British mining multinational Turner and Newall.
- Mhlume Sugar Company (50% share), jointly owned by *Tibiyo* and the Commonwealth Development Corporation (Davies, 1985, 18).

Its revenues of E 10 mln. and assets of over E 46 mln. in 1981 (Davies, 1985, 17), are controlled by the traditional rulers organized through the monarchy, and its operations are largely unknown to the public. "Its accounts are kept separate from the public revenue and are not subject to the same public scrutiny the national budget receives in Parliament" (Booth, 1983, 106). Because *Tibiyo's* revenue and assets do

not accrue to the Swazi Ministry of Finance it can be considered as a state within a state, pursuing its own course with regard to national development policy. "...Its control by the monarchy has seen it siphon off government funds to its own projects, thus placing a strain on the central budget and leading to a fracturing of the government's own development initiatives" (EIU, 1985, 55).

#### ***4.1.3 Government revenue and spending***

Government revenues are increasingly determined by receipts from the Southern African Customs Union (SACU). Customs Union receipts accounted for 45 per cent of total revenues in 1973, increasing to 64 per cent in 1982 (table 4.1.), and even to 71 per cent in the second quarter of 1984 (EIU, 1985, 63). Revenues from the SACU became increasingly important while other revenues declined dramatically. Direct taxes amounted to 38 per cent of total revenues in 1973, but decreased to only 25 per cent in 1982, partly as a consequence of reduced company profitability. The sugar export levy has been a highly variable source of revenue. The levy is 50 per cent of the excess of the average unit export price over a specified reference price, which is based on an evaluation of the local costs of production. In 1982 the reference price was raised and, with the exception of the first quarter, became greater than the average export price, resulting in a revenue of sugar exports of only E 1.0 mln (4th Nat. Dev. Plan, 1986). As a consequence percentage shares have varied from an absolute high of 34 of total revenue in 1975 to 1 in 1982.

Table 4.2 shows central government revenue and expenditure between 1973 and 1983. From 1978 onwards, a significant amount of the grants received came from the EEC in the form of STABEX transfers, principally as compensation for a reduction in earnings from iron ore and for a shortfall in cotton receipts in 1982 (4th Nat. Dev. Plan, 1986).

The high level of lending minus repayments was due to the start of two major projects, the building of the third sugar mill and the construction of the southern rail link with South Africa, between 1978 and 1979. Furthermore, from 1977 onwards, loan funds from the government were required to support a number of public enterprises, including the Royal Swazi National Shipping Corporation and the Royal Swazi Airways.

Between 1979 and 1982, expenditures have increased at an average rate of 24 per cent per annum. However, expenditure increased only 1 per cent in 1983. In 1982, spending on education, transport and communication and agriculture accounted for respectively 20, 16 and 14 per cent in total expenditure (4th Nat. Dev. Plan, 1986). The spectacular rise of revenues from the SACU has forestalled a large permanent deficit in the government budget, except however, the years 1978 and 1981 when the deficit was substantial. After a drop in 1982 it increased again in 1983.

## ***4.2 Employment and wages***

### ***4.2.1 The employment situation***

Following the 1976 census, the working-age population was defined as those falling into the 15-64 age group. In 1982 they were estimated at 301,960 (4th National Development Plan, 1986, 79). Of this potential labour force, 77,253 were estimated to be employed in the formal sector of the economy, and the remaining 224,707 were occupied in the non-formal sector, particularly traditional agriculture, or employed in South Africa or were unemployed. With this 25 per cent of the potential

*Table 4.1: Central government revenue components in millions of Emalangeni and in percentages of total revenue, 1973-1982. Year ending April 1.*

	'73	%	'74	%	'75	%	'76	%	'77	%	'78	%	'79	%	'80	%	'81	%	'82	%
Direct taxes	11	38	11	25	21	30	20	37	24	30	27	27	33	26	36	24	42	32	47	25
Indirect taxes:																				
- Custom duties	13	45	19	42	18	26	13	34	39	49	54	55	74	59	87	58	63	48	118	64
- Sugar exp. levy	1	3	9	20	24	34	13	24	8	10	6	6	8	6	13	9	12	9	1	1
- Others 1)	2	7	2	4	3	4	2	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	2
Other taxes	2	7	4	9	4	6	6	11	6	7	9	9	8	6	11	7	12	9	14	8
Total revenue	29	100	45	100	70	100	54	100	80	100	99	100	126	100	150	100	132	100	183	100

1) Included: Compulsory fees, property income, sales of goods and services.

*Source:* Calculated from: Annual Statistical Bulletin, CSO, 1979, p. 87, 1983, p. 77.

*Table 4.2: Central government revenue and expenditure in millions of Emalangeni, and foreign debt, 1973-1983. Year ending April 1.*

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
Total revenue	28,5	45,6	69,9	54,6	80,8	98,7	126,0	148,8	131,1	175,0	181,5
Grants received	0,1	0,7	0,1	0,1	0,4	6,6	8,0	7,7	5,0	12,3	5,7
Expenditure	-38,3	-39,5	-47,8	-57,6	-75,2	-119,0	-97,5	-117,3	-166,0	-188,0	-190,0
Lending minus repayments	-1,0	-5,1	-5,8	-5,5	-14,5	-26,2	-32,7	-11,6	-19,0	-1,0	-12,9
Surplus/Deficit (+/-)	-10,7	1,7	16,4	-8,4	-8,5	-39,9	3,8	27,6	-48,9	-1,7	-15,7

*Source:* International Financial Statistics, 1985, 586.

labour force in formal domestic employment, Swaziland has one of the highest employment proportions in Sub Saharan Africa (de Vletter, 1984b, 8).

Much of the nature of the non-formal sector employment is unknown, including the type of activity, hours worked and degree of under-employment. As it is not possible to generalize on the employment and income conditions of the non-formal sector, this paragraph only deals with wages and employment in the formal sector.

The average annual rate of growth of paid employment in the formal sector (including people recruited for South African mines) was 1.15 per cent over the period 1976 - 1983. Excluding people recruited for South African mines, employment increased at 2.5 per cent annually, indicating the relative drop of the share of this group in total employment. Given the reduction in GDP growth and the high population growth rate (3.4 per cent) it is likely that the employed portion of the working age population in Swaziland is decreasing.

It is estimated that of the 7000 school-leavers who will be seeking employment in present years less than 2700 will be successful. Absorption by the informal sector is limited to only a few hundred a year, and with current methods of production Swazi Nation Land agriculture does not hold much promise for the productive employment of the residual labour force (de Vletter, 1984b, 8).

The elasticity of formal sector employment with respect to real GDP was estimated to have been 0.72 for the period 1977 - 1982. The elasticity is down considerably from earlier years. For example, from 1973 till 1978 the elasticity was 0.91 and from 1971 - 1975 it was 1.70. This downward trend means that Swaziland's recent expansion has become more capital intensive in nature (4th National Development Plan, 1986, 81). It is estimated that if the elasticity of employment with respect to GDP were to remain at the level of 0.72, the real economic growth rate would have to increase to 8,3 per cent per annum to absorb all the available labour. In the 4th National Development Plan it is concluded that this is "clearly not possible" and "if the political goal of stability is to be maintained a substantial change in the production-input mix in favour of labour over capital is necessary".

The employment situation has been aggravated by decreasing recruitment for the mining sector of South Africa, and only showed some improvement in the 1980s. Sector shares in total paid employment (including people recruited for South Africa) are presented in table 4.3 and figure 4.1.

#### 4.2.2 Wages

A government advertising brochure entitled "Guide for Investors" says: "Wages are low in Swaziland even when compared with those in other African countries". This is only partly true. The available data reveal that there are significant inequalities in wages and extremely high wages for administrators, especially for expatriates. Income inequalities between the formal paid employment sector and the informal sector are even much larger.

Table 4.4. presents figures about income distribution, based on an ILO study published in 1977. Comparable, more recent data are not available.

According to the 4th National Development Plan, real wages increased marginally by 5% over the period 1977 - 1982 in the public sector and by 3% in the private sector. This increase was mostly in favour of the lower paid workers and was partly due to increases in the official minimum wages. This combined with the fact that incomes earned in the modern sector in this period more than compensated for inflation, is seen by the government as disadvantageous: "Laudable though this may be on social grounds, in practice these trends have meant an increase in the real cost of

Table 4.3: Total paid employment by sector (1976-1983), absolute numbers and in percentages.

Industry group	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
Agriculture/forestry	28.520	26.377	27.152	27.664	29.958	26.745	24.657	24.672
Mining	3.076	3.086	2.607	2.554	2.588	2.580	2.492	2.227
Manufacturing	8.216	8.411	8.743	8.938	9.253	13.880	11.708	11.296
Construction	3.075	4.081	7.909	8.201	6.079	6.754	7.426	6.847
Distribution	5.093	5.516	5.589	6.042	5.874	5.862	6.923	7.671
Public administration	13.273	13.283	13.658	14.100	14.512	15.556	16.631	17.647
Others	4.512	5.471	5.598	6.380	6.860	8.362	7.416	8.249
Sub-total	66.215	66.226	71.256	73.879	75.124	79.739	77.253	78.609
People recruited for South African mines	20.743	15.491	14.284	12.604	10.870	11.048	13.690	13.734
Total	86.958	81.716	85.540	86.483	85.994	90.787	90.943	92.343

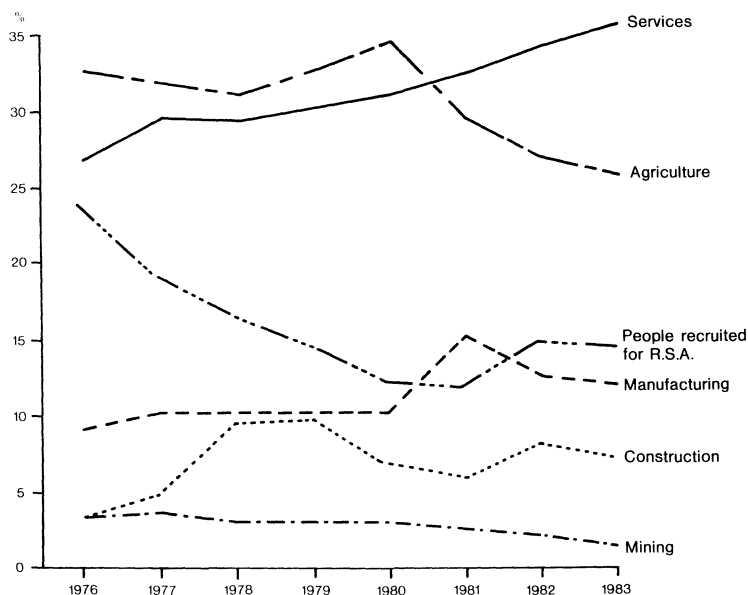
*Percentages 1)*

Agriculture/forestry	32.8	32.3	31.7	32.0	34.8	29.5	27.1	26.7
Mining	3.5	3.7	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.8	2.7	2.4
Manufacturing	9.4	10.3	10.2	10.3	10.8	15.3	12.9	12.2
Construction	3.5	5.0	9.2	9.5	7.1	6.4	8.1	7.4
Distribution	5.9	6.8	6.5	7.0	6.8	6.5	7.6	8.3
Public administration	15.8	16.3	16.0	16.3	16.9	17.1	18.3	19.1
Others	5.2	6.7	6.5	7.4	8.0	9.2	8.2	8.9
Sub-total	76.1	81.0	83.3	85.4	87.4	87.8	84.9	85.1
People recruited for South African mines	23.9	19.0	16.7	14.6	12.6	12.2	15.1	14.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

1) Calculated by the authors

Source: Employment and wages, CSO, 1982  
 Annual Statistical Bulletin, CSO, 1979  
 4th National Development Plan, 1986, 84.

Figure 4.1: Employment by sector, 1976-1983 (percentages of total formal paid employment).



Source : derived from table 4.3.

Table 4.4: Shares in population and personal income.

	Population (per cent)	Personal income (per cent)
Urban Areas	15	43
Rural Areas	82	34
Title Deed Land	(20)	(16)
Swazi Nation Land	(62)	(18)
Total Swazi Population	97	77
Other Population Groups	3	23
Total Swaziland	100	100

source: Based on ILO, 1977, 139.

labour. Such increases reduce the elasticity of employment and indirectly inhibit the growth of formal sector wage employment" (4th National Development Plan, 1986, 95). Average wages of females working in the private sector are considerably lower than average wages of males (CSO, Employment and Wages, 1982, 10).

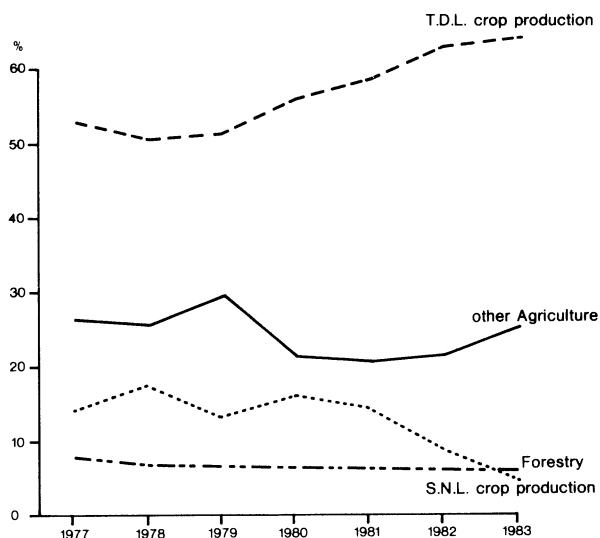
### 4.3 The agricultural sector

#### 4.3.1 Increasing dualism

Although the rural sector is still by far the most important source of livelihood for the vast majority of the population, the contribution of agriculture and forestry to GDP was fairly low between 1977 and 1983 at approximately 24 per cent (table 3.4). On the other hand, production and processing of agricultural and forestry products accounted for 73.5 per cent of total exports in 1983 (table 3.8), a share which has remained fairly stable over the last decade. In spite of the dominant position of the agricultural sector in the national economy, Swaziland's self sufficiency in food has declined recently. Imports of food and live stock rose on average by 15.5 per cent per annum between 1979 and 1983, reaching a peak of 9.8 per cent of total imports in 1983 (table 3.7).

The annual growth rate of total agricultural production (excluding forestry) in the period 1977 to 1983 was 5.5 per cent. The composition of this growth rate, however, has been very uneven, reflecting the large inequalities in the agricultural sector. The modern sector on TDL experienced an average annual growth rate of 8.5 per cent, while crop production on SNL decreased annually at 12.6 per cent in this period (CSO, 1979/82/83, table 03). The share of SNL crop production in total agricultural and forestry production has been steadily declining from 1980 onwards, reaching a lowest point of 5 per cent in 1983 (figure 4.2), or 1.2 per cent of GDP (table 3.4). Thus, already existing inequalities between the modern export-oriented sector and the traditional sector are worsening.

Figure 4.2.: Agricultural and forestry production by sector of origin, 1977-1983, in percentages of total agricultural and forestry production, at constant prices of 1980.



Source : derived from table 3.4.



For its commercial agricultural production, Swaziland is dependent on a few hundred farms and estates, largely owned by expatriates and governmental bodies, such as *Tibiyo*. In 1982, there was a total of 800 individual tenure farms on TDL, 510 of which were registered as 'unused holdings'. Of the 290 farms actually in production, nearly 90 per cent of the total land in use was accounted for by 79 farms

of more than 1000 hectares, of which 24 farms of more than 5000 hectares used 63.5 per cent of total land (CSO, 1983, 19). Compared to the 26 farms covering 50 per cent of total land in use in 1976, this indicates a rapid concentration and increasing scale of production on TDL.

The majority of people in formal paid employment in agriculture and forestry are employed by these large agricultural undertakings. From 1976 to 1979 formal paid employment in agriculture and forestry was fairly constant. After reaching a peak of 34.8 per cent in total formal paid employment in 1980 this share steadily declined, reaching a lowest point of 26.7 per cent in 1983 (table 4.3).

On SNL the situation is totally different. There are 50,000 small-holding farms averaging 2.7 hectares of arable land on communal tenure SNL. "About 70% of the population reside on SNL, and about half of the people depend directly on traditional agriculture for their livelihood, despite their marginal productivity" (Booth, 1983, 94). Both the distribution of land between TDL and SNL and within SNL are highly unequal, the latter characterized by a Gini coefficient of 0.5 (Cohen, 1983, 9).

Recent surveys have shown that homesteads on SNL are overwhelmingly dependent on wage income for their livelihood. Wage earnings, including remittances from migrants, accounted for almost 70 per cent of total homestead cash income, while earnings from crop sales are, on average, 7.4 per cent of total cash income (Russell, 1984). "Crop yields in this sector remain low and it has been estimated that SNL agricultural income has probably stagnated over the past decade" (de Vletter 1984b, 3).

Some further details can be obtained by looking at maize, the major staple crop in Swaziland, revealing, amongst others, the impact of South Africa's policies in this sector. Table 4.5 presents an overview of maize production, imports and apparent consumption per head in the period 1969/70 to 1982/83. The declining trend in maize production from 1978/79 onwards has been aggravated by severe droughts in 1982 and 1983. Given the rapid population growth, this means that an increasing proportion of national consumption had to be met by imports. In the period 1972/73 to 1976/77, maize imports, on average, accounted for 22 per cent of apparent national maize consumption. In the following five years, 1977/78 to 1981/82, this number rose to 35 per cent, despite the falling rate of consumption per head. Almost all maize imports are from South Africa.

Besides variable climatological conditions, the declining trend in maize production can be explained by low producer prices. The producer price for maize is determined by South African maize prices, which are "...related to production costs of large scale commercial producers in South Africa and to the South African Government's concept of a 'desired consumer price', which is heavily subsidized" (4th Nat. Dev. Plan, 1986, 149). The choice for small-holders between embarking on commercial production or engaging into wage labour is, amongst others, influenced by these low returns to maize production.

*Table 4.5: Maize production and imports in tons, and apparent consumption per head in kg, 1969/70 - 1982/83.*

Crop year	National	Production TDL	SNL	Imports	Apparent Consumption per head (kg)
1969/70	62,601	4,518	58,083	23,399	206
1970/71	80,188	7,894	72,294	16,932	226
1971/72	120,291	10,499	109,792	14,771	306
1972/73	87,834	9,941	77,893	25,128	249
1973/74	117,254	8,676	108,578	20,410	295
1974/75	93,911	5,930	87,961	20,668	239
1975/76	97,463	11,358	86,103	27,641	254
1976/77	73,337	9,086	68,764	35,060	222
1977/78	109,464	8,904	96,329	50,574	296
1978/79	109,231	8,726	97,536	48,875	226
1979/80	105,554	8,819	96,735	32,875	246
1980/81	97,860	3,416	93,691	44,969	245
1981/82	60,267	4,724	52,267	49,674	187
1982/83	57,834	2,834	55,000 e	-	-

- = Data not available

e) Estimated

Source: 4th National Development Plan, 1986, 148

#### **4.3.2 Agricultural development policy**

The great inequalities in the agricultural sector between large scale commercial farming on TDL and the mainly traditional farming on SNL has led to a government policy aiming at modernizing farming on SNL. Specifically the agricultural policy concentrates on the following objectives:

- To advance the productivity and income-generating capacity of the agricultural sector.
- To promote and encourage increased crop production and diversification.
- To make farm services, including credit and marketing, more available to farmers and livestock owners, especially in the Rural Development Areas (RDA).

The development strategy for SNL is based on the commercialization of small-holder agricultural production. This should generally improve farm incomes through increased production to over subsistence level and reduce food imports, particularly of maize. The Rural Development Areas Programme (RDAP), initiated in 1970, functions as the main mechanism for increasing agricultural production on SNL. In 1983, the RDAP covered 50 per cent of SNL, or 501.000 hectares, embracing 226.000 people or 22.900 homesteads. Of this area, 70.400 hectares were used for arable cropping, the average farm size being 3.1 hectares. RDAs can be classified as either minimum-input or maximum-input areas. Eight RDAs are of a minimum-input type, where a limited range of facilities and services are introduced, including the distribution of farm inputs, the provision of credit, the development of water supplies and the construction of feeder roads. The ten remaining RDAs are of a maximum-input type which, in addition to the services and facilities mentioned above, have been provided with livestock development, land development and conservation measures, increasing farm inputs and technical assistance.

Furthermore, a FAO Investment Centre Mission, financed by the African Development Bank, prepared a Small-holder Credit and Marketing Project, which proposal was appraised in 1982. This project, which will be financed by a US \$ 6.2 mln. loan to the government of Swaziland from the International Fund for Agricultural Development, is principally concerned with the strengthening of credit, production

and marketing facilities to small-holders on certain RDAs. However, it is expected that other groups will benefit from these facilities too. Although there have been considerable delays in its implementation, the project commenced in 1985 after the government had finally signed the loan agreement.

By the end of the second phase of the RDAP in 1983 it became clear that the main objectives, increased self sufficiency in staple food and expansion of cash cropping, had failed. The 'Hunting Review' of the RDAP stated that: "Failure to achieve the results anticipated so far is not the fault of the implementing agency, rather it must be attributed to a poorly conceived plan" (Hunting, 1983, 236). Crucial assumptions, for example, that rural homesteads were dependent on agricultural production, and that constraints on natural resources, knowledge and motivation were the main factors limiting agricultural production were made during the preparation of the project and were not questioned at the appraisal. This has resulted in unrealistic objectives.

Given Swaziland's socio-economic framework and rural resource constraints, the prospect of obtaining a reasonable livelihood from small-holder agriculture is distinctly poor for most homesteads (Funnell, 1982). These constraints include the existing land-use and land-tenure system as well as an inadequate agricultural policy.

On SNL still only 7.5 per cent of total land is used for crop cultivation, while 89 per cent is used for communal grazing land (CSO, 1983, 18). This has resulted in serious overgrazing and soil erosion.

The present form of land tenure does not provide security of investment for small-holders. Land on SNL cannot be sold or used as security for credit, and the communal ownership tenure discourages the cultivation of perennial crops (ILO, 1977).

Government policy to increase agricultural production seems to be focussed on SNL alone. However, production on Individual Tenure Farms is also promoted through heavy investments by the government and *Tibiyo*, while the government underspent its Second Plan's agricultural goals by 48 per cent and diverts water development away from SNL to support large scale irrigation on TDL (Booth, 1983, 92).

Furthermore, large scale irrigated production of sugar is subsidized by the USA and the EEC. Although Swaziland has recently become increasingly dependent on the free world market for sugar it is still offered an entry to the protected markets of the USA and the EEC at prices generally higher than on the free world market. This has also reinforced Swaziland's dependence on the export-oriented modern sector. The competition from large scale producers on TDL, the absence of adequate marketing facilities and poor extension services for small-holders keep SNL producer prices low which, in turn, hamper self sufficiency in staple food and the increase of cash cropping.

Although underlying relations of production have been questioned, and the Economic Review 1978-1981 concluded: "The present form of land tenure must be reconsidered, because it does not provide security of investment for the small-scale operator" (Prime Minister's Office, 1982, pp. 9, 21), no institutional changes, including changes in the land tenure system have yet been made. Prospects for such changes seem to be dim as the land tenure system enables the Swazi monarchy to exercise political control over the masses in the Swazi Nation areas.

To sum up, the agricultural policy is not expected to provide a major contribution to the advancement of the productivity and income generating capacity of the broad masses of the Swazi population.

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### 3. SWAZILAND: POLITICAL CRISIS, REGIONAL DILEMMA

*John Daniel and Jonson Vilane<sup>1</sup>*

This paper analyses the factionalism following the death of King Sobhuza as part of a struggle for control of the state apparatus by factions of the same class. The outcome will in no way displace the broader influence of this class over state policy. Indeed the relationship of Swaziland to South Africa, argue the authors, is not due to geopolitical factors or structural features, but precisely to the compradorial nature of Swaziland's ruling class.

The 1980s have been traumatic years for the Swazi people. The death of the long reigning King Sobhuza in August 1982 ended 14 years of post-independence stability and initiated a prolonged period of factional strife within royalist circles which has brought into question the very legitimacy of the popular traditions and political institutions which Sobhuza strove so hard to preserve. Simultaneously the Swazi state has created for itself a derisive image with its alignment against those forces seeking a democratic and non-racial alternative in South Africa. This paper analyses these two dimensions of the Swazi state's political crisis. It seeks to explain both the seemingly never-ending series of 'palace coups' as well as the more baffling spectacle of a member state of the OAU engaging guerillas of the African National Congress of South Africa in hostile combat while simultaneously extending nearly full diplomatic recognition to the apartheid government of South Africa.

The most common explanation focuses on Swaziland's structural subordination to the South African economy emphasizing its landlocked condition and the transportation and trade consequences that flow therefrom: its energy, fuel and other forms of dependence; the vital nature of the revenue earned from membership in the Southern African Custom Union (SACU); and the importance of the South African labour market. These are used to justify a conclusion that Swaziland has no choice but to 'play Pretoria's game'. It is the price South Africa exacts for Swaziland's economic dependence.

This argument is incomplete. If it constituted the whole explanation, then Botswana and Lesotho would have the same intimate dealings with South Africa for both exist in a structurally similar subordinate relationship to South Africa and are equally, probably even more so, vulnerable to economic manipulation. Yet they do not and there is a qualitative difference between them and Swaziland in both their attitudes to, and dealings with, the apartheid government. Neither has signed security agreements nor have they exchanged trade missions. Both have expressed support for the imposition of mandatory economic sanctions while Swaziland has taken the opposite position. Their relations are, in diplomatic terms, 'cool'. Where they have been required to co-operate with the government in Pretoria, they have done so reluctantly and only to the minimal extent necessary.

This was well illustrated by Lesotho's removal from its territory of ANC cadres. This action was taken only after South Africa had virtually starved the country into submission. Even so, South Africa's demand that these ANC operatives be handed over to its security forces was refused. Instead they were moved out to Zambia under the safe jurisdiction of the United Nations without the ideological broadside of anti-ANC rhetoric which accompanied the Swazi expulsion of ANC in 1984. Botswana and Lesotho appear therefore as reluctant 'bedfellows' of South Africa while Swaziland seems more of a 'consenting adult'.

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<sup>1</sup>This paper is reprinted with permission of the editorial board of the *Review of African Political Economy* (ROAPE). It appeared in ROAPE, no. 35, May 1986.

These differences illustrate that, even in the imperialist context of southern Africa, there are options and degrees of submissiveness and collaboration, and that economic domination and coercion, as well as the use or threat of military power, should not be seen as the sole determinants of the region's relations with both the government of South Africa and the liberation movements opposing it. South African coercion only establishes the parameters within which the states of the region can safely offer sanctuary, and even some assistance, to anti-apartheid liberation movements. Deviation beyond these limits sets up the possibility of Pretoria taking retaliatory measures. However, Pretoria's power does not create the situation where these states have of necessity to side actively with it against forces of liberation. Botswana, Lesotho and Mozambique have all experienced intense South African military and economic pressure but have not 'declared war' on the ANC nor expressed an ideological hostility to its goals. Yet Swaziland, which by comparison has been subjected to minimal pressure and towards whom the incentives offered by South Africa have never been realised, has done so. Obviously therefore its stance is prompted by other factors, and in our view, these are class and ideology.

This paper therefore locates the explanation for the collaborative behaviour of the Swazi state in an analysis of the specific nature of the power structure in Swaziland, the position and interests of the dominant royalist comprador class within it, their economic links and their ideological worldview. We will show that between the Swazi ruling class and South African capital there are strong ties and, between the ruling classes of the two countries, a commonality of political perceptions. Finally we will argue that current political developments in the region are deepening those ties so that the relationship has become an embrace of two threatened ruling classes.

### *Pre-colonial and colonial class formation*

The modern Swazi state emerged in the early nineteenth century as part of a process of regional state formation and dissolution triggered by the Mfecane. By the 1860s it has developed a tributary mode of production with a dominant class of aristocrats and chiefs for whom control over access to land, wives and cattle, as well as their ability to extract surplus labour time, constituted their material base. By that time the Swazi state had also established a tendency to ally itself with powerful imperialist forces in the region as part of a defensive strategy against its then principal adversary, the Zulu state. On four occasions between 1864 and 1876 Swazi soldiers fought with Transvaal Boers in campaigns against indigenous groups while, in 1879, it was the formidable Swazi army which actually secured victory for the British in their war with the Pedi.

The Swazi ruling class was likewise accommodationist in its response to capital's penetration of Swaziland which began with the discovery of gold deposits in the region in the 1860s. This brought into Swaziland prospectors, adventurers, hunters and fortune-seekers willing to pay for mineral and trading rights and access to other resources. The result was a selling of the country's assets and the permeation by capital of the pre-capitalist Swazi formation.

The defeat of the Transvaal in the South African War of 1899-1902 produced the British takeover of Swaziland. Its colonial policy of developing settler agriculture necessitated a wholesale appropriation of land which deprived the Swazi people of rights of residence on two-thirds of their territory. This generated a crisis for the ruling class as the expropriation of land meant an erosion in their basis of power. The colonial state was careful, however, not to allow this process to go too far and took measures to conserve elements of the existing mode of production in those areas reserved for exclusive Swazi occupation. This secured the purpose of reducing labour costs as it enabled the migrant proletariat to derive some of its means of reproduction from the so-called 'native areas'. Swazi royalty proved adept at adjusting to these new circumstances and it assumed the intermediary role of ensuring a steady supply of labour to South African mining capital. This took the form of labour recruiting with capitation fees fostering the process of capital accumulation begun in the concessionary period. The British abetted this process by



permitting the monarchy to impose, as indirect rulers of the colonial state, a range of taxes upon both the Swazi peasantry and the working class. Gradually over time the Swazi aristocracy emerged as a petty-bourgeoisie within the colonial capitalist state - a class with certain comprador characteristics.

This comprador tendency continued into the decolonisation period. The aristocracy's response to the prospect of independence was to establish the Imbokodvo National Movement, a party formed to ensure 'the perpetuation of the monarchy, Swazi customs, mineral and land rights and the prerogative of the Ngwenyama (the King)'. Often called 'the King's party', Imbokodvo was actually set up as a necessary adaption to the requirement of the Westminster electoral process to give political expression to the class interests of Swaziland's aristocrats and chiefs, for whom Sobhuza was the principal spokesperson. But it also enjoyed the support of a wider and formidable coalition of interests - the South African government, the local settler bourgeoisie and foreign capital. Advising Imbokodvo in its formation were prominent Afrikaner politicians like the Broederbond Van Wijk de Vries and the M.P. and later Prime Minister, B.J. Vorster. Capital provided the financial and organisational resources.

At this point we depart from this description of the evolution of the Swazi ruling class' relationship with capital, to discuss the structure of post-independence political power in Swaziland. We will return in the next section to analyse the post-colonial relationship with capital.

### *The structure of political power*

The Swazi political system is a complex diarchic one with two distinct but interrelated sets of institutions - those of the 'Swazi nation' (the Monarchy, Liqoqo and Libandla) and of the 'Swazi government', comprising Parliament and the cabinet. It was in the latter that the instruments of independence vested most constitutional authority, but the King, as head of state, was given authority to nominate sufficient members of Parliament as well as to select the Prime Minister to make him more than just a symbolic figurehead. In actuality, Sobhuza dominated the political process, because, at independence, every Parliamentary seat was won by Imbokodvo and he nominated the rest of the membership.

Even so the parliamentary arrangement lasted only five years. In 1973, the independence constitution was abnegated, Parliament dissolved and all political parties, even including Imbokodvo, banned. Power now reverted to the political institutions of the 'Swazi nation'. This meant that Sobhuza exercised, by decree, supreme executive, legislative and judicial power, aided by a circle of advisers. These were his council of ministers (the cabinet) and the members of the Liqoqo, a small predominantly aristocratic body under a prince specially pointed out to the people. This centralisation of absolute power was a response to a number of developments: labour unrest and the loss to the opposition in 1972 elections of three seats in an area which contained large numbers of estate and plantation workers, and the blocking by the Appeal Court of an attempt to deport one of these opposition M.P.s. Sobhuza legitimated his drastic action by reference to the ideological raw materials of the pre-capitalist social formation so that the constitution was declared incompatible with Swazi tradition. He argued that it had:

"permitted the imposition into our country of highly undesirable political practices, alien and incompatible with the way of life in our society, and designed to disrupt and destroy our own peaceful and constructive and essentially democratic method of political activity. Increasingly this element engenders hostility, bitterness and unrest in our peaceful society."

What he was referring to were trade unions, political parties and elections conducted on an universal suffrage basis. Rule exclusively by decree continued until 1978 when Parliament was reopened but with its membership now determined by an electoral system so designed as to ensure domination by loyalists to traditional custom. Its functions were

changed as well. Stripped of independent policy-making authority, it was reduced to enacting into law the decisions of Sobhuza and his advisers. To a certain extent this revamped Parliament was a modernization of the Libandla which in pre-colonial Swaziland had offered a limited form of democracy in that all adult males could sit on the body and its sanction was required on all important matters.

The resuscitation of Parliament completed a stage by which the form of the state was reformed to ensure the unchallenged domination of the royalist compradors. Employing the ideology of popular tradition, Sobhuza had devised an institutional format which consolidated both the political power and the material base of this class while also securing the interests of its multinational and local class *allies*. Indeed, these had been buttressed as the suppression of the labour movement and political parties facilitated the accumulation process.

In June 1982, Sobhuza proclaimed a further change to the state's form by upgrading the constitutional status of the Liqoqo to that of the Supreme Council of State and expanding its membership to 16 salaried officials, a marked break with the pre-capitalist polity when the Liqoqo was a small, informal and near anonymous body. However, the decree was never fully implemented by Sobhuza for he died within two months of issuing it and without naming the members of this new-look Liqoqo. Nor was the relationship clearly defined between the four poles or centres which had by this time developed inside the Swazi power bloc. These were the Liqoqo, the cabinet (headed by Prime Minister Prince Mabandla), the office of the Regency of the Ndllovukati or Queen Mother Dzeliwe, aided by an 'Authorised Person' (Prince Sozisa), and a royalist-controlled development corporation, the Tibiyo Taka Ngwane fund. Particularly important and left ambiguous was the relationship between the Liqoqo and the cabinet for, whereas before this proclamation all decrees had been issued in the name of the King-in-Council (the cabinet), it now seemed that policy-making and policy-issuing authority has passed to the Liqoqo. In these circumstances factional strife was inevitable.

### *The post-sobhuza power struggles*

Before examining the points at which the various power blocs have confronted each other, the nature or form of these struggles needs to be clarified. To describe them as either class struggle or as a manifestation of conflict between so-called forces of tradition and of modernity is not correct. Such conflicts do, of course, exist in Swaziland today but they have not actually been the subject of the in-fighting which has surfaced since Sobhuza's death. Instead they have centred on filling the power vacuum left by Sobhuza's highly personalised style of rule. Consequently, with supreme political authority the main object of faction formation, the struggles have themselves been highly personalised and on the whole confined to intrigue and cabal within the royal palace.

Two other elements have, however, sharpened and complicated the conflict situation. One is a division within the royal family dating back to the controversial selection in 1899 of Sobhuza as successor to King Bhunu (Mahlokohla). Today this schism centres upon the personage of Prince Mfanasibili who is held in awe by many within the aristocracy as he is a son of Prince Makhosikhosi who, according to Swazi oral tradition (or one interpretation of it), was the true heir to Mahlokohla's throne, and not Sobhuza.

The second relates to the considerable material resources and political springboard potential of the *Tibiyo* Fund, an entity possibly unique in post-independence Africa. Its origins lie in a provision in the independence constitution granting the *Ngwenyama* exclusive control of revenues generated from minerals concessions. *Tibiyo* has used these funds in a variety of ways, among other things to purchase back freehold land from non-Swazis, much of which it has developed into its own maize and dairy estates. It has set up a number of business enterprises ranging from butcheries to the national airline and the state television service. Most significant in terms of both class formation and capital accumulation, however, has been its acquisition of equity in practically every important

foreign subsidiary in the economy. These include huge agro-industrial multinationals like Lonhro, Cortaulds and the Commonwealth Development Corporation (sugar, timber, citrus, and fruit processing), large wholesalers like Frasers, service industries like freight (Rennies), insurance (Hill Samuels) and banking (Bank of Commerce and Credit), as well as mining manufacturing and tourist companies. Normal practice has been to take a 40% holding but, where a majority stake has been acquired, the procedure has been to sign a management contract with the foreign partner. In this way *Tibiyo* has spread its net vertically through every sector of the economy, establishing a solid, albeit junior, partnership with foreign capital. Dividend payments from these joint ventures have become its largest single source of income.

Control rests with a board appointed by the *Ngwenyama* and it has always comprised a majority of princes with a few loyal commoner allies. Business is conducted as a private royalist fiefdom as it is subject to no form of public scrutiny - no annual statement is published, parliament has no say in its operations and the Swazi government earns no revenue from it as it is exempt from taxation. It is thus a source of exclusive accumulation for the royal family and a material base of considerable social mobility.

More political significance lies, however, in the fact that *Tibiyo* has been the means whereby the Swazi aristocracy has consolidated and strengthened its bridgehead to foreign capital and equally significant here is the change since independence in the constellation of capital in Swaziland. The once dominant position of British capital has been eclipsed by South African. Outside of the sugar industry, South African capital has steadily incorporated every area of economic activity - mining, manufacturing, mercantile trade, transportation and the important hotel, timber and citrus industries. What this means, therefore, is that in Swaziland today the material prosperity of the politically hegemonic class rests very largely on a relationship with South African capital - a fact which naturally shapes the class' views of its political options.

This analysis of the role and place of *Tibiyo* in the political economy of Swaziland and its relationship to the royalist power struggles would be incomplete without specific mention of Dr. Sishayi Nxumalo, the individual generally believed to have conceived of the idea of putting the King's mineral royalties to work as an investment corporation and, as its general manager for many years, the driving force behind its spectacular growth. There is an irony in Nxumalo's involvement in *Tibiyo* and the giving of his considerable talents to developing a vehicle for royalist comprador accumulation. He is not an aristocrat, but a commoner with only distant ties to the royal family. In reflection of this, he was an active opponent of *Imbokodvo* in the pre-independence political process but later (if possible), joined it and became Minister of Industry, Mines and Tourism. Assuming a high profile, he travelled extensively developing links with several figures in international finance like Lonhro's Tiny Rowlands and the South African Natie Kirsch. In the process he attracted considerable foreign investment into Swaziland and became a close confidante of Sobhuza who, in the late 1970s, put him in charge of *Tibiyo*. In a few short years he transformed a bank account into a corporate empire and the most dynamic domestic force in the economy.

However, his success aroused fears and suspicions. Despite his undoubted loyalty to Sobhuza, there were those within the aristocracy, like Prince Mfanisibili, who doubted the totality of his commitment to the status quo. They suspected, for example, that as a dedicated free-market capitalist Nxumalo regarded the preservation of the pre-capitalist system of land allocation and control as highly unproductive and one which restricted the full development of the capitalist relation. Unable to rise as a non-aristocrat, within the ascriptive hierarchy of the Swazi Nation, they feared that at some point he would attempt to use *Tibiyo's* resources and its ties to international capital to advance his political interests. He was, thus, a rival to conservative royalists and it was inevitable that the securing of their hegemony would require his removal from *Tibiyo*, both to eliminate the threat that he, as Swaziland's shrewdest modern politician, posed, but also to ensure that *Tibiyo* continued to function as the monopoly corporation of the Swazi crown.

The first serious bout of infighting occurred in early 1983 and involved an abortive attempt by Prime Minister Mabandla to shift the locus of policy-making power into the cabinet and away from the *Liqoqo*. His failure led him into exile in South Africa and replacement by prince Bhekimpi, a staunch conservative and royalist content to accept the cabinet's subordinate status. The next was even more dramatic and produced the deposition of Queen Regent Dzeliwe and her replacement by Nkhosikati LaTfwala, Queen Ntombi, mother of the designated heir Prince Makhosetive. At issue again was the locus of ultimate authority in the post-Sobhuza state but, at another level, the dispute was rooted in the legitimacy/succession question mentioned earlier. Dzeliwe represented the continuing domination of the royal house by the lineage of Sobhuza. Her deposition and Ntombi's accession meant a shift in the royalist balance of power in favour of Prince Mfanasibili, whose mother was a Tfwala. He and a clique of followers now moved rapidly to consolidate control of both the royal house and the *Liqoqo* by detaining several princes and by the dismissal from both the cabinet and the *Liqoqo* of Prince Gabheni - a charismatic figure, a direct son of Sobhuza and a popular Minister of Home Affairs,

The stage was now set for the showdown between Mfanasibili and Nxumalo and it began when, after elections for Parliament in November 1983, Nxumalo found himself moved sideways from *Tibiyo* into the cabinet as Finance Minister - a prestigious but less powerful position. Six months later he lost even that position when he was sacked from the cabinet and then placed under detention. By this time Mfanasibili's faction controlled the palace, the *Liqoqo* and *Tibiyo*. The main figures in the clique around the Prince were *Liqoqo* members George Msibi, Robert Mabila and A.K. Hlophe, Prime Minister Bhekimpi and Foreign Minister Mahamba Mnisi, while in the background lurked two shadowy expatriates, Yusuf Patel and Chief Antonia Fernandes. The former - a South African lawyer - had fled to Swaziland in the 1970s while on appeal from a 3-year sentence for criminal fraud. Fernandez appeared in Swaziland in 1983, having left his native Nigeria, in 1956. In Swaziland, he was installed in the mansion of the by-now suspended Authorised Person. In 1985 he was accorded the status of Roving Ambassador Extraordinary and, for twenty-four hours, Deputy-Minister of Foreign Affairs, an appointment revoked when it was pointed out that the Chief was neither a Swazi nor an M.P.

Despite the appearance of omnipotence, the clique's political grip was shaky. This was due mainly to the widespread perception that the ousting of Queen Dzeliwe was contrary to Swazi tradition and custom and therefore illegitimate. Public feeling was that Queen Ntombi, and those that had manoeuvred to put her on the throne, were usurpers. Adding to this sense of illegitimacy was massive distaste for the manner by which the clique exercised power - their selective regard for the custom, statutory law and due process; their frequent sackings and suspensions of senior civil servants and other perceived opponents; their constant threats and exhortations to the public to 'spy' on neighbours and run-in so-called 'subversives' which created a chilling atmosphere of fear in the country; and the thinly disguised impression that power was being used to 'feather nests' and that the clique was beyond the reach of the law.

These two impressions were created in part by newspaper revelations that seven *Liqoqo* members - including Mfanasibili, Msibi and Hlophe - had for at least eighteen months been receiving double salaries. Acknowledging this, Msibi blamed it on an accounting error of which the seven were unaware. He attacked the press for creating bad publicity but excluded any mention of any intention to repay the funds. The sense that the clique was beyond the law was reinforced by a decree giving complete immunity to *Liqoqo* members from any legal action in respect 'of matters arising from their official activities'. This was seen as a move to immunise Msibi from a massive libel suit filed against him by Nxumalo shortly after his sacking and also to protect Mfanasibili from revelations that a company of which he and Yusuf Patel were shareholders, was involved in the Customs' Union fraud. It was actions like these that led Minister of Justice, David Matse, to the astounding declaration in June 1985 that 'Justice has disappeared in Swaziland'.

This domestic unpopularity was reflected in an unusually frank editorial in the normally docile Times of Swaziland (29 June 1984). It struck out against the clique and other intrigues comparing their struggles 'over our country and our property' to 'dogs fighting over a juicy bone'. It described the factional strife as 'more deadly than party politics' since 'a privileged few are allowed to enter the arena and the masses become helpless bystanders who watch in awe'. Reflecting a similar theme, the country's other national daily The Swazi Observer (4 August 1984), described the squabbling as 'disturbing and degrading'.

Dissent assumed an organised form in the second half of 1984. The main site of opposition was the University of Swaziland which staged a series of boycotts, strikes and protest marches which led to an enquiry into the causes of student unrest. It 'uncovered' an 'unhealthy preoccupation with the philosophies, aims and objectives of the African National Congress' on campus and, as a result, the Liqoqo forced 21 students and two staff members out of the University. Simultaneously graffiti, slogans and secret pamphlets announced the existence of the People's United Democratic Movement (PUDEMO) and called for unity amongst all groups opposed to the regime. In London an exiled politician, Prince Dumisa Dlamini, announced the formation of the Swaziland Liberation Movement with the objective of protecting the royal family from abuse by Prince Mfanasibili and George Msibi, restoring constitutional legitimacy to the throne and ensuring the accession of Prince Makhosetive - a reference to a view that some *Liqoqo* members had no wish to see a new king installed.

The clique's response was a public relations blitz during which members addressed the *tinkhundla* (distric councils) with a combination of dire warning and plaintive appeals for trust. At one such occasion Prince Bhekimpi assured his audience that 'your monarchy is alive and well. It really cares for you, so please disregard all information to the contrary. Please be steadfast, keep faith in your monarchy and help sustain it'. The pleading tone hardly reflected an assured leadership. The offensive culminated in April 1985 in a bizarre 'national fast' called by Queen Ntombi in response 'to a dark cloud of ill-fortune' which she claimed to have seen 'hovering over the country'. During this 24-hour happening, Swazis were supposed neither to eat, nor to breastfeed their babies and not to feed their cattle. Instead they were to engage in prayer.

The cynical and apathetic response to the Queen's call reflected the erosion of faith in the nation's leaders. Only weeks later the hollowness of prime Minister Bhekimpki's assertion as to the good health of the monarchy was exposed when the *Emakhosikati* (the late Sobhuza's widows) staged an illegal protest march on Parliament - all unsanctioned gatherings of ten or more people in Swaziland are unlawful. The specific targets of their ire were Prince Mfanasibili and George Msibi whom they accused of corruption and of having distorted custom in their 'hijack' of the *Liqoqo*. Confronting the Prime Minister, they humiliatingly taunted him to arrest them - which he did not.

This unprecedented action by a traditionally voiceless group exposed the depth of the crisis within the monarchy. It also signified a swing in the pendulum of power inside the palace for it emerged that the *Emakhosikati's* action had the support of both their sons and Makhosetive. The Sobhuza line had regained the ascendancy and it moved decisively to consolidate its position. In October, Mfanasibili and Msibi were dismissed by the Queen Regent and action taken against some of their allies - the fugitive lawyer Patel was detained preparatory to deportation or extradition; Chief Fernandez was relieved of his ambassadorial status and the much-feared chief of police, Majaji Simelane, was sacked and arrested on a perjury charge. On the last day of the year, Nxumalo and other detainees were released and the treason charges dropped.

However, more significant even than all of these developments, were two pronouncements by the Queen in December 1985. One reduced the *Liqoqo's* status by removing the designation 'Supreme', returning it to being a 'Council of State' and with

many of its functions and powers transferred to the Regency. The second named 25 April, 1986 as the date of Makhosetive's installation as the *Nqwenyama*. Given his youth and the fact that he was still at school, the general expectation was that the coronation would not occur for a few more years.

Taken together, these two events laid bare the extent of royalty's institutional crisis. Returning the *Liqoqo* to its traditional place in the institutional hierarchy was clearly an attempt to regain the legitimacy the 'Swazi nation' had enjoyed under Sobhuza while the early assumption of the throne by Makhosetive was an effort to end the internecine squabbling. It was to be his task to restore faith in the monarchy tarnished both by the years of infighting and by its role as an accomplice to the apartheid state.

Fundamental is the fact that the political institutions of the 'Swazi nation' are becoming increasingly unsuited to the level of the country's development. They exclude the Swazi people as a whole from effective participation in the body politic, and, as long as this is the case, political crisis will be endemic to the Swazi state. The installation of a rightful monarch will make no essential difference. In a region experiencing the currents of revolutionary change, the day is passing when the monarchical institutions can serve to satisfy the Swazi peoples' aspirations. In this context we move to an analysis of the Swazi state's drift into the bosom of apartheid.

### *The alliance with apartheid*

In 1984 the Swaziland Government issued an expulsion order against the African National Congress and agreed with South Africa to an exchange of trade missions. These developments climaxed a process of realignment in Swaziland's foreign policy which dated back to early in the decade when South Africa's relations with the states of southern Africa became openly imperialist and interventionist. This was an effort to regain control of events in a region where the balance of power had swung against it with the independence of Mozambique and Angola and the advances of the Zimbabwean liberation struggle. Responding to these same changes Swaziland had, in the late 1970s, begun a process of bringing its foreign policies more into line with those of the OAU and the so-called 'Frontline' states.

Thus, for example, Swaziland joined SADCC and rejected South African overtures to join its Constellation of Southern African States (CONSAS) while Prime Minister Mabandla improved relations with Mozambique. President Machel visited Swaziland early in 1980 and, shortly thereafter, Swaziland detained a number of MNR members and expelled several of the anti-Frelimo organisation's recruiting agents who had been enlisting Mozambicans working in Swaziland for military training in South Africa. In April 1981, Mabandla hosted a meeting of Machel, Botswana's President Masire and Lesotho's premier Leabua Jonathon which issued a communique probably unique in Swazi history by being critical of 'attempts by South Africa to destabilise her neighbouring black-ruled states'.

Equally as important as the above was the change in relations with the ANC. Following negotiations with President Tambo in 1977, Sobhuza allowed the ANC a low-key but official diplomatic presence in Swaziland and often turned a blind-eye to the infiltration through his kingdom of ANC guerillas. By 1979 the eastern front of Mozambique and Swaziland had become the most travelled crossing point for ANC insurgents and it facilitated some of the ANC's most spectacular armed actions - the attacks on SASOL and the Voortrekkerhoogte military barracks. It was also crucial to the ANC's building up of its internal infrastructure. By this time the South African military was complaining that this eastern front was 'leaking like a sieve'.

In this context South Africa launched its so-called 'destabilisation' strategy, a 'carrot-and-stick' attempt to bludgeon the region into subordination to its dictates. Mostly this meant the 'big stick' of South African economic and military coercion but, for Swaziland, the

approach was nearly all 'carrot' - primarily in the form of an offer to transfer to its jurisdiction lands long claimed by the Swazi monarchy. It soon became clear that the offer was contingent upon Swaziland signing a security pact with Pretoria and adopting a hostile posture towards the ANC. In making this proposal the South Africans were exploiting an old ambition of Sobhuza's - to regain territory conceded away in the nineteenth century by his predecessors. A successful consummation of the deal would for Sobhuza reunite the Swazi people and climax a reign which had seen Swaziland regain its political independence and Swazi ownership of its domestic land resources significantly redressed.

For this reason he 'swallowed the bait' and in February 1982 - six months before his death - agreed to the pact with South Africa, one which at the time was kept secret. While Sobhuza was alive implementation focused on eliminating the ANC's top political leadership in Swaziland. This took the form of the expulsion of the official representative, Stanley Mabizela, and the assassination of Petros and Jabu Nzima - spouses and important officials of the South African Congress of Trade Unions. Their killings by presumably South African agents, as well as the later murders in 1983 of Zwelakhe Nyanda and Keith McFadden, can be seen to have been authorised and exonerated by Article One of the Security agreement which commits both parties to combating 'terrorism, insurgency and subversion individually and collectively ... (calling).. upon each other whenever possible for such assistance and taking steps as may be deemed necessary or expedient to eliminate this evil'. It is noteworthy that the shooting of McFadden, a Swazi national, evoked no protest or comment from the Swazi government, something which one would normally expect when a national is killed on his home soil by foreigners (according to eye-witnesses, the attackers were 'whites with strange-sounding accents'). In a similar vein there is evidence that black and white South African security personnel were involved in the 1984 Swazi military/police operation to flush out cadres as part of the ANC expulsion decree. Again this alleged foreign involvement inside Swaziland is explicable in terms of Article One.

After Sobhuza's death, pressure on the ANC intensified and, at the end of 1982, the first round-up of members occurred and some 35 were deported to Mozambique. It was the signing of the Nkomati Accord in March 1984 which qualitatively changed the situation in Swaziland and led the state to adopt a 'no holds barred' position towards the ANC. In the eyes of the Swazi state, Nkomati legitimated its collaboration with apartheid and the existence of its own security arrangement with South Africa was revealed.

After Nkomati, over 200 alleged ANC members were rounded up in Swaziland and deported but only after periods in detention during which many complained of being routinely assaulted. Certainly some were hospitalised after their apprehension. Others claimed they were hooded and interrogated by 'whites with foreign accents'. At its height in April 1984, the confrontation assumed the dimensions of a small-scale war with, in all, five ANC supporters and two Swazi security personnel killed. Simultaneously four ANC detainees disappeared from Swazi police cells. The authorities claimed they had been freed by ANC colleagues in an armed raid but this was denied by the ANC in Lusaka who, in turn, alleged they had been kidnapped by South African agents and taken across the border. This view was reinforced when, within days of their disappearance, the South African Minister of Law and Order announced the arrest of four guerillas on the reef. Later in the year the Swaziland government deported to South Africa a former student leader and ANC sympathiser, Bhabalazi Bulunga. His handover took place in violation of both the UN Convention on Refugees as well as the state's own legal procedures.

As significant as the above was the accompanying ideological assault upon the ANC. The media denounced ANC fighters as 'murderous', bandits' and 'armed thugs' while the Prime Minister branded their presence in Swaziland as 'a scourge of foreign criminals' and he called President Tambo 'a liar'. The public were exhorted 'to watch their neighbours' and to 'turn in suspicious characters' like 'unattached young males with foreign accents' while the commission into student disturbances at the University

articulated the state's view as to who, in the struggle for power of South Africa, was its real enemy by declaring support for the ANC and its goals a 'security threat' and tantamount to a crime.

At the height of this vendetta, the Swazi and South African governments agreed to an exchange of trade missions. The South African mission opened in November 1984 with six accredited diplomats. In an interview with a journalist the Commissioner, Sam Sterban, described the mission as 'an embassy in all but name'. Many sceptics wondered why, after years of near friction-free trade relations, a new framework beyond the Customs Union should now be required. The Commissioner himself provided the answer:

'I see the work of the mission as going a bit further than promoting trade ... trade between South Africa and Swaziland will look after itself but we can look after other developments'.

Given the known presence in the mission of at least one senior officer of the National Intelligence Service, as well as Commissioner Sterban's description of relations between the Swazi and South African police as 'good' and his statement that

'The policies of both countries are reflected in the relations between the two police forces ... I think this is only to be expected between police forces of any neighbouring countries that have a similar policy',

it seems reasonable to assume that anti-ANC intelligence activities will be one of these 'other developments'.

In 1985 Swaziland's ruling class tied themselves body and soul to the South African government, moving beyond collaboration in the ANC onslaught to advocating some of apartheid's most important policy positions. In May, the Swazi Finance minister criticised the disinvestment campaign and that perspective was carried into SADCC, some of whose members saw positive investment possibilities for themselves in capital's withdrawal from the Republic. Simultaneously the Swazi Foreign Minister came out against economic sanctions and appealed to the world to:

'give South Africa a chance to sort out its problems. We have been really impressed by what South Africa has been doing for the last years trying to improve conditions in this part of the world.. (South Africa is) on the right track as far as we are concerned'.

Quite how Minister Mnisi saw five years of South African destabilisation as improving the lot of the region was not explained, while his appeal for more time in a context of South Africa's murderous repression of the black townships was a clear expression of the Swazi state's indifference to the suffering and struggles of South Africa's blacks. At the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' conference in Nassau in September 1985, Swaziland was the only member state to side publicly with Prime Minister Thatcher's opposition to sanctions. Not even Malawi went so far as to associate itself with the Swazi position.

### ***Conclusion***

It is an obvious truism that in the world community of nations the South African state is a pariah with even its main capitalist allies feeling the need to reduce their identification with it. Swaziland stands out as the exception with its increasingly close association with Pretoria. It is this which constitutes the international dimension of the Swazi state's political crisis. We will now explain how it is that this situation has come about and how, in the present conjuncture of domestic and regional crisis, it is a logical development for the Swazi ruling class.



At the beginning of this paper, we rejected the fact of Swaziland's economic dependence upon South Africa as providing a full explanation. No less satisfactory is the attempt to rationalise it as a response to South African inducements like the 'land deal'. As we noted earlier, there was a qualitative difference in the nature of the Swazi operation against the ANC in the pre-and post-Nkomati periods. The onslaught was at its height at a point in time when the prospects for a successful conclusion of the transaction were receding. In fact Swaziland's leaders have good grounds for feeling 'sold out' by the Botha government. The 'land deal' was the catalyst which triggered a head-on confrontation with ANC but, at the point when the Swazi state was most vigorously implementing its side of the bargain, the South African government backed off and informed the Swazi leadership it had now to resolve the issue with the relevant bantustan leaders - an impossibility given their implacable hostility to any loss of sovereignty and territory.

Soon thereafter, and almost coincident with the South-African/Swazi agreement on the establishment of trade missions, Pretoria signalled its abandonment of the 'deal' by agreeing to upgrade constitutionally the status of the KaNgwane legislature. In terms of the original land proposal, the KaNgwane bantustan was to cease to exist and be incorporated in toto into Swaziland. Rubbing salt into the wound, the South Africans also announced a new economic aid package to KaNgwane which included the designation of Kabokweni as a 'deconcentration' growth point with hugely attractive investment incentives - well beyond anything Swaziland could offer.

Located close to the Swazi border, Kabokweni could only increase Swaziland's difficulties in attracting new investment and accelerate the already steady flight of Swazi-based capital to the bantustans. As if this was not enough, Pretoria was simultaneously turning a deaf ear to the increasingly desperate pleas from the Swazi authorities for it to intervene to end the 'conspiracy' by monopoly fertiliser companies in South Africa to bankrupt its Swazi-based competitor, Swaziland Chemical Industries. As of 1983, SCI was Swaziland's most important and lucrative industrial enterprise. In 1984 it was forced into liquidation.

Having established that the relationship with South Africa is not a product of geopolitical factors or structural dependence, nor a response to South African coercion or offers of handouts, we return to the class and ideological factors mentioned earlier.

We believe we have shown how the material interests of the Swazi rulers have been secured through the comprador relationship with capital and how since independence the bridgehead to South African capital has solidified. Obviously this has shaped the class' worldview so that there is today a remarkable mutuality in its views with those of the apartheid state. These include a shared belief in the superior efficacy of the capitalist mode as well as a view that Africa's indigenous societies should be ruled by its traditional aristocrats. While this may be a self-serving view in Pretoria, in Swazi royalist circles it is an obvious article of faith. Above all in this context, they share a perception about the so-called 'Soviet' or 'marxist' threat to Southern Africa. The ANC represents class forces oppressed and exploited in Swaziland today. It advocates a notion of democracy completely at odds with the arcane conception of the Swazi monarchy and promises changes which could threaten its material lifeline.

This brings us then to our concluding assertion.

The prospect of fundamental change to the social relations in southern Africa poses critical dangers for the royalist comprador bourgeoisie which comprises the central executive of the Swazi state. Its material base has been secured through a series of alliances with colonial state, local settler, multinational and South African capital. Within Swaziland its hegemony has been secured through the resuscitation of indigenous ideology which is pre-capitalist in origin. It is therefore both conservative in nature and deeply hostile to the revolutionary ideology of the ANC whose politics, it fears, would unleash processes and forces whose effects would seriously threaten its hegemony. Hence it has been forced to acknowledge for all the world to see that its best interests lie not in change in South Africa but in the survival of the apartheid regime. It is therefore not correct to see Swaziland's current rulers as helpless hostages; they are rather willing accomplices. Hence it was no

surprise to hear the Swazi Prime Minister deliver to the Council of Minister's meeting of SADCC in Mbabane in January 1985 an unabashed defence of his government's co-operation with South Africa. Before a forum dedicated to reducing the region's dependence upon South Africa, he concluded with the words: 'today I want to make it clear there is nothing wrong with our policy'.

It would be difficult to find a more explicit expression of a ruling class' interests. It is here that the twin dimensions of the political crisis come together. Apprehensive at the prospect of radical change to the regional environment from which it derives material succour, and beset internally within a political framework increasingly unable to satisfy its subject's needs and wants, the Swazi compradors find there is only one place where they can hope for assistance. Thus, no matter how often the Botha government breaks its promises, the Swazi state will always be there with ideological support. And it is not an entirely hopeless survival strategy. In the last analysis, South Africa will rescue the Swazi state should there be a prospect of fundamental political change in Swaziland because Pretoria prefers client states on its border to militant ones.

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#### 4. CAPITALISM AND THE COMPETITION FOR SWAZI LABOUR, 1945-1960<sup>1</sup>

Alan Booth

In May 1947 the Native Recruiting corporation (NRC), the labour recruiting arm of the Transvaal Chamber of Mines in Swaziland, retired its District Superintendent, J.E. Horsfall, and replaced him with a new man previously posted in Basutoland, F.A. Lesrend Whittle.<sup>2</sup> The new District Superintendent was brought in to reorganize and vitalize the NRC operation in the district, which included Swaziland and portions of the eastern Transvaal and northern Natal, an operation which was falling further and further behind in its goals. Whittle was given a two-fold mandate. He was to cut costs, principally by placing company recruiters on salary, gradually terminating the schedule of capitation fees (generally ranging from £1/10/0 to £2/0/0 per recruit) which had prevailed since before World War I. Second, he was to increase 'output' -- numbers of recruits -- which had been lagging, sometimes declining, since the late 1930s. Increased labour demands attendant to the postwar opening of the new goldfields in the eastern Orange Free State made even a steady or modestly increasing rate of output unacceptable.<sup>3</sup>

Whittle took a year to break himself in to his new tasks and to observe the efforts of his various recruiters in the field. Then between January and July 1948 he wrote a letter to each agent, enumerating his station's output annually back to 1936 (totals in Table 1), and detailing the inadequacy of each one's efforts and results. The tone of the letters ranged from correct to politely contemptuous. '...It is disturbing', the superintendent remarked to J.C. McSeveney at Piet Retief, 'to observe that, whereas the total figure for 1936 was 756 it was as low as 421 in 1947. I fully appreciate that the war years were responsible for this decrease and your difficulties in regaining lost ground are not overlooked. At the same time the position facing this industry is grave while the keen and growing competition from other employers makes it incumbent upon each and every official of the Corporation to re-double his efforts in an all out drive to revive the natives' interest in Gold Mining employment'.<sup>4</sup>

Whittle's missives evoked a number of responses reflecting varying degrees of distress. Some explanations were simple. The harvest was bountiful and the 'natives' had plenty to eat. ('When they have full stomachs it's a hard job to move them').<sup>5</sup> Others elaborated on the adverse recruiting conditions in postwar Swaziland: returned Swazi war veterans, their pockets full of wages; competition from Natal coal and sugar interests and Transvaal wattle estates; inflated cattle prices which gave Swazi herdsmen an alternative source of needed cash.<sup>6</sup> 'Yes my output has dropped very considerably', admitted the Mbabane recruiter. 'As you say the demand for labour is terrific.... There is more opposition today than ever there was before. As you know I am surrounded by tin Mines here and Asbestos Mines in the Peak (Pigg's Peak to north), and in addition several people have started up recruiting for the (Transvaal and Natal) Coal Mines and have taken out Licenses which in my opinion the Government should not have granted... It is common knowledge that there is not labour to go round -- a great deal is being absorbed by secondary Industries and this will get worse'.<sup>7</sup>

'As you know I am surrounded' neatly summed up the situation, as they perceived it, confronting the twenty-odd NRC recruiters and offices in postwar Swaziland. The nature

<sup>1</sup>The author wishes to acknowledge with thanks the permission of *The Journal of Southern African Studies* for the republication of this article, which first appeared in the *Journal*, XIII, 1 (October 1986).  
<sup>2</sup>*The Times of Swaziland* (TOS), 29 May 1947.

<sup>3</sup>Interview with F.A.L. Whittle, Johannesburg, 23 June 1981.

<sup>4</sup>Whittle to McSeveney, Stegi, Swaziland, 31 January 1948, NRC Archives, Siteki, Swaziland (hereafter NRCA), 34.

<sup>5</sup>Monthly Report, Ingwavuma, Natal (March 1949), NRCA, 26.

<sup>6</sup>For instance, H.B. Groom to Whittle, Ingwavuma, 21 June 1948, NRCA 34.

<sup>7</sup>Becham B. Stewart to Whittle, Mbabane, Swaziland, 1 March 1948, NRCA 34.

of the competition for Swazi labour which the NRC had faced from the date of its establishment in Swaziland in 1912, had changed dramatically since WWII's end, in numbers, directions, and intensity. This paper will examine the forces which shaped the new demands for Swazi labour during the postwar years down to 1960, and how they affected both the recruiters and the recruited. It argues that the character of labour recruiting in 20th century Swaziland was closely related to the nature of the capitalist forces at play there. Before World War II the competition had been between European settler farmer and South African mining capital; but closely following the war, as foreign development capital began to supplement that of the local settler, the contest for the Swazi labourer became for a time triangular. During the 1950s it became a struggle which the Swazi work force manipulated to its own advantage. Then, as development capital gained primacy in Swaziland's postwar political economy, the competition once more became polarized between South African and local capital forces, in which the latter were discernibly prevailing by 1960, when the tight labour market became one of surplus, and recruiting competition became a thing of the past.

### *Competition for labour to world war II*

Recent scholarship has given us enough of an understanding of various dimensions of the prewar Swazi labour market to be able to compare it with the experiences of other nations on the Witwatersrand's periphery.<sup>8</sup> Compared with others, for example, the Swazi were relative latecomers to the migrant labour scene. Both the Pedi and the Tswana became migrants to the Cape and the Transvaal respectively in significant numbers as early as the 1840s. They were followed by the Tsonga (Natal, 1850s) and the Basotho (Kimberley, late 1860s), entering the labour stream in response to the successive requirements of capital accumulation in South Africa.<sup>9</sup> By contrast, Zulu migrancy, which had withstood previously the lures of Natal's sugar and Kimberley's diamonds, was triggered in the late 1880s by a decade of British devastation and underdevelopment of the kingdom, the aftermath of the Zulu War of 1879-1880. Likewise, significant Pondo migrancy commenced only in the late 1890s, the result of change in local productive relationships combined with the Rinderpest epizootic of 1897.<sup>10</sup> None of these areas was a significant theater for the peopling of European settlers as migrancy commenced.

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<sup>8</sup> Alan Booth, 'The Development of the Swazi Labour Market 1900-1968', *South African Labour Bulletin*, VII, 6 (April 1982), 34-57; F. de Vletter, 'Labour Migration in Swaziland', in W.R. Bohning (ed.), *Black Migration to South Africa* (Geneva, 1981), pp. 48-52; Jonathan S. Crush, *The Struggle for Swazi Labour, 1890-1926*, 'Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Queens University, 1983; Randall M. Packard, 'Maize, Cattle and Mosquitoes; The Political Economy of Malaria Epidemics in Colonial Swaziland', *Journal of African History*, XXV, 2 (1984), 189-212; Randall M. Packard, 'Agricultural Development, Labor Migration, and the Resurgence of Malaria in Swaziland, 1950-1981', mimeo, 1985; Beth D. Rosen-Prinz and Frederick A. Prinz, *Migrant Labour and Rural Homesteads: An Investigation into the Sociological Dimensions of the Migrant Labour System in Swaziland*, (Geneva, 1978).

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<sup>10</sup> Jeff Guy, 'The Destruction and Reconstruction of Zulu Society', in Marks and Rathbone, *Industrialisation and Social Change*, pp. 173-194; Jeff Guy, *The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom* (Johannesburg, 1982), pp. 17-18, 177-178; William Beinart, *The Political Economy of Pondoland 1860-1930* (Johannesburg, 1982), pp. 42-69; William Beinart, 'Labour Migrancy and Rural Production: Pondoland c. 1900-1950', in Philip Mayer (ed.), *Black Villagers in an Industrial Society* (Cape Town, 1980), pp. 81-85.

Swaziland, by contrast, was such a theater, and Swazi migrancy was in part touched off by that phenomenon. Its timing was determined partly by white settlement. Migrant labour as a significant aspect of the political economy of Swaziland did not begin until around 1910, although as far back as the 1870s there are records of spasmodic occurrences involving small numbers of migrants (6 to 41) to the Kimberley diamond fields. Slightly larger numbers (several hundred per year) were going off to the Barberton gold fields, close by in the eastern Transvaal, by the mid-1880s, more by far than were walking to work on the Witwatersrand until after the turn of the century. Swazi employment on the Rand did not top 2,500 until 1907, and reached 4,000 (more or less) only in 1910.<sup>11</sup> Until around the turn of the century, Swaziland's economic resiliency as a grain exporter, cattle producer, and periodic looter of neighboring food supplies had kept them from resorting as a matter of necessity to labour migration in significant numbers, as was happening to other peoples in the region.<sup>12</sup> 'Necessity', when it finally was visited on the Swazi, came through a combination of the hazards of nature and the wiles of man. Virulent cattle pandemics (Rinderpest, 1894; East Coast Fever, 1902) decimated their herds, carrying away nearly 90 percent of them by 1904. Periodic droughts, which had been common enough to deal with, were compounded by infestation by locust swarms, which had not.

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<sup>11</sup> Crush, 'Struggle for Swazi Labour', pp. 143, 278, 283.

<sup>12</sup> Delius, 'Migrant Labour and the Pedi'; P. Harries, 'Kinship, Ideology and the Nature of Pre-Colonial Labour Migration', pp. 142-166.

Table 1. Swazi Migrant Laborers to the Witwatersrand Gold Mines.  
1935-1960

	<u>1935</u>	<u>1936</u>	<u>1937</u>	<u>1938</u>	<u>1939</u>	<u>1940</u>	<u>1941</u>
<u>Contract</u>							
No. Swd. (a)	2697	2392	2289	2236	2095	2206	2041
So. Swd. (b) (*)	4005	4082	3655	3872	3731	3933	4325
<u>Total Contract</u>	<u>6702</u>	<u>6474</u>	<u>5944</u>	<u>6108</u>	<u>5826</u>	<u>6139</u>	<u>6366</u>
<u>AVS (**)</u>							
No. Swd. (a)	1775	****	45	85	214	422	503
So. Swd. (b) (*)	****	1408	1527	1792	1546	1497	1399
<u>Total AVS</u>	<u>1775</u>	<u>1408</u>	<u>1572</u>	<u>1877</u>	<u>1760</u>	<u>1919</u>	<u>1902</u>
<u>Total Swaziland</u>	<u>8477</u>	<u>7882</u>	<u>7516</u>	<u>7985</u>	<u>7586</u>	<u>8508</u>	<u>8268</u>
	<u>1942</u>	<u>1943</u>	<u>1944</u>	<u>1945</u>	<u>1946</u>	<u>1947</u>	<u>1948</u>
<u>Contract</u>							
No. Swd. (a)	837	1976	1418	1757	1815	2035	2039
So. Swd. (b) (*)	2194	3748	2344	3019	2748	3197	3182
<u>Total Contract</u>	<u>3031</u>	<u>5724</u>	<u>3762</u>	<u>4776</u>	<u>4563</u>	<u>5232</u>	<u>5221</u>
<u>AVS</u>							
No. Swd. (a)	336	508	421	510	469	434	443
So. Swd. (b) (*)	992	1649	1134	1563	1326	1242	1306
<u>Total AVS</u>	<u>1328</u>	<u>2157</u>	<u>1555</u>	<u>2073</u>	<u>1795</u>	<u>1676</u>	<u>1749</u>
<u>Total Swaziland</u>	<u>4359</u>	<u>7881</u>	<u>5317</u>	<u>6849</u>	<u>6358</u>	<u>6908</u>	<u>6970</u>
	<u>1949</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1951</u>	<u>1952</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1954</u>	<u>1955</u>
<u>Contract</u>							
No. Swd. (a)	2110	2086	1827	1745	2164	3622	3563
So. Swd. (b) (*)	3040	2550	1965	1695	2254	3110	2582
<u>Total Contract</u>	<u>5150</u>	<u>4636</u>	<u>3792</u>	<u>3440</u>	<u>4418</u>	<u>6732</u>	<u>6145</u>
<u>AVS</u>							
No. Swd. (a)	793	933	998	1031	860	882	755
So. Swd. (b) (*)	1369	2022	2573	2998	2257	1825	1771
<u>Total AVS</u>	<u>2142</u>	<u>2955</u>	<u>3571</u>	<u>4029</u>	<u>3117</u>	<u>2707</u>	<u>2526</u>
<u>Total Swaziland</u>	<u>7292</u>	<u>7591</u>	<u>7363</u>	<u>7469</u>	<u>7535</u>	<u>9439</u>	<u>8671</u>
	<u>1956</u>	<u>1957</u>	<u>1958</u>	<u>1959</u>	<u>1960</u>		
<u>Contract</u>							
No. Swd. (a)	3360	3489	3598	3833	3624		
So. Swd. (b) (*)	2783	2901	2979	3040	2910		
<u>Total Contract</u>	<u>6143</u>	<u>6390</u>	<u>6577</u>	<u>6873</u>	<u>6534</u>		
<u>AVS</u>							
No. Swd. (a)	642	491	453	415	238		
So. Swd. (b) (*)	1806	1758	1619	1617	1122		
<u>Total AVS</u>	<u>2448</u>	<u>2249</u>	<u>2072</u>	<u>2032</u>	<u>1360</u>		
<u>Total Swaziland</u>	<u>8591</u>	<u>8639</u>	<u>8649</u>	<u>8905</u>	<u>7894</u>		

(a) Northern Swaziland

(b) Southern Swaziland

(\*) Includes Piet Retief (eastern Transvaal) Office

(\*\*) Assisted Voluntary Service

Source: The Employment Bureau of Africa Office, Mbabane, Swaziland.

Manmade obstacles impeded catastrophically the ability of the Swazi to recover from these natural disasters, as they had previously done. Concessions by the unfortunate King



Mbandzeni to European mineral prospectors, pastoral farmers and land speculators in the 1880s were, in spite of their speciousness and illegality, recognized by the British colonial administration which settled upon Swaziland following the South African War, in 1902. The offending document, the 1907 Land Proclamation, awarded two-thirds of the territory (including much of the best farming and grazing lands and all of the known minerals) to the European concessionaires. The Swazi either became tenants on the new settler estates, or (more commonly) were forced into reserves which within a generation would become overstocked and depleted.<sup>13</sup>

But in the main, the Swazi strategy in the years immediately following the decimation of their herds and the dispossession of their lands was to enter the migrant labour stream to South Africa. Principally they went to the Witwatersrand (Rand) gold mines, secondarily to the coal mines of the Transvaal and Natal, and lastly (in modest numbers) to the farms and public works of the eastern Transvaal, and the Natal sugar estates. Initially the Swazi became migrants in response to specific needs: the taxes levied not only by successive colonial administrations (the Transvaal in 1898-99, and Britain after 1902), but also by the royal house at Zombodze. In 1905 the Queen Regent, Labotsibeni (grandmother of King Sobhuza II, crowned in 1921) began imposing periodic taxes on her people in order to buy back the sequestered land and to send protest delegations to London. She also despatched youths to the gold mine and requested a quarter of their wages toward the land repurchase fund. Many more Swazi left not on royal orders but in response to other incentives: the need to replenish ravaged herds; the lure of wages independent of parental strings for *lobola* (bridewealth) and hence independence; severe restrictions by the colonials on traditional sources of food and wealth, raiding parties and hunting expeditions. Those activities which had in past years patterned Swazi life, when men had often been deployed on military expeditions between planting and harvest time, now influenced the migration timetable. Swazi men became oscillating migrants, alternating between six-month tours on the Rand (between January and September) and the agricultural cycle at home.<sup>14</sup> By 1911 around 6,000 men were migrating, nearly 27 percent of the male (over age 15) population of the territory.<sup>15</sup>

Recruiting for the Rand mines was, initially, disorganized -- 'anarchy' could describe the period 1906-1912 -- and before 1910 rather unsuccessful.<sup>16</sup> Settler traders doubled as recruiters for individual mines, often using indebtedness as a means of coercion. Labour agents in the employ of South African recruiting concerns roamed the countryside rounding up recruits, for whom they received capitation fees. But experiences of being exploited and cheated stemming back to the 1890s had left the Swazi with a deep and widespread mistrust of the recruiting agent, and they preferred instead to make their own way to the Rand as 'voluntaries', taking their chances at being engaged by the mine of their choice once they had arrived.<sup>17</sup> This began to change in 1913 when the Native Recruiting Corporation, the monopsonistic recruiting arm of the Transvaal Chamber of Mines formed the year previously, was established in Swaziland. <sup>18</sup> With it came the 'cash advance' by which agents would advance up to a year's wage to recruits for the purchase of lobola cattle, food, or payment of tax prior to departing. That became instantly successful as a means by which to lure the most mistrusting young man into signing on as a recruit. Voluntaries, who had outstripped recruits by nearly three to one in 1907, were being outnumbered by recruits by anywhere from three to five to one by the

<sup>13</sup> Sir A. Pim, *Report on the Financial and Economic Condition of Swaziland*, London, 1932; Jonathan Crush, 'Landlords, Tenants and Colonial social Engineers: The Farm Labour Question in Early Colonial Swaziland', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, XI, 2 (April 1985), 235-257.

<sup>14</sup> Packard, 'Political Economy of Malaria', pp. 11-13; J. Crush, 'The Transvaal Labour Crisis and Swazi Migration to the Witwatersrand, 1900-1910', (mimeo, African Studies Association Conference paper, 1984), pp. 4-12; Rosen-Prinz and Prinz, 'Migrant Labour and Rural Homesteads', pp. 8-10.

<sup>15</sup> de Vletter, 'Labour Migration', p. 50.

<sup>16</sup> J. Crush, 'Staying Alive: Swazi Migrant Workers and the Witwatersrand Gold Mines, 1890-1920' (mimeo, 1985), p. 21.

<sup>17</sup> Crush, 'Staying Alive', pp. 15-19.

<sup>18</sup> Crush, 'Staying Alive', p. 22.

end of World War I.19 By 1920 the NRC was firmly in control of the recruiting market in Swaziland, largely on its own terms.

The NRC's main rivals were the settler farmers in Swaziland. The land expropriation decreed by the 1907 Proclamation (actually carried out in 1914) by no means meant that all Swazi were to be forced from the concessioned lands onto the thirty-two 'Native Areas'. Colonial government mechanisms were employed to encourage Swazi to remain on the new settler estates in sufficient numbers to provide the labour required. Many did, 15,000 or so, as tenant workers, labouring for the European farmers in return for free rent, or alternatively paying rent and receiving farmworkers' earnings averaging less than one-third of wages on the Rand.<sup>20</sup>

So 1914, the year of the expulsion, also marked the real beginning of competition for Swazi labour, which over the next few years from the settler point of view was as complex as it was frustrating. For Swazi males not only had the alternatives described above open to them; they also had, irrespective of their spatial and labour arrangements, continuing and burdensome tribute labour obligations to chief and king. And those obligations, being principally agricultural, fell just at the time of year most crucial to settler farm productivity: planting, weeding, and harvest time. Until the mid-1920s the settlers found themselves all too often on the losing end of the competition for Swazi labour. Consequently to round out their requirements the landowners turned increasingly to two alternative sources which did prove reliable: female and child labour, and Tsonga ('Shangaan') workers from southern Mozambique desperate to escape the slave labour conditions of the Portuguese. That, and their vulnerability as illegal immigrants (they were commonly referred to as 'clandestines') made them the very epitome of the 'compliant, cheap labour force' so desired throughout southern Africa. But the real wage exploitation fell on the Swazi women and children. At a time when farm wages for Swazi male labour ran 15/- to 20/- a month, women were given 5/- to 10/- for a month's work, children 3/- to 5/-.<sup>21</sup>

That they, and the 'clandestines' were willing to undergo such back-breaking work for such wages was testament to the deterioration of the labour market from the Swazi point of view by the early 1920s. The causes for this were numerous and complex, but they included the inability of a static economy to accommodate a rapidly growing population (46 percent increase between 1911 and 1936). The ability of Native Area land to support the population progressively declined, ensuring its inhabitants' dependence on wage labour.

From 1922 to 1936, as Swaziland's population and hence its workforce increased, the additional labour supply was taken up fairly evenly by external and internal sources, with the Transvaal's share remaining at about 22 percent of the total. Social conditions (static employment levels in settler farming and public works, and declining local mining production) gradually produced employment slack within the country, which began to be reversed only in the late 1930s. In 1938 the asbestos mine at Havelock opened, which although it added some 2,340 jobs, was not the catalyst to local Swazi employment as might have been anticipated.<sup>22</sup> For nearly 70 percent of the workers were foreign -- Union (South African), Mozambican, and Nyasan.<sup>23</sup>

19 Crush, 'Staying Alive', p. 20, and Figure 1.

20 Alan r. Booth, *Swaziland: Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom* (Boulder, Colorado, 1983), p. 21; Crush, 'Struggle for Swazi Labour', pp. 337-339.

21 Crush, 'Struggle for Swazi Labour', p. 352. Rand mines were paying around £3 per month during the same period.

22 *Annual Colonial Report*, 1946.

23 The 1940 figures were: 75 'Union natives', 1,373 'Foreign', and 822 'Swazis'. 'Report on the Labour Conditions in Swaziland', 1940, RCS 31/40, Swaziland National Archives (SNA)

The second event, World War II, did absorb a lot of Swazi manpower. Some 3,800 Swazi joined the African Pioneer Corps and went off to war, while others joined the Union (South African) Defense Forces.<sup>24</sup> Those numbers more than offset the war-related (1939-1945) Swazi employment decline in the Rand mines (averaging 6,902 per year, 12.5 per cent off from its 1935-1939 level).<sup>25</sup>

These factors combined to create a labour shortage particularly in the south of the territory beginning in 1938, severe enough to spark lengthy discussions in the European Advisory Council (EAC) as to alternative remedies. All of them aimed at delivering enough labour to alleviate the situation while keeping wages low. They ranged from government-sponsored immigration of Mozambican labour, to forced labour of tax defaulters at 6d per day, to cutting back on the recruiting licenses granted to the two Transvaal Chamber of Mines recruiting organizations, the NRC and the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA).<sup>26</sup> The EAC even tried to get the government to stop Swazi migration to the sugarcane fields of Natal seemingly on the grounds of the health and safety of the workers, many of whom never returned to Swaziland alive:

One year there was an epidemic (council member G.L. Wallis, a farmer, recalled). They hadn't even got time to bury them; they were simply put down in the ditches.<sup>27</sup>

The colonial government, however, remained, as it had been for all practical purposes throughout the 20th century, an integral part of Lord Milner's regional scheme of a Euro-pean preserve from the Cape to the tightly controlled African labour force.<sup>28</sup> As such it was committed at least as much to the labour supply for the Rand gold mines as it was to local farms. Even the need to increase food production for the war effort did not alter this dual commitment on the colonial administration's part, except that it turned a blind eye toward the intensified use of 'clandestines' from Mozambique. But beyond that, the administration did nothing to alleviate the local labour shortage that could be construed as discriminatory to the NRC. That situation continued throughout the war, and no doubt worsened, if one can read that into the tones of exasperation in the complaints about the shortages of farm labour ('there is no such thing as unemployment in Swaziland') levelled at the Resident Commissioner. 'I protest', said one irate farmer at the European Advisory Council meeting with him, 'against this country being made a "Tom Tiddler's ground" for all sorts of persons to recruit'.<sup>29</sup>

### *Postwar Capital Development*

Until the end of World War II, the pace of capital investment in Swaziland had been modest and halting. Early interest in minerals slowly petered out: gold by the 1910s had fallen victim to high production costs and low grade ore; tin hung on until the 1930s. By then, three commodity exports had surpassed mining in value: cattle, cotton, and tobacco. But Swaziland never lived up to the optimistic expectations of early entrepreneurs such as

<sup>24</sup> *Annual Colonial Report, 1946.*

<sup>25</sup> By contrast, wartime demand for gold pushed total Witwatersrand mine employment up 9% during the same period. Francis Wilson, *Labour in the South African Gold Mines 1911-1969* (Cambridge, 1972), Appendix 3, p.158. NRC figures (1939-1945) from the Employment Bureau of Africa (TEBA, formerly NRC) Office, Mbabane, Swaziland. Migrant labour figures vary markedly depending upon the source. Probably the NRC numbers for Swaziland are the most reliable, but they too are open to interpretation, for the NRC Stegi (now Siteki) office was responsible for several offices recruiting from northern Natal and the eastern Transvaal, and for the WNLA operations in southern Mozambique. So, for instance, NRC Stegi reported a total 'output' for 1940 of 14,851, while the number for Swaziland alone (plus the Piet Retief office, through which large numbers from southern Swaziland funnelled) was 8,058 (Table 1, which enumerates only NRC offices recruiting in Swaziland, plus the Piet Retief office).

<sup>26</sup> Minutes, European Advisory Council, VI, 5 (1938); VII, 1 (1938); VII, 3 (1941), SNA.

<sup>27</sup> G.L. Wallis, Minutes, European Advisory Council, VII, 3 (1941).

<sup>28</sup> S. Marks and S. Trapido, 'Lord Milner and the South African State', *History Workshop Journal*, VIII (1979), 52-53; Booth, *Swaziland*, pp. 4, 19.

<sup>29</sup> G.L. Wallis, Minutes, European Advisory Council, VII, 9 (1946).

Allister Miller and David Forbes -- largely, they repeatedly argued, because of Swaziland's isolation and lack of rail transport to the South African market. Furthermore, South Africa took measures to protect its own markets in spite of Customs Union regulations (cotton and tobacco marketing boards; 'veterinary restrictions' on the marketing of cattle in Johannesburg and Durban) until the outbreak of World War II, and commercial production effectively stagnated. Then, imperial wartime incentives combined with the dropping of South African marketing restrictions made for a modest agricultural boom in Swaziland, held back only (if the settler farmers were to be believed) by the lack of labour.

The end of World War II brought about change to the economic fortunes of Swaziland. While settler farmers had traditionally depended on British loan and grant capital, for their growth and support, a new type of foreign development capital, directly invested, now made its appearance. It began in 1947, and grew very rapidly. That year a South African consortium backed by British capital established Peak Timbers Ltd., the first of several ventures which, taken together, were to give Swaziland what became by the 1970s the second largest commercial forestry acreage in the world. A major segment of that was the Usutu Pulp Corporation, formed in 1959 by the British firm Courtaulds Ltd. and the Colonial (now Commonwealth) Development Corporation (CDC), a British profit-making parastatal organization operating throughout the empire. Producing unbleached kraft pulp, Usutu Pulp eventually grew to an estate covering 123,000 acres planted with some 55 million coniferous trees.

The CDC had actually begun its Swaziland operations in 1950, when it had bought up over 100,000 acres of concession land in the northern lowveld and had developed it with a substantial irrigation project, cultivating rice, citrus, and sugarcane. Two large sugar milling operations had grown out of that initial scheme: Mhlume (Swaziland) Sugar Ltd., owned entirely by the CDC; and Ubombo Ranches Ltd., backed by both South African and British capital until 1968, when it became a wholly-owned subsidiary of the British multinational Lonrho. By then, less than 20 years after its inception, the sugar industry was providing work for 22 percent of Swaziland's workforce, with 10 percent of the entire population depending on it for their earnings.

Finally, by the mid-1950s the CDC had also become the dominant developer of irrigated farming and agricultural processing (mainly citrus and pineapples) in the Malkerns valley region of the middleveld, an extraordinarily rich and productive farming area.<sup>30</sup>

All told, the period 1947-1960 saw an overall investment by the CDC of perhaps £5 million, and of all other industries closer to £40 million.<sup>31</sup> Those industries were employing by the end of that period a labour force of around 13,000, which when added to agriculture, public works, and other sectors brought the domestic level of employment to around 20,000.<sup>32</sup>

Capital investment in Swaziland also altered the demographic patterns and the balance of power within the European settler population, old vs. new. The decade 1946-1956 saw the European population grow by 85 percent, compared with a 17 percent increase the

30 'Swaziland's Remarkable Agricultural Progress', TOS, 19 November 1955; 'The Bushveld Yields to Wealth. Sugar Production at Big Bend', TOS, 3 June 1960; Martin J. Fransman, 'The State and Development in Swaziland 1960-1977' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Sussex, 1978), pp. 88-89. The Lebombo Ranches mill was second-hand, originally named 'Shire's Mill', purchased near Matubatuba, Natal, dismantled and transported to Big Bend, where it was rebuilt and placed in or "put into" production.

31 Robert P. Stephens, Minutes, Reconstituted European Advisory Council, I, 1 (1961)

32 Robert P. Stephens, Minutes, Reconstituted European Advisory Council, I,1 (1961); *Colonial Annual Reports*, 1960, 1961. There is no telling how many domestic jobs were being filled by 'foreign' (i.e. South African, Mozambican, Nyasan) workers, but on the basis of a consistent 70% to 80% level at the Havelock asbestos mine (workforce about 2,500) and comparable (although somewhat lower) levels in forestry and irrigated agriculture, probably between 4,000 and 5,000 were foreigners.

previous decade (it would grow to 187 percent of the 1946 figure by 1960).<sup>33</sup> During the early 1950s and old industrial trade information and lobbying organization, the Swaziland Chamber of Mines and Industry, which had first been formed early in the century but had lapsed with the decline of mining, was revived as the Swaziland Chamber of Commerce and Industry by the old settler group as a means to protect its interests in the new business environment. Its place had in earlier decades been taken by other effective pressure groups, reflecting the domination by the agricultural sector of the political economy of colonial Swaziland: the Siteki, the Southern and principally, the Swaziland Farmers' Associations. Even more effective had been the European Advisory Council, formed in 1921, whose membership up through the 1950s was heavily weighted with influential British settler farmers -- Allister Miller, J.W. Reilly, I.H. Pierce, and World War I veterans P.J. Lewis and G.L. Wallis.<sup>34</sup>

After World War II, as new capital poured in and new settlers promoting industry and agribusiness threatened the old order, the established settler interests moved to transform their EAC into a proper legislature, with lawmaking as opposed to merely advisory capacity. But the move backfired. When the new 'Reconstituted European Advisory Council' (REAC) was established by the government in 1949, it in no way resembled a legislature, except that it was to be statutory. Its one major change was that the four old north-south (agriculturally oriented) constituencies were replaced with ten new ones, which gave political weight to the newly developing and industrializing areas. That was hardly in the settler interest. The new constitution, *The Times of Swaziland*, the voice of local capitalism, commented dryly, would gain the old-timers 'less trammel and more scope'. 'Certainly', it concluded, 'the Council will be "Advisory"'.<sup>35</sup> Still, it was several years before 'new capital' made its weight felt on the reorganized Council. Pigg's Peak began sending Robert P. Stephens (founder and managing director of Peak Timbers Ltd.) as its representative only beginning in 1957. Thereafter, power on the REAC swung rapidly toward new capital until the Council gave way to the establishment of a legislative council as a step toward independence in 1964.

Postwar foreign capital formed a rival group to the settler industrial chamber, the Swaziland Chamber of Industries, to represent its separate interests with government. Thereafter, there was very little cooperation between the two lobbying organizations.<sup>36</sup>

### *The Competition for Swazi Labour*

The separate voices which settler and foreign capital thus brought to bear on government came rather quickly after World War II to focus on a major concern of them both, the scarcity of labour. The market had been tight since the height of the war, but peace and new investment had brought new scope and complexities to the problem. 'The big development schemes that have been growing from the ground', prophesized *The Times of Swaziland* in 1952, 'will soon be calling for tens of thousands of workers. When the development already in sight is complete a population much greater than that

<sup>33</sup> *Colonial Annual Reports*, 1959, 1960. The European population figures were; (1946) 3,201; (1956) 5,919; (1960) 9,200.

<sup>34</sup> Booth, *Swaziland*, pp. 24, 26. Allister Miller, aside from being a prominent settler farmer, had a hand seemingly in about every undertaking in colonial Swaziland, not the least of which was his role as editor and publisher of *The Times of Swaziland*. Lewis and Wallis (the latter a veteran of Gallipolis), had come to Swaziland after World War I as part of the 'Returned Soldiers Settler Scheme', by which war veterans were sold blocks of farmland at extremely favorable prices in order to settle the country with British loyalists. Both Lewis and Wallis had been badly wounded, the former at the Somme, the latter at Suez. G.L. Wallis Papers, 'Dinedor', Mafutseni, Swaziland. During the 1930s and early 1940s, one of the Advisory Council members was an NRC labour recruiter, V.O. King.

<sup>35</sup> 'Parturiunt Montes', TOS, 7 April 1949.

<sup>36</sup> Fransman, 'State and Development', p. 98. In 1964 both chambers, following the traumatic 1962/63 strike period, saw their labour interests enough in common to form jointly the Federation of Swaziland Employers. Following independence in 1971, both organizations became amalgamated into the Swaziland Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

now established in Swaziland will be required'. 'At (Ubombo) Ranches alone', it went on:

50,000 acres under irrigation will one day require 50,000 workers engaged in direct cultivation, apart from the huge number needed for transport, stores and the processing of produce. As the timber on the Pigg's Peak mountains and around Gege matures the saw mills and their attendant services will call for a large force; an ever larger force is likely to be needed in the sugar developments. Meanwhile sisal, bananas, citrus, sub-tropical fruit and general irrigation farming can be expected to multiply their needs.

The Swazi population, it continued, 'is already insufficient to supply the demands of the recruiters for the mines in the Union. Swaziland concerns themselves have been establishing recruiting depots in the territory'.

Even then, *The Times* concluded, Swazi agriculture was making such headway that men would 'abandon migrant labour for the rewards of improved farming'.

There will be no need for Government to stop recruiting for outside concerns; even the romantic appeal of a spell underground will disappear before the impact of remunerative farming at home and a demand for workers in easy reach of a work-man's family.

*The Times* envisioned an 'immigrant tide' of both European entrepreneur and African labourer 'about to flow'; and it urged the authorities to make provision to ensure that the right kind of each was attracted.<sup>37</sup> But it was a vision which never materialized, at least to the degree the newspaper has prophesized. Local employment would hardly top 20,000, and farms would never produce sufficient food for local consumption. The irrigation schemes never employed over 10,000, not 50,000, and over 2,000 of them were foreigners. The waves of African immigrants from South Africa did not appear; and those who did, principally Mozambicans, were absorbed much as they had been since the 1930s, albeit on the somewhat grander scale of the new mass employers. European immigration was similarly accommodated. But when it came the predicted labour shortage, although on a smaller scale than anticipated, was nevertheless far-reaching in its consequences.

The shortage was felt most keenly in southeast and south Swaziland (Mankaiana and Hlatikulu districts), prime recruiting territory since early in the century.<sup>38</sup> The NRC reported that its main 'opposition' was in part old -- the Natal coal mines -- and partly new, the South African irrigation scheme (sugar and rice) along the Pongola river close to Swaziland's southern border, which had come into production in 1947. The Havelock asbestos mine raised its wage, as did the wattle estates in the eastern Transvaal. All of this forced local settler farmers to raise their own wages. 'One farmer to my knowledge', reported the NRC recruiter in Hlatikulu, 'has been paying girl workers 2/6 a day'.<sup>39</sup> Wattle estate pay exceeded the gold mine basic wage, so that a man and wife working piecework stripping bark there could earn, in season, as much as 10/- a day between them.<sup>40</sup> Yet even at those wages labour was hard to come by in the wattle industry, so that one company was driven to importing labour from as far afield as Pondoland -- and still did not find enough to fill its needs, either adult or '*umfaan*' (underage), in spite of a

<sup>37</sup> 'Immigration', TOS, 13 December 1952. *The Times* warned against 'every potential (European) fifth-columnist, ... every Simon Legree, every gangster...' Likewise, it cautioned against 'the (African) throw-outs from the Barberton gaol, the arrogant mobsters of Sophiatown, the potential Mau Mau organisers, the witch doctors and spivs'.

<sup>38</sup> Crush, 'Struggle for Swazi Labour', pp. 110-121, 272, 282-284, 290, 293-294.

<sup>39</sup> Quarterly Report, Hlatikulu (April 1947); NRC Monthly Reports (May and July 1947) NRCA 26. Female wages of 2/6 a day on farms (£3 per month) were within 10/- of starting wages on the Rand mines at the time.

<sup>40</sup> NRC Monthly Report (July 1947); Monthly Report, Piet Retief (August 1947), NRCA 26.

child's wage rate of 2/3- per day,<sup>41</sup> 'All employers of Native Labour' reported NRC District Superintendent Whittle to Johannesburg in late 1947, 'are complaining bitterly of the supply position'.<sup>42</sup>

By mid-1948 the impact of growing capital penetration on the labour market in Swaziland had become clear. Whittle reported in June that NRC output was still dropping.

Throughout the area I have been struck by the preponderance of women over men and the almost total absence of the latter... it appears that almost the entire Native male population is away from home at employment on the (Rand) Mines, (Natal) Sugar estates or in other industries, and that the reservoir of labour is sadly depleted.<sup>43</sup>

Now it was the wage structure, which the settlers and the NRC had held so sacrosanct for so many years previously, which fell to the new market tightness. Havelock mines raised their monthly wages for the second time in a year, to £2/10/0 for surface work, £3/10/0 underground, scarcely 2/- below the going rate on the Rand at that time. The timber industry began offering £2/2/0 to Swazi children.<sup>44</sup> Sugar estates -- notorious for their low wage scales -- began paying £2/10/0 for weeders, £3/0/0 for cane cutters, and up to £4/10/0 for millhands.<sup>45</sup> The NRC's output suffered accordingly. 'The Natives', Whittle complained, 'almost without exception...attack (our) wage rate and ... openly (say), "You will get us.. for work on the Mines when you increase the wages"'.<sup>46</sup>

In response, the NRC at first did everything but increase the basic wage. Recruiting efforts were redoubled. 'Propaganda' campaigns had been limited in the past to the distribution of NRC calendars (despicting gold mine work as rich and exciting) and such cheap but useful giveaways as bookmatches and razorblades. Over 1947 it expanded its propaganda activities to include booklet literature on the rewards of mine labour, and meetings where the NRC message was conveyed by film and recording. The shows became rather elaborate, involving cartoons and American-made 'western' short subjects, then photographic slides with recorded messages depicting life on the mines. £25 per affair was budgeted to provide free beer and meat. Extra 'runners' (Swazi ex-miners who broadcast the NRC message at cattle dips, beer-drinks, weddings, and the like) were added in targeted areas.<sup>47</sup>

Successful, these propaganda meetings were given more emphasis throughout 1948. Along with the film shows, Whittle met and lobbied with individual chiefs, particularly during beer brewing season after the harvest (June-July) when the NRC's offer of free beer proved less of a draw. By far the most successful of the propaganda meetings was in September 1948 when five large gatherings (involving 2,000 to 5,000 each) were convened throughout the country and were given the official imprimatur of the 'Paramount Chief', Sobhuza II, himself.<sup>48</sup> The NRC delegation was headed by the General Manager from Johannesburg, G.O. Lovett, accompanied by District Superintendent Whittle and the most prominent recruiting officers. Sobhuza himself was present at the Lobamba and Ntonjeni meetings, and sent his personal representative to the others.

<sup>41</sup> Quarterly Report, Hlatikulu (December 1947); Secretary, Transvaal Chamber of Mines to Whittle, Johannesburg, 12 February 1948, NRCA 26. The wage rate for *umfaans* around WWI had been 3/- to 5/- per month. See above, fn. 21.

<sup>42</sup> NRC Monthly Report (November 1947), NRCA 26.

<sup>43</sup> NRC Monthly Reports (April and June 1948), NRCA 26.

<sup>44</sup> Monthly Report, Bremersdorp (Manzini) April 1948), NRCA 26.

<sup>45</sup> Monthly Report, Ingwavuma (March 1948), NRCA 26.

<sup>46</sup> NRC Monthly Report (February 1948), NRCA 26.

<sup>47</sup> Whittle to F. McCarter (Hlatikulu) 11 August 1947; NRC General Manager (Johannesburg) to Whittle, 30 January, 9 October, 27 October, and 21 November 1947, NRCA 36.

<sup>48</sup> The British administration refused to allow Sobhuza the title of 'King' from the time of his coronation until just prior to independence, in 1967.

For the NRC, the presence of the King (and at Lobamba the Queen Mother) was a coup of considerable magnitude, a fact of which Sobhuza was surely aware. He was willing to do so partly out of tradition: the royal house had sponsored and profited from migrant labour to the gold mines since its inception, keeping a hand in a force over which it had virtually no control.<sup>49</sup> But more immediate was the prospect of the NRC reward for his official endorsement of their recruiting efforts: the promise of the permanent posting of the King's personal representative at NRC headquarters in Johannesburg, a prize which he had long sought. For the King was as always conspicuously wary of those enterprises beyond his control which afforded large segments of this people access to wealth over which he had no direct influence.<sup>50</sup> Periodically in the past Sobhuza had placed his representatives (*indunas*) among the workers at the mines most frequented by Swazi, or stationed them at his residence in Sophiatown, outside Johannesburg. It had been by this means that he had retained his royal influence over young men living beyond his borders, influencing them, among other things, to return home after their contracts were up rather than disappearing forever into the ether of Johannesburg. His *indunas* were also useful in collecting the periodic royal taxes from mineworkers' wages. Now here was the Chamber of Mines offering to legitimize this practise in return for royal endorsement of the NRC recruiting operation in preference to its competition.

Sobhuza appeared personally at Lobamba and Ntonjeni dressed in traditional Swazi finery, flanked by one of his personal 'Skonyana' regiments 'wearing their national dress, coloured loin cloths, leopard and baboon skins, multi-coloured bead ornaments and armed with shields, assegais and kerries'. When he addressed the 2,500 gatherers his message was twofold: he noted with 'particular ... pleas(ure)' the Chambers' promise to receive at its Johannesburg headquarters his 'permanent representative'; and he advised his people to support the NRC, 'an old friend', and 'not strike up new acquaintances with those who were not concerned with the welfare of the Swazis'.<sup>51</sup>

The Corporation realized the value of royal support. Framed photographs of the King on the platform with Lovett were distributed to all offices for display and distribution, with the instructions:

When exhibiting these photographs to Natives, the angle to stress is the obviously close liaison that exists between the Paramount Chief and the Corporation and that, as they can see for themselves, Chief Sobhuza publicly and officially during the recent tour gave his blessing to our endeavours well-knowing them to be to the material advantage and gain of his people.<sup>52</sup>

NRC output rose 4% in 1949, and another 4% in 1950 (Table 1) -- years of heavy local demand in irrigation construction and forestry. How much of this was due to the King's influence, and how much to other adjustments by the NRC is impossible to tell, but adjustments there were. The main one was the 'Service Increment Scheme', the Corporation's answer (so it was said) to wage escalation in Swaziland and the other British territories. The scheme, however, was more a measure to raise the skill level of the goldmine workforce than it was an answer to the wage problem; in fact it raised the basic wage not at all, but provided monthly increases of 5/- for each successive 9-month contract, provided that the worker returned to the same mine within six months of his

<sup>49</sup> Crush, 'Struggle for Swazi Labour', pp. 224-309; Booth, 'Swazi Labour Market', p. 41; Booth, *Swaziland*, p. 23.

<sup>50</sup> The King's 1973 overthrow of the constitution and subsequent rule by decree was a direct consequence of this wariness, grown to alarm over a constituency of Swazi farmers' and workers' economic independence from him which became a political rejection. Booth, *Swaziland*, pp. 72-74.

<sup>51</sup> Meeting Held By the General Manager at Lobamba Royal Kraal, Near Mbabane, on 15th September 1948; 'Report on General Manager's Meeting Ntonjeni 20th Sept., 1948', NRCA 36.

<sup>52</sup> Whittle to L.J. Stewart (Bremersdorp), 14 February 1949, NRCA 36.



previous contract's termination.<sup>53</sup> Recruiters also touted the Assisted Voluntary System (AVS), which allowed for a 4-month contract: migrants could then be home at both planting and harvest times.<sup>54</sup>

Welcome as they may have been, those provisions were no substitute for a basic wage increase. 'The Natives state their need of increased pay is immediate', Whittle reported to Johannesburg, 'whereas the new (Service Increment) scheme will only benefit them after some years.'<sup>55</sup> Finally in 1949 the Corporation responded to the market and increased the basic mine wage 9%, from £3/12/6 to £4/0/0.<sup>56</sup> Output rose 4% in 1950, but then fell back 3% the year after, as the wages spiral spread. By 1951 the CDC's Swaziland Irrigation Scheme (SIS), Usutu Pulp, and the Pongola irrigated complex were all matching the NRC, and Anglo American Coal in the Transvaal was starting at £4 and going to £7 per month.<sup>57</sup> By 1953 the SIS had gone to £4/10/0 per month; and in April of that year the NRC bowed to the inevitable and once again upped its basic wage, this time 12.5% to £4/10/0. It also shortened its contract period to 6 months, to counter the local industries' advantage of handiness at plowing and harvest times.<sup>58</sup> In 1954, NRC output jumped a full 25%, and thereafter until 1960 it averaged 15% above the 1953 figure (Table 1).

Wages were only one indicator of the increasing sense of desperation overcoming local employers of scarce Swazi labour by the late 1940s. It was most acute among settler farmers who could not afford to employ runners and run busses in the southern districts to pick up and return labour on the weekends, as Havelock, Peak Timbers, Usutu Pulp, SIS, and other major employers did. The tactic they employed instead was to use all means to 'protect' their local labour supply, tenant and free, from the blandishments of the professional recruiter and his runner. They warned the men of miner's phthisis rampant in the mines, and the women that their men who migrated would never return. The men with families were told that 'if they took up mining employment the farm owners would victimise their families during their absence'. Farmers refused the NRC permission to use their private roads to recruit in remote areas. They told prospective migrants that South Africa would refuse them passes at the border. In the south they 'poached' labour in the dead of night, and by day they roamed the roads and 'pirat(ed)' people they gave lifts to.<sup>59</sup>

But it was to the political process that 'old' capital turned most importantly for redress, a process which it knew well. In 1947 the settler gentry began using the European Advisory Council, ever the bastion of settler power since 1921, to lobby the government into limiting the competition for Swazi labour which was constraining their farm production.

<sup>53</sup> Whittle to District Commissioner, Peak District, August 1948, NRCA 36. The departing miner was given a '5 Moon Bonus Certificate', and, after crossing out each of the five new moons depicted on the ticket, was supposed to make his way back to his mine before the sixth moon appeared. District Secretary, NRC Johannesburg to Whittle, 18 September 1952, NRCA 36.

<sup>54</sup> NRC Monthly Report (July 1948), NRCA 26. The worker, in return for the shorter contract, had to forego the popular cash advance and free transport to Johannesburg.

<sup>55</sup> NRC Monthly Report (July 1948), NRCA 26.

<sup>56</sup> NRC Monthly Report (October 1949), NRCA 26.

<sup>57</sup> Monthly Reports, Bremersdorp (February 1950), Piet Retief (August 1950), Mbabane (July 1951); and NRC Monthly Report (July 1951), NRCA 26.

<sup>58</sup> Monthly Reports, Bremersdorp and Piet Retief (April 1953), NRCA 26. The NRC in July 1952 had instituted an 'Incentive Bonus Scheme' for its runners, whereby individual output above a certain level (100% of the last 3 years' average) earned an extra capitation fee. In September 1953 it began allowing recruits to work only on the surface, in return for a lower wage rate. Many Swazi feared the dangers of subsurface work, and custom forbade royalty from going underground for any reason. NRC Monthly Reports (July 1952, January 1953, and September 1953), NRCA 26.

<sup>59</sup> Monthly reports, Mbabane (February and April 1949), Hlatikulu and Piet Retief (June 1950); and NRC Monthly Report (June 1950), NRCA 26; NRC (Whittle) Monthly Tour Report (February 1949), NRCA 26A.

That was assuredly preferable to raising wages. The coal mines, complained EAC councillor G.L. Wallis,

had agents all over the country. There was a world shortage of food, and Swaziland imported thousands of bags of maize a year. It ought to be able to feed itself, but it could not if farmers did not get labour. In his district farmers grew maize for their own use and for sale, but now they could not get the labour and had to buy maize.

In Wallis's case:

He used the cultivate 130 acres and employed eighteen labourers. Last spring he employed four labourers and could not therefore produce any crops... All South Africa was crying out for labour and the Union regarded the High Commission Territories as a reservoir (sic) of native labour and flocked to them for recruits and the local farmers then lacked the labour to produce more food.

'The time had come', Wallis concluded, for the government 'to put a limit to further recruiting'.<sup>60</sup>

There were two ways the administration could accomplish that without farmers having to raise wages: it could refuse to issue any new recruiting licenses, and it could halt the granting of advances. The advance system, by which the NRC and other recruiters (as well as some farmers) loaned contracted workers money (generally £5) against future earnings, had been found to be a superbly effective recruiting device. It had been widely used since the beginning of the century. Like other schemes it had been subject to abuse -- both by the recruiters, who had, before the government halted them, advanced up to £7 (in some instances, £12), and by the contractees, who had sometimes taken the advances and then gone to work for other employers, or simply disappeared. There was another, subtler abuse also practised by the recruiters in order to lock in their labour supply, which involved the 'grace period'. Once the prospective migrant had been contracted and paid his advance, he returned home for a period of time and used it to settle his affairs (pay tax, purchase cattle, buy food for his family) before reporting for transport to the mines. That interval was normally 14 to 30 days; but recruiters in their effort to obtain commitments from what labour was available took to lengthening the grace period to months, sometimes several months. Such men, with money in their pockets and under contract to a recruiter, were -- as idle as they appeared to the farmer -- effectively out of his reach as labourers.

Beginning in 1947 the EAC tried to get the government to put a stop to those abuses as 'immoral', even to the point of abolishing the advance system and eliminating runners. 'If recruiting was stopped', the argument went, 'there would still be recruiting offices to which they would go...' It was not necessary to 'go on issuing more licenses to more people to come and recruit Natives'. 'The Native', ran the complaint, 'can sell his labour in the highest market and at the present time he has a very shrewd idea of where the highest market exists'.<sup>61</sup>

In response the government neither dismantled traditional recruiting practices nor imposed wage structures for the sake of the farmers. But by 1949 the settler campaign was joined by new development capital (mainly timber), which likewise saw its interest in limiting labour's mobility beyond Swaziland. Their combined lobbying was enough to pressure the government into decreeing in mid-1949 a differentiated advance system, with domestic employers allowed to offer £5, while South African employers were limited to £3.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>60</sup> G.L. Wallis, Minutes, European Advisory Council (Executive Committee), 23 July 1947.

<sup>61</sup> G.L. McLean Luis and G.L. Wallis, Minutes, European Advisory Council, VII, 7,28 January 1948.

<sup>62</sup> NRC Monthly Report (August 1949), NRCA 26. The decree was formalized by Proclamation No. 82 of 1950, amending the Native Labour Regulation (Swaziland) Proclamation, 1913. Assistant General Manager, NRC Johannesburg to Whittle, 15 September 1951; NRC Monthly Report, 'Native Labour Regulations' (August 1951), NRCA 26.

The passage of the differential advance signalled a shift by the late 1940s in the balance of forces vying for Swazi labour. What had been a struggle between European settler and South African mine recruiter became, with the postwar penetration of foreign capital into Swaziland, a triangular contest. In that contest, with the passage of time, the common interests of new development capital and the settlers prompted them increasingly to ally against mine recruiters. And as the balance shifted, the Swazi monarchy realigned its position in concert with the colonial administration.

Broader forces at work explain the seeming abruptness of this change in royal attitude. For the very bases of the monarchy's power were its control over communal land tenure through the chiefs in the reserves ('Swazi Nation Land'), and the tribute labour system, whereby SNL chiefs and King could demand uncompensated fieldwork from Swazi males at various times during the agricultural cycle. As the years went by and the trickle of migrants became a flood, the threat of migrancy abroad to the viability of the Swazi Nation Lands and to tribute labour became more evident. In the interest of the reproduction of the monarchy it was preferable for men to migrate close by, where they could be called upon, looked after -- if need be kept in line -- far more easily than they could in far-off Johannesburg.

The change in royal attitude became evident during the early 1950s. In May 1951 the King accompanied the British Resident Commissioner on a tour of the CDC's 100,000 acre irrigation scheme (SIS) in the lowveld. There Sobhuza laid the cornerstone at the projected African housing project for the scheme's labourers and their families, and praised its value to Swazi education and labour.<sup>63</sup> In the month previous it had been the timber industry's turn. The NRC catalogued its chagrin over the King's about-face from his 1948 position:

It appears that the Paramount Chief is voicing his whole hearted support of local industries, in particular the timber industry, and is publicly exhorting local Swazis to do likewise... The Paramount Chief told a large gathering of natives that it was the duty of the Swazi to support local industries which were developing his country, rather than to proceed to the Rand where he is far from home and subject to evil influences.<sup>64</sup>

### *The 1950s: "Competition is Keener than Ever"*

Throughout the 1950s the battle between the NRC and local capital for the Swazi labourer was fought over the issues of wages, contract length, and working and living conditions.<sup>65</sup> Wages paid locally by the major employers in 1951 and 1952 were generally £3 to £4 per month, plus food, and work was a lot closer to home. The latter consideration proved to be an exceedingly important one to most Swazi men not only during the peak demand periods of the agricultural cycle, but on weekends as well, when larger concerns took to running bus services to the main recruiting points in the middle and lowveld.

Competition by the early 1950s focused not only on the labourers and their chiefs (along with of course the King), but also on the recruiters themselves. There was a scramble for the services of the most successful recruiters. Sidney B. Williams, a former colonial official, was hired away from Peak Timbers by the SIS in 1949.<sup>66</sup> Swazi storekeepers in many frequented areas were engaged by local industries as part-time recruiters for capita -

<sup>63</sup> 'Resident Commissioner and Paramount Chief Visit Swaziland Undertaking of C.D.C.', TOS, 12 May 1951.

<sup>64</sup> Monthly Report, Mbabane (April 1951), NRCA 26. For earlier examples of the conflict between migrancy abroad and the viability of the reserve land tenure and tribute labour system, see Crush, 'Landlords, Tenants and Colonial Social Engineers', 245-253.

<sup>65</sup> The South African coal mines, mainly NCONLA and Witbank Collieries (Anglo American, eastern Transvaal) attracted on the average no more than 5% of the numbers going off to the gold mines.

<sup>66</sup> 'SIS Labour Recruiting 1949-1950', Box 3049-K, SNA.

tion fees of 10/- per recruit. Professionals earned much more: £3/5/0 for 6-month recruits, £3/15/0 for 9-month attestees.<sup>67</sup> Of all local employers, Peak Timbers and the SIS offered wages, contract lengths and conditions that made them the keenest competitors of the NRC. The SIS went furthest in its proffering of amenities, offering both local transport and a housing scheme, early attempts to satisfy and stabilize its skilled labour force:

Swaziland Irrigation Scheme (reported Whittle) have approximately 2000 Natives and I have learned that wages paid are at the rate of £4 per month. A properly organized transport system has been inaugurated .. and youngsters not of age for outside employment are freely accepted. In addition, the men are encouraged to bring their womenfolk with them where married quarters as well as employment for the women, is provided.<sup>68</sup>

Whether or not that was true, Usutu Forests and the other CDC operations, along with Peak timbers, Havelock, and the other major Swaziland employers were by the early 1950s giving the NRC and the coal recruiters a run for their money. 'The demand for labour continues to outstrip the supply and the competition is keener than ever', Whittle commented, explaining his flat output figures to Johannesburg.<sup>69</sup> Farmers, 'desperately short of labour', were making 'strenuous efforts' to hold on their labour sources and were, where possible, replacing men with women and cruising cattle dips 'looking for labour in their cars'. 'Phenomenal development' within Swaziland was creating an 'inevitable tremendous demand for labour that is far in excess of the available supply....'<sup>70</sup>

All this competition was a boon, a seller's market, to the Swazi labourer. 'The Swazi is most independent', complained Whittle; 'he has plenty to choose from and sells his labour where and when he wishes'.<sup>71</sup> Employers -- farmers, agribusiness, timber -- compensated for the market by making commonplace the previously occasional hiring alternatives. Women and children were universally employed; and farmers, to match the competition from other sectors, took to providing their labour -- even female and child -- with daily free transport to homesteads. Many industries looked to Havelock's example and put 'clandestines' from Mozambique to work, up to perhaps 20 percent of their labour forces.<sup>72</sup> But those measures failed to free the marketplace, and Swazi were still, according to Whittle in the mid-1950s, 'select(ing) the type of employment they fancy at times to suit their convenience'.<sup>73</sup>

Even earlier in the decade, the labour shortage had become bad enough to prompt the administration to intervene gradually in the recruiting process. When it did so in 1951, it reversed its decades-old even-handed posture between local and foreign recruiting and began leaning toward support of local (settler/agribusiness) capital to relieve the labour squeeze. Government policy became to:

'gradually discourag(e) our labour from seeking employment outside the Territory & this must apply even in the case of Gold Mine labour .... We should concentrate on the improvement of conditions of pay etc. for local labour & limit our action in regard to migrant labour to the gradual reduction of (recruiting) licenses'.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>67</sup> NRC Monthly Reports (July 1951, April 1952 and July 1952), NRCA 26.

<sup>68</sup> NRC Monthly Report (July 1951), NRCA 26.

<sup>69</sup> Monthly Report, Mbabane (March 1953), NRCA 26.

<sup>70</sup> Monthly Reports, Mbabane (July 1951) and Piet Retief (April 1953); NRC Monthly Reports (June 1951 and September 1952), NRCA 26.

<sup>71</sup> NRC Monthly report (January 1953 and July 1954), NRCA 26.

<sup>72</sup> Monthly Report, Mbabane (May 1953); NRC Monthly Report (June 1954), NRCA 26; 'Foreign workers in Swaziland', Box 176, 3034-B, SNA.

<sup>73</sup> NRC Monthly Report (May 1954), NRCA 26.

<sup>74</sup> Resident Commissioner Minute to Government Secretary, 'Review of Labour Recruiting 1951', Box 92, 3049-M, SNA.

This new bias dominated government recruiting policy throughout the 1950s. Its treatment of the NRC provided the example. It informed Whittle in early 1953 that 'as a result of the undertakings given to the Advisory Council and the Swaziland Farmers' Association' the total number of Labor Agents Licences issued would be held to its current level. In 1955 it began utilizing recruiter deaths and transfers to reduce foreign (NRC/NCONLA) license numbers even further.<sup>75</sup>

It was not just in this manner that the government favoured local employment in its market intervention. As more industries turned to Mozambican labour (Table 2) -- 'clandestine' by virtue of WNLA contracts making Mozambique the exclusive domain of Rand recruiters -- the administration studiously ignored the fact of its employment in Swaziland. The subject was kept in a separate, secret file in the Government Secretary's office:

I think it was decided (the Government Secretary minuted to the Resident Commissioner in 1951) that we should turn a blind eye to the recruiting of Shangaans as they were already in Swaziland when they were recruited, & we did not do or allow any actual recruiting to take place in P.E.A. (Portuguese East Africa).

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<sup>75</sup> Government Secretary to Whittle, Mbabane, 16 January 1953, 'Labour Agents' Licences: Renewals', Box 92, 3049-B/1 (II), SNA.

Table 2: Employment of Labor Within Swaziland (June 1951, June 1956, and June 1960) By Industries Employing More Than 50 Workers

<u>1951</u>	<u>Swazi</u>			<u>Foreign</u>		<u>Total</u>
Public Works	751					751
Forestry	2,643					2,643
Mining	916			1,337		2,253
Citrus	1,570			265		1,835
Other	264			14		278
<u>Totals</u>	<u>6,144</u>			<u>1,616</u>		<u>7,760</u>
<u>1956</u>	<u>Swazi</u>			<u>Foreign</u>		<u>Total</u>
Public Works	602			14		616
Forestry	3,335			64		3,399
Mining	1,077			1,049		2,126
Citrus	1,771			313		2,984
Other	1,285			213		1,497
<u>Totals</u>	<u>8,070</u>			<u>1,653</u>		<u>9,723</u>
<u>1960</u>	<u>Swazi</u>			<u>Foreign</u>		<u>Total</u>
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Fmle</u>	<u>Jvnle</u>	<u>Port</u>	<u>Other</u>	
Public Works	1,239	13	3	41	25	1,321
Forestry	3,513	181	249	85	190	4,218
Mining	554	14	104	571	342	1,585
Citrus and Sugar	3,684	788	624	1,017	908	7,021
Other	233			6	4	243
<u>Total Swazi Workers:</u>						<u>11,199</u>
<u>Total Foreign Workers:</u>						<u>3,189</u>
<u>Totals</u>	<u>9,223</u>	<u>996</u>	<u>980</u>	<u>1,720</u>	<u>1,469</u>	<u>14,388</u>
<u>% Increase Swazi Adult Male Workers:</u>				1951-1956: 31.4		
				1956-1960: 14.3		
				1951-1960: 50.1		
<u>% Increase in Foreign Workers:</u>				1951-1956: 2.3		
				1956-1960: 92.3		
				1951-1960: 97.3		
<u>% Foreign Workers in Swaziland</u>				1951: 20.8		
<u>Domestic Workforce:</u>				1956: 17.0		
				1960: 22.2		

Source: Swaziland Monthly Labour Returns, 3049-L, Swaziland National Archives.

'We cannot ... profess official ignorance of the position', wrote the Resident Commissioner in reply. 'The new Irrigation Scheme will employ a large number of Shangaans when the scheme is in full working'.<sup>76</sup> The government continued to quietly support the employment of Mozambican (and lesser numbers of Nyasan) labour until 1963. Then, the combined pressures of Swazi unemployment and the politics of approaching independence emboldened the monarchy to pressure the colonial administration to put a stop to further employment of foreign labour, and to repatriate it. That was carried out during 1964 and 1965.

<sup>76</sup> Minutes, Government Secretary and Resident Commissioner, 18 January and 27 February 1961, 'Recruitment of Native Labour (General)', Box 92, 3049-D, SNA.

The government policy toward the increase of female and 'umfaans' (child) recruiting, which was markedly stepped up during the 1950s, was not to have a policy at all. In 1954 Peak timbers began offering them advances, with dramatic results:

Most of the recruits have been young boys under tax paying age (18 years), and the advances they have been given have been in the region of 10s. and £1.0.0.

Other industries, principally the CDC and the irrigation scheme, followed Peak Timbers's lead. Although there was no economic rationale (taxpaying or *lobola*) for the granting of such advances, outside of the 'desperate' shortage of labour, the government did nothing to stop the practise. Of the adults hired alongside the children, roughly 25% were women.<sup>77</sup>

It is easy to see broader forces at play in government support of local employment, although in Swaziland's case they were largely unspoken. The postwar decade was one of great upheaval in British colonial affairs the world over. In southern Africa the 1948 election in South Africa turned the world of British assumptions on its head. Britain as a result reversed its decades-old policy of eventual incorporation of the Protectorates (especially Swaziland) into the Union, just as it fashioned the Central African Federation to counterbalance and contain the Afrikaners to the south (not to mention African paramountcy to the north). As in the case of the Federation, London's emphasis on Swaziland became -- even more than during the prewar years when it *had* been preparing the territory for transfer -- the development of a 'European-managed infrastructure' which would result in rapid economic development.<sup>78</sup>

Coincident to that was the imposition of a decade of British postwar neomercantilism aimed at extracting capital and commodities from its colonies toward the relief of its own desperate economic condition. Swaziland, too small for the currency and marketing boards or the groundnut schemes imposed elsewhere in Africa, could nevertheless make its own modest contribution with favourable balance sheets in CDC-sponsored timber, citrus and sugar projects -- all of them labour-intensive.<sup>79</sup> Those considerations made it easy for government officials to begin favouring local enterprise in the competition for Swazi labour.

The total of aggressive and reemphasized recruiting, and government support for dubious local hiring practises along with strict enforcement of NRC/NCONLA restrictions, was a gain for local capital. 'There has been no upward trend in the output of labour for Union Industries generally', reported Whittle to Johannesburg in 1954, 'but a greater volume of labour has been available to farmers and other concerns within Swaziland'.<sup>80</sup> But the *laissez faire* policy of government led to some unfortunate excesses which eventually required its intervention. In 1950 it was discovered that Swaziland Ranches (SIS) was hiring young girls (aged 13 and 14) as labourers without the knowledge of their parents, offering them £1/15/0 per month but paying them only £1/0/0, and housing them amongst the male labour force without any policing or supervision. The girls after a hard day's labour were repeatedly and promiscuously violated by night. This was how one victim recalled the experience:

There were many men in the Mubeni Compound. I was put into a hut at the Compound with Sifapi and Margaret and two young boys of about 15 years.... My

<sup>77</sup> Monthly Reports, Bremersdorp (August 1954), and Mbabane (October 1954), NRCA 26.

<sup>78</sup> Ronald Hyam, *The Failure of South African Expansion 1908-1948* (New York, 1972), pp. 163-183, 189-190; Prosser Gifford, 'Misconceived Dominion: The Creation and Disintegration of Federation in British Central Africa', in P. Gifford and W.R. Louis (eds.), *The Transfer of Power in Africa: Decolonization 1940-1960* (New Haven, 1982), pp. 389-400.

<sup>79</sup> David Fieldhouse, 'Decolonization, Development, and Dependence; A Survey of Changing attitudes', in Gifford and Louis, *Transfer of Power*, pp. 486-490.

<sup>80</sup> NRC Monthly Report (February 1954), NRCA 26. Whittle's assessment was not borne out by the 1954 statistics. See Table 1.

people did not know I was at Swaziland Ranches Ltd. No one got permission from my people to take me to Ranches Ltd. There were many other girls of our age at Mkwakweni Compound... Foreign Natives in our compound made love to me.. There was no separate compound for women at Mubeni. We all lived together... I have not received my money. I finished a month at work. the work is hard. The food was bad. The huts were rotten. Daylight could be seen through them. There is much sickness.

The government's remedial action was to contact the CDC and receive its assurance that it would put a stop to the recruiting of young girls, and would police the labour compounds with *indunas* (officers) appointed by the King.<sup>81</sup>

From an exclusive reading of *The Times of Swaziland*, one would scarcely have known that anything was amiss in Swaziland's labour market. For *The Times*, ever from its inception (1897) the voice of local interests, had during the immediate postwar years begun to swing toward reflecting the new interests of development capital. Under the editorship of Allister Miller, its founder and publisher (1897-1950), it had staunchly supported editorially the agricultural concerns of the settler farmer, and after them (in labour matters) the interests of the NRC and other Union recruiters. Miller, himself a prominent farmer and onetime founder and president of the Swaziland Farmers' Association, saw to that by writing most of the leading articles (editorials) himself. But in 1950, at age 83, Miller relinquished control and sold *The Times of Swaziland* to a South African publishing firm. Even before then, as Miller edged into retirement, the newspaper had gradually shifted its position towards exclusive backing of the limiting of labour mobility to within the borders of Swaziland. 'The natural evolution towards stability of a country is based on the activities of the primary producer', it editorialized in 1947.

Without full utilisation of Nature's gifts a population lives a parasitic existence batening on wages earned beyond the frontiers of the home land, subject always to the fluctuation of demand... It is an unhealthy policy. Had energy, similar to that spent underground in the Union by mine workers, been expended on the soil in this country prosperity would have been recorded and not hunger in the autumn of 1946.

Citing the new creamery, power plant and tung oil processing mill, *The Times* concluded:

The future of this Territory rests with the primary producer, whether he is on our soil or a worker of rocks (i.e. asbestos) or coal seams. Secondary industries follow as a matter of course, and there is no country with greater natural facilities for cheap power nor encouragement for those who can profitably use it.<sup>82</sup>

Over the following years as timber, pulp, and irrigated agribusiness made their impact on Swaziland, *The Times* followed developments with a bright enthusiasm untarnished by a hint of criticism. The afforestation schemes in 1947 would bring 'a natural increase to the wealth of the territory' in the form of wages and taxes.<sup>83</sup> The Usutu pulp scheme would 'add to progress'.<sup>84</sup> Other articles praised the Swaziland Irrigation Scheme, timber manufacture, fruit production and processing, and sugar. Through high wages, up-to-date housing schemes, and modern educational and recreation facilities, all industries would bring, the newspaper confidently predicted, stability, prosperity and happiness to the

<sup>81</sup> Affidavit to Elizabeth Msibi (age 14), Ezulwini, 23 June 1950; Commissioner of Police to Government Secretary, Mbabane, 23 June 1950; Minute, Government Secretary to Resident Commissioner, 10 July 1950, 'S.I.S. Labour Recruiting, 1949-1950, 3049-K, SNA. The Swazi Ranches Ltd. recruiting officer involved was Sidney B. Williams.

<sup>82</sup> 'Production', TOS, 23 October 1947.

<sup>83</sup> 'Afforestation', TOS, 21 August 1947.

<sup>84</sup> 'Mass Afforestation. Official Announcement', TOS, 1 September 1949.



Swazi worker and his family. 85 Nothing, -- least of all foreign recruiting -- should stand in the way of labour's contribution to development for the benefit of all.

Consequently by the late 1950s virtually all elements of what constituted the establishment in Swaziland -- the colonial administration, the press, the monarchy, the Reconstituted European Advisory Council with its new membership -- were in full support of new development capital or leaning toward it. The traditional capital interests away from which this support moved -- settler agriculture and foreign labour recruiting -- were not directly opposed by the establishment as much as they were simply left to their own devices, without government subsidy or significant support. This was most notably illustrated by the government solution during the late 1950s to the decades-old problem of maize deficits.

Since the early 1900s with the imposition of migrant labour, Swaziland had been, with only occasional exceptions, a progressively dependent importer of maize from South Africa. *The Times of Swaziland* under Allister Miller had perennially decried the condition and called for various government subsidies in cropping, transport and marketing to make the settler farmer productive to the point of national self-sufficiency. That had never happened, and by the 1950s the need for substantial quantities of cheap maize to feed the local labor forces was straining the distribution system as heavily as it was production. And local industry, which was the most seriously affected of all by these shortages, was by then positioned to bring pressure to bear on the administration to solve the problem as industry itself defined it.<sup>86</sup>

Consequently the government responded to an ancient problem in a novel way. Deemphasizing its attempts to subsidize maize production, it granted in 1958 a monopoly to a South African milling concern, Wm. Kirsh (Pty.) Ltd. of Potchefstroom, for the purchase (including imports), storage, milling and marketing of all maize and maize meal within Swaziland. The monopoly, the granting of which had the full support of the Farmers' Association, the Chamber of Commerce and the Advisory Council, was to run from 1959 to 1976, and granted Kirsh generous incentives in the spheres of pricing and the restriction of competition.<sup>87</sup> Thereafter the government, in its effort to support the needs of mass employers, in effect abandoned its perennial attempts at fashioning a settler maize productivity policy and turned the problem over to Kirsh, irrespective of the costs in price or South African dependency.<sup>88</sup>

The sum total of these changes was a gradual easing of the labour problems of various local industries by the late 1950s, with the exception of limber. There the Swazi workers voted with their feet against what they considered poor working conditions (long exposure to rain and cold) and inadequate compensation (especially demanding piecework tasks). Peak Timbers and Swaziland Plantations were beset by deserters to other industries during the late 1950s, many of whom took advances and then disappeared.

85 'Farmers' Day at Swaziland Irrigation Ltd.', and 'Resident Commissioner and Paramount Chief Visit Swaziland Undertaking of C.D.C.', TOS, 12 May 1951; 'Usutu Forests. A Contribution to the Economic Development of Swaziland', TOS, 31 May 1952; 'Swaziland's Remarkable Agricultural Progress', TOS, 19 November 1955; 'Africans' Reponse to Development in Swaziland', TOS, 17 December 1955; 'A Visit to the Canning Factory at Malkerns', TOS, 17 March 1956; '£3,000,000 Holding Company', TOS, 25 May 1957; 'The Bushveld Yields of its Wealth. Sugar Production at Big Bend', TOS, 3 June 1960.

86 The maize farmers grew sufficient crops to feed their labour forces, and for foreign recruiting the problem existed in the Union mines and farms, not in Swaziland.

87 'Maize', TOS, 25 April 1959; Interview with Nathan Kirsh, Johannesburg, 2 March 1983.

88 During the early 1960s when Swaziland Milling raised the maize price by 20 percent, those industries feeding large labour forces bitterly complained that its founder, Nathan Kirsh, had broken his gentleman's agreement to hold prices constant and taken unfair advantage of his monopoly. Noone denied that in the process Kirsh had nicely solved the supply and distribution problem; and Kirsh (who parlayed his initial Swaziland investment into one of South Africa's largest personal fortunes) later claimed that his maize operation had consistently lost money, that his sorghum beer-malt milling venture had generated all his Swaziland profits. Robert P. Stephens, Minutes, Reconstituted European Advisory Council, 22 May 1961; Interview with Robert P. Stephens, Pigg's Peak, Swaziland, 15 June 1981; Interview with Nathan Kirsh, Johannesburg, 23 March 1983.

Mass desertions from Swaziland Plantations brought on questions as to the working conditions there, which resulted in a government investigation of the timber industry in 1960. Those who deserted with advances (some with over £7) went off to Mhlume sugar or Havelock asbestos, which on occasion took them on rather than returning them as absconders, so desperate was their need for labour.<sup>89</sup>

During those years however, the NRC held its own, its output levels from 1955 to 1960 remaining nearly constant (Table 1) in spite of periodic evidence of government favouritism to local industry. In 1957 for example, the administration denied permission to the NRC to set up a recruiting office in the Pigg's Peak lowveld area on the grounds that "local (timber) industries will have insufficient labour for their own needs in the years to come".<sup>90</sup> But even that was not enough to suit the timber industry. Its member on the Advisory Council, Robert Stephens, called for a government-imposed quota on NRC output of no more than 3,000 and a raise in the advance rate for local employers to £20. Neither provision was adopted, but the NRC saw these pressures as the 'thin edge of the wedge' of 'pressure which local industries are bringing to bear on the Administration with increasing frequency' which would escalate 'until Government are forced to make a policy declaration dealing with labour'.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Monthly Reports, Mbabane (March, April and August 1960); NRC Monthly Reports (March and June 1960), NRCA 26.

<sup>90</sup> Monthly Report, Mbabane (November 1957), NRCA 26.

<sup>91</sup> Monthly Report, Mbabane (February 1957); NRC Monthly Report (January 1957), NRCA 26.

## Conclusion

The government labour allocation policy which the NRC feared never materialized, for the labour shortage of the late 1950s turned into a surplus by the early 1960s. By then, local cropping and construction were stabilising as postwar economic growth slowed, at the same time as gold mine employment on the Witwatersrand was levelling off. Colonial emphasis on education had resulted in a jump in numbers of school leavers, on top of a demographic growth rate of 3.5%, which was nearly doubling the population every generation.<sup>92</sup>

In 1957 the government appointed its first labour officer in response to the growing complexity of the labour market and the first manifestations of labour unrest over working conditions -- desertions and occasional strikes. The officer, Patrick Forsyth-Thompson, made a survey of labour conditions in the major local industries during 1957 and 1958, and continued with the smaller employers during the following two years.<sup>93</sup> In 1960 the Commonwealth Relations Office scrutinized labour legislation in Swaziland (in fact in all three British protectorates), which resulted in the publication of the Catchpole Report that year.<sup>94</sup> The report summarized the labour conditions developing within Swaziland, conditions which would lead to the first serious labour unrest in the country during 1962-1963, sparking the 1963 Emergency Declaration.

The basic labour law operating in Swaziland, Catchpole observed, was still the 1880 Transvaal enactment (including its Master and Servant Law), which had been incorporated in the laws of Swaziland in 1903. He described a country, partly as the result of this, presenting 'the unusual picture of developing industry with considerable potential for further expansion, and a labour force dominated by tribal affiliations under the Paramount Chief';

There are no organizations of workers and the task of representing complaints and grievances to employers which is normally the function of trade unions, is undertaken by Ndunas appointed by the Swazi National Council and allocated by them to particular employers ... Ndunas... have been appointed for their political rather than their industrial experience ... (and) are paid by the firm to which they are accredited and it is not unlikely that workers have... come to regard them as... biased... representative of the employers rather than of workers...

Wages in all industries and occupations are determined by employers alone...

(The work of the Labor Officer) depends almost entirely on the good will and cooperation of employers...

In short, labour conditions in Swaziland were such that only conditions of extreme worker shortage (as existed throughout the 1950s) kept the employers from utilizing the full exploitative powers available to them in the workplace under the existing legislation and conditions. When unemployment developed during the early 1960s and the employers as a result cut wages and reduced benefits, existing conditions caused the Swazi workforce to erupt into a wave of strikes, bringing on a political crisis to state and monarchy which only the importation of British troops could contain.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Booth, 'Swazi Labour Market', 51; Booth, *Swaziland*, p. 32

<sup>93</sup> Labour Officer Reports, 1957, 1958, 1959, and 1960, 3049-W, SNA. Report headings were; Staff; Contracts; Rations; Quarters; Medical Care; Benefits; Pay Rates, Hours, and Tasks; Leave; Pension Schemes; Recreation Facilities; Labour Management; Recruiting Systems; Scope for Africans and Euraficans; and Education Facilities.

<sup>94</sup> F.C. Catchpole, 'Report on Labour Legislation in Swaziland', Mbabane, 1960.

<sup>95</sup> Booth, 'Swazi Labour Market', 51-52; Booth, *Swaziland*, p. 32; Fransman, 'State and Development', pp. 196-238.

The origins of most of the conditions described in the Catchpole report and which touched off those strikes could be traced back to the early years of the 20th century. What caused them to erupt during the early 1960s was way in which foreign development capital had come to dominate the political economy of the country and to shape its labour market during the years immediately following World War II. What had during the late 1940s been a triangular competition for labour, much to the advantage of the Swazi worker, became by the 1950s something quite different. As the effects of the new industrial power worked their way through every level of the economy, all elements of the establishment -- the colonial administration, the Advisory Council, the press, and the monarchy-- swung toward support of development capital in the struggle for labour. They did so, finally, with such effectiveness that a change in the labour market in the early 1960s from scarcity to worker surplus let loose forces which had been building for years checked only by the labourers' market of the 1950s, which touched off violent unrest and the political crisis of 1963.

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## 5. INNOVATION AND COMMUNAL LAND TENURE IN SWAZILAND: A CASE STUDY OF SMALLHOLDER IRRIGATION SCHEMES ON SWAZI NATION LAND

*Fion de Vletter*

This paper is based on work recently undertaken with the Land Tenure Project coordinated by the Land Tenure Centre of the University of Wisconsin through the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives in Swaziland. A full report of the findings, based largely on a survey of irrigation schemes on Swazi Nation land, will be published at the end of 1986. The author is grateful to the University of Wisconsin for allowing him to publish some of the findings in advance.

### I. Introduction

Much of the literature on rural development in Swaziland has *prima facie* accepted that land tenure practices on communally held areas (for our purposes simply referred to as Swazi Nation Land<sup>1</sup> are an obstacle to innovation. The rapidity with which these homesteads, and those authorities governing them, have accepted innovations such as the plough, row planting, contour ploughing and grass stripping, cash cropping, tractor hire, fertilizer application, fencing and rotational grazing is, however, indicative of the flexibility within Swazi "traditional" society. Outside of brief consideration by Hughes (1972), very little analysis has been made of the process of adoption and adaptation by Swazi Nation homesteads.<sup>2</sup>

When considering the comparatively recent development of irrigation schemes on Swazi Nation Land (SNL), prejudice against what are assumed to be the inhibiting influences of communal land tenure still continues. This is evidenced in the number of studies commissioned over the past 20 years proposing smallholder-nucleus estate schemes (viz. UNDP/FAO, 1970; US Army Corps of Engineers, 1981; Tate and Lyle, 1982; Devres, 1985) which have essentially recommended isolation from the "interference" of traditional authority by establishing autonomously managed enclaves within communal land tenure areas. This type of model (favoured by the World Bank) is given preferential treatment in the Fourth National Development Plan<sup>3</sup> and endorsed by some of the main donor agencies. Within the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, however, there is evidence that a less capital intensive, smaller scale and more grass-roots orientated approach, such as advocated by the FAO, is being revived.

<sup>1</sup>The question of what constitutes Swazi Nation Land has been examined by Armstrong (1986). Swazi Nation Land was previously referred to as "Swazi Areas" during the colonial period. However, through the "Lifa Fund" and under the British Land Transfer Program, the Swazi Nation has purchased back land lost to concessionaires in the 19th century. This repurchased land is registered in the name of the Ngenyama-in-Trust for the Swazi Nation. As Armstrong points out, sometimes this land is given to chiefs and administered according to Swazi law and custom, but more often the land is used by the Tibiyo and Tisuka funds (companies investing on behalf of the Royal Family) for agricultural or industrial projects and housing developments. It appears that, although private land registered in the name of the King-in-Trust becomes Swazi Nation Land, this land seems to enjoy a rather different tenurial status than the former "Swazi Areas" of Swazi Nation Land.

<sup>2</sup>More insight into the process of transition within Swazi Nation Land can be expected from the forthcoming doctoral work of Paul Bowen who has recently completed anthropological field work at the Ntamakuphila irrigation scheme.

<sup>3</sup>The Fourth National Development Plan states that: "Irrigation development in contrast (to rain-fed agriculture), offers improved prospects in terms of employment creation and income generation per land area... Future developments should take into consideration the national factor endowment and concentrate on employment creation and export diversification, with the nucleus/small-holder scheme as the base model". Continuing, in reference to irrigation development, the Plan states that: "As in the case of modern sector development, appropriate organizational and support structures are fundamental", suggesting that the traditional system would impede such a framework and these schemes would somehow bypass traditional authority

There are currently some 25 small-holder irrigation schemes on Swazi Nation Land as well as a few irrigated plantations operating on Swazi Nation Land purchased by the "Lifa Fund"<sup>4</sup>. Smallholder-nucleus estate schemes are still only in the blueprint phase. Much of the inspiration for the latter schemes has been drawn from the apparent success of the Vuvulane Irrigated Farms (VIF) where farmers, in contract with the CDC and the adjacent Mhlume mill, grow primarily sugar. The scheme has, in fact, been plagued by problems between management and farmers for many years. These were exacerbated by the changing of its tenurial status when VIF was ceded by the CDC to the Swazi Nation in 1983. The conflict, which remains unresolved, culminated in a commission of enquiry of the farmers' grievances in 1985<sup>5</sup>.

It is the contention of the author that, although some of the feasibility reports of the smallholder-nucleus estate schemes give much attention to the question of land tenure, recent studies have: i) based their arguments on distorted evidence and have, in turn, used them to support the case of large autonomous schemes and, ii) made no substantive recommendations for alternative forms of authority (apart from vague descriptions of "Basin Development Authorities" or "Settlement Bodies") nor considered the land tenure implications arising from the proposed schemes. The former reflects methodological weakness and it is hoped that the findings below, based on all SNL irrigation schemes<sup>6</sup>, will offer a better understanding of how such schemes have been implemented and adopted on Swazi Nation Land. The latter, bearing in mind the crisis prevailing at VIF, is a serious omission without which there seems little point in engaging in any meaningful discussion about the relative merits of large scale schemes.

The basic proposition set out in this paper is that, contrary to previous arguments, smallholder irrigation schemes are not incompatible with the customary land laws of communal land tenure and that important aspects of operating these schemes, e.g. inception, membership, management, discipline, relocation, compensation and succession, have been suitably assimilated within the "traditional" framework of the Swazi Nation.

## **II. Communal land tenure and rural development**

"Farmers efforts to develop productive irrigated agriculture can be frustrated by customary tenure. Land tenure provisions should freely permit adoption of new farming techniques...

<sup>4</sup>Schemes such as Sihoya and Sifunga are operated by Tibiyo as estates much along the same lines as those on title deed land.

<sup>5</sup>Following the change of tenurial status, the farmers alleged that the late King Sohuza promised that they would be soon regarded as permanent residents and that they would not have to pay rent. The subsequent introduction of rent (to replace previous charges), combined with allegations of management injustices and a variety of other issues, caused 63 of the 263 small-holders to refuse to cut their cane. Although the commission of enquiry has submitted its findings to the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, nothing has been disclosed to the farmers who feel they have a right to be informed of the findings (The Weekend Sun 25.7.86). In the meantime, the CDC (under a management contract) was "ready to pull out, financially crippled and completely at sea as to who was ultimately responsible in the decisionmaking chain" (Swazi Life, August 1986). So far the scheme has managed to avoid closure and management is calling for tough action against the dissenting farmers: 35 will receive a warning, 9 will be sued for longstanding debts and a further 11 farmers, alleged to be uncooperative and poor producers with long-standing debts, will face court evictions (Swazi Life, August 1986).

<sup>6</sup>The survey, to our knowledge, covers all but one of the small-holder irrigation schemes on Swazi Nation Land. The one missing (Qhubekani) was considered both too difficult to reach and relatively too insignificant to justify the effort to locate it. Of the 24 schemes examined, one is, for the time being, inoperative pending a decision by authorities at Lobamba over a dispute (Magagane), while another (Mkhiwenis) is still in its planning stages.



Difficulties (are) experienced by smallholder irrigation schemes on Swazi Nation Land under customary tenure... and the conclusion drawn (is) that the customary tenure is incompatible with this type of development" (Tate and Lyle, 1982).

"The development objectives of the Swazi people cannot be achieved so long as customary land tenure in its present form predominates in the rural areas" (Maina and Strieker, 1971).

"Although the traditional land tenure system represents a serious constraint to the full development of agriculture on Swazi Nation Land, the issue is not generally examined carefully because of its highly political and emotional nature". (Magagula, 1982).

"..land cannot be commercially or privately alienated and thus cannot serve as security. From this perspective, land tenure is not so much too insecure as too secure... Any change in land tenure would involve and precipitate the revolutionary transfer of the greater part of Swazi society. There is no surer way of depriving a peasant of his land than giving him freely negotiable title to it". (Hamnett, 1970).

"No changes should be made in the present system of land tenure which is a crucial source of security and presents no serious obstacle to the adoption of capital improvements necessary for irrigation". (Downs, 1983).

Maina's and Strieker's (1971) discussion of land tenure is perhaps the most comprehensive of the few formal reports examining the sensitive issue of land reform. They argue that: "The development objectives of the Swazi people cannot be achieved so long as customary tenure in its present form predominates the rural areas" and that farmers will only make the necessary investments for viable commercial agriculture if they possess "certain definite, legally protected and commercially essential rights in his land" or more specifically: i) permanency of tenure, ii) clarity of title and iii) freedom of alienability (to at least have the power to utilize the money value of the land as a source of financial capital). They do, however, recognise that, given the few evictions that take place and that most farmers have a good idea of their boundaries, the first two rights do effectively exist under customary land tenure. But, they argue that "these rights, however much they exist in fact, do not exist with the certainty that is required by modern agriculture". To overcome this problem, they recommend a phased programme which would adapt customary land tenure firstly through the adjudication, consolidation, demarcation and registration of land and secondly through the voluntary acquisition of leasehold rights (by chiefdom).

Maina's and Strieker's basic argument is that the lack of total security of land and the inability to use land as security against loans has impeded agricultural transformation. It is one used by many writers on rural development and is appealing in its convenience to explain the lack of commercial agriculture by Swazi Nation farmers. A more realistic argument, however, might be that the fear of resettlement is a more tangible obstacle as homesteads moved by the government resettlement schemes cannot claim compensation for permanent improvement (see IV.3) Nevertheless, the prevalence of permanent brick houses (even in areas not yet resettled) which have been erected in the past few years would appear to belie the notion that Swazis are reluctant to put substantial investments into communal tenure land.

Hughes (1972), whose formidable work on land tenure in Swaziland is still regarded as the most important reference on the topic, considers "innovations" in his study by looking at fencing, gardens, forest lots, etc. Surprisingly, he gives very little attention to irrigation

schemes despite the fact that 5 schemes had been established before and another 3 during the year of publication of his study.

Irrigation schemes could be seen as an alien concept to "traditional" values in Swazi culture for two reasons. First, they are relatively new, the earliest being established some 25 years ago. But, more importantly, schemes in many ways would seem to conflict with the structure of Swazi society which is hierarchical and, at the same time, individualistic in nature. Homesteads are effectively independent economic units contributing communally only when called upon by their traditional rulers (chiefs or the King) for certain ceremonial functions. Although most schemes run as associations, allowing farmers to reap the benefits of toil from their individual plots, a fundamental prerequisite for the success of any irrigation scheme is the cooperation and coordination of its members to work collectively as a group for certain common objectives - an approach with which most farmers are unfamiliar.

A prevailing assumption of many writers is that customary law creates a monolithic and inflexible framework generally inhibiting progressive ideas from germinating within Swazi Nation Land. Case histories of SNL irrigation schemes, however, demonstrate the fluidity of customary law which, by definition, reflects what is accepted as custom or norms in a society. These can differ markedly from chiefdom to chiefdom, but are guided by certain principles. In effect, Swazi society, is far from rigid in its attitudes, and evidence of its flexibility can be demonstrated in the way homesteads have, over time, responded to modernity.

Armstrong (1986), in her analysis of the legal aspects of land tenure in Swaziland warns against taking the works of Hughes and other foreigners who have written on "customary law" too literally as their information was obtained from interviews or panels of Swazi headmen who are prone to depict custom in ways to serve their purpose and that, by recording these "customary laws", there is a danger of implying that such laws are static when custom is, in fact, in a constant state of flux. It is therefore important to see the issue of customary law and land tenure as being "not so much a set of rules as practices and processes of negotiation (which makes it difficult for a Swazi to answer a hypothetical question about a rule to be applied in a particular situation)" (Armstrong, 1986).

It is in this context that the land tenure implications of irrigation schemes will be tackled. From our findings and other case studies, it is evident that there are very few standard rules applying to irrigation schemes and their members concerning issues such as membership, inheritance, eviction, the role of the chief and the participation of women. Over time, as irrigation schemes become more common on Swazi Nation Land, we can expect more convergent treatment of these issues and increasing standardization of approach.

### **III. A brief socio-economic profile of SNL irrigation schemes**

To give some idea of the basic characteristics of the schemes, a brief overview of findings from a survey of 22 known operational SNL irrigation schemes is presented below.

Although the first scheme was started in 1960, most were established in the early 1970s. This growth was, not directly attributable to government: as discussed below, the initiative for establishing the schemes emanated mostly within the community, either by farmers through the chief, or by the chief himself. Government, however, played an important supporting role, undertaking much of the construction work and often providing material and technical inputs.

Most schemes were run as "farmer's associations" (giving each farmer basic autonomy within the rules set down by the scheme committee); there was only one full cooperative and 8 joint cooperative/associations.

Vistors to irrigation schemes will note that a majority of those found on the plots are women. Generally this is attributed to women working on behalf of their homesteads whose male heads are often away, engaged in wage employment. In reality there is much more formal involvement: 13 schemes had female members (in those schemes which had membership by homestead, women had taken over the responsibility from deceased husbands and were designated as members representing the homestead); 2 schemes (Vumathando and KaNdwandwe) were comprised entirely of women; Vumathando having been initiated by the wife of the local chief. The importance of women in the running of the schemes is evidenced from their disproportionate representation (in relation to their official membership numbers) on the committees. Of the 22 operational schemes, 19 had women sitting on their committees (women are often elected to the committees as "members" of schemes where membership is given to homesteads despite the presence of male homestead heads). The ratio of women to men on committees is usually between one-third and one-half.

Scheme size varied greatly (3-100 ha) as did the number of participants (6-53). Plot size also varied considerably, but tended to be between one-half to one hectare. The mean number of scheme members was 25. Though success was difficult to measure without looking at the financial books of each scheme (something to which most schemes were averse when requested by a stranger), the degree of disparity between the schemes was manifest in the amount of equipment available: 8 had no equipment (being largely dependent upon gravity irrigation by furrows from reservoirs constructed at government expense); 4 Taiwanese assisted schemes had requisite allocations of rotavators, tillers and threshers; 4 had at least one pump; 2 had at least one tractor; and 5 had a minimum of one pump and a tractor. Joining fees ranged from virtually nothing in the government initiated schemes to more than E400 per member on the more sophisticated schemes.

Most of the schemes grew a combination of maize and vegetables during the summer and winter seasons, but a few schemes - especially those operating as cooperatives - specialized in sugar, rice (during summer only) or maize (multiple harvests).

Each scheme has a committee which is elected and is responsible for making financial decisions, organising work schedules and ensuring compliance to regulations (sometimes formalized in a constitution).

Regarding institutional links, the closest association was with the government which was often directly involved in the construction of schemes, in providing inputs (such as piping and fencing) and technical advice (through extension officers and an irrigation officer). 10 schemes had borrowed money from the Swazi Bank, pledging mostly cattle as security. 10 purchased inputs on a cooperative basis. Only 7 schemes received direct substantial financial assistance (either by grant or loan); 5 from donor agencies and 2 from government. In addition, 4 Taiwanese-assisted schemes were under constant supervision and were supplied with considerable technical and capital inputs.

The problems most frequently mentioned by scheme members were marketing (often resulting in rotting crops), water shortages, transport and fencing.

Data extracted from the recent census of Swazi Nation agriculture (1983-84) show that less than 1 per cent of SNL homesteads belong to irrigation *schemes*, although 8.6 per cent irrigate some crops in one form or other<sup>7</sup>.

According to the agricultural census, homesteads belonging to schemes, when compared against all SNL homesteads, were found to have considerably more residents, produce much higher levels of maize per capita and are more progressive farmers in terms of input

<sup>7</sup>For a good account of individual irrigators of SNL see D.C. Funnell's "The Quiet Innovators: Small Scale irrigation on Swazi Nation Land" in this volume.

usage<sup>8</sup>. Although it is not known what proportion of scheme members own cattle, the average herd size is significantly larger (13.7 vs. 8.8) and the percentage of homesteads owning tractors was about 7 times that of all SNL homesteads.

From the data, one can deduce that scheme irrigators are, on the whole, wealthier and better farmers than the average SNL homestead. Unfortunately, without any intertemporal comparative data, it is not possible to determine the causality explaining the differentiation. On many schemes members would tend to be automatically better off, either due to high joining fees or because the schemes were initiated by comparatively advanced farmers. On the other hand, there are some successful schemes such as Ntamakuphila where it is evident that homesteads have materially benefited from the scheme.

#### *IV. Communal land tenure and the assimilation of irrigation schemes*

##### *1. The role of the chief*

There is a tendency to view chieftainship as a conservative symbol of the vague notion "traditionalism" which is seen to embrace those aspects of Swazi life which are not "modern". Such stereo-typing builds up the image of chiefs as custodians of the status quo. However, as mentioned earlier, traditionalism is fluid and attitudes towards innovation have changed often with the support, approbation or even initiative of traditional authorities.

Devitt (1981), looking at the land tenure implications of the Usuthu/Ngwavuma river basin scheme, has, perhaps along with Hamnett (1970), given the most attention to the question of land tenure and irrigation on SNL. Unfortunately, his conclusions regarding the relationship between irrigation scheme members and traditional authorities appear to contradict the general findings of our study. Devitt's conclusions regarding SNL schemes are drawn from a few case studies which, in effect, were studies of problem schemes rather than a representative sample of all the schemes. From this distorted perspective, he felt that "outside" interference i.e. from traditional authorities hindered the development of all the schemes. He referred to members of irrigation schemes as "kings in their own right", claiming that schemes operated autonomously and challenged the authority of the chief who often reacted in ways counter productive to a scheme's development. This view has prevailed in many discussions over the future development of small schemes and is often used as an argument to support smallholder-nucleus estate proposals.

Hamnett (1970), took a less critical view of chiefs, but nevertheless felt that they were an obstruction to rural development. "Traditional" attitudes, however, were seen as being pliable and he suggested an improved salary system for chiefs "to elicit a greater interest in and aptitude for modern processes" (although fully recognising the dangers of chiefs becoming servants of central government). Alternatively, he proposed that administrative personal secretaries be appointed for each chief, whose functions would at first be advisory only but would gradually assume the role of effective decision maker whose acts would be endorsed by the chief. Such proposals are not only impractical but fail to appreciate the propensity of many chiefs to promote change.

Hamnett appropriately observed that chieftainship remained virtually the only form of local government. This is still effectively the case today. And, as in any bureaucracy, one finds both enlightened and reactionary administrators. It is in this context that one can

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<sup>8</sup>The number of residents on scheme homesteads averaged 10.5 against only 7.0 for all SNL homesteads. More than half (55.1%) of the scheme members produce maize which is either always or mostly enough for homesteads needs vs. barely one-third (34%) of all SNL farmers. More than two-thirds of scheme homesteads use fertilizer all or most of the time on all or most crops vs. only 38.8% of all SNL farmers.

understand the objectives of the US AID project engaged in the training of the chiefs<sup>9</sup>. Accomplishments of progressive chiefs and not the failures of the reactionary ones should be seen as indicative of rural development potential.

As discussed in the following sub-section, chiefs and the Government of Swaziland, play an important role in the establishment of schemes. The chief's approval is a prerequisite for any scheme; furthermore, the chief often (but not always) chooses the site (sometimes in consultation with government surveyors) and is responsible for the allocation of plots. It should be stressed that this prerequisite role is an administrative one. More importantly, in at least 5 cases, the chief played the initiating role and, in all but 8, pursued the necessary (and often frustrating) steps for establishing an irrigation scheme e.g. obtaining official clearance, water rights, etc.

Against Devitt's conclusion that irrigation schemes foster nodes of autonomy which conflict with the power of the chief, our findings showed that chiefs in virtually all cases voluntarily pursued a *laissez-faire* approach. Not one scheme committee included a chief, although chiefs were members of 7 schemes.

The parameters of authority were, however, clearly recognised by all those interviewed. The committee (with the implicit consent of scheme members) was left free to make up general rules and enforce discipline for more mundane misdemeanours. Any disciplinary action of a more serious nature, e.g. eviction, would be referred to the chief. Furthermore, any issues touching upon land allocation such as expansion, or accepting new members must be approved by the chief. Schemes operated somewhat autonomously, though not in the sense perceived by Devitt. Chiefs allowed and, indeed encouraged, schemes to run their own affairs but with the implicit knowledge that he had ultimate control over the schemes. In only one scheme (Mphatheni) did the chief request that the committee inform him of all decisions and obtain his consent. At Mbekelweni the chief usually attended committee meetings to keep himself informed of developments and at Mkhovu the chief had requested the committee to keep him generally informed of decisions and developments. On most other schemes meetings are normally undertaken, and decisions on day-to-day issues made, by committees without involving the chief.

The importance of the chief in the actual operation of a scheme is difficult to establish. From the above it appears that most chiefs play a peripheral role in the running of the schemes. More evidence is needed, but there are indications that chiefs have been instrumental in the success of some schemes. For example, when members of the Ntamakuphila scheme were asked what accounted for their success, they responded that it was the progressive attitude of their chief, an honorary member of the scheme (Dunn, personal communication).

Although chiefs play an important administrative and initiating role, one should not conclude that the system of customary rule has not created serious problems for some of the schemes. As several of Devitt's and our case studies demonstrate, schemes have encountered sometimes unresolvable problems attributed to traditional authority. However, these cases should be taken individually, as the circumstances surrounding each are quite unique and do not provide any foundation for generalization.

The Tate and Lyle (1982) and Devres (1985) reports suggest that nucleus-smallholder schemes should be divorced from traditional authority. The experience of Vuvulane suggests otherwise, implying that the role of the chief as a mediator and adjudicator of customary law should not be overlooked. As early as 1970 Hamnett noted that there was a perceived need for a chief by both the smallholders and management alike at Vuvulane. Scheme members retained their old allegiances to the chiefs of their homestead areas but

<sup>9</sup>The project deals with the training of traditional leaders and members of women's associations through the Swaziland Manpower Development Project funded by US AID.

had no chief at Vuvulane. Management felt that a chief appointed by the King would have improved the links between the farmers and the settlement office, while the farmers believed that a chief knowledgeable in Swazi law would have been able to more effectively deal with disputes and, at the same time, be their link with higher authorities at Lobamba (who had often been petitioned by the farmers). Hamnett, commented that "they are in a sort of limbo world cut off from the traditional authorities with only the company to turn to". It is likely that, had a chief been appointed to play a mediating role, the recent problems of Vuvulane would not have come to such a dramatic head.

## ***2. Inception of schemes***

Given the common impression expressed by Devitt and many others about the restrictive influences of traditional authority and the land tenure system, we were interested in seeing how each of the schemes was initiated, i.e. who was the driving force in their conception and implementation. By far the majority (15) of the 22 operative schemes were started from within the community rather than by government: in fact only 3 schemes were introduced by the government to the community, 4 others involved assistance after receiving requests by groups of farmers to establish the schemes. Chiefs appeared to play a more forceful role in initiating schemes: 4 schemes were inspired by the chief himself and 1 was initiated by a chief's wife. The remaining schemes were conceived by individuals (6) or groups of farmers (4) who approached the chief. In virtually all cases the government provided infrastructure and technical support.

Chief Dambuza Lukhele spoke of the great frustrations communities have in channelling their ideas to the relevant government authorities. There appear to be no formal channels through which an idea conceived at the grass roots level are submitted for consideration. The process of getting such idea to bear fruit within government or donor agencies will depend largely on the commitment by the chief to the idea and his perseverance in pushing it through the necessary and often painstaking administrative channels.

## ***3. Relocation and compensation***

When a site is chosen there are often homesteads which have to be resettled. 12 schemes resulted in the relocation of homesteads away from chosen sites and one involved the voluntary resettlement of homesteads drawn to the site of a new scheme (Mancubeni). Generally no compensation is given but land parcels equivalent to the former will be allocated. In one case (Kalanga), resettled homesteads were given larger proportions of land to compensate for the move. Resettled homesteads were, however, always given the option of joining the proposed scheme.

In 3 cases (Phoonyane, Ndilambi and Nkungwini) homesteads were integrated into the scheme i.e. water was channelled to existing homesteads and their allocated fields.

As in the case of most schemes, homesteads of members of the Magwanyane scheme are scattered in the surrounding area. However, the chief has allocated a block of land near the scheme for members to grow their rainfed crops in sub-divided plots.

From our survey it was found that all but one scheme did not provide compensation for relocation. It was not possible from the interviews to gauge the extent of disruption and loss caused through relocation, but there was no evidence of strong resistance to the schemes by affected residents.

The principles behind and the treatment of compensation are not at all clear. Hamnett (1970) found that when homesteads were removed from the new site of the Luyengo Agricultural College, the affected homesteads were to be given R200 each, but later it was decided that the homesteads would be incorporated into a new irrigation scheme (Eluyengweni Resettlement Scheme) and that government would provide housing, some cattle, and fencing in addition to general infrastructure. Homesteads resettled during

recent construction of the Lumphohlo hydro-electric dam were paid compensation on the assessed value of their homesteads and were given new land. In contrast, those resettled from the site of the Simunye sugar estate were not given compensation for dwellings nor, it seems, suitable alternative land, as many are still living in caravans awaiting a satisfactory solution. In terms of the RDA resettlement programme, it appears that homesteads which are made to resettle will not be compensated for buildings but, if resettled and for some reason must be removed again, compensation will be granted for any permanent improvements made. Hughes (1972) discussing banishment and compensation, found that, although there was no explicit regulation requiring compensation for permanent improvements made to a dwelling of a banished person, when a case of banishment is put before higher authorities, the material loss which may be incurred from moving is taken into account. In one often quoted case it was agreed to confirm a sentence of banishment, provided the chief or local community paid the concerned E2 000 in compensation.

#### **4. Scheme membership**

The relative novelty of irrigation schemes on SNL and, consequently, the lack of uniform approach between them is evident inter alia in the way membership is treated. Membership is given either to the homestead and therefore registered in the name of the homestead head, or to individuals. In the latter case, women can be registered as members. About half the schemes were comprised of homestead members and the rest of individuals. At the inception of a scheme, the joining process is either through registration for plots on a first come first serve basis (as for most government initiated schemes) or by applying to the chief. To join on-going schemes, the usual procedure is to apply to the committee who will then refer the application to members. If approval is given the chief is consulted. It is unlikely that unmarried individuals are granted membership on many schemes, but Downs (1983) noted that there were some schemes where the only criteria for entering the schemes was the ability to pay the entrance fee and that bachelors were not excluded.

In general membership is open exclusively to residents of a particular area (chiefdom). There are, however, 3 schemes - Magwanyane, Vumathando and Magagane which allow outsiders to join. In the case of Magwanyane, management felt that outsiders, including some Mozambican immigrants, were the best farmers (Tate and Lyle, 1982). At Vumathando membership is open to outsiders, though none have joined so far.

Two case studies suggest that the higher echelons of authority in the Swazi Nation - the "elders" of Lobamba - tend to frown upon outsider membership. The Magagane scheme attempted to integrate selected farmers from two chiefdoms on a farm purchased by government situated in one of the chiefdoms. After the scheme began it was not long before the farmers from the area on which the scheme was located, supported by their chief, complained that the farmers from the other area should establish their own scheme and subsequently boycotted the scheme. In the meantime, the outsiders continued cultivating and established a temporary committee. The matter was then taken up by the boycotting farmers with the "elders" who responded by "freezing" the scheme, forbidding those who had farmed from harvesting their produce. The scheme is still awaiting resolution and remains inoperative.

The fate of the Madlenya scheme (now defunct) further suggests that outsider members are not condoned. The Tate and Lyle report noted that the scheme, which had already failed earlier, was revived by a field officer (outsider) who approached the local chief and requested whether 5 outsiders (4 field officers and a cattle guard) could join 9 other local participants in the scheme. The chief agreed. The scheme apparently flourished but ran afoul of the Central Rural Development Board (CRDB). The Chairman of the CRDB objected to the inclusion of the outsiders. The chief was summoned to the King, admonished for allowing outsiders to join and ordered to stop the scheme. Later the scheme was allowed to re-open, but without the participation of outsiders.

## 5. Succession

Succession in Swazi customary law is patrilineal. When the homestead head dies, his eldest son becomes heir, but where the homestead head is a polygamist, the eldest son of the *principal* wife succeeds as the head of the homestead. The principal wife - known as the general heir - is chosen by the family council after the death of the headman (Maina and Strieker, 1971).

As with membership, succession has not been applied in any standard form and a variety of approaches were found. At Zakhe, which can be seen as fairly representative of most schemes on this issue, the wife would take over the plot and work it with the children but, according to its constitution, the son would take responsibility if he was old enough (and if interested).

Some special cases worth noting include Magwanyane whose members are expected to register successors i.e. they are known before death and are not necessarily chosen according to custom. At Kandwandwe the inheritor would be the oldest child, irrespective of whether it is a boy or girl. At the exclusively female Vumathando scheme, a deceased member's daughter or daughter-in-law would be expected to take over.

At Vuvulane, one of the most controversial clauses in the lease was one dealing with inheritance. The leases were modified in 1969 to allow almost automatic inheritance of plots and to allow disputes to go into arbitration instead of the CDC having unilateral authority (Tate and Lyle, 1982).

The question of inheritance when raised in our interviews stirred little emotion. The general impression gained was that it would be an issue that would resolve itself within the family and that the plot would ultimately be ceded to someone who was willing to bear responsibility for cultivating it. This is not surprising as the plot is probably not regarded as part of the homestead "estate" in that it "belongs" to the scheme and that membership simply allows a member to use the land under what many would perhaps see as fairly stringent regulations (in comparison to the less demanding requirements of tilling usufruct homestead fields).

## 6. Discipline

One of the strongest arguments used against the introduction of irrigation schemes on communal land tenure is the problem of discipline and how to enforce it. Devitt (1981) succinctly encapsulated the problem:

"Farmers associations or committees are seldom prepared to evict one of their members for reasons of poor performance, nor are chiefs normally prepared to do this. There is no precedent in customary law for depriving a person of land on account of inefficient farming. As long as some effort is made to demonstrate continuing use of land the rights of the holder are usually left intact. Without the ultimate sanction of eviction, there is very little to be done to persuade a recalcitrant farmer to improve his standard of husbandry".

Difficult and rare as eviction may be, it is a reality and at least 16 of the surveyed schemes have made provisions for it. The reasons for which a member may be evicted included the following (in descending order of importance): leaving land fallow (6); conflict with other members (5); disobeying rules (4); failure to pay financial contributions (3); stealing (3); sleeping with another member's wife (1).

For general misdemeanours most schemes had no problems in applying discipline as this was usually in the form of a fine (for missing work groups, committee meetings etc). However, for more serious infractions, scheme members often lamented about the difficulty of imposing harsher measures. There were, however, at least 5 schemes which



had evicted members. At 2 schemes a member was expelled for failing to pay the required financial contribution (Kalanga and Magwanyane); in 2 other cases, eviction resulted from leaving land fallow (Ntamakuphila and Mpatheni). At Nkungwini the chief evicted a person for laziness at the inception of the scheme when he refused to dig channels. In most cases eviction (from a scheme) would be sanctioned by the chief on the recommendation of the scheme committee.

### *7. The role of the king and the swazi nation authorities*

The role of the King (the late Sobhuza II) and the "elders" in the development of irrigation schemes has been an important one, on which the fate of several have or still hinge. King Sobhuza was not only an arbitrator in land disputes; he also intervened in cases deemed to have some consequence for the Swazi Nation.

Some examples of where the previous King or the "elders" of Lobamba have had influence are worth noting. In the case of Mankantshane, the local induna appealed against the extension of the scheme, claiming that the land rightly fell under his jurisdiction, not the chief who authorised the extension, because the induna's family had been in the area much longer than the chief's. The case was taken up with King in 1979 and to date no decision has been made (Tate and Lyle, 1982). It is noteworthy that this scheme started in 1972 after members sought the kings' permission to grow sugar cane. Similarly, the Magagane case, mentioned above, was brought to Lobamba but no ruling has been made and the operation of the scheme has been suspended. The ostensibly successful Magwanyane scheme did not meet with the approval of the King because of his concern about the formation of a rural elite from its highly subsidised and rather untypical mode of operation<sup>10</sup>; consequently, the scheme has never been officially opened. At Madlenya (discussed above), the King stopped the scheme because he disapproved of the participation of those outside of the chiefdom.

The involvement of higher traditional authorities in such cases caused Hamnett to observe that: "The effectiveness and promptitude of royal control over chieftainship affairs appear, according to such evidence so far..., to be open to question". It would, indeed, seem that many of the schemes which did fail, or became "temporarily" inactive pending decisions, are the result of the involvement of higher authorities who are forced to grapple with issues for which there are sometimes no obvious solutions within customary law and practice. Other schemes whose problems (if any) are "internalized" and resolved within their chiefdom appear, on the whole, to adapt reasonably well to the parameters of custom set by their communities.

### *V. Conclusions*

An evaluation of SNL smallholder schemes would find great variation in their levels of achievement. There is little doubt that many of the schemes are plagued with problems. From the evidence available, most are problems related to economic (marketing, funds, transport) and technical (lack of water) factors. Previous "evaluations" of SNL irrigation schemes appear to have over-played and even misrepresented tenurial aspects. This is not to say that land tenure issues are insignificant. On the contrary: some schemes have ceased to function or are hampered in their development because of unresolved disputes

<sup>10</sup> The Magwanyane irrigation scheme is the largest of the schemes with an area of 100 ha and only 36 members. 54 ha. has been set aside for growing sugar on a cooperative basis, the rest being cultivated as individual plots with crops of the farmers' choice. The farmers hired management for the cooperative section which, in turn, hired labourers. Effectively, the farmers became shareholders in an operation from which they drew a monthly stipend, without necessarily contributing work (some but not all farmers worked on their individual plots). The late King Sobhuza recommended that 25 year leases be introduced to allow more members of the community to share the benefits of the scheme. Despite its economic success (estimated at 12% internal rate of return) the scheme has never been officially opened by the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives which put a disproportionate amount of resources into its development.

relating to land or customary authority. However, when seen in a wider perspective, the frequent adoption - or, more accurately, the initiation - of irrigation schemes by SNL communities, and the adaptation of customary laws to their operation, suggests a high degree of assimilation.

It can, indeed, be argued that irrigation schemes under communal land tenure offer distinct advantages and certain forms of protection vis a vis more homestead-specific innovations. Because schemes are usually jointly endorsed by government and local traditional authorities, and participation by plot or collective membership is often clearly defined, tenancy will be more secure in the sense that what is sometimes seen as "arbitrary" eviction becomes much more difficult. Furthermore, schemes, being communal initiatives, involve the pooling of resources (land, capital, manpower and experience) which allows for both economies of scale as well as the dispersion of risk (often borne both by members and government and/or donor agencies). Yet, despite communality, irrigation schemes - particularly those operating as "farmers' associations" enable individual members to benefit from the advantages of their own initiative. They also often allow for the participation of women and occasionally bachelors who, under customary law, have no direct access to communal tenure land. In terms of financing, because of their backing from government and local authorities, as well as the collectivity of resources, schemes are likely to gain more favourable access to credit than individual homesteads. Similarly, the inherent nature of schemes benefiting *groups* of farmers, gives them easier access to direct assistance from government or donor agencies than individual homesteads.

Apart from a few cases of conflict, there is little evidence that land tenure acts as a major constraint to the development of irrigation schemes on Swazi Nation Land. It has been argued with some justification that disciplinary measures taken against indolent or uncooperative farmers have in practice not been sufficiently frequently sanctioned. Several precedents have, however, been established, and the principal of eviction is not only recognised by most schemes but is compatible with communal land tenure. There is no reason to believe that, given the relationship between efficient land use and the success of the schemes, evictions will not be applied more readily in the future, especially if the demand for membership to these schemes increases. Because of the very different nature between scheme membership and homestead rights, eviction from a scheme should in no way be equated to banishment or the deprivation of the "right to avail". Membership is a *privilege*; access to homestead land and communal grazing is a basic *right*.

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## 6. CONTRACTFARMING AND OUTGROWER SCHEMES IN SWAZILAND<sup>1</sup>

*Michael Neocosmos and Jan Testerink*

Farming contracts between international agribusiness and sections of the local peasantry, have acquired increased importance in the Third World, especially in Latin America. In recent years, these schemes have been extended to the African continent as transnational corporations have reappraised, often under pressure, their economic and political interests. In Swaziland the system has a long history as the first of these schemes dates back to the 1960's. After a period where attention to such methods had diminished in favour of a more "traditional" emphasis on a "Green Revolution" type of modernization programme for "traditional agriculture", renewed interest has recently been expressed by both the state and international donors in the benefits of such schemes (See for example the recent Fourth National Development Plan of the Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland). The reasons for the resurrection of these schemes in Swaziland are complex and related both to the general trend in agribusiness practice, as well as to the perceived failure within Swaziland of past development strategies and the peculiar structure of the Swazi land-tenure system. In spite of the long existence of such schemes in Swaziland, there is very little information on their operation and no real serious research on their causes and effects. The following paper proposes an initial way to overcome this deficiency. In a first section problems of conceptualizing contract farming, both in general and in the context of Swaziland are briefly discussed. This is followed by an overview of the current arguments for such programmes in Swaziland. Thirdly an outline of the operation of the most important of such ventures in Swaziland is provided.

### *Contract Farming and Peasantry*

Three overall approaches seem to be available in the study of contract farming or out-grower schemes. The first is founded on the precepts of traditional economics. It can be described as principally technicist in nature as its concern is to establish to what extent such schemes are technically viable in the overall process of agricultural development. The idea is to ascertain the viability of what principally is seen as a method or tool which can be adopted or rejected by policy makers after having rationally evaluated the advantages and disadvantages of these kinds of schemes in relation to others. Thus Glover (1984:1144) is concerned with the assessment of contract farming and "its potential as a tool in rural development strategies and its impact on smallholders". He stresses the importance of what he sees as the "economic" and "political" dimensions of contract farming. The former he conceives as "the transfer of technology and integration of smallholders into the national economy" (ibid.:1143). The latter is understood as concerning the "distribution of benefits between growers and firms" which is seen as largely dependent on the amount of bargaining power which growers can exercise *vis-a-vis* the firm" (ibid.:1143-4).

The preposterous notion that somehow the peasantry in the Third World is not integrated into the national economy has been dealt with in such length in the literature on rural development in general that it need not be dealt with here. Rather more important is to note that it is an aspect of this approach to restrict conceptual discussion to the provision of a definition alone and to address the question as basically one of a reconciliation of the interests of a plurality of groups which are otherwise unrelated. This combination of economic technicism and political pluralism is incapable of addressing the fundamental issues concerning the nature of the social relations which form the backcloth to, and are transformed by, this particular form of capitalist development. This is exemplified in Glover (op.cit.: 1145) by the author's understanding of the relationship between the parties involved as being definable in terms of the nature of the contract alone. The fact that both peasants and transnationals interact and are situated within a wider socio-economic and

<sup>1</sup>This paper was originally written as a research proposal for a workshop on Outgrower Schemes in Africa organised by the Canadian IDRC in Nairobi, October 1985. It should be seen in this context. For the purpose of this publication, all references to the proposed research (areas of research, method, budget etc.) have been left out.

political structure is not considered as worthy of note. As we shall see this conception is not particularly useful in the context of Swaziland, both because a variety of contractual relations exist between producers, sellers and the state not all of which are outgrower schemes, and further because the role of transnationals in such schemes can only be adequately elucidated if their wider operations are taken into account.

The second overall approach does indeed analyse contract farming schemes on the basis of wider social relations but tends to see these as one-sided. This position is a product of dependency theory and provides what amounts to a moral and populist critique of the operations of transnationals in the Third World. It restricts itself to seeing the relationship between transnationals and the peasantry as simply exploitative and as a process whereby the latter are simply proletarianized. This approach is common in Africa today. It is exemplified in the present context by the writings of Burbach and Flynn (1950), Lappe and Collins (1980), Dinham and Hines (1983) and Williams (1981). An excellent critique of this position insofar as contract farming is concerned, is provided by Buch-Hansen and Marcussen (1982) with reference to the case of Kenya in particular, and there is therefore no need to repeat their arguments here. Suffice it to note that the dependency position is not capable of validly analysing the changes which occur in the class structure and capitalist social relations as whole, as it tends to ignore the fact that contract farming can clearly benefit a section of the peasantry, precisely by making local capital accumulation possible in a variety of ways.

The third position exemplified in this context by Buch-Hansen and Marcussen (op.cit.), is to our mind much more adequate than the previous two, as it combines an analysis of the transformation of social relations in the societies where contract farming is being pursued, with a sophisticated understanding of the underlying tensions which occur in the process of capitalist agricultural development. Thus for them contract farming leads to (or contributes to) a process of differentiation amongst the peasantry at least to the extent that "contract farmers are far better off than the average smallholder..." (ibid.:28). From their discussion of their work on tea and sugar schemes they note that a substantial amount of capital accumulation takes place on such schemes. They state that "a good number of farmers make a substantial income from growing sugar or tea which they invest primarily in the sphere of circulation - shops and taxis - but also in improving their agricultural production" (ibid.:32). To analyse differentiation amongst the outgrowers they utilise two main criteria, first the extent of the employment of wage-labour, second the utilisation of an economic surplus for consumption or for investment (ibid.:33). Insofar as their position does suffer from any defects, it is to the extent that they ignore completely the importance of free family labour (women and children) in the process of accumulation, and so neglect the importance of gender relations in the expansion of petty commodity production. A final important aspect of the overall position to which Buch-Hansen and Marcussen adhere is that the state is not seen either as a neutral agent which can decide between competing development techniques on the basis of more or less (economic or political) rational criteria, nor is it seen as a simple instrument of multinational capital. Rather such an approach allows for a conception of the state as a locus of struggle where different practices whether "nationalist" or "comprador" have the possibility of acquiring ascendancy at any one time. The various contradictions prevalent within the overall state structure between various groups and factions and their attitudes towards transnational involvement and national development, can therefore be analysed and not simply be taken as given.

It is the argument of this paper then, that outgrower schemes / contract farming constitute a relation between (sections of) the local peasantry and transnational agribusiness enterprises often in partnership with the local state. This relation involves the transnational controlling the more profitable sector, the marketing of the final product, through its privileged and exclusive access to the world market, while restricting the smallholders to a production process which it indirectly controls. It is able to exercise control over production both because of its exclusive control over the market and because of its provision of managerial and technical services and other means of production to which the contracted peasantry is given access on an easier basis than that provided on a free market. It must be emphasised here that the control of the market process by the multinational must be as near

as possible to total, and that it achieves this because of its monopoly position which is both *de-facto* and clearly codified by the contract.<sup>2</sup> A different relationship altogether is involved if, as part of a competitive strategy a particular buyer offers specific services to a producer (e.g. extension advice, or cheap loans) in return for a guaranteed sale to him rather than to competitors. This is common competitive practice, and occurs in Swaziland (e.g. in relation to cotton producers in the South) as elsewhere. This seems to us to be a qualitatively different relationship because no monopoly power is involved.

In the schemes usually discussed in the literature, the outgrowers are required to adhere to a contract which obliges them to deliver a specific product of standard quality at a fixed price. In return they are offered (often obligatory) extension advice, easy access to credit, or more generally machinery, irrigation and other technical inputs. The producers are thus in a position to accumulate through preferential access to sophisticated means of production. Also they have access to a market otherwise closed to peasant producers. Whilst at the early stages of their involvement such a relationship would clearly be in the interests of most producers, as the scheme progresses and some accumulation takes place, one could expect an increase in friction between outgrowers and the transnational, as the farmers feel that they can operate and perhaps sell independently. Thus the scheme is built on a contradiction between transnational and developing national capital, the outcome of which is not simply predictable. This contradiction and the various points above are all noticeable in Swaziland as we shall see.

What therefore are the reasons for transnationals achieving this accommodation with "national development needs" as opposed to restricting themselves to plantation agriculture? Without delving into wider political issues illustrated by the increasingly "negative image" of transnationals provided in "developmentalist" *fora* such as various United Nations Agencies, it is worth noting some of the advantages of these schemes which have been stressed in the literature. These have been outlined by Buch-Hansen and Marcussen in the following manner. They note first of all that direct agricultural production by agribusiness ventures seems to be becoming more difficult on both political and economic grounds. Measures to limit foreign influence and to encourage the development of a rich peasantry and increased productivity, such as nationalisation and other nationalistic policies mean that it is politically more difficult to invest in large-scale plantations, especially in situations of land scarcity. Economically, the employment of large numbers of wage-labourers may not be so profitable in situations where the state regulation of wages and other conditions of employment are relatively progressive. In addition they note that "the costs of direct agricultural production are a decreasing percentage of end product price. It might therefore be good "capital logic" for an international agribusiness firm to leave the agricultural production to the direct producers, which could be in the form of cooperatives, state farms, or contract farming with the state and its extension officers supervising production" (op.cit.:16).

As these authors also note, the major investment burden and risk is transferred, in contract schemes, to the producers, as are fluctuations on the world market. Moreover it is also important to remark that in addition to having no direct labour problems, the transnational benefits from the fact that peasants, unlike wage-labourers, can be "squeezed" so as to increase the length of their working day beyond what is usually possible in normal plantation production, often subject to some industrial relations legislation or practice (however weak). Agribusiness is in this sense acting partly as more traditional "landlords" do in many parts of the world. If it is also recalled that in addition to "employing" smallholders, the transnational also acquires the labour of their families for free, then the advantages of such schemes to these corporations become abundantly apparent. Such corporations can at the same time argue with some justification, that they are helping to develop local agriculture by transferring technology and knowledge to - at least some - local peasants. As the previously cited authors note, to the extent that cheap food crops for the local population (wage goods) are produced in this manner, local wages can be kept down.

<sup>2</sup>A recent Tate and Lyle (1982) consultancy on the development of a cotton/wheat outgrower scheme in Swaziland makes this unequivocally clear.

These observations are intended to apply to contract schemes in general. In addition to these, there are a number of specific characteristics in Swaziland, in particular the land tenure system, which provide pressures towards the development of such schemes.

### *Contract Farming in Swaziland*

As noted above there has been a recent resurgence of interest by the state and various development agencies in Swaziland in contract farming. There seem to be at least three reasons for this which are first the perceived failure of the more "traditional" form of development strategy enacted in Swaziland's Rural Development Areas Programme (RDAP), second various problems which are seen to be inherent in a plantation system and finally the peculiarities of the Swazi land-tenure system. The first two illustrate to some extent the points made previously regarding the operation of multinationals and rural development generally, while the third is a problem peculiar to Swaziland. In this section we will concentrate principally on a discussion of these three reasons. Background information on Swaziland can be found in de Vletter (1985).

While contract farming schemes receive favourable mention in the Swaziland Government's First (Post Independence) Development Plan of 1969, later plan documents make no mention of such strategies until the appearance of the latest Fourth National Development Plan, intended to cover the period 1983/84 to 1987/88. In its review of the earlier period, the plan notes that "given the need to improve the elasticity of employment and develop the country's irrigation potential in the most productive way, it is widely recognized that future agricultural development in the modern sector should concentrate on more labour-intensive irrigation schemes on the nucleus / small-holder model. The experience of Vuvulane is considered to provide a successful example in this respect" (Fourth National Development Plan: 151).

We consider the experience of Vuvulane Irrigated Farms (VIF) below; at this stage however it might be worthwhile noting that one of the proposed reasons for developing contract farming schemes - namely the creation of higher employment opportunities - rings somewhat hollow if taken in conjunction with the fact cited on the same page of the plan, that only 263 farmers are currently settled in Vuvulane. This scarcely amounts to a noticeable increase in employment prospects even given the small population of the country. The "provision of employment" argument however must be seen in the context of the current state strategy of "EKHAYA" or "back to the land" as a proposed cure for unemployment and a philip to productivity increases. Official justifications notwithstanding, it is reasonable to suppose - given the voluminous literature on the subject and the experience of Vuvulane itself - that the expansion of such schemes will make no noticeable difference to levels of employment. That the effect of such schemes, if successful, is to contribute to wealth creation and accumulation for a minority of peasants should not really be in doubt. This can be inferred even from a brief discussion on the selection of beneficiaries.

Even if we lay aside, for the purposes of argument, the eventuality that smallholders may be selected on the basis of their friends, relatives, patrons or contacts within the state apparatus or their general status within society (a huge assumption anywhere, never mind in the Third World), the criteria for selection are largely predictable. These will be based on the apparently objective norm of efficiency, rationality, reliability, and so on, which are deemed to characterise "good farmers". What this means in other words is that such criteria are those which correspond as closely as possible to the characteristics of the "ideal capitalist farmer's" practices. This point is of course independent of any later differentiation process.

More realistic reasons for its advocacy of contract schemes are provided later in the Plan (also under the heading of "Productive Rural Employment Opportunities"). These concern the fact that previous development programmes in the rural areas which have been either plantation estates or infrastructural programmes are said to have exhibited a number of inherent limitations. While plantation estates are said to have an "inherent mono-cultural bias" and to be "incongruent with the factor endowment of the country", the latter are said to be incongruent "with the pattern of consumption and the requirements of the balance of payments". The plan notes that the RDAP was successful in "transferring social and physical infrastructure resources" to the "traditional sector" but states that it failed to provide the

means to employ and support these transfers. Such a procedure is "in reality a welfare policy; not a productive employment policy" it is remarked (Fourth National Development Plan: 350).

This is no place to review the Rural Development Areas Programme. Suffice it to note that the package of infrastructural provisions (extension services, capital inputs, etc.) provided under the programme failed to produce an increase in production. In fact apart from cotton, between 1978 and 1981 all crops on Swazi Nation Land registered a decline in production. This was primarily due to a decrease in the area sown and the greater attractiveness of wage-employment during this period.

Thus the lack of success of both the "traditional" infrastructural policy on the one hand and what are seen as the restricted benefits of plantation systems on the other, provide for the writers of the Plan the main reason for expanding the contract farming system. To this effect the Plan enthusiastically adopts a proposal for a cotton irrigation scheme in the Usuthu and Ngwavuma river basins, for which a feasibility study was undertaken by Tate and Lyle consultants.<sup>3</sup> The final approval for this proposal has yet to be provided; nevertheless it may be pertinent to comment via a short digression on some of the remarks made by the consultants, for these illustrate quite precisely the points made in earlier sections in relation to the nature of contract farming.

The authors of this report assert the role of the transnational with exemplary clarity. For instance they note that "the existing population of an area to be developed must be resettled outside". Moreover they assert that "the nucleus estate or smallholder authority must have full control over recruitment and eviction, marketing of at least one basic crop (e.g. cotton), and overall scheme finances. The estate / authority must also have the right to cultivate a farmer's land if it is neglected". Further, they continue "the settler must establish his permanent residence on the scheme; the settler must have no other occupation; no cattle must be kept within the irrigated area; holdings must not be sub-let or fragmented; acceptable standards of "good farming" must be achieved; a specific area of defined crops must be cultivated and marketed through the settlement authority / nucleus estate" (Tate and Lyle, 1982:134-5). Such statements leave in no doubt the fact that the estate firm is seen as having to control both the production process as well as to be in a de-facto monopoly marketing position *vis-a-vis* the outgrowers. As such these remarks provide some additional justification for the conceptualization developed above.

Furthermore the above report also states that "the size of holding should be small enough to give a wide distribution of scheme benefits, but large enough to give a net income comparable with earnings that could be achieved through work on estates. Incomes for estate workers range from E 2000 p.a. for labourers (including non-cash benefits) to E5 000 p.a. for senior foremen. These provide minimum and maximum target levels for smallholder settlers" (ibid.: 134). What this statement of comparison between the wage levels of workers with the income of smallholders clearly indicates, is that in the latter case, as the women and children of the smallholder also labour on the schemes, their labour is acquired completely free, a practice which is obviously not the case with wage-labourers on plantations. Indeed as will be noted below, it is one of the conditions of participation in the Vuvulane Scheme that smallholders should have a family. In addition, incidentally, the mean net income of the Vuvulane settlers is reported as E3 500 p.a. for the period 1978 - 82 (Fourth National Development Development Plan: 151). This is of course within the range of estate labourers' incomes outlined above.

Returning to the possible reasons for the resurgence of interest in outgrower schemes in Swaziland, the last of these can be surmised as being related to the land-tenure system. Agricultural land in Swaziland is divided roughly equally between Title Deed Land (TDL) (44% of the rural land area) largely an inheritance from the time of the colonial concessions, and Swazi Nation Land (SNL) (56%) which is held by the King in trust for the Nation. On the former, land is a commodity, it can be bought and sold, etc. like in any capitalist country and is dominated by capitalist estates and farmers. On the latter, land is

<sup>3</sup>In addition to this a USAID (1985) report also advocates the development of contract farming schemes in Swaziland, and so do several officials of the ministry of agriculture (Dlamini et al. 1984)



not a commodity and this is where the majority of Swazi peasants are to be found. The RDAP, referred to earlier, is concentrated on Swazi Nation Land.

It is declared state policy to purchase Title Deed Land and to return it to the Nation. The extent to which this actually takes place and whether the land thus purchased is indeed returned to a non-commodity form is indeed an interesting question, but not one which needs to be tackled here. What does need to be briefly mentioned is that, as is well known, the non-commodity nature of land provides somewhat of an obstacle to capitalist development. This is because it is not possible to expand land-ownership at will, neither is it always economically worthwhile for farmers to make economic improvements without security of tenure, and so on. These problems are of course clearly recognised by economists who use terms such as "institutional constraints" or "cultural bottlenecks" to describe such a state of affairs.

In Swaziland however any discussion of the problem of land tenure is highly "controversial" as the power of the state is partly based on the traditional tenure system which underlies the power of the chiefs. This provides a major contradiction for those forces which want both to rely on and bolster the power of the state, as well as to develop capitalism in the "traditional" sector. Moreover the connection between the commoditization of the land and an increase in proletarianization and the consequent rapid rural-urban migration from which Swaziland has so far been immune, is clearly understood by those "modernizing" forces both local and foreign. It is evident that such issues provide the basis for a multitude of struggles within the state and that international donor agencies, keen on advocating land reform and the overall "modernization" of agriculture, have to tread with extreme care.

It is in this overall context that outgrower schemes appear to provide a solution, for it might be possible for these to operate at least on the basis of a formal adherence to traditional tenure rights. Some of the contradictions of the issue are expressed in the following manner by the Tate and Lyle consultants previously mentioned:

"The land tenure arrangements of a settlement scheme can be a contentious issue. The granting of freehold title is very much against Swazi traditions and reduces the degree of control over smallholders. However, on Swazi Nation Land there is no tradition of evicting smallholders for bad farming. On the contrary the smallholder has a well established right to be allocated land, provided he acknowledges continued allegiance to his chief. For a settlement scheme a formal lease of land is required which will differ in certain important principles from the traditional system. This issue is now being tackled at VIF, where the land has been returned to SNL. The smallholders may be given leases "in perpetuity", or for life, which would spell out clearly their rights and obligations" (op.cit.:134).

The manner in which these contradictions are resolved, if at all, awaits investigation. What can be said with reasonable certainty however is that the experience of Vuvulane Irrigated Farms should be central to any such analysis.

We turn to a discussion of the Vuvulane scheme below. Before doing so it is important to comment more generally on contract farming in Swaziland. In Swaziland there is a whole number of contractual arrangements between peasant producers and buyers which vary in content and form. Among these, for instance, are a number of arrangements between South African cotton buyers and Swazi cotton producers in the South of Swaziland. The South African firms provide extension advice, cheap credit, collection and other benefits, in return for the supply of a specific product of a certain quality. This is undertaken as a competitive measure in order to encourage Swazi cotton growers to sell to the South African firms rather than to the Cotona Ginnery of Swaziland.

In addition there is a bewildering plethora of state schemes such as irrigation schemes, development schemes, co-operative projects, marketing schemes and so on, which involve some kind of contractual relationship. There are also schemes run by international and foreign aid agencies which also include contractual obligations. All these projects could very well be considered as "contract farming" if the existence of a contract were considered as the defining characteristic of such relationships. We have argued above for a different conceptualization in which the relation between the peasantry on the one hand and a transnational or the state which controls access to the market on the other, must be seen

as central. Following this approach there seems to be in Swaziland, apart from VIF, only one other outgrower scheme which would qualify for inclusion, and this is a pineapple scheme situated in the Malkerns Valley and attached to the Swazican (Ex-Libbys) estates.<sup>4</sup> There is however very little written information available on this project, so that we have thought it preferable to concentrate on the case of Vuvulane Irrigated Farms.

### *The Commonwealth Development Corporation and Vuvulane Irrigated Farms (VIF)*

#### *The Commonwealth Development Corporation*

The Colonial Development Corporation was established in 1948 and changed its name to Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC) in 1963. The CDC is a development agency, operating on commercial lines (as distinct from an aid-agency). CDC aims to combine the introduction and promotion of commercial expertise and organisational efficiency with assistance in economic development through provision of finance. All investments are made however under the provision that they generate sufficient return to cover its costs, i.e. the cost of loan capital and administration as well as an element to cover commercial risk.

Although CDC is a commercially oriented organisation, it also claims an obligation to invest its funds in the best interest of the countries concerned by having as large a number of rural families as possible benefit from a given investment. This approach is put in practice in three ways (Kendrick: 1976: 117) establishing outgrower schemes, either by settlement or in existing rural communities, to supply a processing industry; the introduction of suitable marketable cash-crops, livestock or farming systems; and the development of settlement schemes based on remunerative cash-crops or farming systems, including supply of irrigation water.

CDC is involved in number of different enterprises in Swaziland, usually as a partner with the Swazi state. Its involvements include forestry, fruit canning, textile, paper and brick production, but its main investments are in the sugar industry (production and processing); the country's main export product (CDC annual report and accounts). Vuvulane Irrigated Farms is a good example of the CDC's approach to investment.

#### *Vuvulane Irrigated Farms: origin and overview of the scheme*

In May 1950, the CDC purchased 150 square miles (41,400 ha) of Title Deed Land in the Lowveld of North-Eastern Swaziland, from Swaziland Ranches Ltd. After conducting studies of crop and market potentials it was decided that sugar, rice and citrus fruit be grown under irrigation.

In the years 1950-60, the Swaziland Irrigation Scheme (SIS) was established and a main irrigation canal, supplied from the Komati River was built, to supply water for more than 30,000 acres (12,000 ha) of land. By the end of 1960, 10,000 acres (4,000 ha) was under sugar cane, and a sugar mill was completed.

Management of the scheme was entirely in CDC hands. Swazis were employed as wage-labourers, but planning, financing and management was done by expatriates. Ownership and production was exclusively in expatriate hands and irrigation was confined to the non-Swazi area. Between 1956 and 1962 CDC set up trials on a limited scale, on which Swazi smallholders grew sugar, cotton, maize and vegetables under irrigation.

These trials proved successful and on 1 September 1962 the inauguration took place of Vuvulane Irrigated Farms as a settlement project within the CDC irrigation complex. Farm development for VIF, carried out by CDC, included bush clearing, ripping, discing, canal and road construction, land drainage, land levelling and first ploughing, amounting to a cost of R672 per ha in 1975.

<sup>4</sup>Since this was written another outgrower scheme involving tobacco producers has been located in the South of the country.

At the end of 1973 there were 233 Swazi farmers on 1080 ha with an average farm size of about 4.5 ha. The size of the farms however was felt by the CDC to be on the small side and the farms developed after 1973 were made slightly larger. This is the reason given by the Company to account for why the planned number of 415 farmers at the end of 1978 was not reached. At the end of 1982, there were 263 farmers on about 1300 ha with an average farm size ranging from 3 1/4 - 6 1/2 ha.

The basic commodity produced is sugar cane; about 70% of the land area of each holding is under this crop. On the remainder, annual crops are grown; in summer mainly cotton and maize; in winter potatoes, beans, onions, cabbage, tomatoes and other vegetables. Net average incomes from sugar alone were estimated at E1200 (ranging from E0 to above E3500) for 1973 (Kendrick: 1976:124). The Fourth National Development Plan reports an annual mean net income over the period 1978-82 of E3500. It unfortunately gives no indications of variation.

Under pressure after a number of disputes which had occurred between the outgrowers and CDC - principally over leasing arrangements - during which nationalist feelings arose (the CDC was suspected of acting in the manner of a colonial landlord), the company decided to transfer ownership to the Swazi state (Tuckett: 1975: 59). As we shall see later, this transfer was to the company's advantage. In January 1982, title was transferred to a Swazi Nation parastatal (Swazi National Agricultural Development Corporation (Pty) Ltd.); the land became Swazi Nation Land and was leased to the farmers on a 20 year renewable basis. CDC was subcontracted as a managing agency.

### *Selection of farmers, and lease arrangements*

The VIF scheme constituted at its inception a completely new idea in the approach to farming and land use to Swazi smallholders in that it required payment for the use of land and water and that there was a complete dependence on arable crops, rather than livestock. The techniques involved in irrigation and modern farming methods were also unfamiliar. The idea of leasing land rather than receiving it from the chief and the new disciplines involved in sugar cane production were practices which had to be learnt.

Tuckett (1975) notes that in the early stages of the project, these novel aspects made the scheme suspect to many peasants and also to chiefs and others. This resulted in few applications at first, but as the scheme became established and the success of the first entrants became known, the number of applicants increased (84 applicants in 1964; more than 1000 by 1970).

At first, selection of farmers was undertaken by management with the help of the District Commissioner and District Agricultural Officer. More recently (also before ownership of the scheme was handed over to the Swazi Nation), Swaziland Government Authorities have organized an Interviewing Committee, consisting of the District Commissioner (now known as Regional Administrator) local chiefs and agricultural officials. This committee recommends applicants to a Selection Committee (including senior officials of the Ministry of Agriculture, the local administration and the Swazi National Council along with the Project General Manager and Settlement Manager). There is also a limited number (2-3) of vacancies left for farmers nominated by the King.

Applicants must be Swazi, healthy, of "good character", willing to make their home at Vuvulane, preferably married, in order to have family labour available, and must be recognised as "good" farmers in their home areas or "good" farm workers in employment (Tuckett: 1975: 8).

In practice, the recommendation of staff of the Ministry of Agriculture is most important. According to Tuckett (1975:8) this selection procedure appears to "work well". He illustrates this by quoting a very low drop-out rate: in the first twelve years only one farmer left the scheme voluntarily, and five farmers had their leases terminated. None of the farmers failed financially or did not prosper sufficiently to induce them to leave.

In the absence of any agricultural legislation to meet the requirements of settlement schemes, many items had to be dealt with in the lease agreements. This according to Tuckett renders the contracts hard to understand and on many occasions has led to confusion and misunderstanding, which in some cases also led to disputes over leases. These

disputes had to be settled in court. Whether Tuckett's explanation is a valid one or not, would have of course to be established scientifically.

The items provided for in the leases include, among others (revised and implemented in 1975 after disputes) (Armstrong, 1985: 48- 49) the following stipulations:

- the level of rent and water charges;
- the property must be used for agricultural purposes only and no animals may be kept there without permission;
- the tenant must adopt agricultural standards according to instruction of the Corporation regulating (among others):
  - (a) the demarcation, use and control of grazing areas
  - (b) the introduction or removal of stock and the control of numbers and kind of stock
  - (c) the construction, maintenance, repair and demolition of buildings and other structures
  - (d) the construction, use, maintenance and care of contour grass strips, dividing access lanes, roads, water furrows, drainage channels and other waterworks, and the use maintenance and care of the property generally
  - (e) the prevention and control of diseases, insect, plant and other pests
  - (f) the prevention and control of fire, soil erosion and the adoption generally of sound and modern methods of agriculture
  - (g) the adoption of adequate sanitary arrangements and satisfactory hygiene control;
- the lease may not be assigned without permission, and only the tenant, his family and his workers may live there;
- the tenant must reside on property ten months of the year and construct and maintain housing for himself and his family;
- the corporation's liability for water damage is limited;
- If the tenant fails to comply with any lawful and reasonable instruction given by the Corporation, the Corporation may do the work required at the tenant's expense;
- the procedure on the death of a tenant is that, generally, the Corporation has the right to name a successor, subject to compensation to the family of the tenant for approved improvements and growing crops. If the Corporation fails to choose a successor, then the family may nominate one, subject to approval of the Corporation (with provision for arbitration in the case of failure to agree). If the lease is cancelled by time lapse or for any other reason, the tenant is entitled to compensation for approved improvements;
- the tenant must comply strictly with the terms of his sucrose permit and must insure his crops if the Corporation demands it.

### **Management**

This section deals with the situation up to 1982. It has not been possible to obtain information on the present situation. Due to the sensitivity and political nature of a current dispute (see below) the management was not available for interviews and secondary material could not be located. Since CDC is still responsible for the management of the scheme one can however assume that little has changed since 1982.

Up to 1970, the Project General Manager of SIS (Swaziland Irrigation Scheme) was responsible for the scheme. In 1970 however, a VIF project manager was appointed, who is directly responsible to CDC's regional controller for Southern Africa. In 1972, an own maintenance workshop was established, and in 1973 the VIF management became responsible for its own accounting services. There are now three departments: the Field Department (under the Settlement Manager); the Account Department (under the CDC Accountant); and the Works Department (under the Work Supervisor). The Field Department staff consists of one Extension Officer, one Assistant Settlement Officer and three Field Instructors (1973). Their duty is to give instruction and advice with regard to farming practices, especially to recent entrants.

Although it is recognised by CDC that some of the services and functions should become the responsibility of the farmers themselves, technical and financial management is still fully under control of CDC. The farmers evolved their own organisation from which eight representatives speak for the community. This organisation takes the form of a Farmer's Association, formed in 1965, basically to handle marketing and retailing. However

farmers have seemed reluctant to join and there are currently only 60 members (Tuckett: 1975: 17). According to Tuckett this is due to the poor management of the association. Tuckett's viewpoint is that membership of the association should have been included in the lease-arrangement as one of the conditions. He states that "participation [of the farmers] in management, co-operative development and representation on external committees and councils might have taken place in a more orderly and responsible way" (Tuckett: 1975: 19).

In order to re-establish the traditional authority of the state over the farmers, a King's representative was appointed in 1971. He is responsible to the National Council and to the Ministry of Local Administration, for the maintenance of traditional customs and discipline. With his libandla (council), he is responsible for dealing with family and minor disputes (instead of calling in the police, as happened before his appointment).

### *Central Services*

VIF management provides a number of services, for which farmers are charged. The services include:

*Irrigation Water.* Water is drawn from the main irrigation system of SIS, which regards VIF as one user. Farmers are charged for water quantity used, measured according to the time for which the half-cusec gate, belonging to one farmer's plot, is open. On top of this, each farmer pays a contribution towards the operating costs of the water distribution system.

*Cane Cutting and Haulage.* By law, sugar growers are required to regulate their daily deliveries through the season. This is clearly not possible for smallholders. VIF was therefore accepted as a single unit for cane delivery. A harvesting programme was set up, in which each farm is harvested in total, in rotation with other small-holdings. Equipment to transport the cane from the field to the roadside loading zone where it is collected by contracted trucks, was purchased by VIF. Since the farmers could not provide enough labour for the cane-cutting, VIF management organizes gangs of cane cutters. For this cutting and haulage service, the farmers are charged a fixed amount per ton, regardless of haulage distance and of ground conditions.

*Hire of Tractors and Equipment.* Farmers can rent tractors and other equipment from the Plant Pool. Rates (E2.50 per hour in 1974) include the driver.

*Fertilizers and other agricultural supplies.* VIF stocks fertilizers, seeds, insecticides, building materials, hand tools, etc., which can be purchased by the farmers against net cost, to which is added a 15% handling charge.

*Seed Cane Supplies.* VIF maintains a nursery, which supplies VIF's needs.

### *Credit and Marketing*

*Credit.* VIF management offers credit to farmers in the form of input supply on credit (at an interest rate of 8.5% per annum in 1975). These loans are repaid after harvest of the cane crop. Furthermore, OXFAM loans are available, up to E15 per month, at an interest rate of 6% per annum. (The Prime Lending Rate in 1975 varied between 10.5 and 11%). Although there have been no major problems in the repayment of these loans, there is a general concern among farmers over large amounts outstanding.

*Marketing.* Farmers largely arrange the marketing of crops other than sugar cane on an individual basis. Cotton is collected by the Cotona Ginnery (Matsapha).

One would expect few difficulties regarding sugar cane marketing, since the sugar mill (Mhlume Sugar Mill Company) in which CDC has a 50% share, is only about 10 km away; there is a guaranteed market, and the mill offers fixed prices. Nevertheless, the marketing of cane led to a major dispute in 1967 (Tuckett: 1975: 34- 36).

Legislation governing the sugar industry in Swaziland includes the proviso that sugar cane may not be grown or sold unless the grower holds a sucrose quota, issued by the Quota Board. This quota both entitles as well as obliges the farmer (or company) to deliver a specific quantity. The law also makes provision for delivery throughout the season to ensure a regular daily supply, and to ensure that varying sucrose contents throughout the

season are spread fairly between all growers. (Sucrose content at the beginning of the season in May is 11%; it goes up to 16% in August / September; and then falls to 11% at the end of the year).

In the case of the VIF, a single quota was issued, because each individual could not make daily deliveries. As was mentioned before, each farmers' cane was cut at once, which meant that each farmers' cane was inequitable in sucrose content. Therefore, the farmers' payment was not based on sucrose delivered, but based on total tonnage. The farmers were dissatisfied with this procedure (1967) and claimed their own sucrose quota's. After a brief period when part of the farmers refused to deliver, the dispute was settled. The result was that VIF is still regarded as one production unit, but the farmers are now paid for the sucrose content of their crop. This means that a farmer harvesting in a high sucrose month can obtain double the profit obtained by another smallholder who harvests in a low sucrose month. Farm by farm harvesting is therefore done on a rotational basis.

### *Conclusions*

The above account of the operation of Vuvulane is mainly based on a report by J.R.Tuckett (1975) who was General Manager at VIF from 1970 to 1974 and therefore presents the company's point of view. Nevertheless, in terms of farm incomes the project has probably been successful in so far as the returns to smallholders seem to be greater than what is usually possible on Swazi Nation Land. This would have to be studied in detail for a more accurate assessment to be made. But there also have been a number of problems and disputes. One of the bones of contention is that the representation of farmers in management decisions has not been satisfactory.

Furthermore, some marketing problems remain unsolved. The sucrose-based payment and the consequent rotational harvesting creates friction between farmers. Obviously, all farmers want to harvest in the high-sucrose-months. About 15-18 months after planting, the crop is ready to harvest. It is easy for a farmer to calculate in which month to plant in order to be able to confront management with a harvestable crop in a high sucrose-month.

With the change in the status of the land to Swazi Nation Land, which went along with the handover of the scheme to the state, the smallholders expressed their discontent over land rent and water charges, as such rents are customarily not charged on SNL. At the same time, the sugar price dropped, caused by a decreasing world market price. In the case of Swaziland, this means that the price of the sugar quota sold to the EEC (about one third of total sugar sales) is down to the minimum guaranteed. Politically, the scheme is considered an area of opposition to the traditional authorities. There could be a number of reasons for this and it would be premature to speculate.

Problems of this kind (complaints of farmers, laced with political aspects) led to a decision by government in 1985 to set up a Commission of Enquiry, to look into the grievances of VIF smallholders. The main task of this commission was to review the existing lease arrangements (Armstrong, 1985: 46).<sup>5</sup>

CDC has incurred substantial losses during its involvement in VIF in the period 1962-82 as the invested capital of 1.76 million Pound Sterling was not recovered. As mentioned before, CDC is not an aid-agency, but a "development agency", operating along commercial lines like any private concern. The question therefore arises as to why the CDC continued to run the project as late as 1982 when it was handed over to the Swazi State and why it still continues to be involved in a management capacity. While this handing over can now be gauged in a more "commercial light" the continued involvement of CDC in the scheme only makes sense if seen in the wider context of CDC's operations in Swaziland (and possibly elsewhere). (It goes without saying that CDC's own altruistic

<sup>5</sup>The commission of enquiry has since reported its findings. One effect of these was that Tibiyo Taka Ngwane, the large Swazi royal parastatal, took over the financing and directing of VIF in May 1986. Management is still under CDC control. In October 1986, fourteen (14) VIF farmers were expelled for 'failing to honour their contracts'.

justification of making the benefits of investments available to as large a number of families as possible rings rather hollow when set against the losses incurred by the company).

When we look at the operations of CDC in a broader context than just VIF, and consider CDC's involvement in other parts of the sugar industry in Swaziland, the involvement in VIF becomes more understandable.

CDC has a 50% share in the Mhlume Sugar Company, which processes all of VIF's cane crop (about 10% of its total annual intake). Being involved in VIF ensures Mhlume Sugar Company of a steady supply of high-sucrose cane (on average cane grown by smallholders tends to have a higher sucrose content than that from large estates). Furthermore, CDC still has a 50% share in (Inyoni Yami) Swaziland Irrigation Scheme. Both the Mhlume Sugar Company and the Swaziland Irrigation Scheme are highly profitable; SIS produced a pre-tax profit of E3.04 million (1984, 1983: E2.32m.) and Mhlume Sugar Company an estimated profit after tax of E5.3 in 1984/85.

Through these profits, CDC's original investment in VIF, and an additional 0.577 million Pound Sterling invested in soil improvement works during 1982/83 will be recovered (as is also stated in CDC's annual reports). In addition of course the company's involvement in a managerial capacity means that it can ensure the provision of a high quality product to its sugar mill. This final argument clearly shows the necessity to consider contract farming within the broader context of the relation between transnationals and the peasantry.

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## 7. FAMILY CYCLE OR SOCIAL STRATUM: AN ANALYSIS OF SPENDING BEHAVIOUR OF SWAZI URBAN WORKERS

*Jaap Barendregt and Maarten A. Brouwer*

### **Summary**

In this paper we apply the concepts of social and demographic differentiation to Swazi homesteads on communal tenure land. After a theoretical analysis and a presentation of our findings, we will draw conclusions on the application of both concepts. The two theories will prove to be meaningful, one in determining static effects on the welfare of homesteads and the other on dynamic effects.

### **1. Introduction**

Swaziland is the smallest country in Southern Africa, landlocked by South Africa and Mozambique. Socially as well as economically the country is sharply dichotomous. More than 80% of the population lives on Swazi Nation Land (SNL) under a communal land tenure system. Distribution of land is controlled by chiefs, who are mostly members of the royal family or leaders of original clans. In order to get access to land a married Swazi has to pay tribute to his chief either by labour or in kind. On the one hand he is obliged to plough his fields to prevent deterioration of cultivated lands; on the other hand he has to keep in mind that land has been given to him as a means of securing subsistence. If he turns to commercial farming, land is used to create personal wealth. This could be a threat to the local chief whose power is strongly related to the monopoly of land distribution. The increasing population pressure on land leads to smaller landholdings which can best be compensated for by the intensification of agricultural production. Although under the auspices of the Swazi government rural development is stimulated, this has not yet led to increased production. In general, productivity on SNL is low and the contribution of traditional farming to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has been no more than 3.5% (average over the period 1978-1982).

The production on SNL takes place within a homestead, which consists of huts and some fields. Usually one family and a few non-family related persons form the whole homestead. In our research we defined as homesteadmembers all those who were daily on the homestead or, if this was not the case, had their own hut on the homestead. This included absentee unmarried sons and daughters and absentee married sons.<sup>1</sup> The impact of absenteeism on the homestead is considerable. More than 65% of all homesteads have at least one absentee and only 18% of all homesteads are without anyone in wage labour. The average number of absentee workers per homestead amounts to 2.0. In total about one-third of the adult labour force is formed this way.

The modern sector in the Swazi economy is providing employment. Its production is export orientated: 60% of GDP is transported abroad. In order to create more employment the Swazi government stimulates this process of exported growth by making considerable investments in infrastructure and working capital of foreign owned companies. Hardly any production is intended for the domestic market. Most consumption items are imported. The large share of imports in GDP (approximately 80%) also reflects the lack of machines, materials and transport equipment. The openness of the Swazi economy creates a great sensitivity to relative price changes because foreign demand determines domestic production. Therefore great emphasis is placed on low wages, for these are the prime components in the cost-price of labour intensive products such as woodpulp and sugar, which accounted for nearly 47% of the exports in 1982. The disarticulation that is thus apparent in the Swazi economy has led to the now existing duality.

<sup>1</sup>See also M. Russell and M. Ntshingila (1984).

Wage labour is the major link between the traditional and modern sectors, because the earnings can lead to a higher level of per capita consumption, better education and agricultural investment. This spin off effect of earnings can have different impacts on the economy. If the money is remitted to carry through structural improvement and the effect are still apparent when the cashflows are cut back, we consider it to have had dynamic effects on the welfare position of the homestead. A higher consumption level however, has static effects on the welfare position because it drops when the cashflows are ended.

In this paper we present some results of a research covering 60 migrant workers<sup>2</sup> at the main industrial site, Matsapha. They have been interviewed on their rural spendings in order to establish possible welfare effects of remittances. The limited number of questionnaires involved do not allow for a statistical analysis of the data. As first step in exploring whether migration stimulates structural changes in the Swazi agricultural sector on SNL our main object of study has been to determine some relations of causality between the existence of a labour market and the development of the rural homestead. If results are influenced by extreme numbers, due to the rather small data base, we will comment on it. The total number of migrants interviewed does not always amount to 58, because we considered it necessary for reasons of representativity that each category should contain at least three people. After the application of the theoretical concepts of social and demographic differentiation it occurred that some categories were too small. In the next paragraph these concepts will be discussed, before analysing the spendings in paragraph 3.

## 2. Theoretical concepts

### 2.1 A controversy on analytical tools

After the publication of Chayanov's theory of peasant economies in English (1966), a polemic was started in *The Journal of Peasant Studies*. The different concepts of social and demographic differentiation were discussed as main variables in explaining the patterns of labour use and inequality in the agricultural sector. In their contribution, Deere and De Janvry (1981) stated that both theoretical perspectives enrich the study of peasant societies. In the Cajamarcan case they concluded that social factors such as the distribution of land and the access to assets offered a better explanation for inequality than demographic ones. Nonetheless, the latter seemed to be important when analysing the division of labour on grounds of sex and age, "particularly where the income-generating activities are more important sources of household net income than agricultural production" (Deere and De Janvry, 1981, pp 358). This is very much the situation in Swaziland.

Many have argued that Swazi homesteads rely heavily on wage-earnings for the maintenance of their standard of living. Like Deere and De Janvry, Low, in his *Farm-household Theory* (1982), used social as well as demographic criteria. He developed a theoretical argument why, despite a favourable climatic and economic infrastructure, the impact of rural development activities on production yields had been so disappointing. Contrary to Deere and De Janvry, Low found that "the domestic development cycle plays an important role in determining the production characteristics of Swazi farm households" (Low, 1982, pp. 49). As Chayanov had foretold decennia before, Low concluded that the failure to use some concept of a family farm with its specific characteristics, was the most important reason for the over optimistic expectations of the production impact of increased technical aid to Swazi farmers. Without contributing to the extensive discussion on the existence of a peasant mode of production, we should like to emphasize that in the background of the polemic on demographic and social factors this very issue seems to be distinctive.

<sup>2</sup>One interview had to be cancelled because the interviewee was in hospital before a second session could take place. Another interview was left out because of incomplete data.

Low described the homestead as an income maximizing unit which used rapidly growing wage labour opportunities in Swaziland to allocate labour to formal employment. The rest of the labour input on the homestead is often aimed at subsistence production, increasing the use of modern technologies as hybrid seeds, fertilizers and tractors. His major conclusion was "that yield increasing crop technologies have been widely adopted by farmhouseholds in order to save time in procuring basic food requirements" (Low, 1982, pp iii), thereby enabling the homestead to send out migrant workers. Russell and De Vletter, among others, described the effects of migration in Swaziland without using Low's theoretical concepts to analyse the feature of internal migration and spending behaviour of migrants. In this study we will pay attention to these concepts because they may explain the migrant's decision to leave the homestead. Therefore they may have influence on this spending behaviour and thus on the spin off effects to be studied. In the following paragraphs we will briefly outline the applicable theoretical concepts.

## 2.2 The concept of responsibility

In describing the disarticulation of the Swazi economy, we noted that migration in itself forms the connection between a modern sector in which capitalism is the exclusive mode of production and a traditional sector in which the family prevails, with its domestic, non-capitalist mode of production. In disarticulated economies wages do not have to cover the total costs of reproduction of the migrant and his family. Meillassoux (1981) argued that these costs of reproduction consist of three elements, i.e. the reconstitution of immediate labour power, the maintenance during periods of non-employment and the replacement by birth of offspring. He goes on to say that the wages paid by employers cover slightly more than is necessary for the reconstitution of labour power, thereby explaining the dominance of the capitalistic sector.

For our analysis it is useful to elaborate on the fundamental treatment of the personal life cycle of a migrant within the concept of the family farm. Not every member of a homestead has the same responsibilities with regard to children and parents and, therefore, if there is more than one migrant from a homestead, each will react to wage labour opportunities differently. In fig. 1 the personal life cycle is depicted.

Figure 1: The personal life cycle

Income generation	spending
- productive phase	- childhood - productive phase - old age

Only during his productive phase a migrant can earn money to pay for his reconstitution. However, during the same period he has to take care of children and parents, like the latter have looked after him before and the former will do so later. It is evident from this analysis that not only the need to earn money is influenced by responsibility, but also the spending of this wage will differ accordingly. In our sample we classify three categories of responsibility: the homesteadhead who has to take care of the wellbeing of every homesteadmember, the heir, who will take over this responsibility in due course and the younger son, whose responsibility will be limited. The division into the three categories is based on the de facto position of the migrants. If the three groups were taken together the research results on spending patterns would be obscured. The classification proves to be meaningful and makes it possible to compare spending behaviour within demographic phases and social strata. Table 1 shows the main features.

Table 1. *Composition of spendings according to responsibility (%)*<sup>3</sup>

	Homestead heads	Heirs	Younger Sons
Number (n= 58)	36	7	15
Irregular Remittances	39.5	36.0	22.4
— Inputcosts	6.6	6.5	2.6
— Investment	1.9	0.3	3.2
— Schoolfees	6.1	4.0	2.7
— Building	6.6	8.8	2.7
— Damage	1.8	4.1	0.4
— Furniture	1.9	1.3	2.5
Regular Remittances	32.3	22.7	20.1
— Food	8.1	8.9	5.2
— Cash	24.2	13.8	14.9
Savings <sup>4</sup>	-1.1	0.8	1.8
Rest income	29.3	40.5	55.7

The figures indicate a strong correlation between responsibility and spending behaviour. Homesteadheads contribute the most to the homestead, younger sons the least. The remittances by heads and younger sons are equally divided between regular and irregular money flows, those by heirs are mainly irregular.<sup>5</sup> The last ones spend a relatively large portion of their income on housing (building and furnishing). As future heads they are probably creating their own homes within the existing homestead. The contribution to inputcosts and schoolfees which are the items in which the responsibility is most prevalent, are mainly done by homesteadheads (12.7%, 10.5% and 5.3% respectively for heads, heirs and younger sons). The level of investment is low. Surprisingly, younger sons are the main investors. Finally, it is important to note that homesteadheads use up their savings, which were accumulated in previous phases of responsibility (see also paragraph 3, table 6). This lends some weight to the argument that there is hardly any financial margin for structural improvements to be carried out by homesteadheads. Up to now we merely discussed the migrant's position as determinant of his spending behaviour. In the next two subparagraphs we will analyse the impact of homestead characteristics on spending behaviour.

### 2.3 *The concept of the family life cycle*

As a leading scientist of the Institute for the Study of Economics and Agrarian Policy in Russia, A.V. Chayanov was convinced that a lot of scientific work on agricultural communities failed to acknowledge the prime socio-economic characteristics of peasant behaviour, i.e. the family as a decisionmaking unit. At the end of the last century the Russian peasantry formed a family economy that had very few interactions with outside markets. In his model, Chayanov explicitly states that the family farm aims at subsistence production. Due to the level of family consumption, different rates of selfexploitation will occur, assuming that those production conditions which determine the level of productivity are equal. The resulting level of production is determined by the equilibrium between utility of output and disutility of labour input. Only when money is

<sup>3</sup>The research population was made representative by using criteria such as region of location of the homestead and type of work done by the migrant. See also Barendregt and Brouwer (1986).

<sup>4</sup>Buying and selling of cattle is included in the savings.

<sup>5</sup>Remittances are 'regular' if they coincide with the regularity of visits to the homestead or with the regularity of wage payments by the employer. In all other cases remittances are called 'irregular'.

needed to purchase subsistence commodities, exchange on a market will take place. In such a situation demographic factors primarily influence the decision on labour allocation. Chayanov emphasizes the fact that due to these demographic factors, the composition and size of a family will change in time as children grow up and slowly become productive units.

As peasant farmers are producing for subsistence by using family labour, the ratio of consumers to workers ( $c/w$ ) is an important indicator of the family's capacity to generate a subsistence production level during its lifecycle. Throughout this cycle one can distinguish between different phases.<sup>6</sup> At first the homestead has to be established by building huts and ploughing fields. The family will consist of a young married couple and possibly a few very young children. After this establishment phase comes the period of expansion in which the number of children will grow. While the labourstrength slowly increases the consumption needs on the homestead will rise rapidly, which results in a higher  $c/w$ -ratio than in the previous phase. When the family enters the consolidation phase, most children are of schoolgoing age. Although some may already be leaving the homestead, other children will take over their tasks and the labourstrength will be consolidated. However, as time passes the labourstrength will drop as children leave the parental home to establish their own settlements. After this period of fission the original founders of the homestead will remain, mostly accompanied by the heir and his family. This period is defined as the decline phase, which ends the moment the son takes over the homestead. In table 2 the main characteristics of our research population are shown.

Table 2: *Family life cycle: some characteristics*

	Home stead heads	Heirs	Younger sons	Total	Average home stead popula- tion <sup>8</sup>	Average home stead size (acres)	$c/w$ <sup>7</sup>
Establishment	2	0	0	2	—	—	—
Expansion	18	0	0	18	10.6	6.6	1.31
Consolidation	15	0	4	19	14.3	6.3	1.15
Fission	1	3	10	14	11.0	3	1.15
Decline	0	4	1	5	7.6	7.3	1.05

According to our definition sons do not play a part in the first two phases we discerned. In the consolidation phase only younger sons occur, which leads to the conclusion that heirs have either started their own homestead or work the fields on their father's homestead. In the fission phase it becomes apparent that homesteadheads withdraw from the homestead, either to commute or to engage themselves in cashcropping. Others (De Vletter, Sterkenburg and Testerink) have found that the number of cashcropping farmers increases with their age. The fission period therefore seems to represent a new start for homesteadheads, as can also be concluded from table 3 below:

<sup>6</sup>Here we follow the terminology of Low, only taking it as literally as possible.

<sup>7</sup>see Appendix A for the criteria we used in calculating  $c$  and  $w$ .

<sup>8</sup>total residents + absentees

Table 3: Activities on the homestead

	Percentage of cashcropping homesteads	Percentage of homesteads selling handicraft	Average number of wage-earners per homestead	Percentage of homesteads using lilima	Percentage of homesteads using hired labour
Establishment	-	-	-	-	-
Expansion	22	28	1.3	33	22
Consolidation	21	26	2.0	32	5
Fission	43	50	2.9	71	7
Decline	20	0	2.0	20	20

As could be expected from our definitions the number of migrants per homestead increases through the different phases. In the fission phase this seems to be compensated for by use of lilima, a system of farmers cooperation in which a helping hand from neighbours, relatives or others is rewarded mainly with food and drinks. Hiring labourers, another possible way of dealing with a shortage of labourstrength, is not apparent in this period. However, in the expansion and decline phases it is. This can be explained by the fact that during the fission phase the homesteadhead himself is able to participate in the lilima, held at other homesteads, while this is not possible in the expansion and decline period, due to lack of time or physical incompetence. In the decline phase the heirs dominate. Cashcropping activities and handicrafts are not yet taken over by the eldest sons, probably because they are too engaged in wage labour.

The free availability of land is essential to the model of Chayanov. Otherwise there is no logical relation between *c/w* and production level. This is the main reason why we defined the five different stages by using the labourstrength as the criterium. The supposition that a growing labourstrength leads to a higher production level through the expansion of cultivated fields is basic to the Chayanovian model. Chayanov himself states on this very issue: "In all probability, in another agrarian regime less flexible than that of the repartitional commune the influence of the biological factor of family development on size of land for use would not stand out so prominently and so evidently as in our material" (Chayanov, 1966, pp. 68).<sup>9</sup> The results of Deere and De Janvry discussed in par. 2.1, can be explained by the fact that in Northern Peru access to land was limited. In Swaziland this problem also arises. Low (1982) supposed that land was freely available, a supposition that we cannot prove (see table 2). The availability of land is also a major point of criticism of Chayanov's model by many neo-marxists. Their alternative concept will be discussed below.

#### 2.4. The concept of social strata

Lenin (1972) argues that differentiation processes in the agricultural sector of Russia at the turn of the century were due to unevenness in the distribution of land under crops. Peasants<sup>10</sup> in the lower strata cannot produce their subsistence requirements and are therefore in search of alternative sources of income. On the other hand, well-to-do peasants, who exceed the family labour norm<sup>11</sup> are able to make profitable use of hired labour in order to raise production levels. In the absence of a developed urban labour market this leads to the hiring out of land and labour by poorer peasants to the upper

<sup>9</sup>In repartitional communes land was periodically redistributed allowing households to adjust land holding to their labour resources.

<sup>10</sup>We use the term peasant instead of farmer, because as Testerink has said: "it should be kept in mind that not every agriculture practising person can be called a farmer" (Testerink, 1984, pp. 1).

<sup>11</sup>The amount of land that can be cultivated by use of family labour.

strata. This penetration of capitalistic production relations within agricultural societies determines the resulting social inequality among peasants. Within the lower strata of the peasantry the main production goal will be to meet the family's consumption needs.

As Patnaik (1979) states in his critique on Chayanov, by defining the peasantry as the agricultural unit aiming at subsistence production, only one class within the peasantry has been taken into account. If one proceeds by analysing the family farm on its own it is not surprising to find a homogeneous subsector, not affected by capitalistic rules of management. Harrison also criticizes Chayanov on his abstraction from interactions of the family farm with its socio-economic context. Neo-marxists in general assume that not only internal needs influence the decision making process on the family farm, but the needs and wants of the small group of farmers that own the means of production are also significant. The simple fact that not all peasants can use the same production technique partly determines the decision to allocate labour to agriculture or to formal employment. As Lenin states: "it is quite natural that the well-to-do peasantry also employ a farming technique much above the average [(well-to-do)]; that is to say, the well-to-do peasants' do their sowing faster, make better use of favourable weather, sow the seed in more humid soil, and reap their harvest in proper time"; (Lenin, 1972, pp. 74). Also Russell finds this relation between production level and access to the means of production as she concludes: "Inability to seize this moment [of favourable weather conditions] through lack of tractors or oxen was the most often cited farming difficulty" (Russell, 1982, pp. 10).

Neo-marxists even apply this through the matter of family size by arguing that the level of well-being is itself a determinant of the family size. The upper strata are faced with lower mortality rates, which undermines Chayanov's argument that family size determines the access to the means of production, specifically the size of fields in use. As can be seen in table 4 we did not find such a relationship. It must be kept in mind however, that the homestead population is not the same as the family size, because most homesteads also include persons not related to the family.

*Table 4: Social Differentiation: some characteristics*

	Home stead heads	Heirs	Younger sons	Total	Average Home stead population	Average Home stead size (acres)	Cattle
Lower peasants	12	2	6	20	11.8	2.3	8.7
Middle peasants	13	2	6	21	10.6	5.7	13.3
Upper peasants	11	3	3	17	12.7	12.6	28.0

In preparing the data on social differentiation we used the acreage of the homesteads as criterium (see also Appendix B). From table 4 we can conclude that the three classes are equally represented in the research population. Our classification is supported by the average cattle holding per stratum, which is a good indicator of the distribution of wealth.

*Table 5: Activities of homesteadmembers and the use of hired labourers on the homestead*

	Percentage of cash cropping home steads	Percentage of home steads selling handicraft	Percentage of hired labour	Percentage of home steads using lilima	Average number of wage-earners per homestead
Lower peasants	20	25	10	35	1.6
Middle peasants	14	19	0	33	2.1
Upper peasants	53	47	29	53	1.9

Middle peasants appear to concentrate the least on homestead based activities (table 5). Cashcropping as well as handicrafts are not as often practised by middle peasants as they are by both other strata. The same pattern emerges for hired labour and, to a much lesser degree, for lilima. The average number of wage earners per homestead fits exactly into this picture. This lends support to the hypothesis that middle peasants have made their choice in favour of migrant labour. This is in contrast to upper peasants, who are more frequently engaged in cashcropping and the sale of handicrafts, using migrant labour as a means of securing cash flows to the homestead. In the following paragraph this will be analysed further.

### *3. The Spending patterns of 58 Matsapha workers*

According to the theory of the family life cycle, a family reaches its peak consumption level at the end of the expansion phase, while labourstrength and production will be at a maximum in the consolidation phase. After the disintegration of the homestead, the family size will be smaller and therefore less money will be needed to make ends meet. For each responsibility category the results of our research on the spending behaviour of 58 migrants working in Matsapha are shown in table 6.

Regarding the homesteadheads it becomes evident that although they do not economize on urban spendings, they are facing a growing demand for money as the homestead enters the consolidation phase. Especially the older children are a heavy burden upon the financial reserves of the heads (schoolfees & clothing). This is met by cutting back on investments and breaking into savings. This last element is clearly evident if we look at the cattle holding per homestead: 16.3; 10.5 and 27.4 in the expansion, consolidation and fission phase respectively. The spending on consumption items does not show any particular increase. However, as a percentage of the total remittances it falls from 56.2% in the expansion phase to 49.3% in the period of consolidation.<sup>12</sup>

Younger sons do not seem to be engaged in farming as much as homesteadheads are. Other items of spending are also less significant, which results in a relatively high rest income to be spent in town. As the homestead enters the fission phase, regular as well as irregular remittances sharply increase. This is due to the average family size of younger sons: while in both stages half of them are married, in the fission phase 4.8 persons directly depend on them, whereas only 1.5 persons do so in the consolidation phase. This becomes apparent in the amount spent on schoolfees, clothing and illness. It is remarkable that younger sons dissave in the consolidation phase, but this was the case for only one of the migrants interviewed as all the others saved. This could be expected

<sup>12</sup>As 'consumption' we considered all regular remittances and irregular consumption.



Table 6: Spendings related to family cycle (%)

	Expansion		Consolidation			Fission		Decline	
	Homestead heads	Homestead heads	Younger Sons	Younger Sons	Heirs	Heirs	Heirs	Heirs	
Number	18	15	4	10	3	4			
Irregular Remittances	34.2	46.9	13.2	27.9	33.4	38.0			
- Inputcosts	6.6	6.6	0.5	4.3	7.7	5.6			
- Investments	2.2	1.2	1.2	4.4	0.7	0			
- Schoolfees	3.7	9.2	0.3	4.0	0.6	6.5			
- Building	5.1	8.8	3.5	2.5	3.8	12.6			
- Damage	1.2	2.9	0.2	0.6	9.5	0.1			
- Furniture	1.6	2.1	0	3.4	2.9	0			
- Clothing	4.4	5.2	0.3	2.9	5.0	5.1			
- Consumption	5.6	4.8	3.2	3.1	2.8	3.9			
- Illness	1.3	2.2	0	1.9	0	3.4			
Regular Remittances	31.0	33.0	12.4	24.6	35.4	13.1			
- Food	8.6	7.8	1.7	6.7	14.5	4.7			
- Cash	22.5	25.2	10.8	17.9	20.9	8.4			
Savings	5.2	-10.0	-2.2	3.5	-3.1	3.7			
Rest Income	29.6	30.1	76.6	44.0	34.3	45.2			

because younger sons will need money to buy cattle for future lobola payments and to start their own homesteads.

Analysing the spending of heirs it is noticeable that they contribute more than other sons to the homestead in the fission phase. This indicates that they have closer ties to the homestead: from the figures it is evident that they start to build their own homes at the homestead (building, furniture). The fact that a considerable amount is paid to repair damage confirms this picture, because it is hard to draw a sharp distinction between building and repairing damage. The high amount spent on building in the decline phase is due to one interview who contributes more than 9 out of the 12.6% mentioned in table 6. It is not surprising that heirs save in the decline phase: most of the building has already been done and consumption needs are low compared to other phases. This last statement is supported by the fact that the ratio of consumption in the total remittances drops from 57.5% to 33.2% in fission and decline phase respectively.<sup>13</sup>

The concept of demographic differentiation is a satisfactory tool in explaining the structure of rural spendings of migrants. Family size and composition are important determinants for their spending behaviour, specifically the need for schoolfees, building and clothing. However, we did not find that the use of agricultural inputs developed according to Chayanov's assumptions. As stated before, it is also possible to analyse the spending of migrant workers by dividing the peasantry into three strata: lower peasants, middle peasants and upper peasants. In table 7 the main features are shown.

Table 7: Spendings related to social strata (%)

	Lower peasants		Middle peasants		Upper peasants		
	Home stead heads	Younger sons	Home stead heads	Younger sons	Home stead heads	Heirs	Younger sons
Number	12	6	13	6	11	3	3
Irregular							
Remittances	33.0	16.8	41.0	15.8	44.7	33.4	47.1
- Input-costs	5.1	3.0	5.0	0.5	10.0	7.7	8.5
- Investments	1.4	2.3	1.5	0.6	2.8	0.7	10.5
- Schoolfees	5.4	1.2	5.9	1.9	7.1	0.6	7.6
- Building	2.2	2.5	11.0	2.0	6.1	3.8	4.7
- Damage	1.8	0	1.0	0.1	3.0	9.5	2.0
- Furniture	3.7	2.5	1.1	1.2	0.9	2.9	3.9
- Clothing	5.4	1.9	3.1	2.2	5.5	5.0	1.8
- Consumption	4.5	1.5	7.3	2.6	4.2	2.8	6.5
- Illness	2.2	1.4	1.3	0.8	1.4	0	1.8
Regular							
Remittances	35.9	20.2	33.8	21.7	26.6	35.4	16.6
- Food	7.0	3.5	10.2	7.7	6.8	14.5	3.6
- Cash	29.0	16.8	23.6	14.0	19.7	20.9	13.0
Savings	0.3	6.5	-2.7	-1.3	-0.7	-3.1	-1.4
Rest income	30.8	56.5	27.9	63.8	29.4	34.3	37.7

Homesteadheads in the lower peasantry spend a smaller part of their wages on remittances than in other strata. This is due to the fact that their earnings are lower and therefore a higher percentage is needed to meet basic requirements in town (table 8).

<sup>13</sup>See note 12.

Table 8: Average earnings and spendings per stratum (E, per year, homesteadheads)<sup>14</sup>

	Average income	Average remittances	Average rest income
Lower peasants	3985	2748	1227
Middle peasants	4808	3595	1341
Upper peasants	4481	3191	1320

As is apparent from the figures, the average urban spendings on a yearly base can be roughly estimated at E 1300. If the size of the fields is a determinant for the spending behaviour, one expects a relatively high proportion of consumption orientated spending in the lower strata.

Table 9: Consumption data

	Lower peasants		Middle peasants		Upper peasants	
	Home stead heads	Younger sons	Home stead heads	Younger sons	Home stead heads	Younger sons
Consumption (E)	1612	718	2004	898	1379	1554
Consumption(% of income)	40.5	21.7	41.1	24.3	30.8	23.1
Consumption (% of total-remittances)	58.7	58.6	54.9	64.7	43.2	36.3

Table 9 confirms this supposition. Apparently lower peasants are forced to migrate due to the lack of income generating opportunities on the homestead. Middle peasants are expected to place greater emphasis on agricultural inputs and investments because they have more fields to cultivate. However, this is not proved by the figures of table 7. Bearing in mind the fact that middle peasants also account for the highest number of wage workers, we can conclude that they have chosen wage labour in trying to raise standard of living. The hypotheses put forward in par. 2.4 also concerned the upper peasants, who were thought to engage in agriculture, using wage labour to secure cashflows. Looking at the input costs and investments (table 7), it becomes apparent that this is indeed true for homestead heads in the upper peasantry.

Without taking into account the different strata, schoolfees are a major item of spending in the irregular remittances. This is an important aspect of spending behaviour, because schoolfees themselves are a stimulus for future migration. Middle peasants contribute a relatively large amount towards building, probably allowing themselves more luxury on the homestead than do lower peasants. Upper peasants seem to have built better houses. This is supported by the high percentage of income spent on building by younger sons in the upper peasantry. The same picture emerges when we analyse the spending behaviour of younger sons. Sons in the highest stratum also spend more money on input costs and investments. In general younger sons allow themselves more money to be spent in town, especially in the middle peasantry. Like the homestead heads, younger sons in the middle peasantry dissave. A closer examination of these findings indicates that all dissavings are accounted for by only three migrants out of a total of nineteen, so no conclusions can be drawn.

Although the family life cycle concept offered a generally good explanation for the structure and size of a migrant's spendings on the homestead, it is evident that the concept

<sup>14</sup>Differences in income can be explained by the fact that middle and upper peasants were represented more in a company paying higher wages and giving better opportunities to work overtime.

of social differentiation as applied in this paper, is needed to analyse the effects on present and future production on the homestead. The noticeable trend in input costs is important, because the use of hybrid seeds, fertilizer, pesticides, tractor hire and hired labour improves agricultural productivity.

#### 4. Conclusions

The application of theoretical concepts clarifies particular issues on spending behaviour that would otherwise remain obscure. The migrants are definitely to be considered a heterogeneous group. More specifically, we have made a distinction between three responsibility categories which have proven to be indicators for the different motives for migration. The less responsibility, the more 'luxurious' the behaviour in town is noticed. The various cashflows to the homestead also show a marked difference in regularity.

Table 10: The Structure of Remittances

	Irregular Remittances	Regular Remittances
Homesteadheads	high	high
Heirs	high	low
Younger sons	low	low

It is apparent that more responsibility leads to a relatively larger and more regular flow of money: the heirs will contribute mainly when they are asked to do so and can thus be seen as the 'helping hand'.

Secondly, we have analysed the development cycle of rural homesteads in order to specify whether a growing family is an important determinant for the spendings. Here we have found that in the consolidation phase a heavy financial burden is placed upon the family. This is not due to growing consumption needs, but to an increasing need of cash. As they grow older, children require money for schoolfees, building and clothing. In this respect it is important to realize that a rise of schoolfees could have a dramatic effect on schoolattendance. Homestead heads are already drawing on savings in this phase, which leaves only one possibility to cope with rising school expenses: the withdrawal of one or more of children from school.

An important feature of the demographic analysis we have done, was the fact that in the fission phase less migrating homesteadheads and more cashcroppers were found. Several aspects should be taken into account if one wants to explain this. First of all, homesteadheads in this phase will be older and therefore probably less educated than younger people. Reduced migration could therefore simply be a result of labourmarket competition. Secondly, if sons can assure a regular cashflow it becomes attractive to do cashcropping on the homestead as soon as initial capital expenses can be met. This is most likely to happen in the fission phase. Thirdly, due to specific tasks it could be necessary for the homesteadhead to start commuting instead of migrating as a consequence of declining labourstrength on the homestead.

In our application of the theory of social strata another explanation for cashcropping activities became apparent. Especially upper peasants were able to start cashcropping which leads to the conclusion that, having the requisite assets, it becomes profitable to be more engaged in agriculture. This is supported by the expenditures of homesteadheads and younger sons in the upper peasantry. Again schoolfees are prominent in the irregular remittances. This is partly due to a large family size (table 4) and partly to higher schoolfees per pupil. This becomes even more prominent if one takes into account that lower peasants earn substantially less than middle and upper peasants (table 8). So the family concept explains the high amount spent on schoolfees due to the number of schoolgoing children. The spending behaviour of lower peasants indicates that social strata influence the quality of the education received.

In general the small amount paid on investments is noticeable. The emphasis is on consumption items as has been shown at different stages in this paper. In the introduction we put forward the notions of static and dynamic effects on the welfare position of the

homesteads. The results show that lower peasants were not able to contribute as much towards inputs and investments as upper peasants could, whereas middle peasants chose in favour of wage labour. Thus migration is not just a matter of free choice; it is also a matter of possibilities. The possible dynamic effects, however, are limited to upper peasants.

We can now conclude that the concept of social differentiation is the best way to provide insight into future developments. It is the upper peasantry that profits from urban employment in the most structural way. There is no doubt that people's present standard of living forms the main incentive to act as they do. Government policy should go beyond this point in order to create a socio-economic infrastructure which would improve daily living conditions. To establish these we think that dynamic processes should be studied to gain the necessary insight into the behaviour of peasants. This study was only a pilot study in that sense. Many important questions have arisen. For example the low level of investments, the apparent shortages of starting capital and the access to land. Further research on these issues could improve our understanding of the Swazi peasants on SNL.

## Appendix A

From our observations in the field we learned that children also take part in the production process on the homestead. Therefore they have been calculated as labourstrength, contrary to Chayanov who only assigned labourstrength to children older than 15 years. In our analysis this results in a maximum c/w-ratio in the expansion phase. Chayanov would have expected this maximum in the consolidation phase.

Criteria for the consumption coefficient

	fulltime on homestead	parttime on homestead or commuting	absent
child (< 6)	0.25	0	0
child (6 < x <15)	0.50	0.375	0.125
adult (15 < x <60)	1	0.750	0.250
adult (>60)	0.75	0	0

1: If a child (>6) returns to the homestead four times a month we assigned a consumption coefficient of 0.125. When he or she visits the homestead less regularly no consumption has been taken into account.

2: If an adult (<60) visits the homestead four times a month he or she is assigned a consumption coefficient of 0.25, if the visits are less regular we accounted consumption for 0.125 (twice a month) or none at all (less than twice a month).

Criteria for the labourstrength coefficient

	fulltime on homestead	parttime on homestead or commuting	absent
child (<6)	0.20	0	0
child (6 <x <15)	0.50	0.25	0
adult (15 <x <60)	1	0.25	0.25
adult (>60)	0.75	0	0

3: The same principle used in accounting the consumption coefficient has been applied: four times a month present: 0.50; two times month present : 0.25; less present : 0.

## Appendix B

- For per capita subsistence production we used 200 kg maize, a quantity mentioned by Testerink (1984, pp. 2) and also by Hunting (Government of Swaziland, 1983, pp. 52).

- To account for the acreage necessary to produce a subsistence level per homestead we used the data of the average resident homestead population per ecological zone, presented by Testerink, Funnell and Freund (1985, pp. 28). We used those figures because they provide a better explanation of the spending behaviour of the migrants than the average homestead population, absentees included.

- The season 1979-1980 is used as average production figure (source: Annual Survey of Swazi Nation Land 1979-1980, pp. 7).

- For the residual of the farm land (fallow and other cropland) we took data from the Annual Survey of Swazi Nation Land 1979-1980, pp. 2.

- The source for the average homestead size in acres per ecological zone is the Annual Statistical Bulletin (1979, pp. 23) in combination with the Annual Survey of Swazi Nation Land 1979-1980, pp. 2.

Table 1: Calculation of subsistence acreage

	Highveld	Middleveld	Lowveld	Lubombo
(1) average resident homestead population	7.6	7.5	7.9	5.8
(2) Subsistence consumption per capita (kg)	200	200	200	200
(3) Subsistence per homestead (1) x (2)	1520	1500	1580	1160
(4) Average production per hectare (kg)	1974.1	1216.6	1005.5	1577.3
(5) Amount of hectares (3) : (4)	0.77	1.23	1.57	0.74
(6) Amount of acres	1.90	3.05	3.88	1.82
(7) % of fallow and other cropland (+ 100%)	128.3	135.3	137.9	115.0
(8) Subsistence acreage 1979-1980	2.43	4.13	5.35	2.09

Table 2: Minimum and maximum acreage of the middle peasant

	Subsistence acreage (1)	Average homesteadsize (2)	Minimum Acreage of upper peasants $2x \frac{(2) - (1)}{2} + (1)$
Highveld	2.43	4.9	7.37
Middleveld	4.13	6.2	8.27
Lowveld	5.35	8.3	11.25
Lubombo Hills	2.09	2.6	3.11

Table 3: Social differentiation in acres

	Lower peasants	Middle peasants	Upper peasants
Highveld	<2.50	2.50 <x <7.50	> 7.50
Middleveld	<4.25	4.25 <x <8.25	> 8.25
Lowveld	<5.25	5.25 <x <11.25	>11.25
Lubombo Hills	<2.00	2.00 <x < 3.00	> 3.00

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## 8. *THE QUIET INNOVATORS: SMALL SCALE IRRIGATION ON SWAZI NATION LAND*

*D. C. Funnell*

### *Introduction*

Much of the recent literature on African agriculture has been characterised by tales of unmitigated disaster (Timberlake 1985). Depending upon the perspective the culprits range from environmental degradation to poor state management, especially with respect to pricing policy. Out of the ashes has risen a new wave of interest in irrigation, itself to be greeted with considerable criticism<sup>1</sup>. However, whereas to most observers in the 60s and 70s irrigation in Africa meant the development of large state financed projects there has been a marked shift in emphasis to a more careful consideration of the potential of the small, often individually motivated operation to which the term 'informal' has been attached (Underhill 1984, FAO). This shift can also be detected in Swaziland, albeit muted by comparison with some other African countries.

The object of this paper is first to draw attention to the extent of smallscale operators in Swaziland and then to consider the potential for incorporating these irrigators in overall rural development strategy. In particular I wish to concentrate on those homesteads that are currently on the SNL but are not part of formal schemes. Other conference participants will be dealing in greater detail with the specific schemes.

### *Irrigation in Swaziland*

It is well known that large scale irrigation development has been the foundation for most of the commercial agricultural sector in Swaziland. The production of sugar, citrus and in certain cases cotton has been dependent upon the construction of private or corporate schemes such as that at Big Bend. Almost all of this development has taken place upon Title Deed Land and recent trends in this sector have important implications for water resource planning (Heilbronn 1982). However, 60 percent of the land area is Swazi Nation Land (SNL) with a communal form of tenure where land and water rights are nominally invested in the King. Over 70 percent of the population have homes on this land and most rely to some degree on its agricultural output as a source of food, and to a lesser extent cash. Policy decisions on the SNL are in the hands of the Central Rural Development Board (CRDB). Up to the present time irrigation has not featured large in the plans for the SNL with the greatest emphasis placed upon improving the rainfed cropping of maize, with cotton and tobacco as the prime cash crops. This has been the central plank of the Rural Development Area Policy (RDAP) which commenced in 1970 and is now in its third phase (Government of Swaziland 1979).

Nonetheless there has been a longstanding interest in the possibilities for irrigation by smallholders on SNL. In one of the early post war programmes, the ill-fated NLS contained some irrigation proposals. The Second Five year Plan (1973-1977) stated that one specific policy measure would be "to introduce irrigated farming on a much wider scale", and although the Third Plan (1978-1983) seems less clear on the matter, the RDAP proposals included some construction of smallholder schemes. By contrast the fourth plan, written largely with USAID assistance features quite strongly proposals to expand smallholder irrigation (Government of Swaziland 1986). The basis of this input is briefly discussed by Schutjer (1984).

At the present time irrigation by smallholders is still a minor activity on the SNL although as will be shown below the exact extent is not clearly known. Its attraction lies in the fact that the private sector has pointed the way through relatively successful

<sup>1</sup> *The Swaziland Native Land Settlement Scheme (1946)* Mbabane

projects which, in turn has led to the view that, with appropriate modification similar success is possible on the SNL. The most obvious scheme under this heading is Vuvulane which was initiated by the CDC in 1962 (Tuckett 1977). It is now controlled by the SNADC. Despite being the most well known scheme in Swaziland it too has been the source of considerable controversy (Fransman 1982).

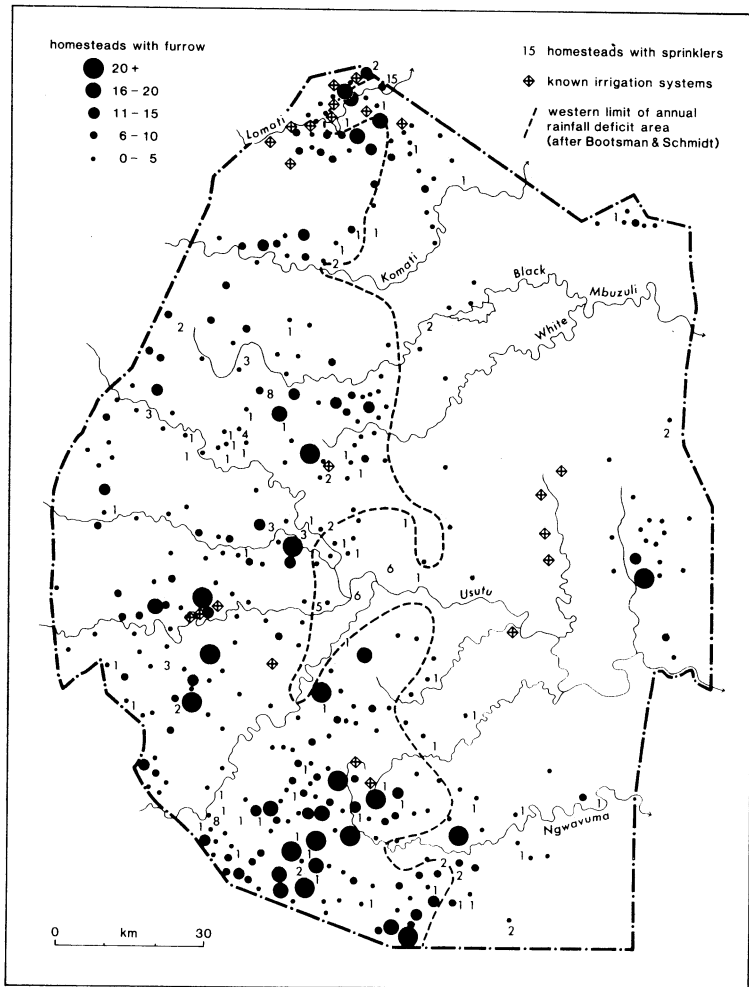
It is possible to classify smallscale irrigation activity into three groups. First there are those locations at which the state has provided all the infrastructure and, until recently, has been responsible for maintaining the water supply system. Second, there are those schemes which are managed by Farmers Associations in which members have cooperated to produce some of the infrastructure and attempted to provide the necessary maintenance. Finally there are small operations managed by one homestead or perhaps a small group as yet not part of a legally functioning cooperative.

A general description of the state aided schemes is provided by Porth (Porch 1980) and Dunn (Dunn 1983). In addition, with respect to the RDA schemes a useful summary is provided by an evaluation report (Hunting Technical Services 1983). This identifies 19 schemes of which 9 are purely government financed, 3 are assisted by Taiwanese and 7 are run by Farmers Associations. In 1983 the total area involved was 395 ha and they involve 577 farmers. The projects range in size from 2.4 ha to 100 ha and it is usually the Farmers Associations that are the largest (mean size 32 ha as against 18 ha). Geographically, it is most noticeable that 8 of the schemes are to be found in the Northern RDA, five more are in the first phase areas (Central, South and Mahlangatsha) and the remainder in newer RDAs. The overall distribution is shown on the map (Fig. 1).

Obviously the most important differences between these schemes lies in the management style. In the Farmers Associations almost all the labour and a significant proportion of the capital is provided by the Farmers themselves. For instance, a recent report describes how the successful Magwanyane scheme in the Lowveld has received assistance from MOAC toward improving its irrigation system (Porch & Nkanyane 1981). However, in 1974 -before this area was part of an RDA - the farmers had installed one pump and another followed in 1979. The scheme, which is 100 ha and now in the process of expansion, produces primarily sugar cane and involves 36 farmers. The recent MOAC finance is aimed at converting the pumps to electrical power as well as design assistance for the extension. Another example is that of Phophonyane which is currently a simple pumped furrow development involving the facility for night storage. In this case only 28 ha are involved with plots ranging in size from 0.9 ha to 3.27 ha among 25 farmers belonging to an Association. The MOAC irrigation section drew up the basic plans costing about E45,000 but the Association were able to raise E11,500 themselves before seeking additional assistance. There is very little economic or social information available (see below) for these FA schemes though by now the CSREPT at Malkerns may have accumulated some useful data. Many were of course severely affected by cyclone Demoina and much of the recent effort has been towards repairing the damage.

With the exception of a few schemes growing cotton or sugar which are in the lowveld, most focus upon vegetables. A number of studies deal with this question but all the writers point to the low level of usage of the irrigated area. Hansen (1978) provides estimates of 60 percent in the winter but only 25 percent in the summer. This points to a crucial feature of much Swazi irrigation on the SNL, namely that it is part of an overall farming system that includes rainfed cropping and livestock. From a management viewpoint (in this instance the state) this is very inefficient, not the least because of the fact that the corresponding low levels of output do not really justify the high costs of

Fig. 1: Distribution of small-scale irrigation in Swaziland, 1984



Source: Tijdschrift voor Econ. en Soc. Geografie 77 (1986) Nr. 2, p. 117, reprinted with permission of publisher.

establishing some of the schemes. As we shall note further below however, such a pattern of labour utilisation probably constitutes an optimal allocation from the perspective of the homestead. In particular much of the work on irrigation plots is performed by women who in winter are not involved in maize cropping and in turn effectively release males to seek cash wage employment.

The low level utilisation is indicated specifically in the only study so far made of RDA irrigation schemes (RDA/MEU 1980). This examined the results of a farm management survey in two RDAs - the Northern and Southern - but even so only covered 29 farmers. The results indicate large differences in the amount of time spent on irrigation but in both cases the labour inputs were well below those embodied in the Crop Profitability Guide of that date. For example, the average input was only 572 hours compared with a figure of 2100 hrs thought to be commensurate with efficient resource use. The results also confirm the low levels of income obtained from the plots, estimated at 21.6 cts/hr (1979 prices). As the survey drily remarks, at this level the returns are only equivalent to the dryland production of hybrid maize and hardly encouraging to a policy of inducing people to remain on the land. Irrigated cropping could provide a better income flow throughout the year because of the possibility of winter cropping, and additionally the production of vegetables assists nutritional status. So far however the RDA schemes do not seem to have made a significant impact on incomes.

The report concludes that "technical and economic performance of government supported RDA irrigation schemes is low and is indicative of a lack of commitment and substandard management". This is also the view of Portch who adds that the standard of maintenance on these schemes is exceedingly low. Theoretically it is the farmers themselves who are responsible for repairs and upkeep, with the state having installed the scheme in working order. In practice, MOAC have tended to carry out the repairs - apparently to avoid criticism that the Ministry is not helping the farmers in the RDAs. The difficulties over maintenance stem in part from a lack of any farmers organisation on these early RDA projects. In 1978, for example, the MOAC suggested that some form of charges ought to be levied and a figure of E105/ha was proposed. This has, however, to be compared with the likely levels of income from irrigation and here the comments made earlier are pertinent. For instance, using the recommended production system an hectare of vegetable could produce (at 1980 prices) a profit of E4-5000. In the farm management survey noted above however, only 2 of the 29 farmers analysed produced more than 25 percent of this figure! In this instance the proposed charge would be seen as punitive.

In fact, the MOAC has shifted quite distinctly in its policy towards smallscale irrigation. In the last few years it has not initiated any new projects in RDAs but has concentrated its assistance on those areas where there is evidence of farmer commitment. Where this is demonstrated there is often quite a long history of involvement with local chiefs and farmers closely connected to both the inception and daily management of the operation. Portch argues that these schemes have one crucial advantage over state sponsored schemes, namely the ability to deal with farmers who do not regularly tend their plots. This raises the whole question of tenure status on irrigation developments and has been discussed extensively in the literature (Tiffen 1985). It was of course a major issue in the disputes at Vuvulane. However, on SNL (at least in the past) there could be no question of forceful action on the part of the state without direct infringement of communal tenure principles. Thus, with regard to SNL 'formal' or state recognised irrigation the net effect of 20-30 years sporadic interest is rather disappointing. On the other hand, the increasing significance of some FA's development points the way for future programmes but still in essence requires relatively large capital outlays and careful local organisation to maintain the level of output that would sustain interest and enthusiasm on the part of the participating farmers.

### *The individual irrigators of SNL*

Unremarked and largely unassisted, there are individual homesteads and small groups who are also involved in irrigation. Strangely perhaps - but in keeping with experience in other parts of Africa - this group have been largely ignored for the purpose of formulating policy (see: Underhill 1984, FAO). Their existence appears to go unrecognised even in Swaziland where one official source states that there were in 1979 at least 3895 homesteads using irrigation! The figures cited above for the RDAs only accounted for about 600 families so the discrepancy is rather noticeable. The contribution of these operators has not been properly assessed and it is fair to say that it has been treated as trivial by the authorities. In fact, there are two main sources of information on these irrigators, neither really satisfactory but they provide a point of departure in an otherwise uncharted area. One (a) set of information can be culled from recent surveys undertaken by the CSO; the other (b) is the information collected by the water section of the Ministry of Works, Power and Communications (MWPC).

#### a. The CSO Data.

Table 1 sets out the data derived from the 1978-79 annual sample survey of SNL. These data are subject to at least 10 percent error so that total numbers could lie between 3500 and 4200. Allowing for the RDA based homesteads that means that there could have been 3-3500 individual irrigating homesteads. In 1984 a new CSO census was implemented that included two questions on the use of irrigation. Preliminary analysis

Table 1: *Homestead & irrigation on SNL 1978-79*

	Total Homesteads with land	Irrigating Homesteads	Percent
Highveld	11265	1399	12.4
Middleveld	25439	2116	8.3
Lowveld	12913	349	2.7
Lebombo	4456	31	0.7
-----			
Total	54073	3895	7.2

Source: Annual Survey SNL 1978-79 C.S.O.

of the data was carried out at the SSRU so that we now have a more up to date estimate of the extent of irrigation usage. It should be pointed out that there are some problems with this information: inconsistencies exist as the tenure status of some of the EAs is not altogether clear.

Of the 54433 homesteads in total covered by the census 44066 were clearly identified as being on SNL. Table 2 records the numbers using sprinklers, furrow or bucket irrigation. The census questions are not entirely satisfactory however, which lead to some difficulties in interpretation. The question asks: "How do you irrigate?" and then offers a number of options. Confusion appears to have arisen about the term 'furrow' which is used both to describe a method of applying water to the crops in the field and also as a means of delivering water to the plots, the supply canal. Thus the supply may be by canal to a small storage dam and thence by pump to sprinklers. Nonetheless these data provide one of the most comprehensive sources of information on smallscale irrigation currently available.

Table 2: *SNL Homesteads only*

Total	Highveld	Middleveld	Lowveld	Lebombo	
Total EAs	118	194	138	36	468
Total Homesteads	10406	19202	10599	3774	44066
Furrows	559	800	53	85	1497
Sprinklers	40	53	8	4	107
Buckets					793
Govt. managed	29	212	23	0	264
Coop. managed	76	105	15	16	212
Private	760	757	96	308	1921

Source: Preliminary data. Census of Agriculture 1984 CSO.

\* EAs reporting SNL homesteads only.

It is possible to obtain a general picture of the geographical distribution of smallholder irrigation. No doubt the correct figures will in fact be somewhat larger than those cited when data is included for certain EAs whose actual tenure status was unclear. Particular attention should be focused upon furrow and sprinkler operations. These are homesteads that have actually made a significant investment in some form of irrigation infrastructure. As is illustrated in Fig 1, these irrigators are concentrated in the High and Middleveld though it is likely that the revised EA data might include more from the Lowveld areas.

The data indicate a number of important points. First the total number is less than that listed in 1978-79, but given the fact that the 1984 data are the result of a census it could be a more accurate reflection of the true picture. Secondly, it appears that at least 3.6 percent of homesteads - some 1604 - are serious irrigators and the figure would be higher if those utilising 'bucket technology' were included. But perhaps more important is the fact that 80 percent of the listed irrigators are accounted for as being private, ie not part of a government or cooperative scheme. Unfortunately, because the data were only available on the basis of EAs, it is not possible to carry out cross-tabulations based upon technology, management type and location. This would entail access to the original returns.

#### b. Water Guard reports.

An alternative source of information consists of the water guard returns held in the water section of the MWPC. These data are collected as part of their statutory duty to monitor water use and check on the issue of water permits. Technically, any person who abstracts water from a stream for the purposes of irrigation must obtain a permit from the Water Apportionment Board. Water use for domestic purposes of less than 3400 litres/day is exempt. Periodic surveys are carried out in catchment areas to list those observed utilising streams and to estimate gross water demand. The data has been examined at the Water Section and it was found to vary considerably in quality and coverage. There are very poor records for the lower Usutu area east of Manzini but in two zones there is recent and apparently accurate information. These zones are the Upper Usutu and the Ngwavuma catchment areas where surveys have been carried out in 1983 and 1984 respectively. The information consists of lists of users (private, institutional, etc.) almost all of whom are on Swazi Nation Land. Furthermore, each homestead/user is listed by name(s) or institution and the site is marked on a 1:50,000 map so making it possible to trace the users quite accurately. For the purposes of further study it should be noted that no data exist for the Lebombo or the Lomati as these have not been incorporated into the control system of the Water Section. This effectively precludes any study of the NRDA irrigation operations using this source of

data. Set out in Table 3 is a summary of the information collected in July 1984 from these files.

Table 3: *Water guard reports*

	Recorded Users	Area Estimated (ha)
Upper Usutu	264	201
Komati	53	53
Ngwempisi	308	135
Mhlatuze	14	8
Lower Usutu	71	53
Ngwavuma	211	214
Mbuluzi	121	144

*Source:* Personal Investigations; Water Section Files July 1984

These figures exclude any schemes or school gardens and provide an estimate of those private individuals utilising water for small scale irrigation. The total is below that reported in the CSO data but the omissions noted above should be remembered. The table also indicates estimates of the area considered to be irrigated. Unfortunately it is very difficult to judge the accuracy of the figures as the documents only refer to an 'estimation'. Apparently this is done by eye! Interestingly, it is these figures that provide the basis for the calculation of water abstraction and hence licence requirements which perhaps indicates some support for the suggestion made earlier that more Swazi ought to register their irrigation than the records indicate.

The data does confirm the geographical pattern of private irrigation in that there is a distinct concentration in the Ngwempisi, Ngwavuma and Upper Usutu areas. This is not surprising in the sense that most of the irrigation is gravity fed to furrows which makes it highly dependent upon reliable stream flow and gradient to avoid the need for pumping. The data does list pump users and also indicates when a delivery canal is shared by one group of persons.

A more detailed analysis of one catchment area, USUTU 06, provides us with additional information. This area is in the Middleveld and stretches from Mbekelweni in the NE through Kwaluseni and Matsapha to Luyengo. The data in Table 4 were collected by the Water Section in 1983. At that date there were 91 individual irrigators along with numerous schools and other schemes. The detailed size distribution is also recorded.

Table 4: *Calculated size distribution of irrigated SNL based on the size distribution in USUTU 06 catchment, 1983*

Size (ha)	Number	Cumulative %
0.01-0.5	44	48.4
0.51-1.0	19	69.2
1.01-1.5	10	80.2
1.51-2.0	10	91.2
2.01-2.5	2	93.4
2.51-3.0	2	95.6
3.01-3.5	3	98.9
3.51-4.0	1	100.0

*Source:* Water Section Data



Almost 50 percent of these irrigators are estimated to apply water to no more than half a hectare, and 70 percent operate within one hectare of irrigated land. Only two of the farmers are recorded as utilising a pump and at least 7 use only a bucket or watering can. Clearly most people are operating very small plots. Another interesting feature of this catchment is that there are records for the years 1969, '71, '74, '77, '79, '81 as well as '83. This would repay detailed analysis to pick out those smallholders who have actively maintained an interest in irrigation. It was clear from a preliminary examination that there were wide fluctuations from year to year both in the total number involved and the participation of individuals. This is also the view of the Water department officials though they themselves have not formally analysed the information.

Thus the water guard data, whilst suffering from many flaws, does provide a geographically and socially useful basis for studying these small irrigators. It certainly provides a better basis from which to design any further data collection exercise than that provided by the CSO, primarily because it is referenced to specific locations. Although individual areas are updated on an irregular basis it would repay much more work in conjunction with the waterguards themselves.

The sources given above provide differing estimates of the extent of smallscale irrigation on Swazi Nation Land. Set out in Table 5 is an attempt to reconcile the diverse results. It is based upon the assumption that all areas in Swaziland have the same size distribution of irrigated land as that found in the USUTU 06 catchment. It is then possible to use the total figure provided by the CSO (Table 2) and arrive at an estimate of the area involved. The resultant figure of 1639 ha is much greater than that reported by Dunn (Dunn 1983) who suggests that only about 350ha of SNL is subject to private irrigation, a figure found elsewhere in a USAID document (USAID/GOS 1983).

Table 5: *Estimates of the area under irrigated cultivation (NSL)*

Area (ha)	% Frequency	No Irrigators	Estimated Total Area
0.01-0.05	48.4	930	232
0.51-1.0	20.9	401	301
1.01-1.5	11	211	264
1.51-2.0	11	211	369
2.01-2.5	2.2	42	94
2.51-3.0	2.2	42	45
3.01-3.5	3.3	63	205
3.51-4.0	1.1	21	79
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Total		1921	1639

### *Other source of information*

As yet there are no detailed studies of individual irrigators on the SNL but some recent surveys of the economic and social structure of homesteads has included interviews in homesteads that by chance utilise irrigation (Sibishi 1981). In addition, during 1984 a small number of SNL farmers were visited who were using irrigation privately. These were all in the CRDA.

As might be expected with this location all these families had close ties with wage employment, either currently or in the recent past. In some cases direct entrepreneurial activities formed a crucial part of the domestic economy. The irrigation component had become an important part of total agricultural production. Indeed, one person claimed to

have no other land but that which was under irrigation. (He had livestock elsewhere.) The links with other employment were also significant in providing certain 'extras' that have facilitated setting up water control systems. For example, the ability to obtain a lorry through government service was clearly important in the construction of a small dam. In other cases motor vehicles were available for marketing. Some homesteads could draw upon experience from within manufacturing industry which has served to provide useful skills and information on suppliers which would not easily be found elsewhere.

The detailed studies also confirm the pattern of labour allocation emphasising that the concentration on winter cropping neatly dovetails into the annual pattern of labour availability. Equally obvious from the observations is the important role of female labour. It appears that traditionally women paid special attention to the 'gardens' and now this extends to the larger plots where these are operational. But perhaps of special importance is the fact that women dominate marketing except perhaps where the husband is an entrepreneur and takes the produce to larger stores. Indeed the whole range of marketing opportunities are exploited: the roadside stall, town markets and sales to bulk buyers (Sterkenburg, e.a. 1978).

These rather impressionistic accounts do illustrate that amongst those currently using simple irrigation techniques there are families whose commitment to improvement is strong. It also shows that in many more homesteads than is usually accepted irrigation contributes an important source of food and cash. But above all it indicates that many of those who have developed some form of irrigation capacity are also able to draw upon resources from outside the rural sector. These factors are important in any attempt to evaluate the potential of smallscale irrigation within overall rural development strategy.

#### *Policy and programmes for irrigation development of irrigation of SNL*

The main objective of setting out the information in the sections above is to provide a framework for discussing the direction of future policy towards smallholder irrigation on SNL. So far the policy directives have been heavily influenced by donor interest and experience. In the RDA programme for instance, irrigation works were included almost as an afterthought, possibly because of pressure from specific technical assistance groups.

At the outset however it must be said that the future development of this group of producers faces its biggest problem in the form of attitudes to SNL development as a whole. Whilst at present there is scope for collective schemes and individual irrigation activities on SNL, the possible development of such projects as the Lushushwana programme or similar large schemes does constitute a threat. Not only is it highly likely that state resources would be absorbed into such developments but the question of competition for water resources would become acute. It is here that Heilbronns' work is relevant. He indicates that the present system of water rights allocation, which effectively prevents a reallocation of normal flow permits (and in practice relatively little surplus flow reallocation), poses a major dilemma. The leading factions of the Swazi state have heavy commitments towards existing large scale commercial irrigators so it is highly unlikely that a significant shift to the support of smallscale individually initiated irrigation on SNL will be easily achieved without strong external financial assistance. Thus it is especially important to review the scope for policy directives in this political situation.

The promotion of an irrigation component within rural development planning presumes that there must be at least a basic economic rationale behind the support. After all, the study quoted earlier and carried out by the RDA/MEU in 1980 (RDA/MEU 1980) doubts the economic justification for smallholder schemes. It is here, in particular that discrepancy exists in attitudes and analysis. For example, the recent proposal by USAID (USAID/GOS 1983) appears to suggest two complementary strategies: on

small schemes ranging in size from 12 ha to 40 ha, 350 farmers are expected to irrigate 0.91 ha. By contrast, some 180 individual farmers are expected to develop sprinkler systems on plots of at least 4 ha. This reflects very much the thinking of the MOAC Irrigation Section in Manzini (mainly one person?) who had by 1984 developed considerable experience in assisting an increasing number of Swazi wishing to introduce irrigation on small TDL plots.

On the other hand a recent study by Cohen (1983) carried out as part of the preliminary analysis of the USAID scheme looks particularly carefully at the possible crop combinations, market prices and labour constraints of smallholder irrigators using linear programming techniques. He makes allowance for the possible inflation of prices at that time due to the 'Ban' but finds that a one hectare plot based upon minimal inputs and furrow irrigation in the Middleveld should produce a net income per day no lower than unskilled employment. In addition substantial quantities of maize, vegetables and legumes would be available for homestead consumption. Moreover, allowing specifically seasonal labour constraints the optimal cropping pattern would be 0.58 ha in summer and 0.80 ha in winter. Certainly at 4 ha the farmer in the Middleveld would be forced to provide either directly or through hiring, 1460 labour days per year. As some degree of hired labour is almost certain the resultant financial returns are much less favourable. The point at issue is that the results of Cohens work would seem to argue in favour of (to use his own phrase) a "reduced returns" viewpoint based upon relatively low input costs. Whereas cropping 0.6-1.0 ha is already not much beyond the current practice on SNL the target of 4 ha is not remotely likely except for a very few operators. Indeed the results of the 1983 CSO sample survey suggests that the average area of cropped land on SNL is only 1.7 ha. Clearly, the ability to alienate as large an area as is proposed on SNL raises all kinds of questions about tenure and development on communal land.

It has already been noted that over the last few years considerable interest has been generated in the possible role of 'informal irrigators' that is, those farmers who are not involved in schemes promoted or supported by the state or donor agencies. Underhill (1984) at FAO argues that 'informal irrigation' possesses the characteristics of 'bottom up' implementation, self reliance and sustainability often lacking in larger, officially sponsored schemes. Perhaps of greater importance is the fact that close observation of these 'informal' schemes has illustrated how the domestic unit (the homesteads) has integrated irrigation into the remainder of its production or income generating activities (Kortenhorst 1980). This is not just a matter of domestic labour economics of which we are particularly aware in Swaziland but also of the social and political linkages which cement societies practising irrigation (Coward 1977). Curiously these factors have often been reported by anthropologists and others studying societies such as the Sonjo (Gray 1963) but have rarely been integrated into the planning of official schemes.

Given the shifts in interests reported in the introduction Swaziland thus poses some very interesting questions on irrigation strategy. In part this is because it currently possesses a complete spectrum of operations. With respect to the individually sponsored developments on SNL it is pertinent to question whether the state should ignore, limit or actively encourage an expansion of this kind of irrigation activity.

At one level there is perhaps a rather perverse argument in favour of ensuring that the state does not involve itself with these operations. This because any involvement would most likely lead to the destruction of local initiative and the imposition of bureaucratic controls and technical services. Arguably sections of the Swazi population, with specific access to water and land, have already shown initiative within the resources available and developed an irrigation capacity to the point where it fits into the local production system. As has been shown this development is seasonal and some evidence suggest that it is sporadic. But it is also clear that it can make an important contribution to domestic consumption and provide a source of income and employment

for both men and women in the homestead. State interference therefore might prove a negative influence.

In practice the state already intervenes in a number of ways. First there is the control of water abstraction mentioned above. Evidently it is imagined that most small scale users operate beneath the critical level though it is probably very difficult for the water guards to be sure. Applications from users on SNL should be made via the CRDB which raises other issues that will be noted below. The state intervenes on the presumption that, in Swaziland, water is a scarce commodity and its utilisation has to be monitored to prevent waste. Clearly the matter is far more than technical. The water used by the smallholders is part of the general allocation to the SNL as discussed in the work of Heilbron (1982). Although at present there may be spare capacity within this allocation, further expansion may force the smallscale users into direct conflict with other developments and so pose the major question of the economic and political desirability of each type of irrigation activity.

In addition, state intervention also operates indirectly in the manipulation of price levels for inputs and outputs. Such policies are unlikely to be aimed specifically at irrigators but the implications are usually very obvious. For instance, the impact of the recent vegetable ban, discussed elsewhere (Funnell 1986) has been considerable, encouraging many Swazi to increase irrigation activities. Similarly, changes in input subsidy, perhaps designed as part of the RDA programme, impinge directly upon irrigators.

One of the main arguments cited in the colonial period for state control of 'piecemeal activities' was that this form of irrigation could exacerbate soil erosion. Small furrows, dams, etc, not well protected from livestock, could lead to gulying. Curiously, despite the vociferous, and at times bureaucratically strong section of the Ministry devoted to land conservation in the colonial period, remarkably little information exists on the whole soil erosion question. There is very little direct evidence to indicate that smallholder irrigators are any more culpable than the rainfed farmer. Indeed, in other former settler territories recent studies have shown how such 'resource management' policies were used as convenient umbrellas for an attack on African agriculture (Anderson 1984).

On the other hand there are some potential problems relating to the health aspects of irrigation which have recently received attention<sup>2</sup>. The uncontrolled expansion of small dams and waterworks may serve to encourage the spread of certain water-borne diseases. This is particularly true for small schemes where the dams and furrows are utilised not only for crop water but also to supply animals and humans. Vector control is difficult and expensive in this situation and the only solution is to encourage the users to take specific steps to minimise risk. For instance, simple changes in the design of the dam or furrow (Stein 1979, Kraats/Stoutjesdijk 1984) can materially assist but in order to achieve this, appropriate incentives, extension effort and skill are required. This is of course tantamount to an allocation of resources to the assistance of these irrigators.

In addition to these directly technical issues there are other important considerations. The sanctioning of irrigation on SNL is officially carried out by the CRDB which operates through the chiefs. The CRDB is charged with ensuring the 'orderly development' of the SNL in the light of the needs and aspirations of the 'Swazi Nation'. Individual initiatives raise important questions about the degree of control that the CRDB can exert. The small number of permits actually issued to the SNL is usually explained by the fact that few Swazi are interested to expand their activities. This may be so but it is also correct to argue that the MOAC has tended to be more supportive of schemes involving a whole community or individuals wishing to invest relatively

<sup>2</sup> For instance see Jewsbury, J.M. (1984) 'Smallscale irrigation projects and their implications for health', in: Blackie, M.J. ed (1984).

heavily in pumps. This can be understood from the point of view of management efficiency and because of the greater degree of water control. The CRDB has other considerations however. The installation of a supply canal, a dam or a water diversion by an individual homestead or a small group of families on SNL constitutes a structural change in communal resources. According to Hughes (1972), a resident on SNL can claim under customary law an 'inalienable right' to water. How far this can be extended to the construction of diversions is unclear. The normal procedure would involve homesteads seeking the permission of the chief before embarking on any such scheme. Certainly, evidence from the CRDA suggests that this has been the normal course of events and often it was the chief himself who would be involved in such activities.

If such developments are allowed to proceed then three issues have to be confronted. The first is the matter of excessive exploitation. A particular user through his system extracts water so that insufficient is available to other users. Clearly, if the irrigator is a permit holder the other residents have a specific channel of grievance via their chief, the CRDB and the Water Apportionment Board. However, it has already been noted that few existing irrigators are in this position but this does not mean that there are no disputes. The recent drought coupled with the expansion of irrigated plots under the 'Ban' seems to have provoked a number of incidents<sup>3</sup>. The second issue concerns the problem of new entrants, i. e. those homesteads who want to extract water from a stream that is already heavily utilised. Again, a framework exists under the legislation for the larger permit holders, but it is clear that the actual inter homestead allocation process is a matter for the CRDB - the WAB having assigned an overall quota to the SNL. If the same kind of 'prior rights' model is used by the CRDB as in the formal sector as a whole then clearly there is an effective barrier within the SNL as new entrants would not get resources. If however, by careful negotiation the water resource can be reallocated as necessary, then the system may cope with expansion.

Finally, any physical development carried out by the homestead may give rise to the need to restrict access to the land involved. This is a complex issue. On communal land traditional land use practices were such that after the annual grain crop land would be available to all to graze livestock. Much has been made of this issue but it is probably exaggerated in the context of contemporary use of the SNL. The evidence suggests that most small scale operators still confine their irrigation to relatively small areas equivalent to 'gardens' which traditionally have been accepted as a more exclusive part of the homestead. Obviously, the issue does become significant if larger areas are involved and the land fenced off. This has already occurred in some areas with respect to the maize crop and there is every likelihood that despite official protestations the practice will spread.

This brings me to consider another aspect of the problem which has occasionally surfaced in MOAC documents. The development of irrigation may well lead to an enhanced economic status for the household involved, and, if the process resulted from some degree of 'privatisation' of communal assets, could be seen to create tensions in the local community. Many of those interviewed in the CRDA had often other interests and could be judged 'successful' prior to their irrigation interests. On the other hand there were those who currently see in irrigation a major opportunity to obtain a living in an otherwise desperate situation with regard to wage employment. Community reaction clearly depends upon the tact and political assiduity of the chief, but there is no doubt that some factions are concerned about these social and economic trends.

I have concentrated so far on those factors which have often been seen as counselling in favour of either closer control or studied neglect of this sector. Certainly in Swaziland the state has shown no real interest, preferring to encourage the formation of irrigation schemes. Nonetheless there are signs that this may change, at least within the

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<sup>3</sup> Comment based upon informal discussions in the CRDA.

government departments directly concerned with SNL development. For example, the shift to the support of FA schemes is quite noticeable and certainly the suggestions contained in the USAID proposals, although not directed to the very small operators, may have some relevance. I think it quite clear, however, that two factors weigh very strongly in favour of positive state support for these irrigators. In the first place, the analysis carried out by Cohen (1984) makes it quite clear that a good economic case exists for encouraging 'informal' developments. Not only is it possible to achieve reasonable returns from smallscale irrigation, a low level of technological input is essential. As Cohen points out, once pump technology is introduced the returns required are so much greater as to place a very heavy burden on the homestead. In addition, existing operators have demonstrated how irrigation can be fitted into current farming systems and further expansion can take place through the absorption of more labour. At a time of economic recession this latter point may be very significant. With respect to the institutional framework on SNL, existing activities indicate that the concepts of communal responsibility are constantly evolving. The rapid spread of fencing is a case in point illustrating an adaptation of attitudes to a new situation. Though there are obviously many difficult problems it is surely the case that the best solutions lie in the hands of the rural communities themselves to evolve on the basis of local experience and conditions. This is the position adopted by Underhill and one which should form the basis for directing state action.

If we accept the need for a policy which incorporates these smallscale irrigators in a positive way into the rural development strategy, then it is incumbent upon us to specify how this might take place. As the discussion has already indicated there are two related aspects: the technical and the institutional. With regard to technical inputs a recent conference in Harare (see: Blackie 1984) has presented a number of ideas for improving water control and associated facilities but much has still to be understood from the point of view of designing appropriate crop combinations. This is specifically the case with regard to fitting irrigation cropping into ongoing homestead activities. At present most Swazi irrigators concentrate upon vegetables partly because of the high returns to labour but also because of their contribution to the domestic diet. Expanding the range of possible crops involves the interrelations of physical potential with economic viability which has yet to be investigated. It may be possible to adapt the proposals in the USAID scheme to facilitate assistance to the very small producer. One aspect of this plan is a suggestion to utilise existing commercial distribution channels for irrigators. Of course, this would be problematic for these very small producers because they usually do not generate sufficient business for commercial suppliers. In the Swazi context at least, it is these agencies rather than government officials who possess the knowledge and managerial ability to provide assistance. Thus it may well be necessary to consider some form of subsidy for the provision of these services.

### *Conclusion*

The paper has brought into focus the existence and potential contribution of a class of irrigators generally ignored in the literature on rural development in Swaziland. Whilst the data available are rather limited, it is evident that at least 1500-2000 homesteads utilise furrows or sprinklers and many more apply water using simple 'bucket' techniques. Though the irrigated plots may be used seasonally and perhaps not every year, such irrigators have introduced innovations into their cropping activities and responded to recent high prices for vegetables. Yet, like irrigation development in other parts of the continent, the state has chosen to concentrate its efforts, not on materially assisting these individual innovators but on creating new smallholder schemes, claiming that irrigation activities are virtually non-existent on SNL. As is now well known, many of these schemes, originally connected to the RDAs, have not been at all successful. Others however, especially when initiated through farmers associations, do show signs of considerable progress.

Although various arguments can be advanced which suggest that these homesteads should be ignored or even limited in their activities, I feel it would be much more appropriate to embrace these operators within future irrigation planning. The paper outlines some of the institutional issues that face the SNL in the event of the expansion of smallscale irrigation, especially with respect to land and water rights. However, even on this delicate topic there is informal evidence of a willingness to innovate. Moreover, their experience is based upon integrating irrigated production into other activities of the homestead which could provide useful guidance to planners. This is an important consideration because most smallholder schemes designed by the state have been based upon the assumption that the families will devote all labour effort to this activity, something that is quite at variance with the evidence from almost all other SNL studies in Swaziland. Finally, these individual homesteads show a flexibility of resource use which is precisely that required in the environmental and economic situation facing most rural homesteads. Thus although at present our knowledge of this group of farmers is still very slim, a number of well designed studies would make it possible to provide a comprehensive framework in which existing state policies could be extended to enhance the capabilities of these 'informal irrigators', and increase their contribution to the rural economy.

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## 9. SWAZILAND'S URBAN INFORMAL SECTOR: ITS CHARACTERISTICS, CONSTRAINTS AND PRODUCTION FROM AN AGGREGATIVE VIEWPOINT

*Michael S. Matsebula.*

### 1. Introduction

The production or supply side (as distinct from the consumption or demand side) of the urban economy can be divided into formal and informal components. It is the informal component that this paper will focus upon. This component is known by various other labels such as unenumerated, untaxed, unorganized, traditional, subsistence, self-employed, smallscale, and low-income. In a sense, each label reveals a particular aspect of the urban informal sector (hereafter abbreviated to "UIS").

Accordingly, we can formulate a definition of the UIS which accommodates each of these labels. The UIS can be construed as that part of the urban economy which comprises relatively small production units which are characterized mainly by self-employment (at times assisted by unpaid family labour or very few hired and apprentice workers), low division of labour, low capital intensity, irregularity of operation, and low incomes. The activities typically include retail trade (for example in fruits, vegetables and handicrafts), household and personal services (for example repair of utensils, haircuts, and repair of watches and radios), and manufacturing (for example food preparation at the marketplace, sewing, welding and carpentry).

Whilst this definition may not appear too tight, it is sufficiently clear to indicate the extent or coverage of the UIS. Indeed this is the working definition which was used to identify the operators to be included in the survey whose findings form the subject of this paper<sup>1</sup>. The survey itself was quite comprehensive in coverage; and the sample was fully representative of the whole UIS. It was carried out during the latter half of 1983 and the first quarter of 1984<sup>2</sup>.

Certain activities, even though falling within the definition given above, were excluded from the survey for various reasons. The excluded activities were the brewing and selling of traditional beer, selling of bottled or tinned alcoholic beverages, traditional healing, and faith healing. The first two activities were excluded because they are generally against government policy and the operators involved would have been very reluctant to give information for fear of being arrested or disadvantaged somehow. The next two activities were excluded because they are not easily influenced by government policies due to their peculiarities — particularly, difficulty of entry by ordinary people. Since one of the objectives of the survey was to collect information to facilitate government policymaking, those activities which cannot be readily influenced were generally excluded.

The survey yielded a lot of information which has so far been analyzed in three papers — namely, Matsebula (1985a, 1985b, 1986). The analysis in these papers has been conducted in terms of four frameworks. The first framework distinguishes among fourteen types of informal activities — namely, sewing, knitting and soft goods; handicrafts and traditional attire; selling fruits and vegetables; selling all other food; hair-works; repairing shoes and leather items; repairing watches and radios; photography and pictures; vehicles and machines; repairing household utensils; wood-work; poultry and gardening; construction; and other.

The second framework distinguishes between those activities undertaken predominantly inside residential premises and those undertaken predominantly outside residential premises (such as marketplaces, makeshift shelters, open spaces by the roadside, hawking, etc.). The former type is referred to as household activities whilst the latter is referred to as market activities.

<sup>1</sup> Preliminary thoughts on the survey are discussed in Matsebula (1983).

<sup>2</sup> The methodology followed in the survey is discussed in Matsebula (1984).

The third framework distinguishes among the four regions into which the country is divided. These are Hhohho, Manzini, Lubombo and Shiselweni. The fourth framework distinguishes between household and market activities within each of these four regions.

In addition to these four frameworks, the analysis also pools together all the data to get a broad or overall picture of the situation. It is this pooled data that the present paper will focus upon. Accordingly, the present paper will analyze the findings of the survey from an aggregative viewpoint. The intention is to obtain insights on a number of dimensions of the UIS. These dimensions are the size of the UIS in relation to the rest of the national economy; distribution of informal activities between households and markets; personal characteristics of the informal operators; constraints faced by the business units in the UIS; pattern of incomes generated by the informal business units; pattern of costs incurred in the production process; and production technology. The sources of the data to be used in this paper are Matsebula (1985a, 1985b, 1986).

The rest of this paper is divided into six sections. Section 2 discusses the size of the UIS in relation to the rest of the national economy, and the distribution of informal activities between households and markets. This will be done through the use of suitable indices. Section 3 discusses the personal characteristics of the operators found in the UIS. Section 4 discusses the various constraints militating against higher production in the UIS. Section 5 discusses the value of output produced, the costs incurred in this process, and the net incomes generated in the UIS. Section 6 discusses the production technology of the UIS by focusing on labour inputs, capital inputs, factor combinations, elasticity of output with respect to the inputs, and returns to scale. Section 7 summarizes the major observations and conclusions of the paper.

## *2. Size and composition of the UIS*

In this section we discuss the UIS from two perspectives. The first is its size in relation to the rest of the national economy. The second is the distribution of informal activities between households and markets. The analysis of these two perspectives will be undertaken in terms of a number of selected indices. The intention is to place the UIS and the subsequent analysis in a proper context.

The selected indices for the first perspective are presented in Table 1<sup>3</sup>. These were calculated after adding the estimates of the UIS (the unenumerated economy) to the published figures pertaining to the rest of the national economy (the enumerated economy). They (and all other figures presented in this paper) pertain to the year 1983/84. However, to the extent that there have been no major noticeable structural shifts in the economy since then, they are still applicable even today.

There are three observations that emanate from these figures. The first is that the UIS is quite important and significant in relation to the rest of the national economy. This is evidenced by its contribution to national production (equal to 1,2% — 3,0%); its contribution to non-agricultural production (equal to 3,9%); and its contribution to total employment (equal to 8,8%); with higher shares in private sector employment, non-agricultural paid employment, and self-employment). In absolute terms, gross output and employment in the UIS amounted to E15 792 206 and 8 759, respectively<sup>4</sup>

The 1,2% contribution to national output exceeds the shares for electricity and water, communications, and crop production on Swazi Nation Land (i.e., the communally owned component of agriculture) which are estimated at 0,99%, 0,91% and 0,93%, respectively. It is just about equal to the share of forestry (equal to 1,24%); and is

<sup>3</sup> The numbering system is that used in Southern Africa - including Swaziland. A comma is used instead of a decimal or fullstop.

<sup>4</sup> The numbering system is that used in Southern Africa - including Swaziland. A space is used to separate thousands. "Emalangenzi" is plural for the Swaziland currency ("Lilangeni" in singular).

not too far below the share of community, social and personal services (equal to 1,38%)<sup>5</sup>. The 1,3% share of intermediate inputs and 1,2% share of value added also indicate the importance and significance of the UIS.

The second observation is that income-distribution seems to be somewhat skewed against the UIS. This is evidenced by the fact that whereas the UIS contributes 8,8% to employment, it receives less than 1,0% as compensation to employees. It is because of the generally low incomes in the UIS that its share of gross national savings is only 0,2%.

It is to be noted that the "compensation of employees" in the UIS excludes imputed incomes for family labour and the labour services of the owner/operator. Hence the share reflected in Table I is an underestimate. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that an addition of these imputed incomes will alter the observation that income-distribution is skewed against the UIS.

The third observation is that production in the UIS tends to be labour-intensive as compared to the rest of the economy. This is evidenced by the very low shares of

*Table 1: Share of Urban informal sector in national economy*

Index	% Share
1. Gross Output	1,22
2. GDP (PV)	2,43
3. GDP (FC)	2,96
4. Non-Agricultural GDP (FC)	3,92
5. GNP (PV)	2,34
6. Intermediate Inputs	1,25
7. Value Added	1,17
8. Compensation of Employees	0,13
9. Operating Surplus	2,92
10. Employment	8,81
11. Private Sector Employment	11,65
12. Non-Agricultural Paid Employment	13,98
13. Self-Employed	64,21
14. Capital Stock	0,14
15. Capital Stock for Non-Agriculture	0,19
16. Capital Stock (excluding buildings, works)	0,32
17. Gross National Savings	0,22

GDP = Gross Domestic Product; PV = At Purchaser's Value; FC = At Factor Cost;  
GNP = Gross National Product.

capital (ranging from 0,14% to 0,32%) as compared to the shares of employment (ranging from 8,8% to 14,0%). We shall say more about factor intensity in Section VI below.

Let us now turn to the distribution of informal activities between households and markets. It can be appreciated from Table 2 that informal activities going on inside residential premises tend to dominate those going on outside residential premises. This is evidenced by the fact that the household share is higher than that for markets in all the indices with the exception of compensation to hired workers and number of family workers. In a sense, this is an interesting result to the extent that from casual observation one would have expected a dominant amount of informal activities to be going on outside residential premises (i.e., marketplaces, open spaces along the roadside, makeshift shelters, hawking, etc.). Indeed, this is the typical assumption in those studies focusing on the informal sector.

<sup>5</sup> These are respective shares out of national output for the enumerated economy. They are computed from Swaziland's National Accounts.

Table 2: Share of Households in Informal Sector Activities

Index	% Shares
1. Gross Output	54,36
2. Intermediate Inputs	54,60
3. Material Inputs	53,29
4. Value Added	53,98
5. Compensation of Employees	56,16
6. Compensation of Hired Works	42,31
7. Compensation of Apprentice Workers	85,13
8. Operating Surplus	53,84
9. Employment	67,84
10. Support Labour	55,29
11. Hired Workers	58,78
12. Family Workers	49,80
13. Apprentice Workers	76,32
14. Capital Stock	60,34
15. Capital Formation	79,08
16. Hired Van Services	64,76
17. Other Hired Equipment	73,73

Source: Matsebula (1985b)

We can summarize the analysis of this section in terms of four observations. First, the UIS is quite important and significant in the Swaziland economy. Second, income-distribution is somewhat skewed against the UIS. Third, production in the UIS tends to be labour-intensive as compared to the rest of the economy. Fourth, informal activities going on inside residential premises tend to dominate those going on outside residential premises.

### 3. Personal characteristics of informal operations

In this section we outline the personal characteristics of the operators or owners of informal business units. This will be done in terms of six areas — namely, sex, age, number of children being supported, formal training, informal training, and previous jobs held. These characteristics form a useful background to understanding other dimensions of the UIS.

Starting with sexual distribution, it was found that 78% of the operators are female whilst 22% are male. Of course there are variations among activities. There are some activities which are dominated by men and others by women. From an aggregative viewpoint, females tend to dominate males in informal production.

Let us now turn to age distribution. It was found that the highest proportion of operators (namely, 26,9%) fell within the 25-34. The next highest proportion (namely, 25,6%) fell within the 35-44 agegroup. This was followed by the 45-54 agegroup (with 21,4%); 15-24. (with 14,0%); 55-64. (with 7,7%); and over 65 agegroup (with 4,4%). The mean age was 39 years. It can be appreciated, therefore, that the age-distribution of the operators roughly follows a normal curve centred around 39 years.

Let us now turn to the children in the households of the operators. It was found that only 7,5% of the operators did not have children in their households. Among those who had children, 48,8% had 14 children and 43,7 had more than 4 children. The average number of children was found to be 4,4.

We now turn to the formal education acquired by the operators. It was found that 50,2% of the operators had primary education and 28,0% had secondary education.

Hence, more than threequarters of the operators had at least primary education<sup>6</sup>. Only 21,9% did not have any education at all. Thus the degree of literacy among the operators is quite high. At the same time, no operator had more than secondary education.

It was also found that 90,9% of the operators had no formal vocational training. Only 3,5% had received training in teaching, nursing, commercial studies and secretarial services; 2,2% had received training in sewing and knitting; 1,7% had received training in construction and wood-work; 1,4% had received training in motor mechanics, machine-minding and electronics; and 0,3% had received training in home economics and handicrafts.

Let us now turn to informal training. It was found that 26,4% did not receive any informal training. In virtually all the cases classified as having no informal training, either such training was unnecessary or the operators had acquired the requisite skills as part of household chores when growing up. It was found that the highest proportion of operators (equal to 35,5%) received informal training from family, relatives and friends. This was followed by selftraining (with 28,9% of the operators); training from the informal sector itself (with 3,5%); training from the formal sector (with 3,3%); and training from voluntary and charitable organizations (with 2,4%).

Finally, we turn to the previous jobs held by the informal operators. It was found that 43,7% of the operators had no previous job (i.e., no job over the five years preceding the survey). Of the 56,3% who did have previous jobs, 13,5% had been selling in the market-place but now shifted to some other informal activity; 12,4% had worked either as domestic employees or low-grade support staff in the formal sector (such as office cleaner, messenger, security guard and waiter); and 8,0% had worked on commercial farms and in factories. The rest of the operators were spread in smaller proportions over formal retail trade (with 4,4%); motor mechanics, machine-minding, electronics and repairing household utensils (with 4,1%); teaching, nursing, laboratory and office work (with 3,8%); sewing and knitting (with 3,3%); construction and woodwork (with 3,0%); handicrafts (with 1,9%); repairing shoes and leather items (with 1,1%); pictures and photography (with 0,6%); and hairworks (with 0,2%).

We can summarize the analysis in this section in terms of six observations. First, more than three-quarters of the informal operators are female. Second, most of the operators fall within the 25-44 agegroup, with a mean of 39 years. Third, 92% of the operators have one or more children in their households; with the average number being four.

Fourth, more than three-quarters of the operators have had at least primary education. However, no operator has more than secondary education. Furthermore, 91% of the operators have no formal vocational training. Those who have it are spread in small proportions over a wide variety of training categories — the three popular ones being: vehicles, machines and electronics; construction and wood-work; teaching, nursing, commercial studies and secretarial services.

Fifth, only a quarter of the operators had no informal training. The rest received informal training of some kind — with the highest proportion receiving training from family, relatives and friends. Sixth, just over onehalf of the operators had jobs before (the popular three being selling in the marketplace; working as domestic servants and lowgrade support staff in the formal sector; and working in commercial farms and in factories).

#### **4. Constraints**

In this section we discuss the constraints faced by the producers in the UIS from three perspectives. The first focuses on the constraints against higher production as perceived by the operators. The second focuses on the issue of competition as it impinges on informal production. The third focuses on the sources of funds for operations.

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<sup>6</sup> The correlation between level of education and age was found to be -0,27. Hence the younger the operator, the more likely that he will have at least primary education.

Let us begin with the constraints against higher production. Table 3 summarizes the picture. It can be seen from this Table that by far the highest proportion of the operators cited inadequate demand as the most serious constraint militating against higher production. This was followed by inadequate funds. The next five constraints occupy an intermediate position; with the last seven being at the bottom of the list.

The fact that the highest proportion of operators indicated inadequate demand as the most serious constraint suggests, among other things, that there is a high degree of competition. Indeed, 58,8% of the operators explicitly stated that they face competition. Of these, 92,3% said that the competition emanates from the informal sector itself. The rest of the operators (namely 7,7%) said the competition emanates from the formal sector.

When those who said they face competition were asked how they plan to combat it, they responded in the manner summarized in Table 4. It can be appreciated from this Table that by far the highest proportion did not plan to do anything about the competition. In neoclassical terms, these business units could be said to be operating at or near the sectorwide point of equilibrium. Smaller proportions indicated that they intend to embark on positive steps — namely, improve product quality, reduce prices and generally increase sales effort.

As pointed out above, inadequate funds was cited as the second most serious constraint against higher production. It is interesting to find out the major sources of funds for operations in the UIS. The picture is summarized in Table 5.

*Table 3: Distribution of Business Units by Constraints on Production*

Type of Constraint	%
1. Inadequate Demand	42,3
2. Inadequate Funds	18,6
3. Inadequate Time	6,9
4. Credit Sales & Bad Debts	5,3
5. Inadequate Workpremises	4,6
6. Inadequate Raw Materials & Intermediate Inputs	4,4
7. Family Obligations	4,1
8. Sickness & Old Age	3,1
9. Satisfied with Current Level of Activity	2,8
10. Regulations & Permits	2,5
11. Inadequate Transportation	1,9
12. Just Starting	1,6
13. Inadequate Equipment	1,4
14. Low Profitability	0,5

*Source:* Matsebula (1985a)

*Table 4: Distribution of Business Units by Strategy to Combat Competition*

Strategy	%
1. Not Planning on New Strategy	70,8
2. Improve Product Quality	12,9
3. Reduce Prices	8,5
4. Increase Sales Effort	7,9

*Source:* Matsebula (1985a)

Table 5: Distribution of Business Units by Source of Funds

Source	%
1. Own Funds	63,4
2. Family, Relatives & Friends	32,2
3. Employer	2,4
4. Bank	0,9
5. Supplier Credit	0,6
6. Joint Work-groups	0,5

Source: Matsebula (1985 a)

Table 6: Distribution of Business Units by Output and Costs

E per month	Value of output %	Total costs %	Non-labour costs %	Support labour costs %
Less than 50	22,5	39,0	39,5	68,7
50-99	21,5	23,0	23,6	20,5
100-199	22,0	14,8	15,7	10,8
200-499	20,8	14,3	14,5	0,0
500 & Above	13,2	9,0	6,5	0,0

Source: Matsebula (1985b)

It can be appreciated from this Table that the most used source is own funds; followed by funds from family, relatives and friends. The rest of the sources are used by very small proportions of the operators.

We can summarize the analysis of this section in terms of three observations. First, the two most serious constraints militating against higher production are inadequate demand and inadequate funds. Second, the majority of the business units face competition in their activities. Most of this competition emanates from the informal sector itself. Third, the two most commonly used sources of funds for financing informal production are own savings on the one hand and savings of family members, relatives and friends on the other hand.

### 5. Incomes and costs

In this section, we begin with an analysis of the value of output produced in the UIS. This will be followed by an analysis of the costs incurred in the generation of that output. Finally, we analyze the net incomes generated from informal production.

It can be seen from the second column of Table 6 that the highest proportion of the business units produce output valued at less than E50 per month. This is followed, in almost equal proportions, by business units producing output valued at E100-E199, E50-E99 and E200-E499 per month. Only a small proportion produce output valued at more than E500 per month. The mean value of output is E245,95 per month.

The costs incurred in the production of the output mentioned above are summarized in the last three columns of Table 6. It can be appreciated from this Table that the distribution of business units by total costs is similar in nature to that by non-labour costs (i.e., total costs less labour costs) and by support labour costs (i.e., compensation to hired and apprentice workers). In all three cases, the highest proportion of business units have costs amounting to less than E50 per month. This is followed by the intervals in the order indicated in the Table. The mean total costs, mean non-labour costs and mean support labour costs were estimated to be E200,35, E154,02 and E47,11, respectively.

The picture on net income (i.e., gross revenues less total costs) is summarized in Table 7. It can be seen from this Table that the majority of the business units enjoy net



incomes amounting to less than E50 per month. The mean net income was estimate to be E45,60. With such low net incomes, it is not surprising that the contribution of the UIS to gross national savings is less than 1% (as pointed out in Section 2).

In some cases, the low incomes of the UIS are supplemented by incomes earned from selling labour services to the formal sector. It was found that 12,0% of the informal operators also hold regular jobs in the formal sector. The average income earned from the formal sector was found to be E158,74 per month. This is equal to 64,5% of the average value of output in the informal sector. Hence by finding a job in the formal sector, the lucky informal operator can raise his gross income quite considerably<sup>7</sup>.

In summary then, we note that the majority of business units are really small. They mostly produce output valued at less than E50 per month; incur costs of less than E50 per month; and generate net incomes of less than E50 per month.

## 6. Inputs and technology

In this section, we analyze the inputs and technology used in the UIS. This will be done by focusing on five areas — namely, labour inputs, capital inputs, factor combinations, elasticity of output with respect to inputs, and returns to scale.

*Table 7: Distribution of Business Units by Net Income*

E per month	%
Less than 50	58,8
50-99	15,1
100-199	12,4
200-499	10,1
500 & Above	3,6

*Source:* Matsebula (1985b)

*Table 8: Distribution of Business Unites by Total Labour and Support Labour*

No. of workers	Total labour %	Support labour %
0	—	67,8
1	67,8	24,0
2	24,1	4,9
3 & above	8,9	3,3

*Source:* Matsebula (1985b)

We begin with labour inputs. It can be seen from the second column of Table 8 that about two thirds of the business units involve only one worker. This is the owner/operator. Only a small proportion involve at least three workers. These observations are also borne out by the figures in the last column of Table 7 (where support labour is defined to be hired plus family apprentice labour). It was found that the mean number of workers (including the owner/operator) is 1,5. The mean number of support workers is 0,45.

<sup>7</sup> To the extent that an operator who finds a job in the formal sector does not relinquish his informal operations, it can be surmized that the UIS is a permanent feature rather than a waiting stage as is predicted in some of the literature.

Table 9: Distribution of Business Units by total Labour Services

Manhours per year	%
Less than 480	9,3
480-959	13,5
960-1439	9,3
1440 and above	67,9

Source: Matsebula (1985b)

Table 9 shows the distribution of business units by annual man-hours forthcoming from all the labour involved in informal production. The boundaries of the intervals shown have been selected such that they coincide with effective employment for an equivalent period of three, six and nine months. It can be appreciated that about two-thirds of the business units have labour employed for an equivalent period of at least nine months in each year. Thus the majority of the business units are continuously operating for most of the year. The mean number of annual man-hours is 2 036 (which is much higher than the 1 440 representing the equivalent of nine months).

Table 10 shows the distribution of business units by the working times of family, hired and apprentice labour. On the basis of the means shown in this Table, we can calculate the average number of hours each category of labour works per year<sup>8</sup>. These work out to 1 940 hours for hired labour, 1 798 hours for apprentice labour, and 1 331 hours for family labour. Assuming a standard work-day of 8 hours, standard work-week of 5 days, and standard work-year of 12 months, we can calculate a standard work-year of 1 920 hours. This means that hired labour in the UIS works more than the standard work-period, whereas apprentice and family labour work less than the standard work-period.

Table 10: Distribution of Business Units by Working Time of Labour

Type of Labour	Hours per day		Days per week		Months per year	
	9+ %	mean	6+ %	mean	7+ %	mean
Family	23,3	6,7	46,6	4,6	85,7	10,8
Hired	22,1	7,4	64,7	5,7	94,1	11,5
Apprentice	37,5	7,5	68,8	5,6	81,3	10,7

Source: Matsebula (1985b)

The labour input can also be viewed from the perspective of output-labour ratios. The distribution of business units by output-labour ratios is shown in the second column of Table 11. It can be seen that the majority of business units (equal to 52,1%) have output-labour ratios of less than 100. It was found that the overall mean is 171,12. In other words, the value of output per worker is E171,12. For the enumerated economy, the value of output per worker is E14,11. Hence labour in the UIS is associated with higher output than in the rest of the economy. Hence production in the UIS is labour-intensive as compared to the rest of the economy.

<sup>8</sup> Hours worked per year equal:  
(hours worked per day) x (days worked per week) x (4) x (months worked per year).

*Table 11: Distribution of Business Units by Output-Labour Ratios, Total Assets and Capital-Labour Ratios*

E value	Output-labour ratio %	Total assets %	Capital-labour ratio %
Less than 50	29,1	26,7	33,6
50-99	23,0	21,2	20,6
100-199	21,4	15,6	16,5
200-499	19,0	19,5	17,5
500 & Above	7,5	16,8	11,8

*Source:* Matsebula (1985b)

Let us now turn to capital inputs. It can be seen from the third column of Table 11 that the highest proportion of business units (equal to 26,7%) have total assets<sup>9</sup> valued at less than E50. It has been found that the mean value of the assets is E 458,37.

The capital inputs can also be viewed from the perspective of output-capital ratios. The distribution of business units by output-capital ratios is shown in Table 12. It can be seen that the highest proportion of the business units (equal to 46,1%) have output-capital ratios of less than 3. The mean is 7,97. In others words, each unit of capital is associated with 7,97 units of output. This compares favourably with the output-capital ratio of 1,2 for the enumerated economy. This reveals another dimension of the labour-intensity of UIS production.

We turn to an explicit analysis of factor combinations. It can be seen from the last column of Table 11 that the highest proportion of business units (equal to 33,6%) have capital-labour ratios of less than 50. The mean is 299,23. This means that capital valued at E299,23 is combined with one worker in the UIS. This compares well with the capital value of E11 773,56 associated with one job in the enumerated economy. Notwithstanding the fact that the capital figure for the UIS excludes building and works (which are included in the figure for the enumerated economy), it can still be said that production in the UIS is labour-intensive.

*Table 12: Distribution of Business Units by Output-Capital Ratios*

Ratio	%
Less than 3	46,1
3-5	20,4
6-8	10,4
9-11	6,9
12 & Above	16,2

*Source:* Matsebula (1985b)

Investment-labour ratios (defined to be capital formation divided by employment) are shown in Table 13. It can be seen that the highest proportion of business units (equal to 8,3%) have investment-labour ratios of less than 5. The mean ratio is 70,44. This means that E70,44 is needed to create a job in the UIS in a given year. This compares favourably with the value of E1 870,55 applicable to the rest of the economy.

*Table 13: Distribution of Business Units by Investment-Labour Ratios*

<sup>9</sup> These are defined to be items of a capital nature (such as machinery, tools, equipment, containers, etc. but excluding buildings) plus working capital.

E per worker	%
Less than 5	48,3
5-9	15,1
10-14	9,7
15-19	2,9
20 & Above	23,9

Source: Matsebula (1985b)

We now turn to the elasticity of output with respect to each of the primary inputs. The estimates for the elasticity of output with respect to capital range from 0,52 to 0,69<sup>10</sup>.

This means that a 10% increase in the amount of capital is expected to bring about a 5,2% - 6,9% increase in production.

The estimate for the elasticity of output with respect to manhours range from 0,04 to 0,31. This means that a 10% increase in the number of manhours devoted to the UIS is expected to bring about a 0,4% — 3,1% increase in production. The estimates for the elasticity of output with respect to number of workers range from 0,02 to 0,52. This means that a 10% increase in the number of workers will bring about a 0,2% 5,2% increase in production.

We now turn to returns to scale. It has been found that production in the UIS tends to exhibit decreasing returns to scale or, at most, constant returns to scale<sup>11</sup>. Decreasing returns to scale means that an increase in the inputs by a given margin will bring about a less than proportionate increase in production.

We can summarize the analysis in this section in terms of four observations. First, a high majority of the business units involve only the owner/operator. Hence the majority do not employ support labour. That labour which is involved, is employed continuously for virtually the whole year. Hired labour tends to work for long periods of time whereas apprentice and family labour work for shorter periods. The output-labour ratio compares favourably with that for the rest of the economy.

Second, production in the UIS tends to be labour-intensive. Third, the elasticity of output with respect to capital is at most equal to 0,69; and that with respect to labour is at most equal to 0,52. Finally, production seems to exhibit, at most, constant returns to scale.

## 7. Conclusion

This paper set out to analyze selected dimensions of Swaziland's UIS from an aggregative viewpoint. The figures used are taken from three previous papers by the author of the present one. We now wish to highlight the major observations and conclusions made in this paper.

First, the UIS as a production entity is quite important and significant in the Swaziland economy; with its production being labourintensive. Slightly more than one-half of the activities go on inside residential premises. Income distribution is somewhat skewed against the UIS.

Second, the majority of the operators are female; they fall within the 25-44 age group; they have at least one child to support; they have had at least primary education; few have some formal vocational training; many have had some informal training; and some have held different jobs before.

Third, the two most serious constraints against higher production are inadequate demand and inadequate funds. The majority of the business units face competition emanating mainly from the informal sector itself. The two most commonly used sources

<sup>10</sup> For reasons detailed in Matsebula (1986), the elasticity estimates are to be regarded as tentative.

<sup>11</sup> For reasons detailed in Matsebula (1986), this conclusion is to be regarded as tentative.

of funds are own saving on the one hand, and savings of family members, relatives and friends on the other hand.

Fourth, the majority of business units are really small in terms of assets, labour involved, value of output produced, costs of production, and net income.

Fifth, the majority of the business units are one-person operations. Few use hired, family or apprentice labour. Labour is involved in production continuously for virtually the whole year. Hired labour tends to work longer hours than family and apprentice labour.

Finally, the findings of the survey largely confirm the working definition of the UIS presented at the beginning of this paper. But more than this, they give a quantitative dimension of that definition. This is useful for gaining insights into the UIS.

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## 10. DUAL PRODUCTION AND MARKETING OF VEGETABLES IN SWAZILAND: A CASE OF MARGINALIZATION OF FEMALE TRADES

*Henry Sandee and Hermine Weijland*

### 1. Introduction

In Swaziland, as in most countries, women generally work for less pay than men do. Therefore, jobs that bring in little money are labelled 'women's jobs'. This paper focuses on two such jobs: small-scale vegetable production and selling. At the Swazi homesteads and retail markets, an increasing number of women are active in this trade which is very important for the poorer families and particularly for the female-headed households. This is one of the reasons why national and international organizations such as ILO, FAO and IFAD have become interested in small-scale vegetable production and marketing (Carloni 1982, Cassam 1983). They claim that these activities have good prospects and should be encouraged by proper policies. A most important government act was therefore the Ban on imports, enforced in 1980, and lifted partly in 1985. Although its enactment was prompted by a cholera epidemic in South Africa, its effectuation has been considered by Swazi economists as a blessing in disguise (Observer 15/10-'83). It was expected that both large and small Swazi farmers would profit from the high vegetable prices the Ban evoked, and that consequently they could expand vegetable production in order to replace the banned imports which were supplying about half of domestic demand (Cassam, 1983).

Unfortunately, this expectation was not immediately realised because a severe drought limited yields in 1981-1982. However, as soon as rainfall returned to normal, production exceeded pre-ban levels by more than 50 per cent and it is claimed that, as far as fresh vegetables are concerned, the country has become self-sufficient. Meanwhile, vegetable imports are again allowed to flood Swazi markets.

The consequences of the ban for producers and traders have been diverse. Apparently, the large farmers on Title Dead Land (TDL) have enjoyed good yields and high profits. They were easily able to expand production with their modern equipment and flexible labour force. This facilitated the accommodation of large wholesale traders who had to shift their business towards TDL farmers and large domestic clients. On the other hand, the small farmers (mainly women) on Swazi Nation Land (SNL) were also able to expand production but it appeared that they could not establish satisfactory trade contacts. Nevertheless, their small middlemen-traders must have had profitable times when vegetables were scarce, because in that period market prices were so high that it became worthwhile to collect products on a small scale from distant and isolated homesteads. However, the small retailers (women) suffered a reduction of their trade because little trade was possible with the scarce and highly priced supply during the ban period.

There is sufficient evidence that the production and marketing structure has changed drastically since more domestic producers have become involved. However, according to a number of studies, the marketing system still cannot cope with small-farm produce, which must be sold at high prices because its market channels are not efficient. Hence the long standing arguments in favour of central marketing facilities for small-scale producers and traders have again been brought to the foreground. Since independence in 1968, suggestions have been made for improvements of the marketing system, but so far no permanent solution has been found.

This paper deals with the question whether small-scale production and marketing of vegetables, which are predominantly women's jobs, can be made profitable and, if so, whether these activities can be preserved for women.

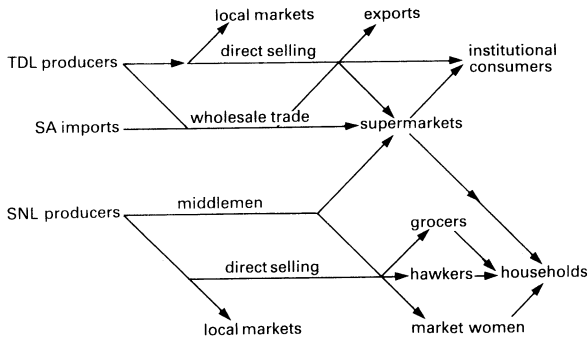
The paper is structured as follows. Firstly, it defines the weak position of small-scale farming and retailing in the dualistic Swazi economy. Then it focuses on the production conditions of the homesteads vis-à-vis the larger farmers and the differences in their access to markets. Thirdly, it describes the position of small-scale vegetable sellers vis-à-vis their suppliers on the one hand, and competing large-scale retail shops on the other hand.

Finally, it attempts to show that marketing problems are indeed most urgent, but that large-scale solutions will probably not benefit the small farmers and traders. It concludes that small farming and retailing could become more profitable if the small farmers and traders set up marketing organizations of their own in order to establish regular, reciprocal trading contacts. However, since it is not likely that female farmers will have time to grow vegetables regularly throughout the Summer and Winter, it is suggested that the division of labour between the sexes should be altered and that men should assist in vegetable production and transportation.

## 2. A Schematic Overview of Production and Marketing of Vegetables

The production and marketing of vegetables in Swaziland follows two separate streams which form an almost perfectly dual system. On the one side, there is the dynamic line of modern, large scale production, trade and consumption, comprising South-African producers and whole-sale markets, Swazi Title Deed producers and whole sale traders, supermarkets and large institutional consumer units such as hospitals, hotels, hostels, barracks, and restaurants at mines, factories and government buildings. On the other side, there is a stagnant line of small homestead producers, middlemen, small retailers and rather poor consumers. Apart from a few minor connections, the two streams have different origins, different transport roads and different destinations. They also have different production conditions, transport and storage facilities, and trade systems. Figure 1 presents a scheme of the two streams.

Figure 1: Production, Trade and Destination of Vegetables.



The production of vegetables can be traced to two major origins: large private farms in South Africa and on Title Deed Land in Swaziland, and small Swazi farms with irrigated land, usually not privately owned, but either leased from large multinational firms (Vuvulane contract farming), or allotted by chiefs who distribute communal land (Swazi Nation Land).

The resources of South African (RSA) farmers are comparable to those of Title Deed Land (TDL) farmers. Most RSA and TDL farmers produce on a large scale and have good and stable trade relations with South African and/or Swazi wholesale traders and large



institutional consumers or supermarkets. They are usually able to arrange selling contracts in such a manner that the greater part of their crops, including vegetables, is sold in advance at a fixed price (tender system), while the remaining part is sold as a surplus at the going prices. On the other side, the small Swazi farmers usually produce vegetables without any sales agreement. They obtain income and food security from wage transfers from migrant workers and from maize production at the homesteads. Their incomes from vegetable crops are determined by the vagaries of middlemen and the fluctuations of local and regional markets (Diphooorn and Spaarman 1980).

The marketing chain of the products of large TDL farmers differs widely from that of the small SNL farmers. It is about four times as large, much stronger and dominated by wealthy wholesale traders owning warehouses with cooling facilities. It even includes a large wholesale shopping centre, where retailers and middlemen can buy products in bulk provided they can show a credit card (Sandee et al., 1985). The large wholesale traders (some 8 firms) have various types of trucks at their disposal; large ones for their import and export business, and small ones for their smaller distribution activities (Diphooorn and Spaarman 1980). They are quick to respond to changes in the market and to trade with RSA, according to demand and supply conditions. Their buying and selling prices are, in general, rather stable, which is obviously due to their standing contract relations with large suppliers and buyers abroad (Sandee et al. 1985).

On the other side, the marketing chain from small-producers to small-retailers is thin and long, poor and fragile. At some irrigation schemes, vegetables can be sold to the 'Central Co-operative' (CCU), but the latter charges high transport and handling fees, pays low producer prices, and in addition is late with disbursements (Sandee et al. 1985). Middlemen from Durban (RSA) used to offer higher prices, but ceased to buy from SNL farmers (*ibid.*). During the harvest in 1985, only Swazi middlemen visited the homesteads and then only at irregular intervals, when it was worthwhile. Collecting vegetables in the Piggs Peak area, in order to sell them in the central wholesale markets, takes a round trip of at least 100 km., part of which is on very bad roads. It is also most probable that much time must be spent on collecting a full pick-up load, and that most of that load will already be spoiled on arrival (Diphooorn and Spaarman 1980). Middlemen therefore visit small farms only when market prices are very high.

Not surprisingly, small farmers are now trying to become less dependent on middlemen and are looking for means to sell their products directly to retailers or large institutional consumers (Sandee et al. 1985). However, to reach such large and distant customers one needs trucks. Such expensive vehicles are beyond the means of the small farmers. Therefore a substantial portion of the vegetables grown on SNL land is traded locally. This portion may vary between regions from some 38% in the Piggs Peak and Vuvulane areas to 84% in South Swaziland where roads are very bad. For TDL farmers, on the other hand, local sales were estimated to be less than 30 per cent (Diphooorn and Spaarman 1980: 71-74). Local markets are easily saturated and consequently have sharp price fluctuations.

Those in possession of a pick-up truck usually prefer to sell their produce directly to regular customers in the Central Area where most of the retailing takes place. In addition to the large institutional buyers and retail shops, there are also a number of large wholesale markets where farmers and middlemen sell their wares. The buyers in wholesale markets are mostly market women who sell fruit and vegetables in small quantities in the adjacent market square. Their merchandise may have changed hands many times and have been transported on long and bad roads. Therefore this small retail channel is the most expensive of all. Its accumulated trade margin is as high as 200 per cent (Sandee et al. 1985). The large-scale traders, on the other hand, can offer cheaper products because they can buy cheaper imports and have lower transport costs. Table 1 gives the price schemes for the main vegetable crops: tomatoes and potatoes. Tomatoes are the major vegetable crop for small farmers, potatoes are the major vegetable crop for large farmers. Together they represent more than half of the total vegetable production (Diphooorn and Spaarman 1980: 70).

Table 1: Prices at Various Selling Points in the two Trade Channels,  
June 1985 (Indexes).

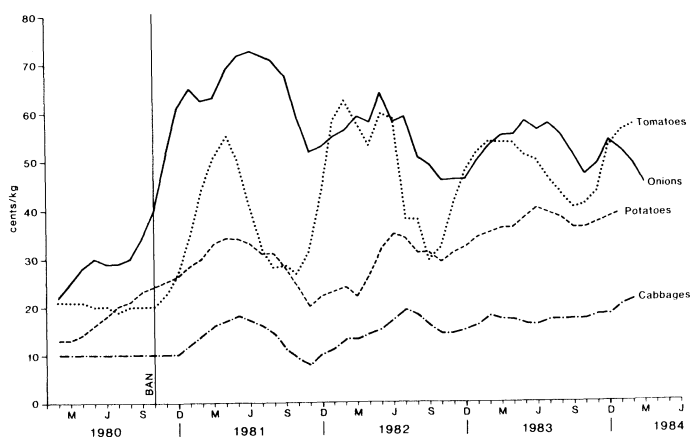
	Large Scale Channel		Small Scale Channel	
	Tomatoes	Potatoes	Tomatoes	Potatoes
Swazi Producer Price	100	100	100	100
Wholesale Price	195	117	246	117
Retail Price	223	134	332	164

Sources: Prices of the Large Scale Channel are derived from survey estimates (Sandee et al. 1985). Prices of the Small Scale Channel are derived from Market Information Bulletin, Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives, June 1985.

The table clearly shows the higher efficiency of the large scale channel, which managed to buy at lower prices, and scored trade margins of only 123% for tomatoes and 34% for potatoes, whereas the small-scale channel had accumulated trade margins of 232 and 64 per cent respectively. This resulted in retail prices in the large channel that were less than half of those in the small channel. For instance, the large supermarkets, which used the large trade channel, were able to fix their retail prices at about half of those of the small-scale market sellers, who were obviously buying from small middlemen.

As so many different types of sellers offered their produce for sale to the market women, trade prices at the small markets varied widely, in contrast to the more stable trade prices in the large wholesale channel. At the retail level, however, prices among sellers did not vary much. At the market places it seemed that the market women exerted an effective price control in favour of the poorer women, who had no connections with farmers, and who had no money to raise their stocks when a farmer or trader visited the market with cheap supplies (Sandee et al. 1985). Nevertheless, both wholesale and retail prices followed the fluctuating supply conditions over the seasons. Figure 2 shows the monthly price variations for the main vegetables over the period 1980-1984. Vegetables were clearly cheapest at the end of the Winter, in the months August-October, and most expensive in the preceding months. The figure also shows that the Import Ban did not only raise price levels but also accentuated price fluctuations after imports were no longer allowed to fill the gaps in local supply.

Fig. 2. Monthly variation in vegetable prices: Manzini and Mbabane markets.



Source: Funnell (1986) p. 15.

As imports used to cover the greater part of domestic demand, they could only gradually be substituted by Swazi products. Figure 2 shows that price fluctuations were decreasing steadily owing to a better regulation of supply. It can also be seen that retail prices rose for three out of four vegetables. These price increases exceeded the annual inflation rate of 10 per cent. However, this trend applied only to retail prices; producer prices seem to have moved in an adverse direction, as is shown in table 2.

*Table 2: Prices of SNL Producers, Traders and Small Retailers, 1983-1984; annual averages, Wholesale Markets.*

	Tomatoes		Onions		Potatoes		Cabbages		Total	
	1983	1984	1983	1984	1983	1984	1983	1984	1983	1984
Producer price	100	71	100	82	100	64	100	94	100	78
Trader price	122	127	124	124	132	91	141	141	130	121
Retail price	143	190	140	210	148	186	294	218	181	201
Increase of total trade margin		+76		+88		+74		-70		+42

Note: prices have been indexed with as base the producer prices of 1983. Thus the indexes show trade margins as well as time trends.

Source: Marketing Advisory Unit (1983, 1984).

According to the estimates of the Marketing Advisory Unit, producer prices for all four vegetables fell, whereas retail prices for three vegetables rose substantially. Consequently, trade margins changed at rates varying from +88 to -70 index points. These price estimates indicate a weakening of the position of the producers vis-à-vis the traders. Retail traders, in particular, should have profited from these price trends, because, on average, they could buy at lower prices, and sell at higher prices, while the volume of sales had increased substantially. It was estimated that production increased by some 40 per cent in the period 1979/80-1983/84.

However, the favourable market conditions need not have affected both trade channels equally. The majority of the market women, in fact, complained that their sales declined (Sandee et al. 1985). The small middlemen-traders also saw their business decline and their number decrease. It seemed that households were turning to cheaper, more efficient retailers, and as a result only the large-scale retailers (supermarkets and green-grocers) benefitted from the increasing domestic production and consumption. They expanded rapidly at the cost of small-scale retailing. On the other hand, an additional trade channel appeared to have developed: that of farmers selling their products directly to large institutional consumers, supermarkets, market women, grocers and hawkers.

It is clear that direct sellers were in an advantageous position as compared to the small farmers and their middlemen. The latter had to spend much time on collecting activities, so that the quality of the vegetables deteriorated, and a large part of the crops was wasted in the fields and during transportation.

These considerations lead to the conclusion that vegetables require a special trade system which is relatively well organized and well-equipped. This is the more urgent the warmer the climate and the less favourable the road conditions. If the intermediary links of the chain fail, producers may try to bypass the inefficient links and reach consumers directly. This development, however, damages the poorer middlemen and retailers of the marketing chain, and it also damages the smaller and poorer producers who are unable to bridge the distance to the consumers. As the direct selling activities of the better-off farmers reduce the supplies for the middlemen, the latter will find their visits to the countryside less profitable. They will have to extend their trips, and appear at less regular intervals. As a result, small-scale vegetable production will become more risky and less

profitable. So it seems plausible that small-scale production and marketing of vegetables by women will disintegrate, unless an adequate trade system will be established.

### **3. *The Weak Position of Small Farmers***

Farming in Swaziland is divided into two main sectors: a large-farm and a small-farm sector. The large-farm sector is dynamic and modern, and it requires full specialization of the farmers. Large farms use relatively large chemical inputs, and high-quality seeds and planting material. The farms are mechanized, they make use of modern irrigation methods, and have access to sufficient water. On average, they have a size of 70 ha, and employ some 40 wage labourers per farm. Of the 600 TDL farmers only some 25 grow vegetables on average plots of 13 ha per farm (Cassam 1983, Testerink 1984).

The small farm sector is not as homogeneous. It can be divided into four farm types of which the leasing Vuvulane farmers form a special category. The other three categories are SNL farmers, who irrigate privately on their own initiative, or do not irrigate at all, or farm under the guidance of the Rural Development Area Authorities. The latter administrate a number of irrigation schemes financed by the government or foreign donor organizations.

There are approximately 60,000 homesteads which have, on average, access to 1.5 ha cropland. Some 4,000 homesteads enjoy access to additional plots of irrigated land, which are distributed by the chiefs. This land is most suitable for growing vegetables. The Swazi farming system is traditionally a female system, which means that women spend more time in the field than men do. The latter usually contribute only seasonally to farm work, when the most vigorous tasks have to be done (Boserup 1970). According to tradition, Swazi men obtain access to land at their marriage, as the chief then allots the new household a plot of land, which is cultivated by the wife with the incidental assistance of her husband (Ngubane 1983). The wife may sell her crops on her own initiative, but usually she cannot dispose independently of the money. Expenditures have to be discussed with her husband, and decisions to buy seeds and chemical inputs, or to hire a tractor, are to be taken by the head of the household. Of the homesteads, 21 per cent are headed by women, and an additional 21 per cent have no adult males living at home (Carloni 1982: 17).

It follows, that even if there are men in charge of the household, the women have to do most of the farming. In addition, they have to do heavy household tasks. Collecting water, for instance, is very laborious work, as more than 85 per cent of the homesteads still depend on distant sources of natural water (De Vletter 1983: 28). For SNL homesteads, farming is mostly a subsistence activity. Staple crops are maize or rice, which are grown in the wet summer season. As an increasing number of men are employed as wage workers in the urban centres and in South Africa, they increasingly fail to be present when the fields need ploughing or some other heavy operation. Therefore the women have been forced to use mechanized equipment on their own. They operate heavy power tillers and fertilizer sprayers, and appear to be quite capable in all farming jobs required of them (Carloni 1982: 6). Table 3 shows the task distribution by sex, observed in 1979.

Table 3: Task Distribution by Sex, 1979.

activity	Only Adult Men	Only Adult Women	Men and Women Together	Children	Other	Total
Fieldwork						
- ploughing	40.7	18.1	27.0	1.0	13.2	100
- planting	26.6	35.5	25.4	1.7	10.8	100
- weeding	4.8	48.7	27.3	0.3	16.2	100
- harvesting	4.4	45.9	28.3	0.4	17.4	100
Animal Care						
- herding	27.8	18.1	5.9	35.1 *	12.5	100
- milking	42.1	15.1	5.1	24.2 *	13.5	100
- fencing	73.9	10.7	8.3	1.7	5.4	100
Housework						
- building, repairs	62.2	13.4	18.3	0.4	2.1	100
- food preparation	1.5	72.5	2.9	6.8	16.3	100
- firewood and water	1.7	64.9	3.1	7.5	22.8	100
Home industry						
- handicrafts and brewing	3.9	92.1	2.0	0.7	1.3	100
Community work and other	42.3	35.9	11.3	1.9	8.6	100
Shopping and selling	14.3	62.2	9.2	6.2	8.1	100

\* boys only

Source: Derived from Fion de Vletter (1983) p. 23, Table 4.

It can be seen that women predominated in field work while men (and boys) took care of the animals and related operations. Men also did construction and communal work and excelled in traditional medicine. Women did most of the housework, home industry, shopping and selling. In 1978, more than 50 per cent of SNL households did not sell any crop at all (De Vletter 1983; 31). Women used to spend much of the winter on home industry, but those who received access to irrigated land abandoned their home industry and started vegetable growing. Vegetables are very labour-intensive crops, and growing them is hardly possible in the summer, when most labour time is spent on maize or rice. It might be more profitable to grow vegetables in summer, when vegetables are scarce, but in most cases this could be done only if the male family members co-operated (Sandee 1985). This would be worth considering, as growing vegetables all the year round on a plot of 0.5 ha could yield more than the average earnings from off-farm activities.

For the average income of households, we have statistics of 1978 and 1983. They show wide discrepancies, which can be ascribed to inflation, location, and conceptual differences.

The estimate of 1983 is more complete, as it includes all absentee transfers, regular as well as irregular, whereas the latter were omitted in the 1978 estimate. All sources of off-farm earnings yield a total of E. 5,596.8 per homestead in the Central region in 1983. As vegetable sales could reach E. 4,000, vegetable growing does not compare badly with off-farm wage labour, especially if one considers that it would not require a full day's work. This result suggests that families on the homesteads should reconsider their traditional division of labour and allocate more male labour to farming. The consequence of such a new task distribution would be that the farming women would lose part of their independence, but would probably gain time to rest, which they desperately need. Another side-effect would be that solidarity among women would decrease. In the prevailing female farming system, neighbouring women work together, and sometimes even share the money they receive from selling their crops (Pommée and Vreman 1985). This custom is likely to disappear when male dominance in farming increases.

Table 4: Homestead income estimates 1978 and 1983

	All Swaziland 1978 (A)	Central Region 1983 (B)
resident wages	E 544	E 2,457.6
absentee wages (1)	338	3,139.2
livestock(2)	500	378.8
crops(2)	230	592.8
non-farm enterprise(2)	133	1,089.8
miscellaneous(2)	170	392.4
Total income, including income in kind	E 1,195	E 8,049.8

1) excluding irregular transfers; 2) including in-kind income.

Sources: (A) De Vletter (1983: 47); (B) Russell and Ntshingila (1984: 1).

Given their present work load, female farmers might not welcome any expansion of their farming activities. However, when asked, farmers mentioned various other bottlenecks. Less than 20 per cent indicated that lack of labour was indeed a bottleneck. A similar number had irrigation problems. The better-off SNL farmers, however, perceived marketing problems as the major bottleneck (De Vletter 1983: 34). They may have compared their situation with that of TDL farmers who were much better equipped for marketing their vegetable production. The latter farmers could flood the markets when prices were favourable. The TDL potential for expansion was estimated at 300 ha, which means that they could still double their vegetable area, while their yield per ha was about 2 times higher than those of SNL farmers (Diphooorn and Spaarman, 1980: 67).

The differences in production conditions between TDL and SNL farmers are summarized in Table 5, which shows the favourable position of TDL farmers. Due to their stronger market relations, the latter could sell more vegetables than SNL farmers could, although TDL farms were only marginally involved in vegetable production.

Most TDL farms received E 6,250 per ha cropped and, after deductions for the cost of chemical inputs and planting material, they earned E 5,578 per ha. On the other hand, SNL farmers could have earned a net yield of E 3,550 per ha, if all had gone well with ploughing, buying inputs, cultivating and marketing. Obviously, many things went wrong, for average crop incomes were estimated at some E 600 for an average plot of 1.7 ha (Table 4, column B). If a homestead could gain access to 0.5 ha of irrigated land, and used the best technology available with a yield of 15 tons per ha, vegetable cropping alone could then yield E 1775 per homestead. Compared with off-farm wages, these would be good earnings for half a year's job.

However, experiences of the small SNL farmers with vegetable growing were not as favourable. The findings of our survey of September 1985 in the Northern Regional Development Area showed that SNL farmers who had gained access to irrigation schemes were very dissatisfied with the results of their vegetable growing. The main schemes

Table 5: Production Conditions in TDL and SNL farms

	TDL	SNL
average farm size	70 ha	1.7 ha
labour; persons per ha	0.6(1)	1.8
machinery	plenty, owned	scarce, hired
irrigation method	sprinklers	furrows
credits	easy	restricted
information	good	mediocre - bad
selling contracts	stable	absent
access to inputs	easy	difficult
inputs per ha	E 672	E 50 - 200
sales per ha (one crop)	±25 tons	1-15 tons
net yield per ha (E 0.25 per kg)	E 5578	?

1) including seasonal labour.

Sources: Diphoorn and Spaarman 1980, Cassam 1983, Funnel 1986, De Vletter 1983.

covered a territory of 116 ha, and shared out irrigated plots to 116 farmers, who all grew vegetables as a winter crop. Vegetable sales reached 137 tons in 1982, fell to 82 tons in 1983, and rose again to 177 tons in 1984, which amounts to an average of 1.14 tons per farmer per ha. Assuming that tomatoes, which formed 85 per cent of SNL crops, were sold at the going producer prices in 1983, the farmers may have received E 570 gross, and after input deductions less than E 500 net per homestead.

The female farmers mentioned selling as the most urgent problem. Most of them had sold to collecting middlemen who visited them at the oddest intervals, so that the women had to wait all days at their fields for potential buyers. Meanwhile their crops were rotting. When one of them had sold her crop, she felt so lucky that the proceeds were shared among the less fortunate neighbouring farmers. It was clear to the farming women that something had to be done about marketing, but they knew no easy solution. Some 10 per cent of the families could afford a little pick-up truck, and they transported the vegetables to various customers. The poorer families, however, could not even afford to hire a truck and were therefore dependent on the unreliable middlemen.

In conclusion, it appears that SNL homesteads have considerable scope for improving their cash earnings from vegetable cropping, but their marketing problems must be solved. However, TDL farmers are more efficient producers and can outdo SNL farmers by offering larger quantities of better quality at lower prices. TDL farmers are particularly competitive when they operate as direct sellers, and supply their products to wholesale markets and supermarkets. Producers from RSA are said to be even more competitive, because they are subsidized by their government. However, they have not yet started the direct selling method. It would therefore appear advisable that SNL farmers organize themselves and form marketing units, in order to establish direct and regular contacts with wholesale markets and other large clients.

#### 4. Small-Scale Retailing on the Decline

The retailing of vegetables (and fruits) used to be an exclusive female business and is done both legally and illegally. The legal sellers sit in fenced market places and buy and store their wares at the same place. The illegal street vendors sell their wares wherever they find a safe and suitable place. These hawkers buy their vegetables from various channels (producers, middlemen and supermarkets). The market women and hawkers used to supply most of the common Swazi households in (sub)urban areas. However, supermarkets and specialized green-grocers appear to be taking an increasing part of this market, because their prices are more competitive compared with the prices of the traditional sellers. If one follows the development of retail prices at the markets of Manzini and

Mbabane in 1983/84, given in Table 6, the fluctuations are unpredictable. Retail prices hardly reflect the falling producer prices. It is notable that in the Manzini market they tend to rise even against the seasonal trend. Vegetable prices should be lowest in September, in the middle of the harvest season. Producer prices do indeed follow this pattern but retail prices do not. In previous sections more proof was given of adverse trade price trends over yearly periods. Since 1981 producer prices have tended to fall, but trader and retailer prices have risen (Table 2; Figure 2). This development demands a more detailed analysis of local retail trade and particularly of the position of the market women whose selling prices served as bases for the retail price statistics.

*Table 6: Development of Market Prices and Trade Margins at Manzini and Mbabane Markets, 1983/84.*

	Tomatoes			Potatoes		
	<i>price-index</i> prod.	retail	trade margin (%)	<i>price-index</i> prod.	retail	trade margin (%)
<b>Manzini</b>						
- Nov. - Dec. 1983	100	241	141	100	183	83
- Feb. - March '84	140	346	147	78	226	190
- April '84	126	452	185	74	200	170
- May - June '84	86	277	222	71	222	213
- July - Aug. '84	94	451	148	75	231	208
- September '84	95	380	300	68	284	318
<b>Mbabane</b>						
- Nov. - Dec. 1983	100	195	95	100	285	158
- Feb. - March '84	137	236	72	104	203	95
- April '84	113	185	64	105	202	92
- September '84	130	230	77	69	231	236

*Source:* Marketing Advisory Unit, Monthly Bulletins 1983-1984.

Contrary to what retail prices may suggest, market women are not at all happy with their trade situation. At least this was what transpired from surveys of trade in the Greater Manzini Area (Sandee et al. 1984-85). In October 1984, retailing was done by 77 hawkers and 145 market sellers (all but one female), 43 grocers and 10 supermarkets. On average, the vegetable sales of one supermarket were as large as those of 10 market women together. In 1984, market women in the Central Market sold for an average of only E 7.50 a day, whereas one male market seller could reach E 50. Supermarkets had a daily turnover of E 60. The prices in the market places were sometimes twice as high as in the supermarkets, and it is therefore not surprising that 70 per cent of the hawkers and market sellers complained that their trade declined. Only a few wealthy women with large and diverse supplies were still doing well.

A further study of the economic background of the small sellers showed that 65 per cent had no side income and 32 per cent had no family members to support them. Half of the small sellers earned less than E 5 a day which was barely sufficient to buy food for their families. An interesting finding of this study was that the women with the higher sales had, on average, relatively more cash earners in their families.



Table 7: Family Support of Hawkers and Market women. Sample Survey 1984

Turnover (E/day)	number of other cash earners in household			Total
	0	1	>1	
< 5	14	10	5	29
5 - 10	4	7	5	16
10 - 15	1	3	6	10
15 - 25	-	1	3	4
Total	19	21	19	59

Source: Sandee 1984.

According to the survey results shown in Table 7, 19 out of 59 trading women had no family support. All 4 women who sold for over E 15 a day had one or more additional cash earners in their families. It is plausible to assume that additional income is an important asset in the vegetable trade, as it may safeguard regular purchases of fresh stocks, and it may also help to buy extra quantities when cheap supplies are offered.

The Central Manzini market is supplied by a variety of traders and direct sellers. In September 1985, surveyors counted 9 wholesale traders and 10 direct sellers. The large traders offered the best deals; probably part of their wares came from RSA. The direct sellers were 2 large TDL farmers, 5 medium, privately irrigating SNL farmers, and 3 small SNL farmers operating within Development Schemes. The latter seemed to be quite well-informed about wholesale prices, as they offered their fresh products systematically at about 60 per cent higher prices. The surveyors spotted no middlemen at the Manzini market during the survey periods, but at other retailing places middlemen were found to distribute their collected products at prices that exceeded those of the direct sellers by 25 per cent.

Poor hawkers and market women must have depended on middlemen for a large part of their purchased stocks, as only middlemen sold small quantities. The wealthier market women probably bought large quantities more frequently from wholesale traders and large farmers. In this way, they gained on two sides: they had lower buying prices and higher sales volumes. The selling prices among the market women were similar, as their social code required. This agreement worked in favour of the more wealthy women who had lower purchasing prices, and guaranteed some income for the poorest women, but it also kept market prices high for the customers. It is noteworthy that the only male market seller did not follow the common pricing rule. His sales were nearly 10 times as much as those of the female sellers.

It is evident that the growing gap between wholesale and middlemen prices works in favour of the wealthier market sellers who buy wholesale, but it is questionable whether the inflated pricing system in the market squares will survive. Competing super-markets and large grocers do not fix their prices according to the standards of the small middlemen and dependent traders; they prefer to follow the adverse price trends set by the wholesale business and lower their prices accordingly. Solidarity among market sellers is bound to collapse. When this happens, the poorer women will be outcompeted. This may mean that small middlemen will lose most of their customers and, in turn, stop collecting their wares at the small farms. Thus all links in the small-scale chain are jeopardized by inflated trade margins.

## 5. Conclusion

It seems highly improbable that the small-scale trade channel can be maintained in its present organizational system of irregular small-scale collection of vegetables from small farmers and irregular distribution to small retailers. The mere fact that this small channel is

only filling in the gaps caused by the irregularities of the large-scale channel, indicates that it is by nature less suitable to cater to the needs of a large group of SNL producers, who want certainty about sales and prices. At the other end of the small-scale channel, poor retailers want a better supply source of their merchandise, where they can buy at reasonable prices, in order to be better able to compete with large-scale retailers. It follows, therefore, that both the small farmers and the small retailers would need a mediating marketing organization that would prevent their further marginalization. Such an organization, however, need not be as large and cumbersome as is currently being considered by the large aid organizations (Carlson 1982; Cassam 1983). It may be more advisable that regional small-farm organizations make marketing arrangements with various local wholesale market organizations. Such arrangements could stipulate that transport and storage facilities are still provided by small middlemen, but that the latter would have to collect and distribute vegetables according to trade schemes set up by co-operative trade organizations, probably aided initially by extension officers appointed especially for solving marketing problems. The aim of the new organizations would be to improve trade relations between small producers and small traders in such a manner that they would build up reciprocal relationships, creating direct contractual links between producers and retailers. This would ensure reasonable and more stable prices for the producers and, in the long run, also more competitive trade conditions for the small retailers.

However, even if such favourable marketing arrangements were to be achieved, there would still be the problem of competition from the side of the men for the women's jobs, which would have become more profitable, and therefore more attractive to male workers. Male farmers would most likely take over some of the traditionally female marketing tasks, and thereby gain control over the sales revenues. In order to increase yields, male workers would have to co-operate substantially with the women in the tasks of cultivation during the summer months, when women are working in the staple crops and have no time for vegetable growing. The shift of male workers towards traditionally female farm operations would undermine the position of women in the homesteads.

In the retail trade, women are operating more independently than in farm production. It seems likely that the retail business could continue to be dominated by women even if this business were to become more profitable. It is even plausible that this business could expand and employ more women when small retailing is made more efficient and competitive relative to large-scale retailing. If marketing remains in the hands of women, it is also possible to strengthen the female farmers through the help of female trade organizations.

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## 11. SITANANI

### *LET'S HELP EACH OTHER*

### **WOMEN AND INFORMAL SAVINGS-, CREDIT-, AND FUNERAL-ORGANISATIONS IN SWAZILAND**

*Sophieke Kappers*

#### 1 Introduction

##### 1.1 Statement of the problem

The present paper describes the various existing informal savings and credit organisations, which are frequently called 'Sitanani': 'Let's help each other'. The survey has been carried out in order to find out how women overcome the serious constraints they face in obtaining formal credit.

Formal credit i.e. credit supplied by banks and other institutions, can be applied for and obtained from a number of sources: Commercial Banks, Swaziland Development and Savings Bank, Cooperative Societies, Cotton Gineries, Small Enterprises Development Corporation (SEDCO), Chinese Agricultural Mission and The Women in Development Project at Ntfojjeni. Appendix I gives a more comprehensive description of the lending policy of banks and other institutions.

In most cases collateral is a prerequisite for obtaining a loan. Guma and Simelane conclude that only 6% of the sample of non-borrowers cited the lack of acceptable security as their primary reason for not attempting to obtain credit. To the extent that cattle and acceptable security are synonymous, this suggests that cattle holdings are not a constraint to access to credit' (Guma and Simelane, 1982). The reason for this finding can be that Guma and Simelane have not looked at possible constraints which women experience when trying to obtain credit, as cattle are owned and controlled by men. Sachs and Roach (1983) and Andrehn (1977) found that women do not have control over cattle and need their husband's consent to obtain a loan.

Tabibian (1983) discovered another constraint, namely that 87.7% of the surveyed women have little or no knowledge of how and where to apply for a loan. So is difficult for women to obtain a loan, even though Carloni (1982) found that women have a better repayment record than men in the Northern Rural Development Area and that according to Chaney (1982) access to credit encourages women to engage in income-generating activities.

Nevertheless, women do need and often lack money. Sachs and Roach (1983) find that the expenses of agricultural inputs are felt to be the major constraint on farming by women. Tabibian also finds that women who want to earn an income do not have sufficient means to purchase necessary inputs for the non-agricultural production.

Besides women face difficulties in obtaining loans, another problem may be that formal credit is supplied only for so-called production objectives. Guma and Simelane found that credit is often used by -male- farmers to purchase agricultural inputs and other agriculturally related items such as fences and motor vehicles to transport agricultural produces to urban centres (Guma and Simelane, 1982).

The question now asked is how families and women overcome lack-of-cash problems when money is needed for unexpected events such as funerals, other religious and social ceremonies and for schoolfees and long-term investments such as in brick houses and zinc-roofs.

The relevant literature hardly makes any reference to this problem in Swaziland. Elsewhere it has been shown that the problem can be circumvented by establishing informal credit groups or institutions. Bouman has done extensive research in this area in several developing countries and discovered well-functioning informal savings and credit organisations (Bouman, 1978, 1979). Only Armstrong (1985), and Guma and Simelane (1982) briefly mention the existence of some informal groups in Swaziland.

This paper presents a survey investigating the existence of informal savings and credit organisations, analysing the groups' objectives, structure and viability and their benefit to women and men.

### *1.2 Execution of the fieldwork*

The present study is of an exploratory nature, because little or no research on this subject has been done before in Swaziland. Therefore it was not possible to compile a formal, balanced questionnaire and a check-list (see appendix II) was more appropriate.

As illustrated in appendix II, women were questioned on their private life, assets, and other matters in order to obtain an impression of the categories of women who tend to organise themselves. This caused some irritation, however, as women felt they ought to be interviewed about their group and not about their individual life. It was therefore decided to exclude that part of the questionnaire. However, it remained possible to gather some general information about women who organise themselves in different types of organisation.

As time reserved for the execution of the fieldwork was limited, not all areas in Swaziland could be visited (see figure 1.2.1).

The research started by interviewing a few groups which were known to exist. Via these groups information about other groups was obtained. Other groups were located by visiting hospitals, markets and individual homesteads in both rural and urban areas.

Although most attention is paid to women's organisations, an effort has also been made to obtain information on possible men's organisations. However, men do not seem to organise themselves as far as could be discerned.

Finally, the interviews were taped if this was permitted and possible and later translated and transcribed.

Interviews elicit organisations' relations with banks. So a few banks were asked about their opinions towards these organisations.

### *1.3 Method of analysis*

The survey, which lasted six weeks during the period of August and September 1985, consisted of 56 interviews. The information gathered can be divided between four types of organisations, see table 1.3.1.

Figure 1.2.1.: Areas and towns visited

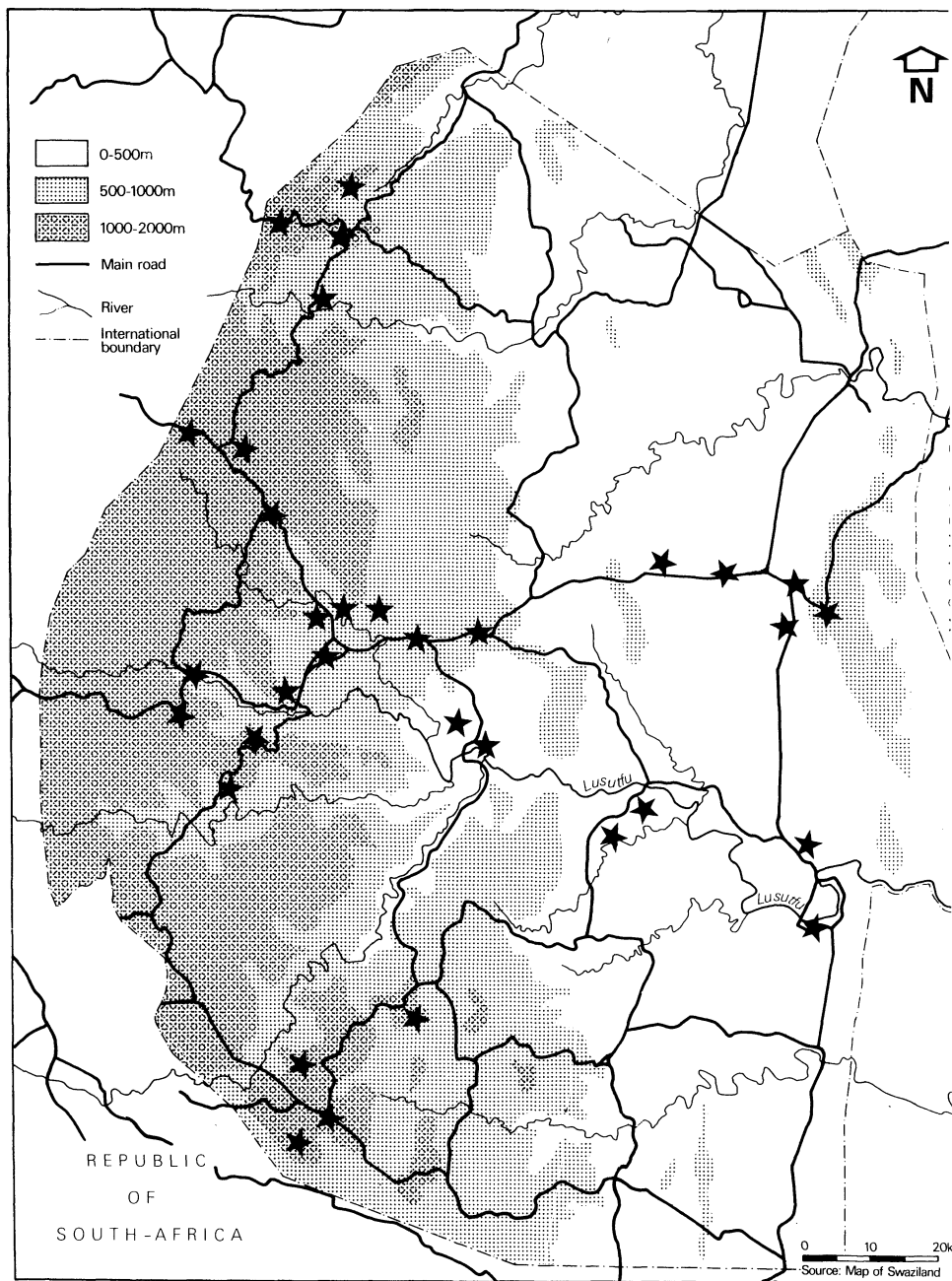


Table 1.3.1 Classification of the 56 interviews held

type of organisation	dealt with in chapter	number of interviews	number of organisations discovered
Funeral organisation	2	16	37
Rotating Savings and Credit Organisation	3	20	innumerable
Christmas-savings and moneylending organisation	4	13	13
Other fund raising organisations:	5		
- agriculturally involved		4	4
- charitable		6	5
		59(1)	

(1) Three women interviewed were member of two organisations

The first group (chapter 2) deals with funeral organisations. In this group the women assist each other, when a member or a members' relative has deceased with labour, moral and financial support. In some cases the functions of these groups extend to weddings, births, and other occasions.

Within organisations of this first group another type of organisation can emerge; the so-called Rotating, Savings and Credit Organisations (ROSCA's) (Chapter 3). In these organisations people contribute money in small sums and at a later state receive a lump sum.

The Christmas savings organisation is another type of savings organisation (Chapter 4). In these groups people save money during the year and then receive it, plus interest, in the month of December. After a while this type of organisation tends to develop into a money lending organisation, whereby the money saved during the year is lent to (non-)members at a certain rate of interest.

The fourth type (chapter 5) is not so much a savings or credit organisation, but rather a type of organisation with emphasis on agricultural and charitable purposes. Each group has its own objectives and activities. In general these groups tend to raise money for a desired specified objective. Some concluding remarks will be made in chapter 6.

## 2. *Funeral organisations*

### 2.1 *Objectives*

The main objective of a funeral organisation is to provide assistance when a member or a members' relative has passed away. At such a time the organisation gives financial support for organising the funeral and for the purchase of necessary items such as grass mats, pillows and the coffin. Members provide labour for cleaning the homestead, cooking and serving the meals during the funeral, and they console the bereaved.

In addition to this help at funerals, these associations have a multitude of other interests and activities as stated in table 2.1.1.

*table 2.1.1 Funeral organisations' objectives*

Other objectives of funeral organisations:

- to meet the expenses, and provide moral support and manual labour at weddings (3),\*
- ditto at birth occasions (1)
- ditto when a child graduates (1),
- to provide utensils needed for preparing food at funerals (4),
- to buy utensils for use at special occasions or to let to non-members (5),
- to reserve money for unmarried mothers (1),
- to take care of older women in the area (1),
- to pay school fees (2),
- to help each other in times of need (2),
- to create 'relatives' via these organisations for South-African immigrants in Swaziland (2).

\* The number between brackets indicates how many groups stated this objective

As table 2.1.1 indicates the funeral organisations' objectives cover a range of social activities. As death comes 'unexpected', people need a certain 'insurance' and that is why groups are formed just around funerals. These funeral organisations provide the necessary 'relatives' who can give assistance when a member's relative has deceased.

*2.2 History and Existence*

Fifteen of the fifty-six interviews concern individual funeral organisations and one deals with the overall funeral organisation in Swaziland. Appendix III lists the discovered and interviewed groups and the area in which they are situated. As is shown in appendix III, 37 groups were discovered in Swaziland, of which one has ceased to exist. Figure 2.2.1 indicates the geographical distribution of the funeral organisations.

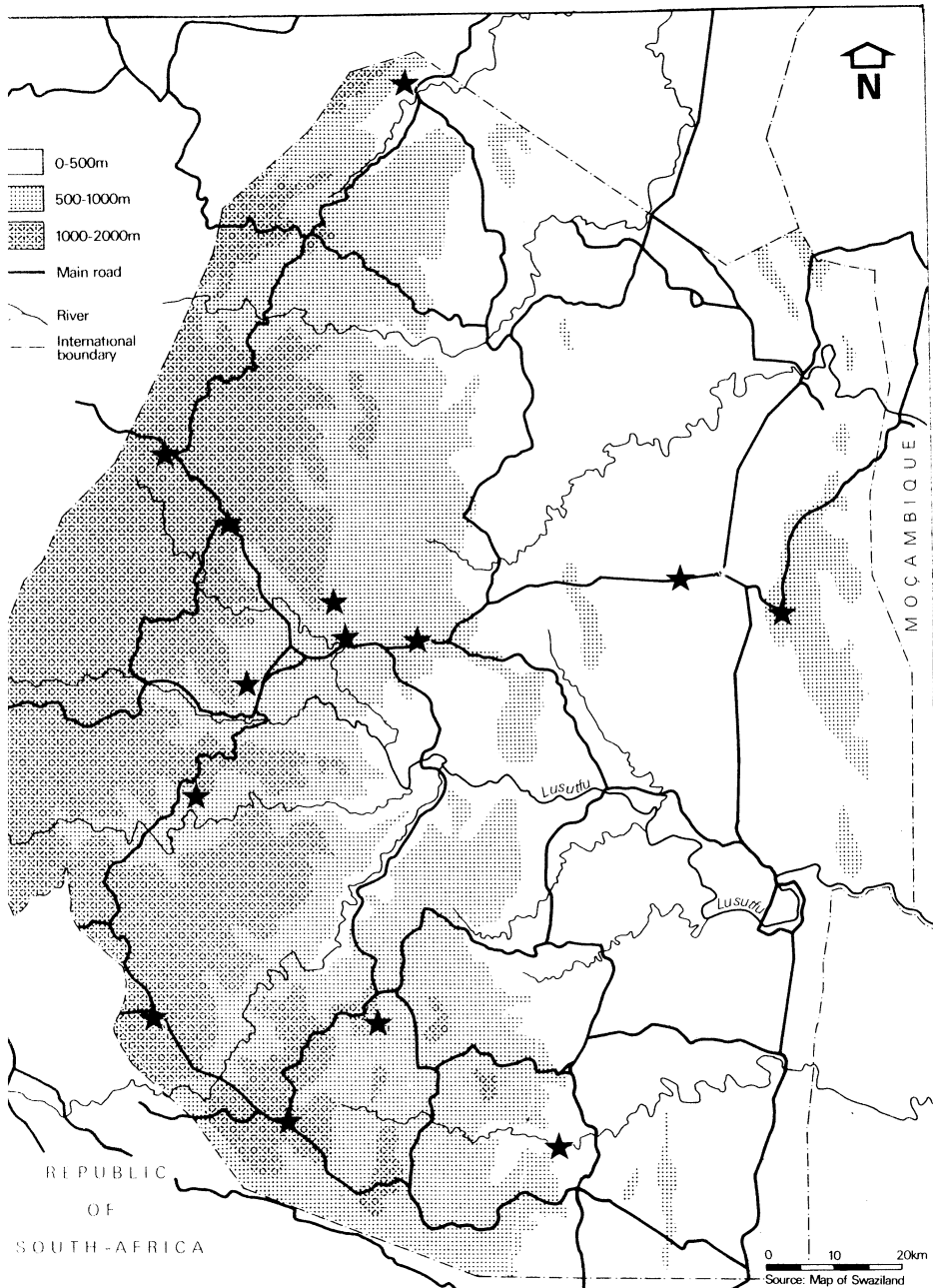
A combination of appendix III and figure 2.2.1 demonstrates that there are only two of the 37 discovered organisations in the eastern part of the country. A reason for this might be that the idea behind the funeral organisation originated in South Africa. One group also stated that their overall organisation is located at Piet Retief, South Africa. Therefore, funeral organisations may come into existence close to South-African border as people in Swaziland take over the idea via friends and relatives who live in South Africa.

As the idea takes root in Swaziland, new funeral organisations are founded when a certain group considers itself too large and consequently breaks up into smaller units. Another way for establishing new groups is that people who are invited to attend a funeral, see the funeral organisation at work. Interest is thereby aroused, action to start an organisation is taken and, in rural areas, permission is requested from their chief to form a new funeral group.

As can be seen from the starting dates of the funeral organisations, two groups started in 1974 and the others began between 1978 and 1983.



Figure 2.2.1: The geographical location of the funeral organisations



A possible explanation for the mushrooming of funeral organisations is the shift from traditional, sober funerals to the modern style whereby coffins are used, food is supplied to all those present and grass mats and pillows must be bought. So more money and organisation is required, for which the funeral organisation takes care. No data were obtained whether funeral organisations did exist around the more traditional funerals or not.

It is hard to find an explanation for the fact that no groups starting after 1983 have been located.

### *2.3 Membership*

Twelve of the fifteen interviewed funeral organisations consist of only women. Two other groups which were formed at work (the Mbabane library and St. Michaels School at Manzini) have male participants too. The Swaziland Christian Church of Zion for Burial also have male members and here the men perform all the tasks although women form a large majority. The reason for this is that in the men's opinion women should always be under their control.

The men's lack of involvement in funeral organisations can be explained by the groups' objective that not only members are helped by the group, but also the members' relatives. By relative one means members' children, husbands, parents and members' husbands' parents. Every group has its own variation on exactly whom is included in the assistance. The Zion Church Group forms an exception by being the only one to request that every member of the homestead has to be a member of the group in order to be helped. Therefore, when women join a funeral organisation, men are covered as well.

The group's size varies between fifteen and ninety-nine members. With an average of 44 members per group, the total membership of the 36 still existing groups is about 1600. Taking an average of about ten people covered per member at least 16.000 people are 'insured' in the case of a death.

Usually only married women are allowed as members and participants in these funeral organisations but unmarried women can also join several groups. As married women include their husbands and their husbands' family in the security, unmarried women have to choose five to ten other people for reason of equality.

There is not only a restriction on coverage, but also on membership. The requirements for members are that a woman must be married and women must be honest and respected in society. Another variant is that only those members can join who are old, responsible and respectable and don't drink. The co-opting system is also used and a few other groups only accept Christians.

Any woman can join the funeral organisations as long as she meets the above mentioned requirements. The groups consist of wage-earners, nurses, market-women, 'housewives'; living in urban and rural areas.

### *2.4 Structure*

The funeral organisations have monthly meetings to discuss about affairs related to the burial activities, and to voice opinions about the group and its financial statement. Some groups also have lectures about killings pests and household tips. The 'Church of Zion for Burial Activities' also discusses church matters and the organisations which encompass a rotating, savings and credit association (see chapter 3) use the funeral organisations' meetings to pay out the rotating lump sum of money to one member.

Several groups rotate the place of the meetings amongst the members and the purpose of this is to encourage cleanliness, as the host member has to clean her homestead if the meeting is to be held there.

The groups are characterised by a well-structured organisation. All groups have an executive committee. The only organisation that lacked this failed. All the executive committees consist of a chairlady, a secretary, a treasurer and committee members.

Of the 37 funeral organisations discovered the majority functioned independently of other groups. However nine organisations formed the Family Burial Association, eight of which were located (see appendix III). This association started in 1979 and is registered with the government at the Home Affairs department. The organisation's objective is to supervise groups that are organised under her. The management of the Family Burial Association consists of two representatives of every affiliated organisation. These representatives are usually not members of their own executive committee, as this would bias their response at the monthly Association meetings. When an individual group wants to join the Family Burial Association, it has to pay E(malangen) 200,= as a joining fee and E 24,= at the beginning of each year.

The future plan of the Family Burial Association is to buy and own an office and a mortuary, in order to offer members a price reduction and to share profits among the registered members.

Individual groups plan to join the Family Burial Association, or to buy their own utensils, to use at special occasions or to let to non-members. Some groups would also like to issue shares and divide them among the members enabling them to share in the profits at the end of a financial year.

## *2.5 Problems*

Only one group has stopped as a result of disorganisation. None of the other groups mentioned serious problems. Internal problems are prevented by restricting membership to those who meet requirements and by restricting the number of members because if there are too many members, there is too much talk resulting in problems. Although some groups consist of 99 members.

Although each member has to pay the monthly contribution and an extra contribution when a member or a members' relative dies (see finances), this does not usually lead to serious problems. When someone fails to pay, the executive committee usually tries to find out whether she has problems and how she can be helped. In the case of default a member may be dismissed by the group. The groups associated in the Family Burial Association have a special procedure, ranging from a talk by the executive committee or disciplinary measures, to a rebuke by the main association. So far, no such cases have been reported.

Problems are also prevented by making the organisation well-known to the chief and through clear regulations. Before a woman commits herself to the group she has to attend a so-called training period of three months. This means that she has to attend the groups meetings in order to learn the organisations' procedures.

Two funeral organisations tried to establish a credit system in their group. This failed as the demand for money was so great that it endangered the main objective of the funeral organisations: to give financial support in the case of death.

## 2.6 Finance

To maintain the funeral organisations the finances must be well-organised, as cash is needed to buy the coffin and grassmats and to provide food for those present at the funeral. The estimated costs of a funeral are between E 120,= (only the coffin) and E 1000,=.

All the groups have a joining fee ranging from E 0,50 to E 24,= and a monthly contribution, varying between E 1,= and E 5,=. These contributions go into the group's fund. There is also the so-called money-for-tea. This money is for the hostess, and covers tea and transport costs. In a few cases the hostess will also be given a packet of candles, a box of matches and a bar of blue soap.

Each group follows a special procedure when there is a death. The possibilities are stated in table 2.6.1.

*Table 2.6.1. Variations of how groups act when someone dies.*

- when someone dies, everybody who is covered pays E 1,=
- when someone dies, children who are covered by members contribute E 2,= and adults who are covered E 3,=
- when someone dies, the member receives what she has contributed
- when someone dies, all the joining fees together are given to the bereaved family. The following month every member has to refund the joining fee
- when a member dies, 100% of the total costs will be paid by the group and if a member's relative dies 50% is paid
- the group pays E 5,= multiplied by the number of members if a woman dies; if it is a man E 10,= multiplied by the number of members will be paid out of the group's fund; the money has to be refunded the following month. In both cases the members also have to contribute E 1,= from their personnel allowances
- when someone dies, the group will give E 200,= to the bereaved family and each member has to pay E 5,=
- if an adult dies each member pays E 5,= and if it is a child each member pays E 3,=

As table 2.6.1. shows, members and sometimes others who are covered by the security have to pay a certain amount or have to refund the joining fee when there is a death.

One group stated that it had spent as much as E 24.000,= within four years. Taking the membership into account it can be shown that every member must have spent E 100,= a year and this amount doesn't seem exceptional when compared with data of other groups.

Realising that groups consist largely of housewives and marketwomen, it is of interest to learn how these members can afford these large amounts of money, especially as most members stated that they make money through their own efforts, e.g. selling handicrafts, renting houses and selling vegetables instead of asking their husbands to make the payment.

De Vletter found an annual income per homestead obtained through homestead based non-agricultural activities of E 133,= (de Vletter, 1983). Compared with these data the required E 100,= a year as total contribution for the funeral organisation seems exceptionally high. The question arises whether the data found, i.e. E 100,= a year as

total contribution, are overestimated and whether women are excluded from the funeral organisation as they cannot afford it. Surprisingly, as the funeral organisations require financial and manual efforts, only one group spoke about women leaving the group because they could not afford it. All the others only mentioned women who wanted to join.

If a woman moves within the country, she can remain a member, or she can withdraw her joining fee(s). In case she is a member of a funeral organisation associated in the Family Burial Organisation, the savings can be transferred to another associated organisation.

The funeral organisations deposit the money in any bank. There does not seem to be a preference. It is obvious that the groups make passive use of the bank's services, by only saving and withdrawing the money when necessary.

### *3 Rotating savings and credit associations*

#### *3.1 Objectives*

The Rotating Savings and Credit Association, (ROSCA) is a type of organisation in which members contribute money in small sums daily, weekly or monthly, and collect a lump sum at once. The first collector receives an interest-free loan from all the others. The last in line saves money as (s)he extends credit to the fellow members. So not only does the credit position rotate but the savings positions does too. That is why the term 'rotating' is used (Bouman, 1978, 1979).

The main objective of the ROSCA is that members force themselves to save and also to enable members to make more substantial purchases with a lump sum rather than having to save a year or more to obtain the same amount of money by the individual.

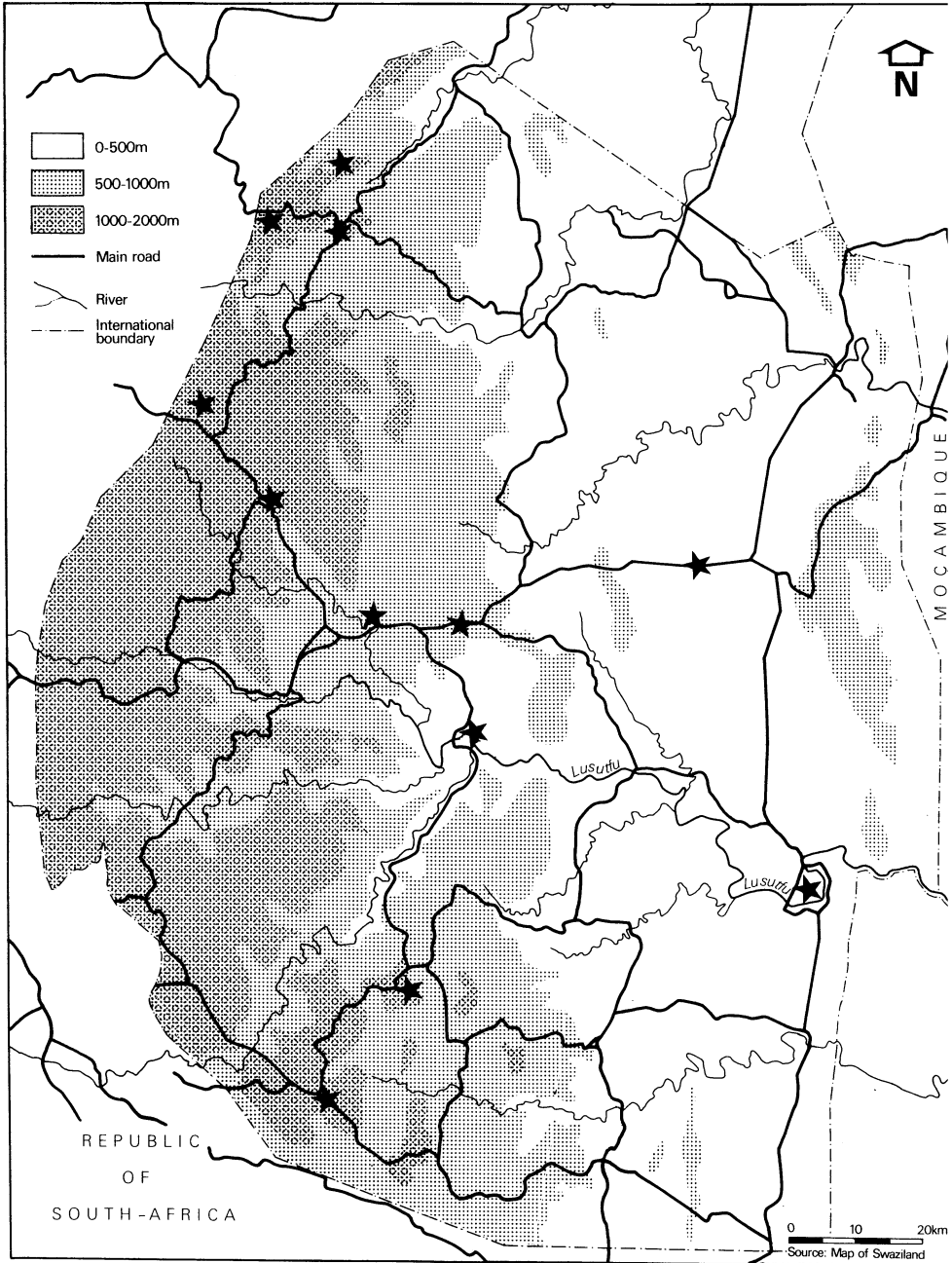
The objectives are not restricted to saving money but also have a social aspect, as other objectives are that members help each other when there is a death, a child's birthday or a wedding. In Swaziland some ROSCA's are found on markets, some at the working places and others function within funeral organisations.

#### *3.2 History and existence*

A comparable phenomenon of the ROSCA, the so-called 'Stokfels' is known to exist in urban areas in South Africa. Groups varying in size, form the core of the organisation. They hold meetings or parties weekly, fortnightly or monthly, each time at a different members' house. Each member of the Stokfel pays the host of the meeting a set amount ("table money"), varying according to the standing of the Stokfel. Food, liquor and entertainment (dancers, singers) are provided and the party may last an entire weekend. Stokfels have an important social and recreational function, but their most vital function is a form of compulsory saving. The hosts are supposed to make money at the party ("table money") and through selling of food and drinks at inflated prices and they have to put the money in a special account which he/she cannot touch without the Stokfel's consent. At the end of the year, or at some other specified time, money is allotted to each member. Stokfels are run by men and women and the pooled capital may be intended for very different purposes such as children's education, household appliances, furniture, deposits on houses or starting capital for a small business. Self help associations which have a great deal of overlap with Stokfels, collect money for funerals and all the expenses that go with them.

Members of one of the groups interviewed stated that they wanted their group to be like the South-African Stokfels.

Figure 3.2.1: Geographical location of the ROSCA's found



In total twenty ROSCA's were interviewed, but many more groups have been discovered. It is difficult to enumerate them because, for example on a market many groups functionate, only one of which was interviewed. Figure 3.2.1 indicates the geographical location of the ROSCA's found in Swaziland

The groups are located in both rural as urban areas. Thirteen of the interviewed groups function as a ROSCA only, while the other seven organisations started as a ROSCA and developed into funeral organisations (chapter 2). These ROSCA's continued to function within the funeral organisations. Comparing the starting dates, ROSCA's which were initiators of the funeral organisations started before 1980, whereas the majority of the remaining ROSCA's started after 1980. The reason mentioned for their start was the cycloon in 1984 which damaged many houses and money was needed to rebuild them.

These starting dates don't claim that ROSCA's are a relatively new phenomenon in Swaziland as the idea can be ancient and groups generate during the time. However, no detailed information was gathered on this aspect.

### *3.3 Membership*

Women form the body of the ROSCA's as only two of the twenty ROSCA's interviewed have a few male members. Generally, anyone is allowed to join as long they can pay the subscription fee. Of the twenty ROSCA's interviewed seven groups function within the funeral organisations, naturally having the same members, and nine ROSCA's exist on market places with mainly market women and hawkers as members. One group had ceased to exist (see 3.5) and the three remaining groups function within their workplace.

### *3.4 Structure*

The structure of the ROSCA's which function within the funeral organisations differ from the other ROSCA's.

ROSCA's which are subgroups of the funeral organisations consist of about four members, so within one funeral organisation several ROSCA's exist, each with their own membership and contribution system. Since funeral organisations already have an executive committee the ROSCA's do too. And when funeral organisations hold meetings, ROSCA's, of course meet as well.

The size of ROSCA's which don't function within the funeral organisations, varies between two and twenty-four members. Of these smaller ROSCA's don't have an executive committee, contrary to larger ROSCA's. Here an executive committee might be necessary to ensure that members pay their contributions and that members are paid.

When a member dies, the family will receive the money if possible. The group may then look for someone to replace the deceased member.

### *3.5 Problems*

As previously stated, of the twenty ROSCA's interviewed one group had stopped. The reason given was that the members would not wait their turn to receive the money. Moreover, a loan system did not exist within this ROSCA through which otherwise an acute money-crisis could have been solved. This group was dissolved after everybody had been paid.

More ROSCA's exist than the twenty groups interviewed; some of them have failed. The reason was that members could no longer afford to pay the contributions. In one case the chairman had squandered the money.

The ROSCA's interviewed also mention the contribution payment problem. Each group took different disciplinary measures such as telling the defaulter to leave the group, paying the arrears of contribution as a group or going to the defaulter's home in order to sell enough goods or furniture to be able to recover the amount due.

A possibility why few serious problems occur is that women know each other before they start a ROSCA. Once it operates as in the case of the ROSCA's within the funeral organisations the social engagement is present and, in case of the other ROSCA's social control is exercised at the marketplaces and at work where members meet one another.

### 3.6 *Finances*

The contributions are made daily, weekly or monthly. The longer the intervening periods, the higher the contribution will be. The daily contribution lies between E 1.50 and E 3.00. The weekly contribution varies between E 2.00 and E 20.00 with one exception of E 30.00. The monthly contributions amounts from E 20.00 or less to E 50.00. Some groups have a joining fee of about E 2.00. Obviously the size of the contribution is adjusted to the members' needs and possibilities. Within the funeral organisations and at the markets several ROSCA's function with different contributions, so each woman can choose the group she would like to join. Some women are even members of several groups.

In most cases the moment of joining the group determines the members' place in receiving the lump sum, in other cases every member has a number and the numbers are paid in sequence.

When it is the marketwoman's turn to receive the money, she spends it on buying her supply of goods. In the other ROSCA's women use the money for such purposes as paying schoolfees, taking a child to the clinic, buying household necessities or clothing. It was also frequently mentioned that the money is used for rebuilding homes affected by the cyclone in 1984. This was the reason for some groups to start a ROSCA.

All the contributions are paid cash, and women earn the money themselves by selling fruits and vegetables or by selling handicrafts. Only one group did give each other cooking pots in stead of money.

As money is always disbursed in the ROSCA's, they have no dealings with the banks.

Swaziland's inflation rate is 15% a year (Mercey, 1983, p. 216) and, as a result, when the groups are rather large, hold monthly meetings and have high contribution fees the lump sum paid to the last member in line will be worth less than the same sum which had been paid to the first recipient. This means that a group with for instance 24 members and a monthly contribution of E 20,= pays the lump sum of E 480,= to one of the members every month. The first in line to receive the money gets E 480,=, but the E 480,= paid after two years to the last in line is only worth E 363,= when corrected for inflation. This is a potential problem.

Some groups have already reduced the time-cycle by keeping the groups rather small; larger groups have the system that two women are paid every month, so that everybody is paid within about one year.



### 3.7 *Future plans*

As stated earlier some ROSCA's initiated the development of funeral organisations. Other ROSCA's just plan to become funeral organisations; others mention that they want to help members to build houses. Several groups consider starting an interest-charging group (chapter 4).

## 4. **Christmas savings and money lending organisations**

### 4.1 *Objectives*

The groups' names such as 'Let us lend to each other'; 'Savings and credit group', 'Moneylenders' indicate the organisations' involvement with savings and credit. The main objective of this kind of organisation is for members to force themselves to save at the end of every month, in most cases out of their salaries. As a result members have saved enough money by the end of the year to be able to pay the expenses of Christmas shopping and schoolfees for the New Year.

These savings occur from January until November and the money is redivided among the members in December. As the money lies idle throughout the year, it is lent to (non)-members at a certain interest rate. The received interests are also divided among the members at the end of the year.

The money which is borrowed throughout the year can be used for different objectives as stated in the introduction and in chapters two and three. Money is often needed and this kind of organisation offers possibilities to obtain credit easily.

Other objectives are to save money for Christmas holidays and for the (re)building of houses. Only one group stated a more or less social purpose of helping orphans.

### 4.2 *History and existence*

Thirteen interviews have been made that deal with the Christmas savings and moneylending organisations. In general this kind of group is difficult to identify and to interview, because in 1984 the government demanded that the groups register themselves and pay tax on the interests (i.e. profits) charged. Therefore, no names or locations of the groups will be mentioned in this paper.

This kind of organisation mainly exists at work places in the urban areas such as government departments, hospitals and industrial sites.

Prerequisites for new groups to start are that members are already related to some extent and receive a regular salary. All groups began as a result of women's initiatives, and the idea behind the groups seem to spread around Swaziland.

All but two of thirteen groups started in 1981 or later, and it is therefore a relatively new phenomenon in Swaziland. A possible explanation can be rising irregular expenses and cost of living for which cash is needed.

### 4.3 *Membership*

These organisations are characterised by the relatively high male involvement. In seven of the thirteen groups men were participants. It is striking that all the groups started as a women's initiative and men joined later. Men's involvement can be explained by the fact that this kind of organisation mainly exist at work places where men and women do have jobs.

The requirements which must be met before a person is allowed to be a members are much more business-like than in other types of organisations. The demands have little to do with a person's marital status. There are more important criteria such as whether someone is able to pay the monthly contribution. As many groups function at the work places, membership is often open to all staffmembers. As rather large amounts of money are involved (in the case of one group as much as E 24.000 a year) groups only admit honest and trustworthy people. One group allowed children to be members although children could not receive money in their own names. In almost all groups the co-opting system is used.

It seems evident that the members of the savings and moneylending organisations are usually relatively well-off as the monthly contributions are rather high and because the members can afford to spend money on Christmas gifts, Christmas holidays and building homes.

#### 4.4 Structure

All the groups have an executive committee consisting of several people in order to reduce the chances of embuzzlement of funds.

A few groups have a legal constitutions, so they can register with the government.

This kind of organisation does not include social component and therefore meetings are only held when a problem arises or at the end of the year when the contributions and the interests on the capital are divided among the members. The executive committee deals with affairs in general.

With the exception of a few small groups, the size of the organisations varies between 20 to 141 members. Nevertheless, few serious problems occur.

#### 4.5 Problems

As stated above the government wants to tax the moneylending organisations because of their "banking" function. One group decided to dissolve owing to the government's decision. Only a few groups drafted a constitution and are registered with the government. The majority functions illegally.

Although every member has to pay each month, this usually does not cause problems. Nine of the thirteen groups interviewed pay the contribution out of the salaries, while other groups have wage-earning members and members that earn their monthly contribution by selling whatever they can. The composition of the group does not influence the amount to be paid monthly. The members of each group decides at the beginning of the year the monthly contribution and whether this amount is variable.

Problems can arise when non-members do not repay their loans. Most groups have avoided this problem by requiring that only members can borrow money from the group's fund, so that non-members can only borrow through relatives or friends who are member. In that case the member is responsible for the repayment of the loan. Therefore, the default becomes an individual problem rather than the group's problem. Real problems of unpaid debts occur in those groups which lend money to any applicant and not through members only.

A problem which arises in the groups with only government employees is that the members can be transferred throughout the entire country, which hampers the paying of the monthly contributions.

#### 4.6 Finances

Within these groups a certain development can be traced. Most groups start simply as a saving group for Christmas shopping and schoolfees. After a few years the groups develop into a money lending organisations because the saved money lies idle throughout the year.

Several groups do require a joining fee of E 50,= or E 100,= or another extra monthly contribution in December or January, so they can start lending money right at the beginning of the year. Besides a joining fee a monthly contribution is required and this varies between E 10,= and E. 50,= a month, but the majority saves between E 30,= and E 50,= a month. This seems to be rather high, but can be explained by the fact that most members have relatively high and stable wages. Tables 4.6.1 and 4.6.2. give an indication of the wages in the private and public sectors in Swaziland.

*Table 4.6.1 Swazis in private sector: Average Earnings according to Skill/Sex*

	<u>Males (E)</u>	<u>Females (E)</u>	<u>Female wage as % of male wage</u>
Professional and technical	950	442	46.5%
Administrative and managerial	993	502	50.6%
Clerical	342	300	87.7%
Skilled manual	568	211	37.1%
Semi-skilled manual	235	110	46.8%
Unskilled manual	125	93	74.4%
All	220.5	144.2	65.4%

Source: Employment and Wages 1982, p. 16-17, Tables 22, 23

in: Armstrong, Alice, A Situation Analysis of Women in Swaziland, page 6.

*Table 4.6.2 Public Sector 1982: Average Earnings o Men & Women Monthly*

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Women's earnings as % of men's</u>
Professional and technical	458	330	72.0%
Administrative and managerial	710	824	116.0%
Clerical	301	272	90.4%
Skilled manual	371	218	58.8%
Semi-skilled manual	257	190	73.9%
Unskilled manual	128	129	100.8%
All	274.95	286.2	104.1%

Source: Employment and Wages 1982, pp. 21, 22, 26

in: Armstrong, Alice, A Situation Analysis of Women in Swaziland, page 8.

When taking an average monthly contribution of E 40,= this implies that men and women, on average, save about 15% of their wages in the public sector, while in the private sector it would imply that men save 18% of their wage and women even 28%

If for instance 35 members contribute E 40,= monthly the group's fund increases by E 1400,= per month: reason enough for groups to decide to supply loans. These loans are given with a grace-period of three months usually. The interest rates on an annual basis are 40%, 120%, 180% or even 240%. In some cases members get a reduction compared to non-members, when they borrow money from the group's funds, but even then the interest rates vary between 40% and 240%. If a borrower does not repay in time, some groups charge another 20% a month. These interest rates are rather high, but most groups mention that the demand is so high that they do not require a bankaccount.

The advantages of being a member of such an organisation are obvious. Firstly, members force themselves to save. Secondly, they have easy access to the group's funds and sometimes get a reduction on the interest rate and thirdly, they receive the charged interests at the end of the year. Some groups have the following procedure of interest-sharing; 50% of the interest that is received, is given to the members under whose authority the money was borrowed. The other 50% is shared within the group. This of course encourages members to help outsiders on borrowing money, although they are responsible for the recovery of the debts. One woman even borrowed from a commercial bank, although she herself was member of a money lending organisation, which lend money to non-members at higher interest rates compared with the commercial banks' interest rate.

Besides the advantages to members there must be also benefits to the borrowers who get loans from these moneylending organisations, as the interest rates are much higher than the rates the banks charge (about 19% or 20%). The banks' attitude towards these moneylending organisations is, on the whole, negative; their opinion is that these groups should be dissolved by the government because they charge high interest rates. However, according to the great demand for money (credit) people are willingly to pay these high interest rates. The reason may be that money lending organisations don't have complicated procedures and paperwork and do not require any security unlike the bank's policy. That the borrower is known by at least one of the members is sufficient security for the moneylending organisations. As a result borrowers are forced by peer pressure to repay the loans.

### ***5 Other fund raising societies***

Previous chapters described funeral organisations, ROSCA's, Christmas organisations and moneylending organisations. This chapter deals with nine other women's organisations, which were found. As this type of organisation is hardly mentioned in any literature, the groups are placed in a separate chapter, although they are not really savings and credit organisations. The groups demonstrate how women combine their efforts to raise money for different objectives. This type of organisation can be divided into agriculturally involved groups and charitable organisations. Generally speaking, no serious problems occur in the groups and women seem able to realise their objectives, frequently with government aid and/or foreign financial support.

#### ***5.1 Agriculturally involved groups***

##### ***5.1.1 Silwa Nendlala, We are fighting against hunger, Kwaluseni/Mbuleni***

This group started at the time of the vegetable ban, due to a cholera epidemic. In order to fight hunger, agricultural experts were invited to lecture the members on how to prepare seedbeds. These plants were shared by the group. Fruit trees were also bought via these agricultural experts and fences were organised with donor aid. A creche was also built, but it had to be destroyed, as the owner of the land was against it.

Future plans are to rebuild the creche and to buy a large plot of land where all the members can have gardens. Another plan is to start poultry farming.

#### 5.1.2 *Umbono Wabomake, Women's suggestion; Nkomanzi*

The results of poor maize production prompted forty women to conduct a meeting. The conclusion was to buy a tractor that could be of benefit to the members and which could be hired to women, who are not members. Although the tractor was very expensive, a women were prepared to save. In the process of paying the contribution the project was reported to the chief. He sent a messenger to find a cheap tractor, but then he reported that it was impossible to buy one. For this reason the tractor projected had to be dropped and, instead, a goods' shed was built which required far less money. The contributions were therefore reduced from E 10,= to E 1,= a month while the yearly subscription remained E 10,=and the women started building with the help of a government adviser. The government intends to supply the roofing. The shed can store the manure which will be ordered by the group and the women now hire a tractor.

#### 5.1.3 *Women's Tobacco Growing Organisation; Zombodze*

The idea to form such an organisation originate in Nhlngano and was adopted by six women in Zombodze in 1976. Membership is open to women who are married and have responsibilities and who have, of course, an interest in growing tobacco. The purpose of the group is to buy inputs together and the members also work communally. The profit per woman is about E 300,= a year and the money is used for paying school fees as well as improving the homesteads. The only problem this group faces is that the buyers started paying twice instead of three times a year for the tobacco grown.

#### 5.1.4 *Ngonini Mothers Organisation; Ngonini*

Sixteen women are involved in this project. When they started their objective had been to raise and sell eggs and chicken. However, after all the chickens had been stolen, they turned it into a piggery project after raising funds from a concert. Another objective is that every member will have a vegetable garden for family consumption. The women are sometimes taught by the home economist of Central R.D.A. (Rural Development Area) about cookery, drying vegetables and childcare. As meetings take place at the members' homestead, cleanliness is encouraged by inspecting the rooms, the huts and the garden and tips are given to improve them. Another goal is to help each other financially. As the monthly contributions of E 2,= are kept in the bank, this money can be lent to members only.

#### 5.1.5 *Vukuzenzele, Arise and do it yourself; Logoba*

Vukuzenzele started in 1983 and the aim is to improve the area by owning a covered market, because marketing in the open air is affected by the weather. The Logoba mothers decided to raise money to fulfil this wish. The fund increased within two years to E 2000,=. Members contribute E 2,= monthly and a yearly subscription of E 15,=, and the funds are raised by allocating duties to the 28 members who are given a certain amount of money. They are then to increase this amount for instance by making and selling handicrafts.

### 5.2 *Charitable organisations*

#### 5.2.1 *Dorcas Welfare Society for the 7th Day Adventist Church*

This society started in 1844 outside Swaziland but it is now also federated in Swaziland and has about 500 members in total.

A group of mothers form this society which offers help to the needy and the sick. The society sees that children are taken to school and are dressed. Accommodation is also taken care of and at times the members sew for the children. the society aims to build a school for orphans where they can be educated. The problem is usually a shortage of funds. Each member pays E 2,= monthly and those who can afford to pay more, usually do. There are also mothers who cannot afford to pay but offer their help.

### *5.2.2 Women's Association; Malkerns and Lobamba*

This association is under the auspices of the Associated Countrymen of the World which also organised an African conference. This organisation helps mothers to learn to care for their homes as well as teach High School children and help the sick and needy. Mothers are also taught how to make use of old pieces of cloths and old plastic bags are collected and mats are made. They are also taught new crafts. The group's duty is to go around the country creating new groups because those who need help are in the rural areas. The problem this organisation faces is that people lose interest and this hinders progress.

### *5.2.3 Zondle, Feed Yourself Women's Organisation; Manzini*

Zondle was started in 1970 and emanated from the women who had volunteered to do school lunch rosters, financed by the Save the Children fund. Not all the children could be helped through this fund and another problem that existed was that some children had neither parents nor schoolbooks. Some of the 300 women members volunteered to accomodate and feed these children, but then again not all the children could be accomodated. Therefore the organisation felt an orphanage was needed. Although it was difficult to obtain a piece of land, because according to the Swazi law only men can obtain land and all the members are women, in 1970 the organisation obtained a place at Hlatikulu and accomodated ten girls. In 1971 the boys were given a home. In 1983 the decision was made to establish a day-care child centre. These initiatives could be worked out because of the financial support of several foreign aid agencies.

The organisation still faces difficulties in paying for electricity, water, medical care, schoolfees and clothing.

In 1985 a farm for the boys was bought with foreign help. The boys could then be taught agricultural methods and could supply the organisation with a modest income through the sale of vegetables.

### *5.2.4 Khutsala make, Work hard, Woman, Swaziland Alliance Women*

This is the general name under which several groups such as "Vuka Mfati", "Wake up women" at Nhlambeni ; "Khutsale Make", "Get busy women" at Mbabane; "Mfati Vuka", "Wake up, women", location unknown; "Kukhutsala bomake", "Hard working women", location unknown; and "Zenzele", "Do it yourself" at Manzini function.

The last group was interviewed and is the so-called mother organisation. Forty women came together in 1981 to help each other through self-education programmes concerning income-generating activities such as sewing and handicrafts. The future plans are to build stalls to use for selling and as workplaces which can also be rented to non-members.

Every member has to pay totally E 500,= in instalments of E 20,= a month, and it should not be less than E 10,=. The group is divided into three sub-groups with different duties, for example buying bricks, flooring and roofing.

To earn money the contributions are lent to members at interest rate of 20% for four months (i.e. 60% a year). Out of this 20%, 10% is divided amongst the members and the other 10% goes to the groups fund. To encourage women to borrow money, an

interest rate of 10% is charged temporarily. The purpose of the loan must be known and women are stimulated to refrain from asking more than they can afford to pay. Another way of raising funds is by cooking food to sell in the meetings at very high prices. Since 1981 this organisation has already raised E 8000,=.

The International Alliance of Women donates money to keep the group going and to share with those who are occupied with similar projects. As a result other groups were initiated and one of them received money to buy sewing machines. Vuka Mfati received foreign financial assistance for their waterproject to improve agriculture.

### *5.2.5 Sibane Sabomake, Light of the Women; Logoba*

Sibane is a church organisation of which mothers are members. It consists of five churches, the Anglican, Methodist, Catholic, Zion and the African Methodist Episcopal church. Churches that are not in Sibane yet, can become members; individuals are not taken as members. This Sibane was started by mothers wishing to share the Word of God. Eventually it progressed until the decision was made to earn money. The joining fee for the church as a whole is E 100,= and every month the communities/parishes visit each other. If one church is visited, the other four churches collect E 100,= each which amounts in total E 400,= and this will be given to the church visited. This E 400,= is used by the church itself to build more churches and to improve church schools. On the same day the church receives the money, a raffle will be held and goods are sold. These profits are used to help the needy including the refugees at Mpaka by buying them food, clothing and blankets.

## **6 Concluding remarks**

Women hardly have access to formal credit sources as this requires collateral and their husbands' consent. Therefore this report has studied informal savings and credit organisations with the objective of determining how women overcome lack of cash.

Four types of organisations have been discovered and studied:

- a) Funeral organisations
- b) Rotating Savings and Credit Organisations
- c) Christmas savings and money lending organisations
- d) Others: agriculturally involved groups and charitable organisations

### *Objectives*

The objectives of these organisations vary. The funeral organisations provide a sort of insurance in case a member or a member's relative dies. Savings occur in ROSCA's as well as in the Christmas savings organisations. In ROSCA's savings rotate, while in Christmas savings organisations money is saved during the year. The charitable organisations help the sick and the needy in the country and the agriculturally involved groups intend to improve an aspect of their agricultural practices.

### *Purposes of the money*

As stated in the introduction Sachs and Roach found that the expenses of the agricultural inputs are felt to be the major constraint on farming by women. Tabibian also found that women do not have sufficient means to purchase necessary inputs for the non-agriculture produce. The amounts of cash generated by these informal savings and credit organisations, however, are not used for these items (except in the case of the agriculturally involved groups). In the case of the funeral organisations money is used to buy a coffin, food and other necessary items. ROSCA's use the lump sum to buy the supply of goods for the market and for paying school fees, taking a child to a clinic, household necessities, clothing and (re)building houses. The Christmas savings and money lending organisations use the saved money for Christmas shopping and Christmas holidays and for paying school fees.

### *Origin and development*

Due to changing social conditions the need for cash is ever increasing, i.e. school fees, modern-style funerals, house building and so on.

The reason most women gave for forming these informal organisations, was that they felt that their husbands misused the scarce financial household resources. These organisations offer women possibilities to generate the amounts of money needed. Obviously, women accept full responsibility for all these matters. Several women stated that they have to participate since their husbands do not care.

It was suggested in another study (Armstrong, July, 1985) that such informal organisations find their origin in the customary labour exchange process (= *lilima*). However, no indication has been found to confirm this assumption.

The discerned funeral organisations, ROSCA's and Christmas savings and money lending organisations seem to be a rather new phenomenon in Swaziland, but no information could be gathered whether these types of organisations already existed in another form previously. The idea behind the funeral organisations may originate in South Africa. Individuals and some ROSCA's were initiators in Swaziland and the idea is spreading inland at present. Christmas savings organisations tend to develop into money lending organisations, because saved money lies idle throughout the year.

### *Contribution*

Generally, these organisations are rather time consuming and require high contributions, always to be paid in cash. The agriculturally involved groups and the charitable organisations require the lowest contribution, as women's participation is equally important. Since often several ROSCA's function on markets and within funeral organisations with different contributions, women can choose which ROSCA to join. The Christmas savings and money lending organisations require high contributions, on average E 40,- a month. This is possible as most members are wage earners. However, the funeral organisations which is said to consist of all kind of women, require a total yearly contribution of about E 100,-. This raises the question whether women are excluded from these organisations as they cannot afford it. Especially as women stated to earn their own contributions in stead of asking their husbands to make the payments.

### *Membership*

Women start and run these organisations and they also form the majority of the members. Besides the specific restrictions to become a member of each type of organisation (except the Christmas savings and money lending organisations which usually accept colleagues only colleagues as it function at the work places) it is said again and again that in all the organisations all women can join. The groups indeed consist of wage earners, nurses, market women, 'housewives' who sell handicrafts and the women are living in both rural and urban areas.

Membership is not a secret although the Christmas savings and money lending organisations cannot function openly as the government demands groups' registration and tax payment on the interests. Most organisations do not fulfil these requirements.

Except in the case of funeral organisations several members of one homestead are allowed to join the same organisation.

Men's involvement is small in these organisations. Only the Christmas savings and money lending organisations have male participants. When a member or a member's



relative has died men sometimes have to pay as they are also covered by the funeral organisations. Men's involvement is small as they don't care according to the women and in all cases women accept full responsibility.

### *Problems*

Only a few groups are known that have ceased to exist, but these seem to be exceptions. Furthermore, no problems were mentioned. It might be possible, of course, that problems have not been told.

As far as can be discerned, problems are prevented through social ties; women know each other before they join or start a group. Furthermore, all organisations include a social component and the groups' structure is adjusted to the needs and the possibilities of her members. Problems are also prevented by different measures such as clear arrangements, having an executive committee, making the groups known to the chief or by inviting their husbands at a meeting so that they cannot complain that they do not know what the women are doing.

### *Banks*

Women experience constraints when trying to obtain formal credit since collateral and their husbands' consent is required. As stated in the introduction, Tabibian discovered another constraint namely that women have little or no knowledge of how and where to obtain a loan.

The findings of this research, however, show that members of the organisations generally know where to go and to ask for a loan. The reason why women don't even try to obtain a loan is that they know beforehand that banks ask security, which they lack.

The organisations have different dealings with the banks. Funeral organisations, agriculturally involved groups and charitable organisations make passive use of the banks' services, by only saving and withdrawing money when necessary. In ROSCA's money is always disbursed, so they do not have dealings with banks. As the demand for credit supplied by the money lending organisations is so high, these organisations do not even require a bank account.

### *Other linkages*

Some charitable organisations receive financial foreign support. The Swazi government's involvement with these informal savings and credit organisations is limited. The Christmas savings and money lending organisations are required to register themselves and to pay tax on the interest earnings. A few agriculturally involved groups received some assistance from the government. The overall funeral organisation, the Family Burial Organisation is registered at the department of Home Affairs.

### *Perspectives*

These informal savings and credit organisations are mushrooming in Swaziland. They function rather well and via these organisations women organise their own social security system.

As women help each other by forming and continuing these organisations, 'Sitanani' is a perfect name for the phenomenon of the informal savings, credit organisations and funeral organisations.

When analysing their achieved results, the prospects for these organisations look good.

## ***APPENDIX 1: SOURCES OF FORMAL CREDIT***

Formal credit can be applied for and obtained from a number of sources (Armstrong, Feb. 1985, Craw e.a. 1984, Guma and Simelane):

### ***Commercial Banks***

The commercial banks are the Barclays Bank, Standard Bank and the Bank of Credit and Commerce International. These banks place great emphasis on collateral which a potential borrower can pledge to secure a loan. Cattle and lines on standing crops are not acceptable as collateral for loans. The required collateral must have a stable market value and be accessible for the bank. Examples of collateral are immovable property, insured inventory of saleable goods and financial assets.

Women married in community of property require their husbands' consent to apply for a loan involving marital property as collateral. Women in wage labour may obtain credit through an arrangement whereby the employer deposits their salaries directly at the bank.

### ***Swaziland Developments and Savings Bank (SDSB)***

The SDSB provides credit at two different rates to SNL-farmers:

- a. The Agricultural Advisory Credit provides seasonal credit with a maximum of E 1000,= at a reduced rate of interest. Cattle are used as collateral, but in some cases farm-implements and financial assets may be pledged as security for the loan.
- b. Credit at commercial rates is extended to SNL-farmers for all seasonal credit in amounts over E 1000,=.

### ***Cooperative Societies***

After 1980 the Central Cooperative Union has been unable to lend money due to abuses, mismanagement and poor repayment record.

The CCU did not require collateral or the husband's permission for women to obtain loans.

### ***Cotton Ginneries***

In order to assure a consistent supply of cotton, seasonal credit is provided at commercial rates by the cotton ginneries to farmers wishing to grow cotton. There is no evidence that any loans are given to women.

### ***Small Enterprises Development Corporation (SEDCO)***

This parastatal company grants industrial loans to small enterprises. Approximately 75% of the loans are to women, but due to budget cutbacks in recent years only a few loans have been approved.

### ***Chinese Agricultural Mission***

This mission operates its schemes by delivering inputs on the understanding that an agreed volume of production would be used as repayment. It is not known whether women can also benefit from this scheme.

### ***The Women in Development Project at Ntfontjeni***

This revolving loan fund was originally financed by the United Nations Decade for Women. It started by making the necessary capital available to graduates of the Women in Development Project. The women were then able to use the skills they had

learned without needing collateral (Russell). It is now being administrated by the Swazi Development and Savings Bank. No interest is charged, but there is a small surcharge and 20% is added to compensate for inflation.

## **APPENDIX II: CHECKLIST USED FOR INTERVIEWING WOMEN**

### ***General***

- name
- age
- marital status
- educational level
- place of living
- are you head of the homestead de facto
- how many dependents do you have
- do you have male or female supporters
- how many people have jobs
- do you perform an income generating activity
- do you have a job, where and what are the wages
- other activities such as schoolbuilding

### ***Wealth of the woman***

- what do you grow, any cash-crops
- do you have to buy your own maize
- do you own cattle, where are they and how many
- do you own goats, where are they and how many
- do you own a car, a house, do you pay rent
- do you have or hire a tractor

### ***The group***

- when did it start
- who started it
- why did it start
- how were you organised before
- if you joined halfway, why didn't you join at the beginning
- name of the group
- group's objectives when started
- group's objectives at the moment
- members:
  - how many
  - males, females
  - do the members change
  - characteristics of other members, do they have jobs
  - who can become a member
  - how can you become a member
  - do you know all the other members
  - are other homestead members also members of this group
  - is membership secret
- what is the structure of the group
- what are the executive committee's functions
- do you have a function
- do you meet; how often
- what do you do at meetings
- which function do the group meetings have

### ***Credit-aspects***

- do you make a contribution in money or other form
- how much is the contribution
- how do you obtain this contribution
- what do you do with the money when you receive it
- what are you going to do with the money in the future
- does the group do anything with the money
- what happens if someone fails to pay
- what happens with the money when a member dies

- is there any interest on the money
- who decides who will receive the money
- are there any problems in the group
- what do borrowers do with the loans

**Other groups-** have you joined a group which failed

- if yes, why did it fail
- do you know a group which failed
- why are you member of this group
- are you member of another group
- are there any other groups around here
- would you like to join another group
- do men organise themselves

### **Banks**

**the woman:**

- have you ever had a bankloan or another transfer
- do you lay-by, where and which articles
- do you have a bank account; which bank
- would you know how to borrow; did you ever try
- what do you invest money in
- what do you think of the different banks

**the group:**

- have you ever obtained a bank-loan
- do you have a bank account; which bank
- would you know how to borrow
- have you ever tried

**APPENDIX III: FOUND AND INTERVIEWED FUNERAL ORGANISATIONS**

<i>Name of the group</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>(1)</i>	<i>(2)</i>
1 Duduzani: Let's console each other 1	Ludze Ludze		
2	"		
3	"	I	M
4	"		
5 Bezabemkhalela: They came and cried together (3)	Ludze Ludze	I	
6 Masifukamelisane: Let's support each other	Mankayana		
7 Masisitane: Let's help each other	Logoba	I	M
8 Masingwabisane: Let's bury one another			
9 Khanyisani: Light 1	Mbabane	I	M
10	Hhohho district		
11	"		
12	"		
13	"		
14	"		
15 Burial + Wedding Organisation at St. Michaels School	Manzini	I	
16 Masakhane Club: Let's train each other	Manzini	I	
17 Mbabane Library Burial Group	Mbabane	I	
18 Simunye group	Siteki	I	
19 no name	Motjane	I	
20 Masibonisane branches: Working together	Hlatikulu	I	
21	Nsongweni		
22	Gege		
23	Mbukwane		
24	Sishelweni		
25 Swaziland Christian Church in Zion for burial	Luyengo	I	
26 Lubambiswano Lwabomake: working together by women 1 Nhlngano	I		
27	Nhlngano		
28 Masibambisane 1	Veleziweni+Magubeleni		
29	Mpaka		
30	Mankayana	I	
31 Sitanani: Let's help each other 1	Nhlngano	I	
32	Makhosini		
33 Sizanani Women's Club: Let's help each other	Kwaluseni	I	M
34	Mbekelweni		M
35	Mankayana		M
36	Hlatikulu		M
37	Nhlngano		M

(1) whether or not the group was interviewed; 'I' means that the group is interviewed

(2) whether or not the specific group is a member of the Family Burial Organisation;

'M' means that the group is a member

(3) This group went out of existence

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## 12. "CATTLE BEGET CHILDREN" - BUT WOMEN MUST BEAR THEM. FERTILITY, STERILITY AND BELONGING AMONG WOMEN IN SWAZILAND

Rita Astuti

The Bantu of Southern Africa have a saying: "cattle beget children". They refer to the cattle paid as bridewealth (*lobolo*) by a man to the father or brother of his future bride. Although a man acquires a woman with his cattle, the Bantu refer only to the children that woman will bear. This logical jump — from a woman to her offspring, from instrument to product — is far more significant in what it reveals of the status of a woman than in its definition of the nature of marriage payments. The logical passages hidden in the relationship between a woman and her offspring are: that a man acquires a woman with cattle; that the woman, being fertile, will bear children; that the man will assert his paternity upon them.

The concepts implicit in the Bantu proverb are therefore two, both of which define the status of a woman: fertility and belonging. This paper aims to reveal and render explicit these concepts, with reference to one particular society, that of the Swazi<sup>1</sup>, in which a woman must be fertile and must belong, during her lifetime, first to her father, then to her husband, and finally become a member of the latter's clan.

### Fertility

Some years ago Nicole-Claude Mathieu demonstrated that in the vast majority of philosophical, historical, ethnological, sociological or psychoanalytical studies, women are of treated on a different analytical level from men. In particular, women are confined to the biological sphere, whereas only men are allowed to enjoy "la plénitude culturelle" (Mathieu, 1977: 40). At the best, women have the responsibility to mediate between nature and culture, since they are allegedly closer to nature. Women are supposed to be more biological and less cultural beings than men because of their motherhood: not so much because they can be mothers, but because they must be so. Once it is assumed that compulsory motherhood is a natural task, women are necessarily confined of to the fulfillment of a purely biological function<sup>2</sup>.

Analysis of the Swazi society — patrilineal in ideology and practice — will show the consequences of such a concept in defining the status of women — in a "real" society, not only in academic and male-oriented western studies.

If the assumption is that a woman cannot but be fertile because it is natural — and necessary — for her to be a mother, the society to which this woman belongs must some - how face, with the means at its disposal, the "unnatural" disorder caused by a barren woman. The answer to the problem can be the sororate, by which a real or classificatory sister, or another member of the same group, is sent to replace or simply join an already existing (barren) wife. In Swaziland, the family of the barren woman must find a new and productive "womb" for her: this is done by offering her a female mate. The person who offers her reproductive capacity to the barren women is called *inhlanti*.

<sup>1</sup>I did field work in Swaziland in 1983-84. Mafutseni is the rural area where I lived during my research. I wish to thank the entire community of Mafutseni for their hospitality and for letting me live among them, sometimes interfering with their normal life; special thanks go to the family I lived with. I also wish to acknowledge the great help - both material and intellectual - I received during the whole period from the Social Science Research Unit, University of Swaziland. I can only mention Nomsomboluko Vilakati's extensive collaboration, both as an interpreter and as a friend, which has been too important for me to be fully acknowledged here. Last but not least I must thank Pier Giorgio Solinas for the interests he aroused, which were a source and stimulus for this work.

<sup>2</sup>See Paola TABET's article (1985), where the implications of the absence of limits to the sexual availability of women - as opposed to animals - are fully appreciated: the non-naturality of procreation is the first consequence of this fact.



The *inhlanti* is a relative of the woman taking her in, either a younger sister or a brother's daughter. When the *inhlanti* joins her sister or aunt, she is often still very young, and normally sexually immature. She will live with the older woman and become her loyal friend, sharing her hut, her kitchen, her granary and her fields. Moreover, when the *inhlanti* is very young — she can be 4 or 5 years old or even younger — the relationship with the older woman is almost of a filial type. Initially at least the *inhlanti* actually assumes the role of a daughter, thereby somehow solving the unbearable situation of her companion, woman and wife with no children.

The social role of the co-wife is well explained by the meaning of the word *inhlanti*<sup>3</sup>: the noun is formed by the prefix *in* (*ti* for the plural) and by the verb *hlanta*, changed into *hlanti* to indicate a reference to a human being. *Hlanta* has a variety of meanings, among which are "to bear fruits" (it is used for pumpkins, for example), "to purify", "to exculpate". The *inhlanti* ("she who bears fruits") must purify her companion of her fault, cleanse her of her most severe shame, exculpate her of the failure of being sterile.

The status acquired by the *inhlanti* in her new reproductive unit represents a social neutralisation of the first woman's sterility: the children born of the *inhlanti* will not be recognized as her own, but as if they had actually been borne by the barren woman. The solution to the elder woman's sterility is found in denying recognition to the motherhood of the *inhlanti* who, by being reproductive, is not violating the "natural" order. Paradoxically, it is the fertile woman who is given recognition without being socially a mother, whereas the barren woman cannot do without children to exercise her motherhood on.

The *inhlanti's* existence is explained solely by resorting to the dual concept of fertility and sterility which defines the Swazi's expectations of a woman. It is not necessary, if though useful, to refer to the bridewealth system to understand the co-wife's status. The *inhlanti* is not only given because the performance of the woman of whom the bridewealth has been received is inferior to the price asked for her, but because both partners, prefer not to acknowledge the existence of a woman who does not procreate. The bridewealth system must perforce adapt itself to this radical denial of sterility. Even though the husband of a barren woman has the hypothetical right to send his wife back to her parents and claim all his cattle back, he is offered a much better solution in asking for an *inhlanti*.

A legitimate question to raise at this point is if and how the peculiar status of the *inhlanti* finds expression in the bridewealth transaction. In fact, the *inhlanti* is married like any other woman and passes through all the stages of the complex Swazi marriage ritual<sup>4</sup>, including the payment of her *lobolo*. However, the latter will not be delivered in its entirety to the *inhlanti's* father, who will receive only half the normal *lobolo* (according to Marwick, 1940:136), namely 5 cattle<sup>5</sup>.

What this arithmetic of marriage payments means is clear: the *inhlanti* is sent to complete a woman who has not been able to bear children; her future husband expects from her what he has not yet received: his wife's fertility. He will not pay full *lobolo* for

<sup>3</sup>I warmly thank Dr. Lwandle Kunene, University of Swaziland, for kindly corresponding with me and giving me the linguistic information I report further on.

<sup>4</sup>This consists of three different stages, called *umtsimba*, *teka* and *bayeni*. *Umtsimba* is the dance performed by the bride's relatives and the bride herself at the husband's homestead; gifts are given by the bride to her in-laws. *Teka* consists of two main events: first the bride is put in the cattle byre and there is insulted until she cries desperately; then her face and body are smeared with *libovu*, red clay mixed with animal fat. *Bayeni* is the preceding culminating in the consignment of *lobolo* to the bride's father. For a discussion of the entire ritual see ASTUTI, 1984: ch. 3.

<sup>5</sup>According to the data collected in Mafutseni (ASTUTI, 1984: 154 ff.), the average number of cattle given as *lobolo* for non-aristocratic women is 11; the lowest figure (excluding the *tinhlanti*) is 8, the highest is 15. These figures correspond to those reported by the literature (MARWICK, 1940: 125; H. KUPER, 1947: 98).

her because — as the Swazi say — she comes to "put children in the womb" of the other woman. With the first *lobolo* the husband has already acquired a right to full fertility<sup>6</sup>.

Coming back to the problem of a woman's fertility, we should ask if there is any way to quantify the value of her reproductive power. Does her greater or minor success, which can be measured in terms of the number of children borne, find expression in the higher or lower *lobolo* paid for her? Is there a recognized difference between rights *in uxorem* and rights *in genitricem*?<sup>7</sup>

In Swaziland this last is not the case: the amount of cattle paid as *lobolo* is in no way proportionate to the number of children born of a woman, and the practice of paying *lobolo* in instalments corresponding to each newborn child does not seem to be followed<sup>8</sup>. It is simply taken for granted that children are the unquestionable outcome of a woman's reproductive power. Once a man acquires this power, he also naturally and freely acquires the offspring, with no restrictions on its theoretically unlimited quantity. The naturality of a woman's reproductive function is once again stated by the rules and action of the bridewealth system.

The fact that a man does not pay for his (future) progeny and that the bridewealth includes the offspring with their mother becomes even more evident and significant when one considers that sometimes children are actually "quantified" separately from their mothers. This however only takes place when the children are taken away from their biological mother when the recognition of motherhood is denied to the reproductive power of a woman — i.e., in the event of divorce or of a prenuptial pregnancy. In such occasions, men pay one head of cattle for each male child, and two for each female.

Even though divorce is a rare event among the Swazi, it is nevertheless a real possibility. We have already mentioned the fact that the husband of a barren woman has the right to send his wife back to her parents and to reclaim his *lobolo*. Other legitimate reasons to ask for and obtain a divorce are, for example, the committing of adultery, a charge or simple suspicion of sorcery (Marwick, 1940: 133), laziness or inefficiency as a worker. Notably only men, not their wives, have the right to appeal for divorce; a woman can leave her husband only in quite exceptional circumstances, hoping that, on the grounds of severe maltreatment, she will be granted permission to live alone<sup>9</sup>. The marriage tie will otherwise persist even after she has left her husband<sup>10</sup>.

The breaking up of the marriage following a divorce also and especially implies an interruption of the male's control over the woman's fertility, and a readjustment of the husband/wife and parents/children relations will thereby take place. The reallocation of the bridewealth paid for the wife is direct evidence of this fact. If a husband rejects his bride, accusing her of some faults or misbehaviour, he has the right to claim his cattle back. However, in the few cases in which he is deemed responsible for the failure of the marriage, the wife can abandon her affinal kin and no bridewealth will be returned. Moreover, if the guilty wife has given birth to one or more children during her

<sup>6</sup>The husband however cannot claim the *inhlantl* if he has not paid any *lobolo*; he has to pay at least 5 head of cattle because the first woman he acquires is not simply a fertile womb; if the *inhlantl* compensates for her companion by paying a debt contracted by the latter, she is doing so simply as a procreator, and her husband therefore has to pay for anything other than her fertility, such as her labour. I discuss this "second half" of *lobolo* extensively in ASTUTI, 1984: ch. 6. In this analysis I confine myself to a discussion of the component of marriage payments corresponding to a woman's fertility, because that is the focus of my argument, but I fully acknowledge the fact that *lobolo* is not only "child" or "fertility price".

<sup>7</sup>See PARKIN, 1980 and note 23.

<sup>8</sup>The payment is in fact very often postponed, but the decision as to when to pay or to claim the still due cattle has normally nothing to do with the number of children borne by the woman.

<sup>9</sup>Theoretically the entire patrilineage, represented by the council of the elders, should be informed of any planned divorce, and its assent should always be previously obtained.

<sup>10</sup>MARWICK, 1940: 133 is the opinion that even if a woman were very badly treated and therefore justified in leaving her husband, the marriage tie would still be considered valid: this means that any new child would in any case belong to the mother's previous husband.

relationship with her husband, the bridewealth will not be returned in its entirety: one head of cattle for each male child and two for each female will be deducted from the *lobolo* once paid for the woman. It is therefore theoretically possible that the wife's relatives' debt with her past husband be entirely paid off by the progeny of the rejected woman.

The offspring therefore acquire an independent existence from their mother — and their mother from them — when and only when the marriage relationship comes to an end. Only when the reproductive woman is returned, her product — the children — can be physically as well as socially separated from her. This is an implicit recognition of the fact that the identity of a woman with her offspring resides within the marriage relationship: this implies that a wife belongs to her husband, and therefore that the woman's offspring also belong to him. The breaking up of this relationship is followed by an inevitable loss by the woman, who will never be able to claim her children and will simply be deprived of her motherhood. By assuming an independent status from that of the woman with whom they had been identified, the children will also acquire an individual and autonomous value: by rejecting their mother, their father now has to "pay" individually for her progeny.

Thanks to what Marwick rightly calls "an almost illimitable capacity for compromise" (1940:133), it can also happen that although a woman has already left her husband, no bridewealth is returned to him, not even reduced by the number of children left with him. What will then probably happen is that the woman, now living on her own, will find, or more likely will be found by, a new lover. Her previous partner, who is still considered her legal husband because he is the creditor of his cattle towards his affines, will be deemed the father of all the children born of the woman by her new companion. If the latter wishes — and indeed he will — to obtain social recognition of his biological fatherhood, he must ask for and obtain permission from the woman's legal husband<sup>11</sup> to "break her womb", i.e. he must pay the latter the same amount of cattle once given over to the woman's father as bridewealth. If the husband accepts this new transaction — a transaction between two men outside the woman's group, inherently different from the one between her father and her husband — he thereby also surrenders his previously exclusive right to his wife's fertility. From now on all the children borne by the woman will be, not merely biologically, children of her second man. All the children born before the "breaking of the womb" will belong instead to the first companion.

When the fertility of a woman is surrendered by one partner to another, the latter pays the former the entire original *lobolo*, with no deduction for any children already born<sup>12</sup>. No interruption in the reproductive duties of a woman takes place when she passes from one beneficiary to the other (on the contrary, when a woman is sent back to her relatives, she is at least temporarily removed from these duties)<sup>13</sup>. From the point of view of the male users, their right to use the compulsory fertility of women is reasserted and upheld by the very possibility of transferring it from one individual to the other without modifying it<sup>14</sup>.

The birth of a child outside marriage is another occasion for the separation of the (biological) mother from her child. Once again we will take the bridewealth system as our analytical device.

<sup>11</sup>Very probably the second lover will first go to the woman's relatives to offer to pay *lobolo* for her, but they will refuse because they cannot receive bridewealth twice for the same woman - a rule invariably followed by the Swazi.

<sup>12</sup>If the husband is not able to get the cattle due to him from the new lover because the latter cannot or is not willing to pay, the principle that he shall not be accountable for the children his wife has borne for the second man is always acknowledged by both parties.

<sup>13</sup>If the husband sends his wife back to her relatives and thereby reclaims his *lobolo*, the woman's father or brother will try to find another partner for her; the new suitor will pay *lobolo*, even though not the entire amount for reasons which will become clear further on.

<sup>14</sup>The men who take part in the transaction both belong to the numerous group of males who can claim legitimate rights over the woman's fertility - i.e. all the men with the "right" *sibongo* to marry her. This right can lead one to consider them as a homogeneous group, acting in defense of their corporate interests.

Virginity is not valued in any particular way in Swaziland, and it does not affect the amount of *lobolo* expected of and paid for a girl. Sexual intercourse among young and unmarried people is not disapproved of as long as it does not result in a pregnancy. The correct use of a woman's fertility and motherhood is instead sanctioned and held as a value in itself. Every man wishes to be the first one — as well as the only one if he decides to marry her — to impregnate his lover. A special type of compensation, called *inhlawulo*<sup>15</sup>, is devised to safeguard a woman's fertility. It consists of 5 head of cattle that are paid to the father of a woman who has never before given birth by the man who has made her pregnant. After paying *inhlawulo*, a man can choose either to carry on his relationship with the girl up to the marriage and the payment of her bridewealth, or to bring it to an end by paying the fine alone.

What happens to the children born outside marriage? If the man decides to claim his full rights as a husband, he will also acquire full paternal rights over the children born of his wife, including the first and prenuptial one. He will pay *lobolo* for his wife, but he will deduct the 5 cows already paid as *inhlawulo* from it. The fine is thereby reabsorbed by the normal bridewealth. By claiming his rights over the woman as wife, the man also acquires a right, which he has already made use of, over her fertility, which he has already paid for. As in any other union, the offspring naturally follow the mother, and as such are simply confused and incorporated in the *lobolo* paid for their mother.

A completely different situation arises when a man does not want to carry on his relationship with the girl he has impregnated. In any case — with even more reason — he is expected to pay his fine. His *inhlawulo* (the same 5 head of cattle), however, will not give him any rights over the girl's children, not even over the prenuptial one. This child will live with his mother in his grandparents' homestead, and will be considered a son of the girl's father.

Even in this case, though, it is possible for the biological father to assert his legal parenthood over his child or children; but since he is not acquiring the mother together with the children, he will have to "buy" them separately<sup>16</sup>: like a divorcee, he will be charged one head of cattle for each male child and two for each female.

It is obvious that the man who decides to abandon rather than marry the girl is heavily penalized<sup>17</sup>. The decision to have and to keep one's children outside the marriage tie is paid by a large amount of wealth: not only the 5 head of cattle given as *inhlawulo* are virtually lost, as they will not be deducted from any *lobolo*, but a new payment will also be required for the children. The latter choice is, from a man's point of view, a waste<sup>18</sup>. In fact, while the ultimate right of a man to decide upon his fatherhood — even, if not necessarily, to the detriment of a woman's motherhood — is stated once again, a preference for "normal" relationships, which allow an easier and less ambiguous assignment of the newborn to their social fathers, is made clear.

In a similar way, divorce and prenuptial compensation reassert the same principle, i.e. that children are the natural outcome of a woman's fertility only when both are acquired through marriage. If reproduction is achieved outside the norm of marriage the allocation of the newborn will then follow different paths, which lead to their expropriation from their mother. The separation of the offspring from the woman could represent the possibility for women and for society as a whole to become aware that procreation is not

<sup>15</sup>There is no linguistic relation between *inhlanti* and *inhlawulo* (Dr. Lwandle Kunene, per litteram). *Inhlawulo* consists of the prefix *in* and of the verb *hlanta*, which means to pay a fine; this is modified into the impersonal form (with a final letter *o*), which gives the word a more general meaning of punishment.

<sup>16</sup>It is interesting to note that the most "westernized" type of informant, although refusing to refer to the *lobolo* as a form of purchase of the bride, was instead easily led to define the acquisition of children through cattle as a real purchase (*kutsenga*).

<sup>17</sup>For the father who receives the girl's *lobolo* there is no difference: his future son-in-law - if he is different from the man paying *inhlawulo* - will give him the number of cattle equal to a standard *lobolo* less the 5 head of cattle he has already received as *inhlawulo*.

<sup>18</sup>See WILSON, 1977: 46: among the Nyakyusa-Ngonde adultery is punished by a fine paid in cattle, and is explicitly referred to as a waste of wealth, as opposed to marriage which, in exchange for cattle, gives a man his wife.

an inherent and necessary function of women: if the offspring can be physically separated from women, then women can be other than their offspring. However, it is precisely in this separation, which is possible only outside the socially and ideologically accepted norm, that the deep subjection of women and their defeat can be read. Both in the case of divorce and of the interruption of a prenuptial relationship, a woman is not only conceptually separated from her offspring, but she also loses them. The children she bears for a man will always and in all circumstances follow him. The relationship between a woman and her offspring is merely functional to and dependent on her relationship with her husband: when this comes to an end, the tie with her offspring will also be severed, and her motherhood will be erased.

### *Appropriation and belonging*

Not only must a woman procreate, but she must also do so to the advantage of a man, who alone has the right to claim the offspring and to assert his fatherhood upon them. A man's and a woman's obligations and rights could not be more different and even opposite: a man must not necessarily be a genitor to be a father, because it is socially accepted to manipulate fatherhood in order to guarantee its status; on the contrary a woman, even if she is always expected to be biologically a mother, will never have her maternity acknowledged<sup>19</sup>.

If a woman must procreate to the advantage of someone else, the question inevitably arises as to who can legitimately claim a right upon her offspring: one man only can claim a woman's children, thereby becoming their father. A man will first of all have to acquire a woman before legitimately acquiring her offspring. Once again this hypothesis can be tested by following the course of marriage payments. *Lobolo* is in fact the most tangible instrument by which the effective appropriation of an individual takes place. The basic rule which assigns every newborn child to his social father is expressed through bridewealth: each new individual, irrespective of sex, will belong to the man who has paid (or will pay) *lobolo* for the mother. If the child is a male, his mother's *lobolo* will assign him once and forever to his father. A female instead will pass from her father to whoever will acquire her to transform her into a mother — her husband.

Only in the case of a woman, therefore, does bridewealth — a criterion of belonging, but, more actively, an instrument of appropriation — find repeated and doubly prescriptive enforcement: a woman belongs, before marriage, to the person who can claim it (her father or his heir); once she leaves her original group, she will belong to whoever has paid her *lobolo*. In turn, a father's claim to his daughter's *lobolo* is sanctioned by the bridewealth previously paid for her mother. And so on, in a chain of generational payments which define the passage of a woman from father to husband through time.

The bridewealth's normative and appropriative power, which affects children by way of their mother, does not cease with the death of either father or husband of the woman. On the one hand, a father's right to his daughter's *lobolo* is passed down to his heirs, a brother or half brother of the woman. On the other, even more significantly, the legal husband has the right to exploit his wife's reproductive power even after his death: the widow's children — born from her union with her husband's younger brother — will be considered as accruing to him, because he was the owner of the cattle paid as *lobolo* for the mother. His heir will therefore claim the bridewealth paid in future for these children.

By virtue of the same principle, chief Dinabantu (Marwick, 1940: 14), having a wife who had gone to live with another man who gave her three children, declared — rather paradoxically, indeed, because a woman offers other important services besides her fertility, that are clearly lost if she leaves the homestead — that he was very pleased with the situation, because all the offspring and their mother belonged to him in any case, while the other man simply had to maintain them. In a similar way, one of my informants told me: "it does not matter if she (his wife) wants to go with another man, because all the

<sup>19</sup>As already pointed out, paradoxically the only occasion in which a woman has her non-biological maternity socially recognized is when she is sterile.

children will be mine, wherever they are - all my daughters' *lobolo* will come here, to this homestead"<sup>20</sup>.

It is notable that, from this point of view, a woman's belonging to her husband is indeed defined by the bridewealth paid for her, but much more so by the bridewealth paid for her daughters: a woman belongs to whoever may claim her offspring's bridewealth. The appropriation of a woman is actually to be found in the appropriation of the children borne by her. Thus besides having the duty to procreate a woman must also belong. The correlation between the two is strong: a woman must procreate and her offspring must belong to her husband; therefore the woman who bears this offspring must be appropriated. The control over the woman guarantees that of her offspring.

The relationship between reproduction and belonging appears very clearly if one follows up the previous discussion on fertility and analyses if, how, and to whom a woman belongs in the case of divorce, of prenuptial pregnancy and of sterility.

In the case of divorce — which should be analysed not only as the separation of a wife and husband, but more dramatically of a mother from her children — there are two possibilities: a woman can either pass from her husband directly on to her new partner, or she can be given back by the former to her father. In the first instance, as has already been pointed out, a woman changes hands but continues to be able and to be compelled to procreate for a different father of her future children. In the second case, if she is sent back to her father she cannot revert to being a daughter again; once she has been fertile and productive in marriage she can find no place either beside her father or beside any other kin. She cannot belong to them any more — after all, a woman's belonging to her father is always provisional, leading as it does to her inevitable consignment to someone else and to the collection of her bridewealth — precisely because father and kin are unable to fulfill the woman's continuing obligation to procreate.

Her kin are therefore left with no choice: they can only supervise the next passage of the woman to a man who, by making her bear anew, will claim his rights over her offspring and herself.

The same principle operates in regulating and sanctioning prenuptial pregnancies. In this case a woman is in the hands of her father, who has not yet passed her on to anyone. The birth of a child in these circumstances could mean that a woman's fertility has been used with no appropriation of the mother by the man responsible for the pregnancy. It is not the woman who decides whether to be married by the man who has impregnated her, nor is it she who chooses this man to become the (legal) father of her offspring. The ultimate decision is always left to the man, whose only obligation is the payment of the *inhlawulo* fine; having done this he can decide to reject both mother and child, to take the child and leave the mother or to take them both.

As has already been said, the third solution is the most convenient one, because the man is allowed to deduct the fine (5 cattle) when he comes to paying the whole *lobolo*, and he is not required to pay anything for the children. It is far more convenient for the same man to have the use of fertility together with its "container". What happens if the other two options are chosen is fully in line with this rule: if the man who is responsible for the pregnancy does not want either woman or child, both will be left with the girl's father. The father will assert his fatherhood upon his daughter's children: he will effectively be the father of the progeny of his daughter<sup>21</sup>. If the man instead wants the children but not their mother, he will be asked to pay to the girl's father for them. Such a payment is due because the man refuses, contrary to rule, to assert his rights both upon the woman and upon her fertility.

<sup>20</sup>Interview with Mthetwa, Mafutseni, 3.12.1983.

<sup>21</sup>However it is often pointed out that nowadays the father of a child left with his mother and grandfather often decides to claim it back many years later, when it is already a grown-up, fully able to work, to get married and, in the case of a daughter, to provide her (legal) father with a valuable *lobolo*. Whoever has kept the child and suffered the costs of its raising and education complains feelingly about this situation, and thinks it very unfair that a man should acquire a grown-up by paying just one or two heads of cattle.

The last case is that of a barren woman. Sterility and belonging can be seen as being totally irreconcilable. A woman can be rejected by her husband because of her reproductive deficiencies and be sent back to her original homestead, but there a barren woman (differing in this respect from "temporary" divorcees) will remain forever, belonging to no one. What could become a permanent status of non-belonging, however, is promptly denied by the *inhlanti*, who replaces the barren wife in her reproductive functions and allows her to retain her existence by remaining beside — and belonging to — her husband. Now that the barren wife can procreate, she can also belong to the man who asserts his rights upon "her" offspring. Not only therefore does the *inhlanti* have to prevent a woman from shirking her reproductive duties, but *she also has to prevent*, with equal determination, *that a woman avoid being appropriated*.

What has been said about barren women seems to open up a chance of breaking the vicious circle which, by imposing reproduction as a "natural" female task, decrees that a woman also be an object of male appropriation, subject to the father of her children. It is in fact clear that the only way for a woman not to be appropriated is to avoid procreation. This is where the power, importance and significance of the *inhlanti* reside: by preventing sterility — which could, with greater awareness, be birth control, abortion and more generally a willing refusal of pregnancy — the co-wife frustrates the only chance for a woman to avoid belonging to a man.

We have now come to the heart of the problem: why should a woman give up her motherhood in order to avoid appropriation — even if she does not succeed in doing so? In fact there could be an alternative solution: that of bearing children for herself and, in full accordance with the rule which states that a woman belongs to the claimant of her offspring, to belong to herself. All things considered, this is precisely what cannot be. The presupposition — no more "natural" than its consequences — which underlies the dual concept of fertility and belonging is the annulment of social motherhood: no woman is allowed to bear children for herself, and therefore she cannot belong to herself; she cannot assert her motherhood upon her offspring, and therefore someone else has to do it for her. To be a mother, a woman can only be the wife of her children's father<sup>22</sup>.

What has been said up to this point needs an important integration. Our analysis will have to shift from the individual relationships between father and daughter, husband and wife, offspring and father to more general ones, which form their background. In this perspective, the passage of a daughter from a father to a husband can be interpreted as her transferal from one clan — or patrilineage<sup>23</sup> — to another one; the appropriation of a newborn baby by his father, as the acquisition of a new member by his clan; the predominance of legal over biological fatherhood, as the assertion of the overwhelming importance of clan membership.

It is especially interesting to show how this different analysis confirms a woman's duty to belong, to be yielded for procreation and, finally, to be fertile in order to be recognized a social existence. First of all, however, we need to understand what being a member of a clan effectively means. Clan membership is symbolically marked at the birth and death of every individual. Just after its birth, a baby must inhale smoke produced by the combustion of special ingredients, such as animal skins, feathers, herbs, etc., each one belonging specifically to a single (father's) clan. Each clan, by distinguishing itself with the special ingredients it uses, assures itself that each individual inhale its clan identity and

<sup>22</sup>It should be noted that in Swaziland a woman will never be allowed will never be allowed to pay cattle to claim a child back. Elsewhere, where the distinction between rights *in uxorem* and rights *in genitricem* is drawn, women stand in very different position. In such cases they can effectively take advantage of the distinct value attached to their offspring by "paying" for the recognition of their maternity as opposed to men's paternity. Kikuyu women in Nairobi or Digo women in Mombasa are examples of how women living in the city, working for wages or as prostitutes, are able to pay back their bridewealth and to buy their offspring from their husbands. They can therefore set up independent matrifocal units (PARKIN, 1980: 215, 218), a social setting inconceivable in traditional as well as "modern" Swaziland.

<sup>23</sup>For a discussion of the legitimacy of using concepts such as clan and patrilineage for Swazi society see A. KUPER, 1982: 45-58 and ASTUTI, 1984: ch. 1.

membership with the smoke. The procedures to bury the dead vary with equal symbolic intensity according to one's *sibongo* (the patrilineal name): hence differences in locality (on a mountain or near a river), in the corpse's orientation, in the timing of the burial (at sunset or at dawn), etc. Each clan also has certain prescriptive rules of behaviour, which normally concern allowed or forbidden foodstuffs, but do not completely ignore other activities as well.

What will make one's clan identity openly manifest, however, is the *sibongo* or clan patronymic. The first thing a mother will do to a newborn child is to whisper its *sibongo* in its ear: this will belong to him forever, and will accompany and guide him in his social relations<sup>24</sup>.

The inhaled smoke, the rules guiding everyday life and behaviour, the *sibongo* and the burial ceremony are all visible traces of one's clan membership and identity, accompanying one from birth until death.

Clan history, however, is not the same for everyone; not everyone follows an untraumatic and uneventful course. Men and women do not share the same status as members of a clan; their membership and identity are very differently perceived. A man will be a member of his clan for ever, but a woman can only leave her group of origin. When a woman becomes physiologically fertile, she must be yielded to those who, alone, can exploit her reproductive power. She will gradually be transferred to her new group — first by *belonging to* it, then slowly by *belonging in* it<sup>25</sup>. The various steps of the "long journey"<sup>26</sup> a woman undertakes during her lifetime will not only lead to a progressive loosening of the ties with her original clan, but also to the gradual attainment of a higher status as a member of the adoptive clan.

The first step, the smearing of the *libovu*<sup>27</sup> — a red clay mixed with animal fat — is a dramatic turning point in the life of a woman, who is thereby, once and forever, transformed into a wife. The ritual is performed by the women of the husband's patrilineage, during the willful and necessary absence of the new wife's kin. The ritual severs all ties with the group of origin, which cannot thereafter hold on to what has become a "wife": the woman must now belong to others.

The smearing of the *libovu*, however, despite its being a dramatic and irreversible act, is only the first step in the life-history of a married woman. Next in time and equally significant is the handing over of the *liphakelo*, a cow presented to the bride by her new husband. A wife can begin to drink milk from her husband's herd only after receiving this animal. No exact rule defines when the *liphakelo* must be given, but it is extremely unusual for this to happen before the birth of at least one child; the gift may be given right after the birth of the first one, though it may also be delayed. By this act a woman is given the ownership of an animal of her husband's herd and can drink its milk, thereby being admitted to the most intimate and important belongings of her husband, and, by extension, of the entire clan — ancestors included, ultimate custodians and owners of the herd. Such an act must needs signify and demarcate an accomplished acceptance of the woman within the husband's group<sup>28</sup>. It is therefore that, at the birth of successive children, a woman can breathe her husband's clan's smoke without danger, as she has her child inhale it:

<sup>24</sup>The *sibongo* is especially important in guiding every individual in his/her behaviour towards any new person he/she meets and in the choice of a partner.

<sup>25</sup>See KOPYTOFF-MIERS, 1977: 10 for the distinction between "belonging to" and "belonging in".

<sup>26</sup>For this expression and its meaning in Zulu society see NGUBANE, 1981: 85.

<sup>27</sup>For a description of this important stage of marriage ritual see ASTUTI, 1984: 10-17 ff. The significance of this ritual has often been underestimated in the literature.

<sup>28</sup>For the significance of milk in its relation to clan identity see LEVI-STRAUSS, 1949: 577-583.



"She inhales her in-laws' clan's smoke. When she makes her children inhale it, she breathes it too, but this has no bad effect on her. After marriage, she becomes a real member of the homestead<sup>29</sup>".

The final act sanctioning a woman's definitive integration is her burial, performed according to her new clan's rules. It is certainly significant that the act of burial is always — and not only in Swaziland<sup>30</sup> - taken as proof of the completed appropriation of a woman:

I'm Nxumalo, my wife will be Nxumalo also and she will be buried the way I will be buried. She'll be never buried the way whatever clan she belonged, you see<sup>31</sup>.

It is not however, merely a recognition of what a woman has become during her lifetime; even more, it is an assertion of what she will be thereafter — from then on she will belong to the ancestral world of her husband's clan. A woman's burial comes as the conclusion to a constant and gradual movement to closer relationships with her husband's ancestors, during which her ties with her original ancestral world have slowly weakened and disappeared. This process will so deeply transform her that, when she becomes a *gogo* — mother of an adult son and head of their homestead — she will be the only intermediary with their ancestors, and all members of the homestead shall depend on her: even the son — a "real" and not an acquired member, as *gogo* is, of that clan — will have to accept her intercession to speak with his ancestors. It is a sign that the woman's assimilation has reached such a point that no trace of it is left.

The transition is now complete. On hindsight it has not been a free choice: by being yielded by her paternal to her affinal kin, a woman begins the only journey that can transform her into a *gogo* of respect, an ancestor, besides, naturally, a reproductive force. If a woman were to refuse to submit to the transition and to the difficult but promising acceptance within her husband's group her potentialities would be wasted: belonging to her affines is the condition of her existence.

Belonging however is not enough: to be a *gogo*, to become an ancestor, even to be able to grow old, a woman must be a mother. In Swazi society an aged woman has power and control of no mean importance over a homestead's life. Each homestead is structured according to the basic model of the royal family, in which the King's mother, the Queen Mother, has wide powers and responsibilities and is the custodian of important and most valuable knowledge of rain, a warranty for the wellbeing of the whole nation. But the Queen Mother — even she — must first have been a mother. Thus it is and must be for all other women.

So we finally return to the Bantu proverb from which we departed: after having shown all that it does not say, we have found that, as often happens, what goes unsaid is more important — and more subtle — than what is openly declared. The mechanism whereby Swazi society controls its women — by forcing them to be fertile and fruitful, by depriving them of their offspring, by compelling them to be appropriated — lies hidden in the semantic trick that upholds and gives sense to the statement that "cattle beget children".

<sup>29</sup>Interview with Ndlovu, Mafutseni, 2.11.1983. The case of a young girl, mother of a 6 months old child, can be cited as indirect proof of the significance of letting a wife inhale her husband's clan's smoke. The girl was not sure that the man responsible for her pregnancy would marry her, and to avoid "contamination" with the smoke belonging to a clan which could not become hers, she sent her child to her lover's parents so that it could inhale their smoke outside her presence.

<sup>30</sup>See Wilson; 1977: 30: referring to the Nyakuyusa she writes that "after cattle has passed (...) 'it means that she is of my lineage (*ikikolo*) now (...). They will bury my wife as they bury me' - that is, the form of ritual will follow that of her husband's lineage, not her father's".

<sup>31</sup>Interview with Nxumalo, Kwaluseni, 11.10.1983

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### **13."BACK TO THE GRASS STRIPS": THE EVOLUTION OF SOIL CONSERVATION POLICIES IN SWAZILAND<sup>1</sup>**

*Chris Reij*

#### **1. Introduction**

One can distinguish five periods in the history of soil conservation in Swaziland. The first one is the pre-1949 period during which soil conservation experiments and activities were initiated. In the second period which lasted from 1949 to 1960, a large scale soil conservation programme was executed during which more than 70,000 miles of contour grass strips were demarcated. The programme lost momentum at the end of the fifties for the simple reason that virtually all cultivated lands were then protected by grass strips. The period between 1960 and 1970, was characterised by water conservation through the construction of small storage dams. From 1970 onwards, interest in soil conservation increased and in a USAID supported soil conservation programme, short-based terraces were constructed with the help of heavy earthmoving equipment. The first phase of the RDA programme (1970-1977) corresponds with the fourth period distinguished in this paper. In 1977 soil conservation activities were critically reviewed which resulted in a modified system of soil conservation for the second phase of the RDA programme (1977-1983). Grass strips were no longer replaced by terraces but broadbased terraces and grass strips were combined. Each period will be briefly analysed in the following paragraphs.

#### **2. Periods in the history of Swazi Soil Conservation**

##### **1. The pre-1949 period**

In the annual reports of the Veterinary and Agricultural Department for the years 1942-1946, mention is made of some efforts in the field of soil conservation.

- a. Contour lines were laid out on native and European lands which were planted with Napier grass.
- b. In one or two places the formation of "dongas" (gullies) was stopped by diverting flood water from cattle paths to the adjacent veld.
- c. Eroded areas were fenced off for demonstration purposes and showed rapid recovery which, according to the report indicated (1946: 29), that the solution was the prevention of overgrazing.

The increasing pressure of population and livestock on Swazi Nation Land, as a consequence of an extremely unequal distribution of land between the Swazi and European populations, created hardships for the Swazi and caused an increasing deterioration of their resource base. In 1942 and 1943, 229,875 acres were bought from European owners with grants from the Colonial Development and Welfare funds and 135,000 acres of Crown Land were made available for the resettlement of 22,000 landless Swazi (Department of Native Land Settlement, Annual Report 1945: 7).

In 1944, the Native Land Settlement Scheme started a first pilot settlement project in the Mayiwane area (Pigg's Peak). Land was made available to settlers (60 acres per family) on a leasehold basis (which is in strong contrast to the Swazi view that all rights to land are vested in the King), and the most important aspects of land use, such as control of grazing, were

<sup>1</sup> This paper is a short and revised version of RDRP Research Paper 12, SSRU, Kwaluseni, May 1984.

## II. *The period of 1949-1960*

In 1948 an Eight Year Development Plan for Swaziland was approved. The introduction of better methods of land utilisation was a major feature of the plan and soil conservation was regarded as the first step towards intensive farming (McDaniel, 1966: 507-508).

According to Scott (1954: 444-445) this Rural Development Programme for the period 1948-1955 was admirably comprehensive, " but too much emphasis seems to be placed on anti-erosion measures which, if they are to be of lasting value, should follow and not precede pasture management and stock reduction".

### *Grass Strips*

During this period more than 70,000 miles of grass strips were laid out. (see table 1) It is assumed that each mile of strip protects about 5 acres of land, which means that in 1960 more than 350,000 acres were protected against soil erosion.

*Table 1. Miles of contour grass strips demarcated on Swazi Nation Land between 1949 and 1960*

1949	1005 miles	1955	6538 miles
1950	3589 miles	1956	6579 miles
1951	8956 miles	1957	4874 miles
1952	15509 miles	1958	4567 miles
1953	9972 miles	1959	
1954	8272 miles	1960	<u>855 miles</u>
	total 1949-1960		70716 miles

There is, however, some difference in opinion about the efficiency of grass strips.

"It must be conceded that, as the new strips do little more than confine cultivation to the contour, the protection is very slight indeed". (Agricultural Department, Annual Report 1952: 4).

"In comparison with contour bank systems, grass stripping is inexpensive. The scheme has proved effective in stopping large quantities of silt".

It may be assumed that the efficiency of the grass strips increased over the years. Grass strips were created by leaving 6 feet wide strips unploughed, which were marked on contour lines with a 4 feet vertical interval. In the first year the unploughed strips were mainly covered by weed, which gradually gave way to grass, often *Hyparrhenia hirta* which is the local thatching grass.

### *Gully control*

In order to control gullies, the Department of Agriculture followed two different approaches:

#### *a. Gully control on rangeland*

In 1952, five tractors were bought and equipped with a sub-soiler and a double-disc plough in order to break already denuded range land. The sub-soiler was used at 6 feet vertical intervals to promote rainwater penetration and thus the restoration of the grass cover, whereas the disc plough was used to make a series of furrows and banks to retain as much water as possible on the land. (Dept. of Agric., 1952: 6). In other words, the policy was to reduce run-off to a minimum.

#### *b. Gully control on arable land.*

The construction of graded drains and banks to check gully formation was considered to be an essential part of land use and thus the responsibility of the farmer himself.

"To construct these protective works mechanically at Government's expense would relieve the cultivator of all concern and undermine the principle of self-help and of Swazi national responsibility for soil and water conservation".

It was accepted, however, that voluntary labour would fail to do the job properly and timely. The solution found was to make money available under the Rural Development Scheme to subsidise the digging of communal diversion drains by local cultivators in the hope that personal association with the scheme would lead to adequate maintenance of the works afterwards (Dept. of Agric. 1953).

#### *Constraints for soil conservation on Swazi Nation Land*

Most of the annual reports of the Agricultural Department mention lack of controlled grazing as the major constraint to soil conservation. According to the annual report of 1952.. "there has been no general progress with grazing control and run-off from overgrazed hillsides continues unabated and practically uncontrollable".

Lack of maintenance of established grass strips is also mentioned as a constraint but one which gradually becomes less important. "Although maintenance still leaves much to be desired in that the strips are by no means restored to their full width of 6 feet and get little deliberate care to make them effective, their value is being more widely acknowledged each year as the initial weed growth gives way to a good cover of thatching grasses (*Hyparrhenia* spp.)" (Dept. of Agric., Annual Report 1954). Persons causing damage to grass strips were fined up to £2 or £3 by Native Courts created in 1952.

#### *The Central Rural Development Board*

In 1954 the King created the Central Rural Development Board (CRDB) by an Order-in-council (Order no. 4 of 1954). Its terms of reference include amongst others:

- to submit to the King periodic reports covering the state of the country's natural resources, i.e. soil, water, flora and fauna;
- to approve (after thorough discussion with His Majesty) resettlement schemes and other agricultural projects that have been prepared by the local people assisted by the technical officers of Government;
- to insist on the practical involvement of people in rural development projects;

One of the major reasons for the very slow progress made in the field of soil conservation in the pre-1949 period was the lack of cooperation in this work by the Chiefs (Livestock and Agricultural Development, Annual Report 1946: 29) which, in fact, meant that these activities were not supported by King Sobhuza II. This changed, however, in the beginning of the fifties and the creation of the CRDB in 1954 is only one illustration of the full support of King Sobhuza II to the conservation of Swaziland's natural resources. Without his backing grass strips could never have been established in such a short period.

#### *Soil Conservation on European (Individual Tenure) Farms.*

Specific arrangements were made to promote the conservation of natural resources on European farms in Swaziland. In 1951 the Natural Resources Board was created in order to carry out the natural Resources Act. The Board had three major functions:

- a. except in respect of Swazi areas, to exercise supervision over natural resources;
- b. to stimulate by propaganda and such other means as it may deem expedient, a public interest in the conservation and improvement of natural resources;
- c. to recommend to the Minister the nature of legislation it deemed necessary for the proper conservation, use and improvement of natural resources.

The natural Resources Board organised, amongst others, demonstrations of soil conservation methods and equipment, lectures on pasture management, research on grazing control, stock limitation on cattle ranches and grazing management on sheepfarms. As such the Natural Resources Board played an important educative role for the European farmers, which led to an early acceptance of conservation farming methods.

### III. *The period of 1960-1970*

In 1960 the total length of grass strips laid out fell, for the first time since 1949, to under 1.000 miles. This was because almost all cultivated land had grass strips by that time. For this reason a change of emphasis was proposed. This was made clear in an appendix to the Development Plan 1960 - '64 in which is stated that '... as is obvious from a number of areas, grass stripping by itself is not sufficient to halt erosion, and must be augmented by a carefully planned system of mechanically constructed discharge furrows". 85 miles of contour furrows had already been constructed by soil conservation mechanical units in the Ngwavuma catchment area in the South but the policy now became to speed up the construction by expanding the number of soil conservation mechanical units.

Another task of these units was the construction of small storage dams. In fact, most of the work of the soil conservation mechanical units was spent on the construction of small storage dams and, as shown by table 2, the allocation to soil conservation was negligible in this period.

*Table 2: Work done by the Soil Conservation Mechanical Units in period 1965-1970 \*1).*

	1965	1966	1967	1968*2)	1969	1970
Dams (hours worked)	18040	13330	16094	-	16996	12959
Dams (number)	19	35	53	-	18	4
Dams (storage; million of gallons)	860	353	503	-	735	1280
Roads (hours worked)	3417	1592	4217	-	4712	3707
Conservation and miscellaneous *3)	548	4111	3598	-	50	588

\*1) In some years, such as 1965 and 1967 the units were involved in construction of roads for foot and mouth cordons.

\*2) Author found no data for 1968.

\*3) Conservation and miscellaneous includes bush clearing.

*Source:* Annual reports Department of Agriculture.

In 1966 the Government of Swaziland made an important agricultural policy statement. It declared that "the immediate and prime goal of Government agricultural policy is the rapid development of agriculture in the Swazi Nation areas". This could be realized by the selection of a number of Rural Development Areas in which concentrated and coordinated intensive development programmes will be applied by all departments concerned ....

Plans for the Rural Development Areas had to include the following features:

- provision of a village site for the houses of non-farmers, for shops, schools, etc.
- consolidation of fragmented arable land by mutual arrangements, enclosure and sub-division of grazing areas

- adequate communications and soil and water conservation works
- the limitation of livestock numbers to carrying capacity
- the aggregation of spare arable land in blocks, to be issued by Chiefs to new farmers.

(Annual report Dept. of Agriculture 1966: 17-18).

In the Development of Expenditure Proposals for the period 1965 - 1968 published by the Government in 1966 some specific statements were made with regard to soil erosion and soil conservation:

- (1) soil erosion measures are not keeping pace with erosion (p. 6);
- (2) in terms of the new policy (1966) and following the reorganization of the soil conservation section, soil and water conservation work will be increasingly confined to the selected Rural Development Areas in Swazi Nation Land;
- (3) self-help will figure more prominently in soil and water conservation work (p. 7).

As a result of the new policy the Mechanical Soil Conservation Units were moved to Rural Development Areas to assist in the implementation of agreed area plans. In 1970 the Rural Development Area Programme received an important impetus with the acquisition of donor funding. The programme is funded by British bilateral aid with the exception of "land development" activities (soil conservation, road construction, etc.), which are financed by USAID.

#### IV. *The period of 1970-1977*

The Rural Development Area Programme concentrated its activities in this period on 4 RDA's: the Central RDA, Southern RDA, Northern RDA and Mahlangatsha RDA, which were selected on basis of, amongst others, their agricultural potential and the interest of the local population to participate in development efforts. The RDAP comprised many elements such as: improvement of extension efforts, input supply, tractor hire services, construction of dipping tanks, road building, land consolidation and soil conservation. A highly remarkable aspect of soil conservation efforts in this period is the complete abandonment of grass strips in favour of a system of (short-based) terraces. Grass strips were now considered to be inadequate for the protection of arable land and, as a result, they were destroyed on those sites where terraces were constructed.

Heavy earth-moving equipment for terrace construction and road building was bought by the Government of Swaziland in 1971 with a \$ 1.8 million loan from USAID, and in 1972 a \$ 1.855 million grant was provided for technical services, participant training and other AID assistance closely related to the activities covered by the 1971 loan. (USAID, RDA Infrastructure Support Project Paper 1978: 16).

In 1972 the Soil Conservation Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture was transformed into the Land Development Section which is responsible for the implementation of all development works, such as soil conservation, construction of dams, feeder roads and bush clearing. The Land Development Section works on the basis of area development plans prepared by the Land Use Planning Section of the Ministry of Agriculture. Such area development plans are elaborated in consultation with the chiefs and the local population but they need to be approved by the CRDB before they can be implemented. Table 3 shows the achievements of the first phase of the RDAP in the field of soil conservation. The number of hectares terraced each year are extremely variable.

*Table 3: Hectares terraced during RDAP I (1970-1977).*

1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	total
425	370	1810	1526	578	1155	1398	7262

Source: USAID, 1978

The following reasons are provided by the USAID Infrastructure Support Project Paper (1978: 17/18) for the disappointing results.

- a) Due to excessive equipment downtime and a lack of sufficient equipment, the momentum of the RDAP has slowed considerably.
- b) The Land Development Section workshop has lacked the managerial and technical talent necessary to maintain the earth-moving equipment at an acceptable level of downtime.
- c) Both the MOA's Land Use Planning Section and Land Development Section are severely understaffed and underequipped to complete and implement the land use plans necessary to achieve current RDAP land development targets.
- d) Earthmoving equipment provided under the 1971 loan has now depreciated in value as it is close to the end of its estimated life.
- e) With the expansion of the RDA's from four to eighteen, the need of additional equipment and effective maintenance is critical to the success of RDAP

Although the Hunting report (1983; E8) states that good terracing was done in the first four RDAs, Spaargaren (1977), a soil scientist at the Ministry of Agriculture, was highly critical of the achievements as is shown by the following remark.

"In the past few years, the standard of soil conservation measures viz. terracing, grassed waterways, have proved to be expensive, land consuming and sometimes even erosion inducing".

In addition, there is an absolute lack of participation of the local population in soil conservation activities, which is to a large extent the result of the total reliance upon the use of heavy equipment. As the population did not participate in the construction of terraces, it is not surprising that these were also not maintained by them.

According to Spaargaren, only a few heavier soils on steeper slopes (over 7%) need to be terraced and he strongly recommends the use of properly designed, maintained and propagated grass strips. His findings and recommendations were to a large extent adopted by USAID's feasibility study team which in 1977, at the request of the Government of Swaziland, examined the cost-effectiveness of soil conservation practices. USAID's feasibility study team proposed a modified conservation system for arable lands (Haslem, 1977: 36-37), including:

- termination of terrace construction on slopes in excess of twelve percent and conversion to permanent improved pasture;
- installation of grassed waterway outlets preferably two years or, at least, one year in advance of terracing so that a stable grass cover can be established prior to use;
- reinstall or realign improved grass strips where this measure is included as a component of the modified conservation system;
- acquire the needed additional heavy equipment to facilitate the modified programme in the expanded RDAP;
- provide the needed management, training, manpower and materials to keep this machinery running efficiently and effectively;
- consider the use of improved grass strips rather than recommended terraces in areas where constructing an outlet would be excessively expensive or where terraces would be inappropriate or extremely difficult to construct;
- ensure that all conservation measures installed will be adequately maintained.

#### ***V. The period of 1977-1983***

The Third National Development Plan for the period of 1978/79 and 1982/83 reflects the rather ambitious targets of the second phase of the RDAP (1977-1983).

Some of the specific targets to be met by 1983 or earlier are;

- to reclaim or execute conservation work on 10,000 hectares of agricultural land;



- by 1979 to establish and define criteria of livestock overgrazing for the various ecological zones of the country;
- to increase the annual offtake of the national cattle herd to 12 percent and to seek means of controlling overall number of grazing stock, etc. (Government of Swaziland, Third National Development Plan, 1978: 75).

Elsewhere in this Development Plan it is stated that "during the plan period, 18.000 hectares are to be terraced and 80 dongas are to be reclaimed (p. 80).

During the second phase of RDAP, the number of RDAs were expanded from 4 to 18 and a distinction was made between maximum and minimum input RDAs. Maximum RDAs benefit from a whole range of development activities, such as land development (including soil conservation), livestock development, road development and social infrastructure, whereas minimum input RDAs benefit only from improved extension and credit services.

Tables 4 and 5 summarize the achievements of RDAP II in the field of soil conservation. They show a large discrepancy between targets and achievements. The Hunting report (1983; E7) remarks with regard to this: "On the arable land there never was a serious (erosion) problem, so the low achievement of the terracing programme is of no consequence". It is interesting to note that a mission of USAID for the evaluation of the Rural Development Areas Support Project arrived at conclusions similar to those of the Hunting team. Their report (1983: 13) states that "Soil conservation is not as critical a problem as was believed in the mid 1970s, and the demand for roads and domestic water supplies has increased".

Table 4: Soil conservation in multi-donor funded RDA's physical plans and progress (1977/78-1982/83)

	Terracing (full)		Terracing (reduced)		Grass Strips (remov.&real.)		Grass Strips (remov.only)		Donga Rehabilitation	
	work plan	achieved	work plan	achieved	work plan	achieved	work plan	achieved	work plan	achieved
1977/78	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1978/79	600	-	1150	-	1600	-	1750	-	10	3
1979/80	450	-	1000	-	900	-	1350	-	6	-
1980/81	600	-	1000	-	1000	-	1000	-	15	-
1981/82	700	680	1000	-	1000	-	1000	-	12	-
1982/83	<u>1000</u>	<u>1200</u>	<u>1000</u>	-	<u>1000</u>	-	<u>1000</u>	-	<u>10</u>	-
total	3350	1880	5150	-	5500	-	5100	-	53	3

Source: Hunting report, 1983 table G.1.

Table 5: Soil conservation in UK-funded RDAs - physical plans and progress 1976/77-1982/83)

	Terracing		Grass Strip removal		Donga Rehabilitation	
	workplan	achieved	workplan	achieved	workplan	achieved
1976/77	-	153	-	-	-	-
1977/78	-	-	-	-	-	-
1978/79	2181	83	1850	-	19	-
1979/80	3225	600	2900	-	13	-
1980/81	2835	551	1700	-	17	-
1981/82	3625	455	3900	-	17	1
1982/82	<u>1450</u>	<u>1050</u>	<u>2500</u>	-	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>
total	13316	3057	12850	-	74	2

Source: Hunting report, 1983 table G.5.

According to this mission, two factors contribute to the changed setting. Firstly, the Swazi people in the RDAs are exerting greater 'influence' in establishing priorities and their priorities differ from those of the experts. Secondly, the need for extensive land terracing and other major soil and land structures has been found to be less than was originally envisioned. The evaluation team did not find indications of serious erosion on the arable land.

It is, at the least, remarkable that after a USAID involvement of more than ten years in soil conservation and an expenditure of millions of dollars in loans and grants<sup>2</sup>, which was always justified on the basis of an observed serious degradation of the land resource base, soil erosion is suddenly no longer a critical problem.

Before identifying some elements for a soil conservation policy based on past and present experience, it may be useful to determine first whether or not soil erosion in Swaziland is a serious problem.

### *3. Is soil erosion a problem in Swaziland?*

There is not a simple answer to this question, the main reason for this is that erosion and run off have never been measured, which is in itself surprising given the long history of soil conservation in Swaziland (almost 4 decades) and the millions of dollars spent in this field. As a result statements, about how serious soil erosion is, will always be subjective to a certain degree.

Over the past 40 to 50 years several authors have claimed that soil erosion is a serious problem in Swaziland (Evans 1932; Faulkner, 1944; Scott, 1951; I'Ons and Kidner, 1967; Spaargaren, 1977; USAID, 1978).

In a seminar on 'Overgrazing and livestock development' (Ministry of Agriculture 1978: 16) the situation was described in the following way: "In many areas all vegetative cover has been lost and the soil is exposed to erosive forces. Immediate measures are needed on 228,000 hectares, according to a recent land planning survey. At the present rate of soil loss over 300,000 hectares have a life expectancy of less than 50 years and thereafter will be barren".

In the Rural Development Areas (RDA) Infrastructure Support Project paper (USAID, 1978: 16) the situation of the land resource base was described in equally dramatic terms, but reference was made to the situation on cultivated lands rather than on grazing lands. "Physically, the nature of the soil itself is such that conservation measures are needed. Most of the arable land of the RDAs have a slope of 3 to 10% with relatively shallow soil. Root zones are less than 18 to 24 inches and topsoil is less than 10 to 12 inches. Also intensive rains are common and the soils are unprotected by plant foliage during most of the year since all of the crops are clean tilled. Under these conditions, much damage has been done by soil erosion. Much of the surface soil has been lost as indicated above, and the remaining root zone of much of the crop land is less than 45 cm in depth".

According to a recent evaluation of the Rural Development Areas Programme by Hunting Technical Services Ltd. (1983: annexe E) documents seeking to justify rural development projects often invoke the idea of serious erosion and rapid deterioration of the land resource as one of the justifications for the programme. In this respect, the evaluation refers to the RDA Infrastructure Support Project paper 645-0068 quoting Spaargaren's estimates of erosion from 25-35 tonnes/ha/year and to Evans' (1932) and Faulkner's (1944) state -

<sup>2</sup> For the second phase of RDAP, USAID provided a loan of US\$ 5.6 million for equipment and a grant of US\$ 7.1 million for technical assistance to the Land Development Section and the Land Use Planning Section (Hunting report 1983, E13).

ments that human and livestock pressure had literally worn out tracts of the area in the south which have been inhabited the longest. However, the Hunting report continues "all of these are subjective opinions without supporting evidence". The same applies to the only optimistic view - that "erosion is the main observable soil problem on grazing grounds, although it does not seem to have worsened appreciably over the past 15 years (Murdoch, 1970: 235)".

Using the Universal Soil Loss Equation (USLE), for which relevant data are either lacking or insufficient, as well as the few data available on sediment transport in rivers (Pitman et al, 1977, 1981), the Hunting report argues that there does not seem to be a serious (sheet) erosion problem in Swaziland.

#### ***4. Some elements for a soil conservation policy based on past and present experience***

1. Given the present state of confusion because of a lack of quantitative data one cannot but recommend the initiation of a research programme measuring erosion and run off on arable land and rangeland. Such a research programme should also include testing the impact of soil conservation and range management techniques on erosion, run off and yields.
2. Grass strips are well-known by Swazi farmers, easy to install and low-cost; terraces on the other hand are difficult to construct and relatively costly. As long as data on soil erosion and soil conservation are lacking, the most careful approach will be "to concentrate on grass strips and only install terraces where absolutely necessary and farmers agree to maintain them" (Hunting report, 1983, vol. 1: 249).
3. At the local level there is a clear need for a more intensive dialogue between extension agents and farmers about major principles of resource management (incl. soil conservation, range management, herd management, afforestation, etc.)
4. More emphasis should be given to local participation in the design, execution, monitoring and evaluation of resource management projects.

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#### 14. A LANDED PROLETARIAT? COMING TO TERMS WITH A CONTRADICTION IN TERMS

Margo Russell

At the outset let it be said that what is at issue is not the fact of what Marxists gloomily call massive capital penetration in Swaziland<sup>1</sup> which had been slowly gathering momentum since the turn of the century, suddenly to accelerate after World War II<sup>2</sup>, nor of the central place of wages and waged work in the economic strategy of most contemporary Swazi homesteads (Russell 1982, 1983). What is at issue is the usefulness of class concepts developed in the rather different circumstances of nineteenth century Europe to capture the parameters of the particular social formations of contemporary Africa and of Swaziland in particular.

Such doubts have been expressed before.<sup>3</sup> (Worsley 1972, p.226; Cohen 1972, p.237; Sandbrook 1975, p.12). Sandbrook and Cohen (1975, p.2) welcomed the "extension and modification to Eurocentric portrayals of the [African] working class" made by some contributors to a 1973 conference on this theme. But a difficulty with the Marxist paradigm dominant in social analyses of the Third World is that to appear to quarrel with any part of it is to bring upon oneself not only intellectual but moral censure: one has become the victim of "imperialist hegemony" (Glavanis 1981) one is not merely wrong but bad.

Because of the central role of the proletariat in Marx's analysis of capitalism - both the source of capital through exploited labour and the victor over capitalism through revolutionary consciousness - there is particular hesitation to conceptualize wage workers in other terms, despite a sensitivity to discrepancies between the position and role of wage workers in Africa and the West. Yet there is a problem "of conceptualising in class terms .. people who do not fit snugly into either the 'worker' or 'peasant' pigeonhole", (Cliffe 1979, p.150) which arises from the widespread persistence of access to land, the importance of which as means of production will vary from case to case, but will usually entail "a continuing attachment to the peasant social formation" (Cliffe 1979, p.150). Cliffe's own suggestion for Zambia, that the peasantry be seen as predominantly female, linked through marriage to a predominantly male working class, is surely a bizarre use of the concept of class.

Most writers signal some allegiance to the Marxist paradigm by retention of the notion of proletariat if only in its softer form, proletarianization, with its implication that although the class does not yet exist in its pure form it is in the process of becoming. Such a formation seems in line with Marx's own account of the slow development of European wage labourers into a cohesive and eventually revolutionary force. Sandbrook (1975, p.12) describing Kenyan workers says that while, in view of their access through land to the means of production, they cannot be regarded as full proletarians, through their increasing commitment to long-term employment they are an *embryonic proletariat*. First (1977) describes Mozambican miners as worker-peasants who, unable to reproduce their households and their agricultural plots without spells of wage-work, have experienced "an *incomplete and impermanent* proletarianization". Stichter (1975) argues that capitalism on the periphery breeds a distinctive proletariat (p.22) some of whose members are "*partially proletarianized*" (p.22) or "*semi-proletarianized*" (p.21), and suggests that proletarianization refers either to increasing necessity for wage work, or to the fact that the

<sup>1</sup> For an earlier statement of some of the ideas developed in this paper see Russel 1982.

<sup>2</sup> See Alan Booth's account in this volume.

<sup>3</sup> Since completing this paper I have read Lloyd's extensive coverage of this topic in 1982.



work has shifted to wage work (p.23).<sup>4</sup> Similarly Arrighi and Saul (1968) distinguish "the proletariat proper" (p.285) from "semi-proletarianized peasants periodically engaged in wage employment" (p.291). Winter (1978) argues that the working class in Swaziland is "*not a permanent proletariat*" (p.35). Standing (1981) suggests that semi-proletarianization, while a "transitory phenomenon in the development of capitalist structure of production" may nevertheless characterize "a protracted phase of that development" (p.7).

Most analyses concur that the chief hinderance to full proletarianization, access to land, is not likely to go away, either because capital wills that it should remain (Wolpe 1975, Legassick and de Clerq 1978, Cliffe 1979, Bettelheim 1972) or because of "the tenacity of specific communities to resist incorporation" (Martin 1980), "the inability of capital to carry through a total destruction" (Ajulu 1981).

The rural connection, serving everybody's interests, thus looks set to remain a continuing feature of African wage work, valued both by the capital 'penetrators', as providing not only a subsidy to wages but a cheap pool of labour, and by the 'penetrated' to whom it represents, minimally, a source of subsistence, but often very much more.

We have, in short, a *landed proletariat*, which is of course a contradiction in terms, which, properly grasped, may lead to new insights into the structuring of interests of wage workers in Africa, however labelled.

In Marx's analysis it is the landlessness of the labourers that forces them into their only option, to sell their labour power to the bourgeoisie in return for a wage which allows them only to survive, not to accumulate. The Roman *proletarius*, from whom the word derives, were landless, they lacked *familias*, property (Briefs, 1929).

Faithful to this model, some writers on Africa look for evidence of either actual landlessness, [settler appropriation and over-crowded reserves], or effective landlessness through the degradation of land or the manipulation of markets and terms of trade to render surplus production an unattractive option. In these analyses, land is EITHER valued and seized, suggesting the classical paradigm, OR it is devalued as a means of production; although people have land they merely 'scratch a living' from it (Kimble 1981) or 'eke out a subsistence' on it (Magubane 1983).<sup>5</sup> Cliffe argues both alternatives for Zambia; where people engage in cultivation excessive clearing of the bush leads to soil erosion; and where they do not the lack of bush clearance also leads to a breakdown in shifting cultivation (Cliffe 1981, p.155).

In either case the intrusion of opportunities for work has 'maimed' the indigenous mode of production. Typically rates of out-migration are taken as evidence of the inability of the land to sustain the population.

An equally convincing explanation for the persistence of migrant labour (though not its genesis which was often extremely coercive) is that juxtaposed capitalism with its organizational and technical efficiency<sup>6</sup>, and its range of consumer commodities, is able to offer through money wages (exploitative as they technically are) access to a wider range of options than ever existed or now exists in the "indigenous system", leaving aside the question of the extent to which the natural economy is in a "crippled state.... a travesty of its former self" (Marx 1913, p.301). One is not so much driven as pulled into wage labour.

In Swaziland wage work is a choice (constrained as all social choices are) to be able to buy machine-milled refined maize meal, granulated sugar, Singhalese tea and

<sup>4</sup> Balance in source of income offers an appealing working definition which I have used (Russell 1985, p. 601, note 3) but, I argue here, it is conceptually weak.

<sup>5</sup> J. Simons (1969) reckoned that miners' families produced 45-60% of their household income from the land.

<sup>6</sup>"The most highly developed historical organization of production", Marx, 1913, p. 300.

acrylic jerseys which capitalism produces, packets, advertises and delivers, through at least six hundred small Swazi traders, supplied by a few big non Swazi wholesalers.

Land, the theoretical alternative to wage labour, is available to all Swazis and most avail themselves of it. "The mere fact of being a Swazi ... does give one the inalienable right to some place to live and cultivate" (Hughes 1972, p.247). The right is accorded to a homestead by one of some two hundred chiefs who administer sixty per cent of the country on behalf of the king, who has legal title to this portion of the country on behalf of the people. The remaining land is held on freehold, originally by settlers, now joined by large investment companies, and by a small but increasing number of black Swazi freeholders<sup>7</sup>. Some four per cent of Swazis live on freehold as squatters and farm labourers. In return for a pledge of allegiance (Khonta) a married man can receive from a chief land sufficient "to satisfy the needs of himself and his family" (Hughes 1972, p.128).

The average size of such an allocation is presently two hectares of arable land plus some sixteen hectares of grazing land, the latter being the theoretical share to each homestead of communal grazing land: in practice (De Vletter, 1983) only sixty per cent of homesteads have cattle, and the herd size of any one homestead is unrestricted by any theoretical per capita considerations. The average is eighteen head, but the range is from one to over a hundred.

The system of communal land tenure, putting power into the hands of chiefs, also thus puts resources discreetly into the hands of the successful accumulators in the form of free grazing, and is thereby insulated from criticism from a group who might otherwise have interests in its demise.

Arable lands are more evenly distributed, the average also being the norm for the fertile middleveld where population is concentrated. Under prevailing agricultural practice, as measured annually since 1975 by sample survey, two hectares of land can produce at least 2,700 kilos of dry maize annually<sup>8</sup>, or sufficient to meet the annual prevailing maize consumption of ten adults<sup>9</sup>. Ten people is indeed the average homestead size (four being adults of whom on average two are absent, usually at work). These aggregate figures suggest that the goal of the 'traditional' land distribution system, to meet but not exceed the homestead's need for its own food, is still practicable. Only eight per cent of the country is presently under crops as against a World Bank assessment (1977) that twenty-two per cent of the land is arable.

*Table 1: World Bank Assessment of Swaziland land use potential, 1977*

Arable	22 %
Poor arable/good grazing	20 %
Wet land	3 %
Grazing	26 %
Steep and rocky	29 %

But aggregate figures mask maldistribution. A more painstaking breakdown by Testerink of land distribution in relation to household size for a sample of 632 households in 1982/83 showed that a quarter of homesteads have insufficient land to grow more than 125 % of their annual maize supply: at the other extreme at least 18% have sufficient land to grow more than 200 % of their requirements (Testerink 1984,

<sup>7</sup> In November 1984 10 % of freehold parcels were in private black ownership.

<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Agriculture in 1984 (a year of good rainfall) found an average yield of 3,958 kilos per 2 hectares. See Ministry of Agriculture extension Service, 1984, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Following Fowler (1980) and Testerink (1984).

more than 200 % of their requirements (Testerink 1984, pp.2-7)<sup>10</sup>. Following Testerink's (high) standards, at least 75 % of households could be self-sufficient in annual basic foodstuffs from their land.

The practice is quite different. In 1982/83 three quarters of all households bought more than half of their household annual maize requirements: nor was this pattern much affected by size of landholdings except insofar as the largest landholders are the least self-sufficient in maize (Testerink 1984, Table 12).

*Table 2: Swazi household maize-purchase behaviour 1982-1983*

N = 632

	Households with land less than 125% of subsistence need	Households with sufficient land but who sell no crops	Cash croppers with land below 200% of subsistence need	Cash croppers with land above 200% of subsistence need
Percentage of sample	27.1 %	38.4 %	16.1 %	18.4 %
Percentage purchasing maize	73.1 %	79.4 %	73.5 %	72.8 %
Percentage of annual maize requirement purchased	58 %	56.4 %	56 %	67.6 %

*Source:* Testerink (1985) Tables 1 and 12.

It should be added that 1982/83 was a dry year but, as Funnell (1981, p.18) has shown, poor rain affects one year in three. De Vletter's figures for 1978 (1983, Table 8) showing only 52.3% to have purchased some maize, are better but not much better.

The picture is clear. Swazis buy a lot of basic food even when they have the land to grow it. Furthermore they buy it despite the fact that in 1977 the cost of buying maize was four times the cost of growing it (Low and Fowler, 1980); despite twelve years of a rural development programme worth E43 million (De Vletter 1982) and aimed at transforming Swazi subsistence cultivation into "semi-commercial" farming (Third National Development Plan 1978-83) and despite a national drive for maize self-sufficiency. They buy it because they have money, chiefly from wage work, but also indirectly through sale and purchase of services in the informal sector, and from money transfers between kin. Men in the prime of life are expected by kinsmen to seize opportunities and earn money by selling their labour power.

These expectations have been shaped over almost a century, since the rinderpest decimated herds and the Transvaal imposed a stiff head tax (Parsons and Palmer 1977); since in 1914 Queen Regent Labotsibeni (with a shrewd grasp of the importance of money

<sup>10</sup> Testerink, concerned with the production of surplus crops, was interested only in the holders of land adequate for this purpose, not with maldistribution per se.

Partition Proclamation of 1907 (Youe 1978; Crush 1980.) By the late thirties Kuper observed "The Swazi are expected to depend on the European trader for essential goods and on the European labour market for money to buy them" (Kuper 1947, pp.56-57). Wages earned at work are still used for taxes and for cattle purchase, but they also allow participation as consumers in the world of commodities that has interpenetrated the older self-sufficient world of more limited options: at first cloth rather than skins, matches rather than flints, tea and coffee as well as beer; later radios, tape players, watches, bedroom suites, chrome and plastic kitchen suites, and dozens of smaller household objects - vases, ornaments, saucepans as well as cosmetics and underwear, now toted back from wholesalers in Johannesburg on buses and mini-buses by self-employed women trading in other women's grass-and-bead-handicrafts, exploiting kinship links in South Africa and selling on credit to neighbours back home (Russell 1984).

Until 1950 opportunities for wage employment in Swaziland were limited. The 1946 Census shows less than 5,000 jobs amongst a *de jure* African population of almost 200,000 local wagework for only 2.5% of the population. By 1956 employment within Swaziland exceeded migration to South Africa, which, by 1976 had shrunk to a fifth of all jobs in a population of half-a-million, in which 40% of all people over fifteen were in wage employment (De Vletter 1982, p.54).

By 1982 the skill profile of the domestic workforce<sup>11</sup> reflected the widening range of opportunities in an economy in which foreign investment was courted with sensitivity, (Economic Review 1982, p.8) often in partnership with Swazi capital, most importantly Swazi monarchy's capital from the mineral royalties which passed at independence in 1968 from the British to the Swazi Crown.<sup>12</sup>

*Table 3: Skill profile of formally employed Swazi workforce 1982*

	Men	Women
Professional and technical	4.1 %	5.8 %
Administrative and managerial	2.1 %	0.5 %
Clerical	6.4 %	5.3 %
Skilled manual	4.2 %	0.1 %
Semiskilled manual	12.5 %	1.3 %
Unskilled manual	45.0 %	12.7 %
All (100%)	74.3 %	25.7 %

*Source:* Government of Swaziland, Employment and Wages 1982.

In 1978 a national survey confirmed the very wide spread of Swazi participation in wage labour: 82 % of all rural homesteads had some member in paid employment, with an average amongst these of two workers per homestead, most of whom worked (and lived) away from home but within Swaziland (De Vletter 1983). Constrained by complex obligations their wages filter back to the rural sector as direct payments to parents, wives, lovers, and indirectly as cattle, houses and agricultural inputs (Russell 1985). The continuing salience of the rural connection is shown in the fact that only 13 % of a sample of men in work disclaimed any active rural connection (Russell 1983,

<sup>11</sup>The population of Swaziland (last census 1976) is approximately 666,000. The formally employed are some 120,000 to 130,000, of whom 100,000 are within Swaziland. Seventy-three per cent of these are in the private rather than the public sector. Twenty-three per cent are women.

<sup>12</sup>There are two royal investment corporations: Tibiyo Taka Ngwane, which now generates sufficient capital from its investments, passed mineral royalties into Tisuka Taka Ngwane in 1983. Both corporations publish accounts but are not publically accountable. See Daniel's paper in this volume.

*Table 4: Gross Domestic Product, Swaziland, 1981*

Agriculture, Freehold land	15.7 %
Agriculture, Swazi Nation Land	4.9 %
Forestry	2.1 %
Mining	3.8 %
Manufacturing	25.2 %
Construction	3.7 %
Public Administration	13.3 %
Distribution and Hotels	11.2 %
Other, including banking, transport and real estate	19.9 %
	100.0 %

Source: De Vletter 1982, p.44.

*Table 5 : Growth of domestic employment in relation to migrant labour from Swaziland*

	de jure Swazi population	Absentees(1) as % of population	Employment in Swaziland as % of population
1911	104,533	5.6	Nil
1921	110,295	5.43	2.8
1936	153,270	6.23	2.2
1946	181,269	4.78	2.7
1956	229,744	5.1	5.8
1966	381,687	5.03	15.8 *
1976	520,184	4.93	20.0 *

Source: de Vletter 1982, p.54.

(1) Not all absentees are in employment. Survey figures for 1978 suggest that 78% of them are likely to be, half in the mines. See De Vletter (1983), Table 3, p.20.

\* Figures include the self-employed and "irregular employees": regular wage earners are perhaps only two-thirds of this number in each instance. See Notes to De Vletter (1982) p.54.

p.21), others contributed on average 4.2 % of their annual wages towards the annual cost of ploughing and planting the subsistence crops, which 98 % of all homesteads grow.

Cash cropping is much rarer. Only 1% of Nation Land (14 % of 8 % cultivated) was put to cash crops in 1983 (CSO Annual Survey of Swazi Nationland 1982/83), and only one-fifth of households had cash income from crop sales, for half of whom such enterprises yielded less than E100 per annum (Testerink, Funnell and Freund 1985, p.52).

Several incisive analyses (Funnell 1981, Low 1982, 1983, Low and Fowler 1980) account for Swazi avoidance of cash cropping [despite massive government expenditure on appropriate infrastructure] in terms of simple economic rationality.

Table 6: Cash Income from Crops 1982-83

Annual cash income from crops E	Percentage of households with crop income
0	79.3
1-50	5.9
51-100	3.2
101-250	5.7
251-500	2.8
501-1000	1.7
1001-2000	1.3
2001-10000	0.2
All	100
Mean annual income from this source per participant	E 256

Source: Testerink, Funnell and Freund (1985) Table 25, p.52.

"One member of a household working away at the mines could bring in an income very nearly similar to that provided by *improved* farming involving all the household." (Funnell 1981, p.21.)

This economic rationality is underpinned by Swazi norms whose origins can be traced to the 'traditional' system of land distribution: for not only is one expected not to 'make money' out of access to Swazi Nation Land, (to do so can provoke accusations of witchcraft and banishment, Kuper 1947), but distribution of fields *within* the homestead puts the monopoly of all surpluses in the hands of the head, who is also able to command resident homestead labour. Such internal structuring of access to homestead resources promotes wage employment as a route to relative autonomy over time and product - though even here strong norms ensure a return to the homestead of a share of earnings, (*pace* Kimble 1981 and her contempt for "anthropological hang-ups"), (Russell 1985).

No traditional moves inhibit the making of money from other homestead-based entrepreneurial activities. De Vletter in 1978 estimated that 41 % of all rural homesteads were generating income from petty commodity manufacture or services, although only 12.4 % of homestead cash income on average was generated this way (De Vletter 1973, p.47). Matsebula in 1983 found that the informal sector accounted for 8.8 % of all employment, but that only 26 % of informal businesses generated net incomes of more than E 100 per month, with an average net income of E 46<sup>13</sup> (Matsebula 1985 and 1987 this volume). Three quarters of all informal entrepreneurship is by women.

In 1930 Kuper estimated that Swazis grew only one-fifth of their own food supply. But the deterioration was not sustained. In 1960, 70 % of production income was derived from the land, 20 % from wages, 10 % from cash raised in other activities (Hughes 1964, p.262, 258) Forty per cent of homesteads had no wage income (Ibid, p.273.). By 1978 wage income had risen to 46 % of rural homestead income (De Vletter 1983,

<sup>13</sup>Minimum wages are reviewed annually under the Employment Act of 1964. For unskilled labourers they ranged in 1983 from E 33 monthly in agriculture (14 cents an hour) to E 133 in motor engineering (66 cents an hour). Actual wages are reckoned on average to be 10% higher than these minima. See Annual Wage Orders for each industry.

p.47) and the proportion without wage income had fallen to 18 %. In 1983 wages accounted for 69.5 % of all rural homestead income in central Swaziland (Russell and Ntshingila 1984, p.1). For that same year the Central Statistical Office, Swaziland, reported, "an astounding 82.2 % [of all cash income] from wage transfers" (GOS-CSO, 1982/83 Annual Survey of Swazi National Land [1985]).

All evidence points to a tighter embrace of capitalism by Swaziland: but does this imply a proletariat or a process of proletarianization? Gutkind has argued that "any labourers whose labour is commoditized to produce surplus value for which they are not rewarded are 'authentic' proletarians" (p.187). But this is to stress only one half of the essentially symbiotic relationship between workers and capital. It is a capital-centred view. "Authentic proletarians" must, in addition to being thus exploited [in a purely technical Marxist sense], be dependent. The relationship between capital and proletariat thus has two aspects:

- (a) what the proletariat is to capital (an indispensable source of surplus value), and
- (b) what capital is to the proletariat, (an indispensable means of subsistence).

While there can be no doubt of the universality of the first, the second holds only when labourers have been deprived of all other access to the means of subsistence.

"If he is to be assured continued subsistence he must continue to market his abilities, in as much as the price they bring him gives only enough money to meet his running expenses ... In this continuing renewal of the wage-earner group we find the essential character of ... the proletariat" (Briefs 1929, p.23).

Gutkind errs in his statement that the labour of African workers is "as commoditized as the labour of those who are viewed as fully proletarianized" (1983, p.187). To the contrary, this same worker sometimes works for himself, to produce use-values from his land. His labour is less commoditized: it is only intermittently commoditized. For long periods it is likely not to be commoditized at all.

As compared with the landless labourer, the landed labourer is in a structurally different relationship to capital, no matter how great or small a proportion of his income derives from wages. For the landed labourer wage work is a choice. In Swaziland it is a choice to widen the narrow options that are entailed in living exclusively off the land. It is a decision to commoditize one's labour in order to acquire the commodities capitalism offers, and to share in the services of an increasingly monetized state.

This argument implies that land is still a real resource. At most homesteads people are housed, warmed, fed, entertained with minimal expenditure of earned wages. Wages can consequently be accumulated, and invested, often as cattle, or in the means to increase agricultural productivity, or education to improve the rewards to the next generation; sometimes as entrepreneurial capital for homestead-based enterprises. The system of deferred pay in the South African mines and its popularity with workers testifies to its status as extra income rather than the means of subsistence. It is because earnings can be accumulated in Swaziland that petty entrepreneurship features so widely. Wives are set up in the business of brewing, trading, dressmaking; men acquire and hire out vehicles or establish rural retail trading outlets.

The *genesis* of wage-labour in Swaziland is a problem for historians. Secondary sources suggest a constellation of the usual precipitators, tax, land expropriation, drought, cattle-plague, effecting on the whole a rather benign transition to wage labour, which was enjoined upon all young men by the Queen Regent as a means of raising revenues for the Swazi monarchy to buy back the lands which had provided so handsome a source of revenue for itself through concessions<sup>14</sup> till rudely alienated as freehold and Crown Lands by the colonial government (Youe 1978, Crush 1980.)

The persistence of wage labour can be understood as consequence of the new terms of exchange brought about by the juxtaposition of capital in South Africa. The most far-reaching change was not the decline in the area of land available (even so stern

<sup>14</sup>The Transvaal in 1898 paid the Swazi monarch one thousand pounds a month for the concession to collect all its concession revenues. Youe 1978.

a critic of colonialism as Crush shows that partition deprived people of title rather than access to land), nor the decline in game and other wild foods which the increased population, both indigenous and European, effected, but in the value people now placed on their labour and their products. Through commoditizing their labour people could, and did, have instant access to the seductive world of woollen blankets, gramophones, cast iron grinding mills, enamelled plates, etc.

Wage employment diverted the labour of younger men, but from national service under the monarch rather than the homestead (See Kuper 1947b). The shift in the early twentieth century from millet to maize as the staple homestead cereal may have been a response to homestead labour shortage. The Swaziland Ministry of Agriculture calculates that it takes fourteen man-days to produce one hectare of maize as against more than sixty to produce a hectare of millet (GOS-MOA Crop Profitability Guide 1982). Its effect must have been to release homestead labour for employment. The shift from hoe to ox-drawn plough at about the same time pulled men, the cattle-keepers, into the agricultural cycle. The seasonal nature of this involvement accorded well with the short-term wage employment contracts of the mines.

The rural homestead lands are still able, as they once were, to produce food sufficient to keep body and soul together, to fatten and reproduce cattle and goats, to yield firewood and building poles and grass for sleeping and grinding mats. But the people aspire to more than that. Since the discovery that capital expands at the expense of labour, it has become hazardous to suggest that capitalism might nonetheless have positive consequences for those who become labourers in the system. The flood of labour to capital is attributed to direct and indirect coercion rather than to a simple choice of economic maximizers facing new options. First (1977), in an otherwise incisive analysis, weakly suggested that Mozambican labourers were victims of the propaganda of mine labour recruiters, though her analysis itself demonstrated the effectiveness of such labour to generate amongst some peasants sufficient capital to raise themselves into the middle peasantry, and her central policy preoccupation was with how the independent socialist state might supplant this valued South African source of wealth.

In suggesting that African workers with land are not 'dependent' for subsistence on wages I am suggesting that their original economic base has not been 'eroded' by capitalism, but simply rendered comparatively (and selectively) less attractive. In Worsley's words, "the countryside can no longer support them, certainly not in the style to which they have become, not so much accustomed (for they live miserably) but to which they aspire ... Their expectations are indeed rising" as they experience "newly generated relative deprivation" (1972, p.210). Similarly the Ugandan railway workers in Uganda worked to maintain "a standard of living far above subsistence level". They were committed "not only to a high level of consumption but to conspicuous and competitive consumption" (Grillo 1975, p.62.).

All this is a far cry from Bernstein's image of the African peasant and wage worker whose labour is all "expended in order to meet the costs of simple reproduction" (1977, p.54). The frequency with which Swazis opt for wage labour casts doubt on Wallerstein and Martin's generalization (1979, p.195) that "labour under the imperative of capital is longer, harder and *less rewarding*". (My emphasis.)

The choice is constrained in different ways for people of different ages and sexes as a consequence of the 'traditional' patterning of access to land. Homestead heads, with their right to monopolize surpluses from homestead land, usually choose not to work. De Vletter (1983, Table 3) shows 78 % of homestead heads in full-time management of the homestead resources. Homestead heads in work anticipated imminent retirement from wage employment, often as homestead based self-employed entrepreneurs. But all homestead heads had been employed for wages at some previous time (Russell 1983) since young men are expected to find paid work and to share their earnings with parents, and through parents, with siblings. In this way they escape their irksome



subordinate role as homestead labourer, or labour pawn to the Royal household (though the latter can bring its own rewards, including land).

Married women supply the bulk of homestead labour, and work for wages only when they can sell their skills for a high price. Hence the high skill profile of women in formal employment. Unmarried (but not necessarily childless) women work either under their mothers at home, where their labour, like that of their mothers, can at best provide surpluses which the homestead head appropriates, or seek wage work. In a national sample Armstrong (1985) found that 88 % of working women had children, 35% were married<sup>15</sup>. The internal structure of the homestead inhibits the production of agricultural surpluses, as do the wider community norms. The combined effect is to inhibit inequalities arising from land ownership. Employment is a much more potent source of inequality.

Access to communal lands entails tribute labour in Swaziland. Contrary to Martin's sweeping generalization, (1980, p.29) tribute labour in Swaziland coexists with extensive wage labour: but there are tensions, and Swazi workers are quick to exploit them. In April 1985 the newly appointed Labour Commissioner toured all major industrial establishments and addressed work forces with the enigmatic message that "All work belongs to the King" (Times of Swaziland, April 1985), presumably an attempt to quieten workers' demands for time off to make tribute, (which may be welcomed as a distraction from wage labour). The Farmdwellers' Protection Act of 1982 specifies the occasions when the King's demands take precedence over the farmer's for labour. In 1978 45.5 % of all homesteads claimed to have provided tribute labour directly to king or chief, as distinct from 11.5 % who had merely provided labour "labour to the community" (De Vletter 1983, p.69).

It is thus evident that labour in Swaziland is not 'free' even in the most elementary sense; chiefs command the labour of subjects, old women command the labour of daughters-in-law, adults command the labour of children. Kingship and kinship both limit individual freedoms; the ideal type Western proletariat who "economically ... is completely responsible but only to himself" (Briefs 1929) or who is "masterless and propertyless" (Taylor, Preface to Briefs 1929) does not exist, despite a century of wage work. Nor need one be "mesmerized by the communal and redistributive aspects of African social formations" (Kimble 1981, p.143) to see that in Swaziland the rules for redistribution are clear, respected, and undoubtedly inhibit the crystallization of some inequalities as clearly as they create others (Russell 1985). Pfefferman (1968 cited in: Cohen 1972) apparently shows a similar redistribution of earnings for Senegal.

Kimble argues that though the migrant labourer in Lesotho "retains some access to the means of production ... land, cattle, tools etc. At the point of urban production the same migrants can clearly be seen to be wage labourers, free from the means of production and dependent on a wage for subsistence" (p.134). But why at the point of entry to urban production *should* we see them as 'free from the means of production', since we know from her (and Spiegel 1981) that those with work are precisely those who also have 'some access to the means of production'?

Grillo likewise suggests that the railway workers in Uganda "in that they are dependent on employment for their livelihood ... are in the same position as any member of the industrial proletariat" (1975, p.62) and again, "that they are thus dependent for their standard of living on the sale of their labour and that they are proletarians in a more orthodox sense" (1978, p.180). But of course they are not orthodox proletarians nor are they in the same position as any member of the industrial proletariat, for "The farm may subsidize income" (1975, p.48). "At home it (food) is free, or rather the major cost is labour which is of course provided by wives, children and perhaps other relatives" (1975, p.48). The rural home also provides "a livelihood and security in time

<sup>15</sup>Including of course the 3% widowed and divorced. Two thirds were married by Swazi law and custom. Armstrong 1985, pp. 10-15.

of difficulty or in the future after retirement. It was often said by informants that a man might need his land should he become unemployed" (1975, p.48).

As for their "livelihood", it is as we have already seen "a standard of living far above the subsistence level including the whole range of goods characteristic of a modern consumer society" (1975, p.62). The "dependence" of these African workers on wages is not, as is the classic Marxist proletariat, for survival, ("labourers who live only as long as they find work" [Marx 1935, p.212]) but for what Arrighi and Saul (1971, p.29) call "discretionary consumption". Saul and Woods note that wage labour is to meet "new needs" (1971, p.107); Stichter that it is to meet "new wants" (1975, p.29).

The rediscovery of the implications of imperialism in the Seventies by social scientists has generated a lot of theoretical excitement, especially amongst those working in Africa where generalizations are often better emotionally than empirically grounded<sup>16</sup>. The discovery of the manipulative power of capital has tended to blind us to the capacity of pre-capitalist structures to creatively adapt to or selectively resist new options. The assumption of the inevitable proletarianization of Africa is such a generalization, but case studies of African workers (First, Grillo, Sandbrook) point to structural features which suggest a more complex adaptation to capitalism than the classical paradigm allows. The African worker/peasants are indeed a "complex social category" (Cliffe 1981, p.116) which cannot be reduced to a simple class identity.

Worker/peasants are not unique to Africa. Briefs (1929, pp.107-108) reminds us that in the nineteenth century "the great mass of Russian [industrial] workers" were "bound to soil and to village home" (p.108). "In the interior of Russia the proletarians (sic) remained more or less attached to the soil, many of them cherishing a treasured plot of land in some remote village ... they had no inclination towards revolution" (p.107) and Briefs suggests they were "not proletarians in the strict sense of the word" (p.107). Froehlicher (1982) notes the persistence of part-time agriculture in France, Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Miljovski (1980) makes the same observations for Yugoslavia. The same surely holds true for much of southern Europe. Comparative study, away from the confusing heat of colonialism and imperialism, may prove rewarding.

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<sup>16</sup>And may well be defended as such by astute social scientists who assent to the proposition that ideas are real in their consequences.

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