

# Historical background to South African migration

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This chapter contains a historical overview of cross-border migration to South Africa (that is, migration from Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana and Namibia to South Africa), as well as a historical perspective on internal migration within the country.

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

Drawing on the literature, three streams of movement to South Africa from neighbouring countries are identified: contract mine migration, other categories of voluntary migration, and refugee migration. These are discussed in the first section of this chapter.

The post-apartheid political, social and economic changes of the 1990s brought about some changes in South Africa's internal migration patterns. Some dimensions of internal migration do not have the same relevance they had in the past, while others are probably continuing in spite of the changes that have taken place. New trends can also be observed. To understand these trends, an analysis of the historical context is of particular relevance. In the second section of this chapter, a historical perspective of internal migration in South Africa is thus given, and issues such as migration to urban areas, the government's measures to control migration to the cities, and the government's responses to African urbanisation are discussed. Finally, in the third section some concluding remarks are given.

# Cross-border migration

## *Contract mine migration*

### EARLY LABOUR MIGRATION

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

However, the discovery of diamonds and gold was not the beginning of labour migration in the region. By the time of the discovery and mining of diamonds in the Kimberley area in the late 1860s, a system of labour migration had already been established. Bapedi men, from Sekhukhuneland (which covers parts of Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces) had worked on farms and public works in the Cape Colony as early as the 1840s, and this had increased in the subsequent three decades. In the same period many Basotho were working on farms in the Orange Free State. According to Delius (1983), the Bapedi participated in migrant labour mainly to obtain cash to buy rifles, since they were experiencing external military threats (from the Zulus and Swazis, as well as from the colonists), and for hunting purposes. They also wanted money to use for 'bride wealth' (*lobola*) and to buy agricultural implements. The Basotho mainly participated in labour migration to enable them to buy guns and agricultural implements, although the importance they placed on bride wealth should not be underestimated (Turrell 1987: 22).

Since the 1850s the Tsonga (also known as the Shangaan) had been travelling from the Delagoa Bay area to Natal to work for wages, and in the 1860s Mozambicans (from the Gaza, Inhambane and Lourenço Marques districts) worked as seasonal workers on farms in the Western Cape (Katzenellenbogen 1982: 37). Writing about migration to the diamond fields in Kimberley, Turrell (1987: 23) observes that the Tsonga workers migrated to engage in labour migration due to a number of factors that impacted on their rural economy. Examples of such factors were the hunting-out of game, the redirection of the trade routes and the presence of the Portuguese colonial power in their area. Wage labour thus emerged as a means of improving a young man's standing within the web of kinship relations and, in order to earn wages for bride wealth and consumer goods, the Tsonga men participated in wage labour.

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

The change in mining methods from opencast to underground extraction in the early 1880s created a need for a stable, skilled labour force. To achieve this, the Kimberley mine owners provided housing for mineworkers in closed compounds (Turrell 1987: 149–150). By introducing compounds on the diamond fields, mine owners ensured a continuous, controlled and cheap labour force. Besides the obvious short-term benefits for the mine owners, there were also long-term economic and political advantages. Over time, migrant labourers became experienced yet affordable workers, but various statutes and regulations prevented the establishment of an organised black working class in white urban areas. This pattern of large-scale utilisation of cheap labour, and the control of labour by means of pass laws and the compounds, was the beginning of a system that dominated migrant labour in South Africa for more than a century (Wessels & Wentzel 1989: 6–7).

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

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

Between 1890 and 1899 the total number of Africans employed on the gold mines rose from approximately 14 000 to 97 000. Although labourers from all over southern Africa and further afield went to the gold mines, most mineworkers came from the former Portuguese East Africa (Van der Horst 1971: 136). On the eve of the Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902) about 60 per cent of the unskilled labourers on the gold mines were Mozambicans. A labour agreement between the Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR) and the authorities in Portuguese East Africa was signed in 1897 and was operative for more than a century (Jeeves 1985: 187–188). Since Portuguese

East Africa was deemed a very important labour supply area, the 1897 labour agreement was reconfirmed in 1901 – even before the end of the Anglo-Boer War – by the signing of the so-called *Modus Vivendi* between British officials and the Portuguese authorities in Mozambique (Van der Horst 1971: 161).

Why did men migrate, sometimes over very long distances, to work in mines on the Witwatersrand? According to Katzenellenbogen (1982: 37–38), it was because they needed to earn money, and on the mines they could secure the highest wages. Cash was needed because of changes in the economic structures of communities. Furthermore, colonial taxation practices and forced labour laws contributed to the movement of people. It was also important to earn cash to pay *lobola*. African men were also frequently encouraged to migrate by their chiefs who, in many instances, co-operated with recruiting agents who paid them a fee for each recruit.

#### SUPPLIER COUNTRIES: 1920–1990

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

- long-standing supply countries such as Mozambique, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland;
- episodic supply countries such as Malawi and Zimbabwe;
- occasional supply countries such as Zambia, Tanzania and Angola.

For many decades Mozambicans were the main source of labour on the South African mines. As mentioned earlier, a labour agreement between the ZAR and the authorities in the former Portuguese East Africa was already signed in 1897. Other labour agreements followed. When Mozambique gained independence in 1975 the labour agreements between South Africa and Mozambique were left unchanged. In November of that year, the number of Mozambican mineworkers reached a high of 127 000. However, in the mid-1970s, in response to increasing unemployment within the country, the South African authorities started to implement a policy of preferential employment of South African workers on the mines. This, as well as other factors, resulted in a drastic decline in the number of recruited migrant mineworkers from Mozambique. By April 1977 the number had fallen to about 35 000, but it gradually increased thereafter (Van Aswegen & Verhoef 1982: 154–154). In 1997 the official figure for in-service Mozambican workers on the South African mines was about 83 000 (De Vletter 1998: 12). According to a media statement by the Department of Labour, about 60 000 Mozambicans were working on South African mines in 2003 (Department of Labour 2003).

As has already been mentioned, workers from present-day Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland had been involved in labour migration even before the discoveries of diamonds and gold. However, before 1973, no official labour agreements had been signed with these countries. Labour relations and arrangements between the South African authorities and these former British High Commission Territories were governed by the informal inter-territorial undertakings that had existed since colonial days. In 1973 South Africa signed bilateral labour agreements with both Botswana and Lesotho. A similar agreement with Swaziland followed in 1975 (Breytenbach 1979: 17–25).

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

Since 1977 Lesotho has been the main supplier of labour for South African mines. In 1990, about 108 000 Basotho workers were employed on the South African gold mines, with a slight drop to about 100 000 in 1995 (Crush 2000: 15). However, since the early 1990s the numbers of miners overall, and from Lesotho in particular, have fallen fairly rapidly, due to mine closures and retrenchments. Thus, by 2003 the number of workers from Lesotho in South African mines was estimated to be about 60 000 (Cobbe 2004: 3).

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

Initially Southern Rhodesia (later Rhodesia and now Zimbabwe) prohibited the employment of black Rhodesians outside the country. This policy resulted in numerous Rhodesians resorting to clandestine migration to South Africa. By 1966 between 50 000 and 75 000 black Rhodesians were known to be employed in South Africa. This compelled South Africa and Rhodesia to enter into an agreement regarding administrative arrangements for travel documents, recruitments, repatriations, ports of entry and so on. It was agreed that South African employers would not recruit black Rhodesians, although an employer could re-engage a person employed previously. However, a 1974 agreement between the Rhodesian government and WNLA lifted the prohibition on the recruitment of Rhodesians for South African gold mines (Breytenbach 1979: 32–33). After Zimbabwe gained its independence in 1980, the government announced that it would not allow active recruitment of its citizens for employment in South Africa, although people would not be prevented from seeking or taking up employment in South Africa (Whiteside 1988: 20).

As early as 1904 arrangements were made between WNLA and the colonial authorities in Nyasaland regarding recruitment of workers for the South African gold mines. In that year 5 000 Malawians went to work on the South African mines. In 1913 the government of the Union of South Africa prohibited the recruitment of any Africans from areas north of 22 degrees south latitude, due to the high mortality rate caused by pneumonia and other lung diseases. This ban on the recruitment of labourers from the Tropical Territories was lifted in 1937 (Van der Horst 1971: 221). In 1938 an agreement was formalised between WNLA and the authorities in Nyasaland regarding the recruiting and employment of workers from Nyasaland on the South African mines. The largest number of Malawians working in South Africa in any single year was in 1973 when there were almost 140 000 workers (Breytenbach 1979: 30). However, after a WNLA plane crash in 1974, in which 72 Malawian

workers were killed, the Malawian government ended all external recruitment of labour on the grounds that it was not safe (Whiteside 1988: 19). Consequently, the number of Malawian labourers in South Africa dropped dramatically. In 1977 recruitment in Malawi was again allowed, but stopped in 1988 after a dispute over HIV testing (Crush 2000: 16).

Countries such as present-day Zambia, Tanzania and Angola did not contribute a large proportion of foreign migrant workers to South Africa. After the independence of both Zambia (1966) and Tanzania (1967), these countries prohibited all labour migration to South Africa (Breytenbach 1979: 29). Since the middle of the 1970s the recruitment of Angolans for work on South African mines has been stopped (Crush 2000: 15) and no new drives have been undertaken since then.

#### MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MIGRANT LABOUR SYSTEM IN SOUTH AFRICA

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

The idea of an African labour force entering the country only on a temporary basis was in accordance with the South African government's policy of preventing the settlement of African people in urban areas. This principle was, with others, captured in a number of laws, for example the Native (Urban Areas) Act (Act 21 of 1923) and the Native (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act (Act 25 of 1945). (More information on these acts is provided later in this chapter.) Pass laws were used as influx control mechanisms to apply the conditions stipulated by these laws (Wentzel 1993: 3).

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

Oscillating migration served the interests of the mining industry, as it meant that labour was cheap. Normally the employer only had to pay the worker enough for his upkeep and to have a small surplus in order to attract him back to the mines. Another way in which the migrant labour system benefited the South African state was that the social and economic costs, normally associated with the support of a productive workforce, were externalised with regard to foreign workers (International Labour Office 1998: 9–10).

Participation in the South African mining economy came to be of major importance to the domestic economies of several countries in the region. For example, the system of compulsory deferred payment (and the voluntarily deferment of wages) constituted a significant proportion of the foreign exchange earnings of Mozambique and Lesotho. In the 1980s remittances from Basotho labourers working

in South Africa accounted for about half of the country's gross national product (GNP). By 1994 about 40 per cent of the Basotho male labour force was employed in South Africa, and their remittances accounted for a third of the Lesotho GNP. In 1997 mineworkers' remittances contributed 32 per cent of Lesotho's GNP (UNDP 1998: 29).

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

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

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

Since the late 1970s patterns of migration to the South African mines 'stabilised' as miners became professional mineworkers. According to the current system, trained and skilled mineworkers are employed continuously on the mines and return home for a fixed period of annual leave. Normally the mineworkers also work at one particular mine throughout their careers (Wentzel 1993: 4). While most Mozambican mineworkers still go home only once a year, Basotho miners are close enough to make more frequent visits home (De Vletter 1998: 3).

In 1995 the South African government offered permanent South African residence to mineworkers from other countries who had been working on the mines since 1986 and who had voted in the 1994 election. Yet only about half of the eligible miners applied for the amnesty. Two studies by the Southern African Migration Project (SAMP) amongst miners and their wives in Mozambique and Lesotho (De Vletter 1998; Sechaba Consultants 1997) explain the reasons for this. Apart from ignorance about the amnesty and confusion and misinformation about the consequences of permanent residence on a variety of issues (for example pensions, taxes, visas, land rights, recruitment procedures and deferred pay), there were also other reasons for not applying for amnesty. It seemed that miners with resources in their home countries did not want to become permanent South African citizens, while those who did apply saw this as a strategic option for acquiring certain benefits. For example, permanent residence would allow miners to seek other employment in the event of retrenchments or job dissatisfaction. Importantly, both Mozambican and Basotho miners remain attached to their home countries, even though some had spent many years working in South Africa, and most respondents did not want to become South African citizens.

Throughout the twentieth century at least 40 per cent of the South African mine workforce was non-South African. This figure peaked in the early 1970s at over 80 per cent (Crush 2000: 15–16) and, by the late 1990s, 60 per cent of the mine

workforce was of foreign origin (Crush 2003: 3). Thus, over the years, hundreds of thousands of male migrants from the southern African region have spent most of their working lives in South Africa.

### *Other categories of voluntary cross-border migration*

#### OVERVIEW

Apart from contract mine migration, other categories of voluntary cross-border migration between South Africa and its neighbouring countries can be identified, covering the following broad 'other' groupings:

- Skilled immigrants: mainly highly skilled, professional, semi-professional, managerial and technical people;
- Documented migrants: temporary residents in possession of permits, visitors, and those with business, study, medical or work permits;
- Undocumented or unauthorised migrants: migrants who entered South Africa clandestinely without proper or any documentation, or acquired false papers before or after entry; migrants who entered South Africa legally, but whose permits expired and therefore became prohibited persons in terms of the former Aliens Control Act of 1991 (as amended in 1995) and the current Immigration Act of 2002; contract workers who illegally stayed on in the country after the expiry of their contracts.

#### SKILLED IMMIGRANTS

In the late 1980s, a brain drain of skilled and professional migrants from the southern African region to South Africa and Botswana gathered pace. During this period South Africa and Botswana were the only regional countries that could offer real income growth in the more highly skilled occupations, hence professionals were keen to move to these two countries.

African countries accounted for an estimated 30–40 per cent of all skilled and professional legal immigration to South Africa between 1982 and 1988, with Zimbabwe contributing 90 per cent of South Africa's immigration from Africa during the early 1980s – the result of post-independence white emigration (International Labour Office 1998: 12). Economically active immigrants to South Africa from Zimbabwe peaked at 1 144<sup>1</sup> in 1988, and then declined almost steadily to 221 in 1994. Economically active immigrants from Lesotho increased from eight in 1986 to 76 in 1990 and then declined to 38 in 1994 (Presidential Commission to Investigate Labour Market Policy 1996).<sup>2</sup> Immigration from Botswana, Swaziland, Mozambique, Zambia and Malawi peaked in 1990–01, then declined for the next few years until 1993, and all experienced a small increase in 1994 (Presidential Commission to Investigate Labour Market Policy 1996).

Although, overall, the number of economically active immigrants from the region has declined since 1988, the proportion of professional immigrants has increased, in contrast to the proportion of people in clerical, sales and artisan occupations, which decreased over the same period.<sup>3</sup> In absolute terms, the number of professional immigrants from the region fluctuated from 361 in 1988, to 233 in 1992 and to 259 in 1994 (Presidential Commission to Investigate Labour Market Policy 1996).

In 2001 the number of documented immigrants to South Africa was 4 832, of which 538 (11%) were from South Africa's neighbouring countries. About three-fifths (61%) of the documented immigrants from neighbouring countries came from Zimbabwe, 22 per cent from Lesotho, seven per cent from Mozambique, six per cent from Swaziland, four per cent from Botswana and less than half a per cent from Namibia (Statistics SA 2002: 20–21).

#### DOCUMENTED MIGRANTS

Since 1990 there has been a dramatic increase in legal cross-border movement within the southern African region, from less than 500 000 in 1990 to 3.3 million in 1995. The bulk of this cross-border traffic consisted of people moving temporarily to South Africa for various non-work related reasons, for example tourism, visiting relatives, medical attention, shopping and education. Only a small proportion of these entrants were in possession of work permits. However, some of those people did work illegally or engaged in informal sector and other trading activities once inside in the country (International Labour Office 1998: 11).

Various studies<sup>4</sup> have found that many migrants from neighbouring countries exhibit circular movement patterns between South Africa and their home countries. Some migrants come to South Africa for a relatively short time, for example, women involved in cross-border trading, who usually do not stay longer than a month before returning to their countries of origin. Other migrants may enter South Africa for prolonged periods of time before returning home. Although these people come to South Africa in search of economic opportunities, many have no intention of settling permanently in the country. Many have dependants in their countries of origin to whom they send remittances and consumable commodities bought in South Africa.

#### UNDOCUMENTED OR UNAUTHORISED MIGRANTS

Initially the term 'clandestine emigrant' applied to all Africans who went to work outside their country without obtaining official permission (Katzenellenbogen 1982: 108). Since governments were generally more interested in monitoring movement than in controlling it, passes were relatively easy to obtain. The borders presented no real obstacle to people who wanted to move in the southern African region. Although most migrants went to urban areas to look for work, some also found employment on commercial farms.

South African recruiting organisations could officially recruit males in the southern African region, but the official recruiting of females was not allowed. Women from the neighbouring countries who worked in South Africa were regarded as 'clandestine workers'. Women did, however, migrate more and more to South Africa of their own accord and not because they were simply following their spouses and partners. Cockerton (1997) indicates in a study on the migration of Bechuanaland women to South Africa that Tswana women's migrancy in the post-1920 period differed substantially from previous trends. The Tswana women were predominantly motivated by economic reasons to travel to South Africa and in particular to the Witwatersrand, as described here by Cockerton:

Not only were the numbers of those involved completely unprecedented but the earlier pattern of married women accompanying or joining husbands or moving short distances to work on white farms was completely transformed. Perhaps the most important feature of this era was the emergence and consolidation of new categories of female migrants. These were the divorced, the deserted, the widowed, the childless and the single woman migrant. (1997: 49)

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

Since the earliest colonial times, workers from present-day Mozambique, Lesotho, Botswana and Zimbabwe entered South Africa to work as seasonal workers on commercial farms (Van der Horst 1971: 288). Initially, non-South African farm workers were formally recruited and came to South Africa on contract. However, since temporary farm workers became increasingly accessible to employers in South Africa, recruiting became unnecessary and many farmers employed undocumented workers from countries such as Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Lesotho. Consequently, the South African Department of Home Affairs made special arrangements to regularise the status of undocumented farm workers by allowing post hoc registration and the issuing of temporary residence and work permits under Section 41 of the Aliens Control Act of 1991. These special arrangements applied primarily to certain farming areas in Mpumalanga and the Northern Province (now Limpopo) (Crush 1997b: 16–17). Many farmers did not utilise this system and did not register their workers, mainly because they had a high labour turnover and the chances of prosecution were very slight. In these circumstances registration was not an attractive option (International Labour Office 1998: 13).

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

### *Refugees in South Africa*

Although several thousand refugees arrived in South Africa in the 1990s from Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other countries further afield in Africa, a vast majority of South Africa's refugee population was Mozambican, as a result of the civil war in their country in the 1980s. Preceding this flow of refugees, Portuguese colonists in Mozambique and Angola had fled to South Africa during the mid-1970s when independence from Portuguese colonial rule had been granted to those countries. During that period many Angolans and Mozambicans were granted rights of citizenship and permanent residence in South Africa. It is difficult to determine the exact number of emigrants from those countries during that period.

However, nearly 7 000 of the Mozambican refugees who entered South Africa were formally accepted as immigrants between 1974 and 1976 (RSA 1976, 1977).

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

The South African government of the time refused to recognise the Mozambicans who had fled into the country as refugees, and thereby deprived them of international assistance. This action forced thousands of refugees to become economically active in the country of destination. In many instances they worked illegally on commercial farms in Mpumalanga, as well as in urban areas. In some instances refugees even went to Gauteng to take mainly low-skilled jobs, for example on construction sites (Hough & Minnaar 1996).

Although Frelimo and Renamo signed a peace accord in October 1992, drought and food shortages continued to drive Mozambicans to South Africa. In 1993 the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that there were 250 000 Mozambican refugees in South Africa. At the end of March 1995, when the UNHCR's repatriation programme ended, only 32 000 of these Mozambicans had been officially repatriated (Hough & Minnaar 1996: 114–115).

The South African Department of Home Affairs estimated that there were at least 90 000 documented Mozambican refugees in South Africa in 1996. An estimated 60 000 permits were issued to Mozambican refugees, allowing them to work (Presidential Commission to Investigate Labour Market Policy 1996). Many refugees did not want to return to their country and remained illegally in South Africa.<sup>5</sup> An HSRC study (Wentzel & Bosman 2001) found that some of those who returned to Mozambique after the war decided at a later stage to return to South Africa – the main reasons being that either their families had been killed, or they could not find employment in Mozambique, and because they were familiar with the situation in South Africa regarding employment, accommodation, etc. These former refugees thus form part of the category of migrants that came legally or illegally without contracts to South Africa as discussed in the previous section.

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

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

## Historical overview of urbanisation and internal migration in South Africa

### *Migration to urban areas*

It was not until the later decades of the 1800s that South Africa became an important part of the world economy. During this period most of the inhabitants of the country were occupied in subsistence agriculture, thus limiting urban settlement to the four harbour towns, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London and Durban (Gelderblom & Kok 1994). However, as South Africa became a modern capitalist economy, increased economic activities pushed various population groups to move to the cities.

At the end of the nineteenth century, white agriculture went through a period of crisis that led many Afrikaners to move to the towns. Together with other factors, crises in agriculture such as poor farming practices, depression and drought, led to the urbanisation of landless rural Afrikaners, known as *bywoners*, who were eventually compelled to move to the towns to survive. By 1936 about 50 per cent of the Afrikaners were urbanised, compared to less than ten per cent at the turn of the twentieth century (Giliomee, cited in Gelderblom & Kok 1994). Many of them were poor and had very few urban skills. As a result, the state undertook measures to address the 'poor white' problem.

Large numbers of unemployed Afrikaners were subsequently employed by the state through the so-called civilised labour policy. In other cases, government public works programmes and job reservation were put in place to protect white workers. Between 1924 and 1933 the number of unskilled white labourers on the railways increased from 10 to 39 per cent, while the number of unskilled African labourers decreased from 75 to 49 per cent (Giliomee, cited in Gelderblom & Kok 1994). Furthermore, semi-state industries such as Iscor also implemented the civilised labour policy, providing further jobs for poor whites. Pressure was also put on the private sector to implement this policy when government tenders were allocated. Afrikaner organisations such as the Reddingsdaadbond, as well as big new Afrikaner capitalist concerns such as SANLAM, Rembrandt and Federale Volksbeleggings – which mobilised Afrikaner savings and gave preferential employment to Afrikaners – also helped to solve unemployment among the Afrikaners. These actions by the state and private sector therefore allowed Afrikaner urbanisation to take place easily (Gelderblom & Kok 1994).

Unlike Afrikaner urbanisation, the migration of Africans to urban centres mostly took the form of labour migration. As early as the 1840s, a large number of African males had streamed to urban areas in search of work. The discovery of the first diamonds in 1867, and the opening up of the Witwatersrand gold fields in 1886, led to an explosion of economic activity in the urban centres of Kimberley and Johannesburg, creating both new market opportunities and a great demand for labour (Burger 2002).

As has already been mentioned, young African men participated in migrant labour to pay *lobola* and to obtain rifles (Turrell 1987). They were also encouraged by African chiefs, who were interested in the cash obtained from wage labour, to participate in migrant work (Harries, cited in Gelderblom & Kok 1994). The involvement of Africans in labour migration can also be explained by the taxes – hut, poll and labour – instituted by the government in the nineteenth century (and, in some places, earlier). These measures had made it necessary for Africans to become involved in the cash economy in order to pay these taxes. In situations where agricultural production was no longer an option, labour migration was an alternative for obtaining cash (Gelderblom & Kok 1994).

Another important source of African urbanisation relates to the conditions that led to the migration of Africans from the *platteland* (rural areas) where African squatter farmers rented land from white farmers, land companies and absentee landlords. With increasing urbanisation, which created many new markets for agricultural products and thus labour shortages, many white farmers saw squatter farms as a potential labour force. These farmers used their political influence to have squatter farming declared illegal, and the now-illegal squatters were distributed as labourers on white farms. However, the black labour tenants resisted these actions and attempted to use migration as an instrument for strengthening their bargaining position. By leaving the farms to work in town, they could deprive white farmers of their labour and thus get them to improve labour conditions (Gelderblom & Kok 1994).

The farmers understood the potential impact of their labourers' leaving, hence a number of government measures were adopted to immobilise labourers on white farms and to give farmers greater control over them. The Land Acts (Act 27 of 1913 and Act 18 of 1936) defined reserves for African occupation – termed 'scheduled areas' – and made illegal any black land purchases or rent tenancy outside these reserves (Burger 2002). After the promulgation of the Native Service Contract Act of 1932, white farmers gained control over the labour migration of all dependants of the chief of the kraal with whom they entered into a service contract. Dependants were subsequently encouraged to leave for the towns to perform migrant labour or to settle there permanently – though only if they obtained permission from both the farmer and the kraal chief. If any of the dependants refused to submit to this, the whole family would suffer (Lacey, cited in Gelderblom & Kok 1994).

The Natives Laws Amendment Act of 1952 placed further restrictions on the mobility of farm labourers. This gave rise to a system of labour bureaux that compelled African men not to leave a farm without the permission of the farmer (Greenberg, cited in Gelderblom & Kok 1994). Labour bureaux were further expanded in terms of the Black Labour Act of 1964. Despite attempts to immobilise

them, many labourers left the farms. Between 1936 and 1951 an estimated 280 000 Africans left the farms permanently (Nattrass, cited in Gelderblom & Kok 1994).

The combination of deteriorating economies in the African Reserves and the growth of manufacturing employment in the cities led to a dramatic growth in the number of urban Africans, with a high proportion of males. According to Lemon (1991), it is estimated that 31 per cent of the total African population had been urbanised by 1960, compared with 28 per cent in 1951. Between 1914 and 1960, the numbers of Africans in urban areas were estimated as shown in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1** Numbers of Africans in urban areas between 1914 and 1960

Year	Number of urban Africans
1914	336 800
1921	587 200
1936	1 146 700
1951	2 329 000
1960*	3 444 000

Source: \*Gelderblom & Kok (1994: 87), all other years, Lemon (1991:2–4)

All the above circumstances, including the high proportions of Africans in urban areas, led government to initiate measures to regulate the conditions under which Africans were permitted to live in urban areas.

### *Government measures to control migration to the cities*

#### THE ENFORCEMENT OF INFLUX CONTROL

Although thousands of Africans were involved in labour migration, many did not settle permanently in the towns, but remained migrant labourers. The state enacted several legal measures to regulate the movement of Africans and to ensure that they remained temporary residents in towns. The principle of temporariness was embodied in the system of influx control. The main reasons for influx control relate to the demand by employers for state regulation of the African labour market and the state's unwillingness to grant political rights to Africans in the common area (Gelderblom & Kok 1994). Given the number of legal measures taken over time to regulate the movement of Africans, this chapter will only outline those measures that severely limited the movement of Africans.

#### *The Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923*

Although legislation to regulate movement to cities was envisaged as early as 1912, state intervention began in 1923, and a draft Urban Areas Bill was enacted to embrace the conception of an African middle class with property rights in urban areas. Strong views on the need to limit the African urban population were expressed by both white labour and urban commercial capital, who saw their positions being threatened by a growing influx of Africans (Lemon 1991). The Stallard (Transvaal Local Government) Commission, which investigated the matter in 1922, came to this conclusion:

The native should only be allowed to enter the urban areas, which are essentially the white man's creation, when he is willing to enter and to minister to the needs of the

white man and should depart therefrom when he ceases so to minister. (Davenport in Unterhalter 1987)

In 1920 the Native Affairs Act came into being and paved the way for the establishment of a Native Affairs Commission, which was headed by the Minister of Native Affairs and made provision for the creation of a countrywide system of tribally-based district councils. These were to consider and make recommendations on any matter relating to the general conduct of the administration of Native Affairs. Three years later, in 1923, the Native (Urban Areas) Act came into force and was seen as having, to a large extent, entrenched the Stallardist principles (Lemon 1991).

The Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 empowered urban local authorities to set aside land for African occupation (not ownership) in separate areas known as locations and to house Africans working in urban areas. It also required employers to house those who did not live in the locations, and to implement a rudimentary system of influx control (Lemon 1991). Furthermore, landowners within five kilometres of proclaimed urban areas were prohibited from allowing Africans other than their employees to reside on their property. This provision was an attempt to prevent peri-urban congestion, the idea of a *cordon sanitaire*, but in the long run it proved to be impossible to police adequately (Gelderblom & Kok 1994).

The 1923 Act also sought to impose a form of influx control by allowing local authorities to deport Africans from their area if they were 'habitually unemployed' or did not 'possess the means of honest livelihood' or led an 'idle, dissolute or disorderly life' (Gelderblom & Kok 1994).

#### *The Native Law Amendment Act of 1937*

The machinery providing for systematic influx control was introduced in the Native Law Amendment Act of 1937. This Act allowed Africans a maximum of only 14 days to find work in an urban area (reduced to three days in 1945). Thereafter, if their job search was unsuccessful, they might be 'rusticated' if municipal returns showed a labour surplus. Controls over the entry of women to urban areas were reinforced, but at that stage did not require them to carry passes, without which the legislation proved difficult to enforce (Lemon 1991).

The Native Law Amendment Act of 1937 represented an increase in centralisation, by allowing the Minister of Native Affairs to compel a local authority to implement any section of the 1923 Act, or alternatively to have the section implemented by its own department. Furthermore, urban authorities were also compelled to keep a record of all Africans living in their area, and if the African population exceeded the labour requirements of the area, the Minister of Native Affairs could expel the 'excess numbers'. During this period, state urban policies were concerned largely with Africans, and in the late 1930s whites became increasingly concerned as Indians began to infiltrate predominantly white residential areas, especially in northern Durban, and the trading areas of Transvaal towns. White reaction was disproportionate to the scale and nature of such movement, but led to two 'penetration' commissions and the imposition of new restrictions on Indian occupation and ownership of property in 1943 and 1946 (Lemon 1991).

*The Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act of 1945 and the Natives Laws Amendment Act of 1952*

In 1945 a further restriction was added with Section 10 of the Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act, which allowed an African to claim permanent residence in an urban area only if he or she had resided there continuously since birth, had lawfully resided there for 15 years, or had worked there for the same employer for ten years. This measure became applicable only at the request of a local authority until the Nationalist government made it mandatory in 1952 (Lemon 1991).

The Natives Laws Amendment Act of 1952 laid the basis for all state intervention to control the distribution of African labour between town and country and between towns. Section 10 of the 1945 Act became mandatory and was extended to cover mineworkers who had been previously exempted. The Act also strengthened provisions for the expulsion of Africans deemed surplus to local labour requirements, and introduced the principle of influx control by means of canalising labour through labour bureaux in rural areas, from which permission to go to 'prescribed' areas had to be obtained (Lemon 1991). However, the labour bureau controls were largely ignored because these restrictions on urbanisation were not successful and African urbanisation continued to escalate (Posel, cited in Gelderblom & Kok 1994).

When it became clear that state policies were ineffective, the government undertook measures in the 1970s to ensure that as many Africans as possible would live in designated, often deeply rural, areas, later called bantustans or homelands. The government embarked on initiatives to improve circumstances in the homelands with a view to encouraging Africans to stay there and not move to towns, and to induce those already living in the common area to return to the homelands. In some cases it meant that African townships in towns and cities that were within commuting distances of a homeland were dis-established and rebuilt in a homeland. For example, the African township of Nelspruit was moved over 20 kilometres into KaNgwane, and Pietersburg's African township was moved into Lebowa. The expansion of all townships within a certain distance from a homeland was frozen after 1968. The increased urban population was supposed to be accommodated by new townships in the homelands. Pretoria and Durban are cases where such a policy was practised (Smit & Booysen, cited in Gelderblom & Kok 1994).

*The pass laws and the Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents Act No. 67 of 1952*

Influx control legislation, which was consolidated in the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923, had entrenched urban segregation and controlled African mobility by means of pass laws. These laws were intended to serve as a cornerstone of the government's policy of influx control, which was enforced against black people as a means of controlling domestic migrant labour. The pass system thus served to supply mines, farms and towns with labour, and where shortages occurred, it functioned to channel labour to sectors and areas where it was needed (Muthien 1994).

In 1932 the Holloway Commission, tasked with investigating the general economic circumstances of African people, recommended that the pass system be abolished

and that black workers resident in cities should be considered as permanent residents. Nothing came of these recommendations. Instead, influx control was intensified with various amendments to the Native (Urban Areas) Act (Unterhalter 1987).

During World War II the African National Congress (ANC) and its allies organised protests against the pass laws, and during 1942 the policing of these laws was suspended. This, however, would last for only a short while (Gelderblom & Kok 1994). The Fagan Commission in 1948, like the Holloway Commission, criticised the Stallard doctrine with its stress on the migrant labour system and the inhumanity of the pass laws, but the government mostly ignored them and became more proactive and vicious in its policies (Unterhalter 1987). Through the Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents Act No. 67 of 1952, the government consolidated the various documents that Africans had to carry into a single document. Despite its title, this Act did not abolish the passbook, but rather led to the rigid application of pass laws and extended their scope to women, who now also had to carry passes (Gelderblom & Kok 1994). The Act met with various forms of resistance throughout the country during the 1950s and 1960s.

Organised resistance was seen as both a response to the state's assault on black civil liberties and as a challenge to the legitimacy of the South African state (Muthien 1994). For example, the Women's Anti-Pass Campaign was launched at the beginning of 1950, and took the form of anti-pass conferences, mass rallies, marches and petitions against the extension of the pass laws to women. These events culminated in the historic national demonstration of more than 20 000 women at the Union Buildings on 9 August 1956, with thousands of petitions presented to the Prime Minister (Muthien 1994). On 21 March 1960 a protest march in Sharpeville to defy pass laws, resulted in the police killing and wounding many protesters in what came to be known as the Sharpeville Massacre.

#### *The Group Areas Act, No. 41 of 1950*

The Groups Areas Act, originally written into law in 1950 and eventually repealed in June 1990, was one of the cornerstones of racial segregation in South Africa. The essence of this legislation was that people of different racial groups were not allowed to live in the same residential area (Gelderblom & Kok 1994).

The operation of the group areas legislation was essentially urban, as many of its provisions applied elsewhere already. Group Areas radically extended control over private property. The Group Areas Development Act of 1955 provided machinery for compensation, but established procedures for regulating the sale price of property in the open market, and provided for expropriation of properties under a system of public acquisition for group area development (Lemon 1991).

A fundamental aspect of this act was the removal of the racially integrated areas found in numerous urban centres. These were problematic to the government because of their racial heterogeneity and because they had become major centres of black working class mobilisation in the post-war period. Their continued existence thus posed a threat to the government's ideal of racial segregation (Gelderblom & Kok 1994).

In urban areas where Africans were initially permitted to own land – like Sophiatown, Alexandra and Newclare in Johannesburg and Lady Selbourne in Pretoria – an amendment to the Native (Urban Areas) Act in 1937 made it illegal for Africans to purchase land in urban areas. State power in the group areas was extended in 1955 with the Bantu (Urban Areas) Amendment Act that enabled the government to abolish African freehold rights to their property (Unterhalter 1987). Furthermore, the government also made very little land available for township development, and this led to huge levels of overcrowding and to squatting.

The Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act, No. 52 of 1951 gave landowners, local authorities and government officials many ways of evicting people, including breaking down their houses to get them off the land. Many squatter settlements and areas where Africans had been able to own land were broken down during the 1950s, and their inhabitants moved elsewhere, with the result that they lost the security of land ownership (Gelderblom & Kok 1994). The areas where Africans could own land were bulldozed during the 1950s and their inhabitants were moved elsewhere, with the result that they lost the security of land ownership (Gelderblom & Kok 1994). The Surplus People Project (SPP) claims that between 1960 and 1983 some 3.5 million people were forced to move out of metropolitan areas and smaller towns into peripheral areas or to remote rural homelands (Platzky & Walker 1985: 9). The vast majority of relocated people were Africans, but a large number of people from other population groups were also forced to move in terms of the Group Areas Act (Omond 1985).

These forced removals inflicted great damage on the lives of those removed. Irrespective of the physical improvement or deterioration of housing conditions, many communities were emotionally devastated by the destruction of their community, and by being forced to live so far from the area in which they had grown up (Lemon 1991). The removals were accompanied by one of the biggest housing actions ever undertaken in South Africa when new townships, like Soweto near Johannesburg, and Atteridgeville and Mamelodi near Pretoria, were established. The houses built in these townships were for rent and not for sale, and their existence was therefore in line with the policy of urban African temporariness (Gelderblom & Kok 1994).

Urban segregation was, however, not achieved easily. The promulgation of the Group Areas Act did not register immediate success in its implementation. The Act was made effective only after its amendment in 1957. Its real impact was thus not felt until the 1960s and 1970s (Lemon 1991). Between 1950 and 1957, the government faced numerous obstacles to and inadequacies in its own plans. The Act was in fact quite weak in its exposition of practical plans for its implementation. Six years after its promulgation, only five group areas had been declared. Various administrative shortcomings, and opposition from political organisations, local authorities and the black urban population, also retarded its implementation (Nieftagodien 1996). For example, Indian property owners used the courts in long drawn-out battles to delay their removal. Some African freeholders also took legal action. The Johannesburg City Council refused to co-operate in moving Africans from freehold land to new townships. The central government responded by enacting new legislation, the Bantu Resettlement Act of 1954, to force local authorities to carry out these removals (Unterhalter 1987). On the eastern Witwatersrand in the 1960s, attempts were

made to concentrate coloured people at Boksburg and Indians at Benoni, but the proclamation in the 1980s of some 57 new coloured and 15 new Indian group areas suggested that such earlier policies of concentration had not succeeded (Lemon 1991).

In the mid-1970s, the cities and towns in South Africa were still not fully racially segregated despite strict enforcement of the Group Areas Act. The increasing numbers of middle-class black people able to afford houses in white areas led to more houses in these areas coming into black ownership, mostly via whites who acted, for a fee, as nominees on their behalf, or through closed corporation deals. In this way, a new generation of 'grey areas' was born in several major cities, especially Johannesburg. Such changes led to other pressures and strong demands for the repeal or drastic amendment of the Act (Cloete, cited in Swilling, Humphries & Shubane 1991).

In 1984 the State President requested the President's Council to advise him on the desirability of consolidating the Group Areas Act with the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act, the Slums Act, and the Community Development Act. The Council recommended that the respective acts should not be consolidated but insisted on the 'greying' of the cities. Consequently, three bills were tabled, of which one, the Group Areas Amendment Bill, sought to strengthen enforcement of segregation by substantially increasing fines for contravention by landlords, vendors and residents, and by making it obligatory for courts to evict people contravening the Group Areas Act. The Bill was however, rejected by the coloured and Indian houses of the tricameral parliament, referred back for consideration by the President's Council, and subsequently dropped. However, two other bills were passed. First, the Free Settlement Act of 1988 enabled the declaration of 'open' (non-racial) areas on the recommendation of a Free Settlement Board. The other, the Local Government Affairs in Free Settlement Areas Act provided for residents of a 'free settlement' area to elect a non-racial management committee (Lemon 1991). The establishment of these free settlement areas proceeded until the government announced in 1990 its intention to abolish the Group Areas Act the following year (Cloete, cited in Swilling et al. 1991).

#### STATE RESPONSES TO AFRICAN URBANISATION

The inevitable need for African urbanisation, to meet the changing needs of the economy, gradually became apparent to the government. Its first response was a search for ways of optimising labour flows within a modified apartheid framework (Lemon 1987). The basic strategy embodied in the Riekert Commission and a subsequent White Paper, was to widen differentiation between 'insiders' and 'outsiders'. Insiders would be free to change jobs inside the Administration Board area within which their Section 10 rights held, without recourse to labour bureaux. The apartheid government's idea was that, by making the best use of those Africans who already possessed Section 10 rights, the need to have more Africans moving to the cities could be minimised. However, attempts to translate the Riekert proposals into legislation failed, largely because of a conservative drafting that failed to entrench the rights of urban residents. Meanwhile, the legal definition of those who could potentially qualify for Section 10 rights was actually narrowed by the so-called independence of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei (Lemon 1991).

The machinery of influx control and labour allocations changed considerably after 1980. The centralisation of recruitment in new employment and guidance centres in or near African townships in larger cities increased the mobility of urban Africans and gave preference to local workseekers – as Riekert had recommended. After the onset of the recession in 1982, stricter controls were exercised over the entry into prescribed areas of black workers without Section 10 qualifications.

In the homelands there were breakdowns of labour bureaux and mine recruitment as the labour market contracted and the labour surplus grew ever larger, resulting in vast areas and populations being excluded from the urban labour market. However, many rural households had to have access to urban economies in order to survive, so various means of living within reach of urban employment were found, ranging from backyard shacks in formal townships to squatting within commuting distance of urban labour markets. By the end of the 1980s, there were many informal settlements in and around the urban areas and overcrowding of township housing reached high proportions in many areas. In the metropolitan areas people settled on whatever land they could find. Many faced eviction and relocation, while some were settled in newly established communities. Others were forced to settle even further from the cities (Lemon 1991).

The President's Council released a report in 1985, proposing the elimination of the discriminatory aspects of influx control and a shift towards a positive strategy, emphasising the development role of 'orderly urbanisation'. This involved the ordering and directing of African urbanisation, mainly by indirect incentives and disincentives, but also by direct control measures, mainly through existing legislation, including those concerning group areas, squatting and slums, health, immigration and security (Lemon 1991).

The new approach was embodied in the Abolition of Influx Control Act of 1986, which provided for a total repeal of the Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act of 1945 and the partial or entire repeal of 33 other laws. Henceforth, attention was focused on the provision of housing, infrastructure and social services. But the new strategy still controlled and channelled African urbanisation, using the material constraints of land and housing as tools for distributing labour and population, and employing the decentralisation and deconcentration programmes developed under the new regional development strategy which had been operative since 1982 (Lemon 1991).

Within the townships, the passing of the Black Communities Development Amendment Act in 1986 allowed full home ownership and introduced procedures through which the supply of land for African housing could be increased, thus making possible the development of an African housing market. The government made clear its intention to withdraw from the direct supply of housing, preferring to concentrate on the supply of land and bulk infrastructure. From thenceforth the private sector could apply to build in these development areas (Lemon 1991).

Despite the fact that many government restrictions were lifted during the late 1980s and early 1990s, many areas continue to be marked by poverty and vulnerability. These inequities could escalate if people are denied the opportunity to move.

## *Internal migration in South Africa*

### MIGRATION DATA FROM CENSUS '96

Internal migration, a term used to describe movements that occur when people move from one part of a country to another, has not been well researched in many countries. South Africa is no exception. Before Census '96, the only available data on internal migration in South Africa were those for the period 1975–1980, emanating from the 1980 census. However, these were flawed because they excluded data in respect of the former homelands of Transkei, Bophuthatswana and Venda (Kok, O'Donovan, Bouare & Van Zyl 2003).

Other data sources are available for the analysis of migration patterns, but they do not provide a comprehensive and detailed analysis of this phenomenon. To emphasise this point, Kok et al. (2003: xvii) argue:

while 'purpose-made' sample surveys can generally deal effectively with the processes and causes of migration, census-based migration data are essential for providing the context within which migration takes place in a country. Although there clearly are limits to the scope of the migration data that a census can provide, sample surveys cannot be successful in providing the necessary insight into migration processes without reliable census data on internal migration patterns and trends.

Census '96 covered migration data for the entire population and for the country as a whole, and included five fields of data for migration analyses, namely, (i) lifetime migration, (ii) migrant labour, (iii) place of usual residence, (iv) duration of residence and (v) origin of the most recent move. Taken together, these questions provided a potentially powerful source of information on internal migration in South Africa, thus leading to a thorough understanding of the dynamics of migration (Kok et al. 2003).

Census '96 therefore became the first census to provide a detailed and reliable source of data for the analysis of internal migration patterns in South Africa (Kok et al. 2003). The resulting study undertaken by Kok et al. (2003) on the patterns of internal migration in South Africa provides analyses of migration trends in the country.

### A PROFILE OF MIGRANTS AND NON-MIGRANTS GENERATED FROM CENSUS DATA

This section will present a summary of findings of the study undertaken by Kok et al. (2003) on the causes of internal migration in South Africa. The study placed emphasis on obtaining a better understanding of the complex migration/non-migration differentials. Despite some data problems, the study attempted to provide answers to questions on the characteristics of migrants and non-migrants, and the features of migration in South Africa. The authors argue that it is important to look not only at the causes and consequences of migration as a social phenomenon, but also to consider the causes and consequences of non-migration. A comparison was also made between the basic migration patterns for the periods 1975–1980 and 1992–1996.

In their analysis of the census data, Kok et al. (2003) indicate that on average, only about a quarter (24%) of the South African population has ever migrated across district boundaries. However, for the migration levels of the two five-year intervals (1975–80 and 1992–96) the proportions of migrants were much lower. Despite dramatic political, social and economic changes in the country (including the abolition of migration control measures such as influx control and Group Areas Act), the overall level of migration between the 1970s and early 1990s declined from about 13 to 11 per cent. It is however, difficult to draw firm conclusions about changes in mobility patterns among the African population because the figures for 1975–80 excluded the migration of residents of the former homelands of Transkei, Bophuthatswana and Venda. While the level of mobility declined among whites during the 1992–96 period, the Indian population experienced increased mobility due to the abolition of migration control measures that had prevented them from settling in certain parts of the country.

With regard to age-gender migration patterns, data for the 1975–80 and the 1992–96 periods did not differ significantly. Men were more migratory than women in virtually all age categories. People between the ages of 15 and 44 years were particularly inclined to migrate, with the most mobile people being between 25 and 29 years of age. Given these age-gender migration patterns, it is clear that young people, with better education, are particularly inclined to leave rural areas. Another consequence is that, as men migrate more, rural areas are left with high proportions of female-headed households that are often highly vulnerable and poor. It is thus doubtful whether out-migration in search of better opportunities will ever be an option or even a solution for such households (Kok et al. 2003).

In a logistic regression analysis, Kok et al. (2003) show that while migrants in general do not often conform to popular expectations, labour migrants do. Migrants 'proper' are primarily not vulnerable, poorly educated, rural residents, while labour migrants are often less educated. After considering the location, sex, age, race and educational level of migrant people, Kok et al. (2003) identify five important predictors of migration probability:

- The single strongest indicator of a probability to become a labour migrant is a low level of education, and the strongest indicator of disinclination to being a labour migrant is being female or being non-African. The multivariate profiles of the former migrants and non-migrants, as obtained from a multiple classification analysis, show that Mpumalanga, Gauteng and Western Cape have by far the greatest proportions of former migrants (31–32%), while the Northern Cape, Eastern Cape and Limpopo (17–18%) have comparatively few.
- The second predictor of migration probability is type of dwelling. Shack dwellers are more likely to be former migrants (32–35%) than people living in formal dwellings (24–25%). Rural people living in traditional dwellings have the lowest probability of migrating (19%), even after standardisation in terms of locality type and other spatial and socio-economic differences.
- The third predictor of migration probability is type of locality. People in urban areas are more migratory (28%) than rural people (21%).
- The fourth set of predictors is population group, age and household size. The data show that whites are somewhat more migratory than other population groups. As far as age is concerned, the proportion of former migrants among the

population increases with age from a low of 20 per cent among children under the age of 18 to a high of 30 per cent among people in the highest age category (75 years or older). For household size, the largest households (of more than 15 members) contain only 18 per cent former migrants compared to 31 per cent among the smallest households (1 to 2 members).

- The last important predictor of migration probability is total household income. Only 22 per cent of households with no income have former migrants, while 31 per cent of households with the highest incomes (more than R192 000 per annum) have former migrants.

## Summary and conclusions

In conclusion, the reader is reminded that the discovery of diamonds and gold in South Africa, coupled with industrialisation, lured thousands of migrant labourers from the southern Africa region and also from other parts of South Africa to the mining and industrial centres of the country. Men from South and southern Africa participated in the mining economy because they needed to earn money, and the mines were where they could secure the highest wages.

In the past the South African government did not intervene in the recruitment of foreign workers and this has remained the responsibility of the private sector. It did, however, sometimes act to assist private industrial interests by concluding inter-territorial labour arrangements and agreements with supplying countries. The formal mine labour agreement concluded in 1965 between the government of Malawi and Wemela, the mines' recruiting agency, is a good example of this. However, the South African government has always had a clear foreign African labour policy that controlled the movement of foreign black workers both to South Africa and within its borders.

The South African government enacted several measures to regulate the movement of African migrant workers, whether within the country itself or from the southern African region, to ensure that they remained only temporary residents in urban areas. This principle of temporariness was embodied in the system of influx control and in the particular form of management of African townships. The main reasons for influx control centred on the demands of employers for state regulation of the African labour market and the state's unwillingness to grant political rights to Africans. Although influx control was abolished in 1986 and Africans were permitted to settle in urban areas, the migrant labour system continued to exist, as foreign workers were not entitled to residential rights in South Africa, and many South African workers from rural areas preferred to leave their families in their home areas.

The South African government's policy for controlling the movement of certain categories of citizens was unsuccessful and alienated many South Africans for decades. Eventually this policy was dropped, due to its impractical nature and the extent of African resistance to it. This policy also resulted in considerable social costs to local households and communities, as families were fragmented and women and children left with the burden of traditional work.

South Africa has a sad history of racially-based government interventions in the movement and settlement patterns of its own people and those from other countries

in the region, with grave effects on the well-being of most of its population. The dramatic political changes that took place in the early 1990s did remove the cause of this pain for most, but not necessarily its lasting effects. Very poor rural people, trapped in the legacy of the apartheid homeland policy, have probably found it difficult to escape from their situation. This helps to explain the lack of significant changes in migration levels in South Africa between the periods 1975–80 and 1992–96.

## NOTES

- 1 In 1988 a total of 5 010 economically active immigrants immigrated to South Africa (Central Statistical Service 1991: 12).
- 2 A total of 3 085 economically active immigrants came to South Africa in 1986 (Central Statistical Service 1988: 12) and 6 727 came in 1990 (Central Statistical Service 1991: 12).
- 3 This reflects, in part, a stricter application of the South African government's job-preference policy, especially since 1991.
- 4 See for example Wentzel and Bosman (2001); Reitzes (1997); McDonald (1999).
- 5 In the early 2000s about 20 per cent of the Mozambican refugees had returned to their country (Crush 2003).

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