Migration and Underdevelopment: Interviews with Migrants on SA Mines

Erik Lyby

Migration Studies - Macro and Micro

It is well-known that labour migration is a significant feature of the social economic life of the Batswana and has been so for several generations. However, apart from Schapera's research during World War II [1] until very recently, little attention has been paid to the subject. A few private researchers have been carrying out basically micro-oriented studies since 1975 [2] and the Botswana government is presently undertaking a country-wide statistical sample survey, called the National Migration Study. The International Labour Office has initiated migration surveys in Lesotho and Swaziland (in cooperation with the university campuses there), and another survey has been carried out in Mocambique, so a fair amount of material is now building up concerning the labour reserves of Southern Africa.

What kind of material is it then that we get, and how should it be interpreted? If we restrict the discussion to Botswana, the National Migration Study emerges as a macro-oriented, statistical exercise aimed at presenting all the relevant 'hard facts' on the subject. Such large-scale surveys based on questionnaires are suitable for collecting simple factual information. They are less suitable for complicated questions and questions concerning the intentions, attitudes and aspirations of those interviewed. They are unsuitable for finding out about historical changes. The statistics of the National Migration Study, therefore, need to be supplemented by more detailed case studies and documentary studies, in order to provide a fuller picture of migration.

The research method used by the present author included lengthy interviews with Batswana workers migrating to the South African mines. This short paper attempts, firstly, to show the migrant workers' own views in their own words (translated into English) by presenting a few excerpts from interviews, in order to try to reveal some common problems. Secondly, it then attempts to outline a more generalised picture of the migrant workers and their situation.

Some Migrant Profiles

The form in which the excerpts are presented is a slightly edited (shortened) English version of tape transcripts and the excerpts should merely serve as examples and indicators of problems rather than pretend to be representative. Some of the basic data (statistics) will be presented afterwards with a discussion of some of the implications. The interviews used here were all taken at the Mine Labour Organisation's recruiting office at Kanye village in Southern District in 1977.[3]

(a) the role of parental authority in the system

The interviewee is 24 years of age and lives with his father, mother, 4 brothers and 4 sisters in Kanye. His situation is fairly typical, as can be seen by comparing it with the generalised statistical picture presented in Section III below.

Q: Are your brothers older or younger than yourself?
A: (counting) 3 brothers are older, then there is me, I am number 4. One brother is younger, he is attending primary school.
Q: Are some of your brothers working?
A: Yes, all the old ones work at the mines (in South Africa).
Q: Did your father ever work on the mines?
A: Oh yes, he went there for many years.
Q: So he thinks minework is good?
A: Well yes. I don't know. He never said anything about it.
Q: Did you never discuss it at home?
A: No. He never said anything.
Q: Is your father working now?
A: Yes, he is a labourer at the hospital here.
Q: Does your father have a field for ploughing?
A: Yes.
Q: Who tends the field when your father is working in the hospital?
A: The children look after the field. And my mother.
Q: Is the field close to the village?
A: It is not very close. It takes more than one day to go there by ox-cart. On a bicycle it takes three hours, or two hours.
Q: Do you have enough oxen to pull the plough?
A: Yes.
Q: How many cattle do you have?
A: I don't know.

Q: Could you try to estimate it? After all you've been home for some time, so you must have seen the cattle. Do you think there are 10 head? Or 50 head? Or 100?
A: Well, I don't know, but I think there are about 30. (After some further discussion about cattle).
Q: Do you or any of your brothers buy cattle with the money you earn on the mines?
A: No, we don't buy cattle ourselves. We give the money to our parents.
Q: So you send remittances home from the mines?
A: Well, some of my brothers do, but I don't. I just keep the money and give it to them when I return.
Q: Why don't you send the money?
A: It is because I can't write, so I don't know how to send money. I don't want other people to do it for me. Sometimes they can cheat you and keep the money.
Q: What do your parents do with the money?
A: I don't know.
Q: Don't you know if your father buys cattle with this money?
A: No, I don't know.
Q: Who do you give the money to?
A: I give it to my father, but I don't know if he or my mother keeps it. But my mother built a house in 1975.
Q: Are any of your brothers married?
A: No, not yet.
Q: Do you know if your brothers are trying to save money for **bogadi** (bride-price)?
A: No, they never tell me anything.
Q: Do you want to get married yourself?
A: Yes, I want to, but not now, because I am still young.
Q: Will you be able to pay **bogadi** when you want to marry?
A: I think so, because I hope my father will give me some cattle.
Q: How many times have you been to the mines?
A: Since 1973 (counts) 4 times.
Q: Which mines have you been to?
A: Blyvoor (Blyvooruitsicht). Every time I have been there, and I am going there even this time.
Q: What kind of work have you been doing?
A: I am a winch driver.
Q: Are you satisfied with working at Blyvoor?
A: Yes, it is alright. I like it.
Q: What is it that you like in particular?
A: Well, I am used to it, I am used to the whites there.

Q: They treat you alright?
A: Yes.

One conclusion that emerges from this particular interview is that the migrant is not in a mood to open his heart and soul to the interviewer. There can be several reasons for this. One reason is a (natural) scepticism towards any 'official' - he could be a tax collector in disguise or in some way associated with the recruiting agency. In the first case,it is better not to reveal too much about cattle numbers, and in the latter it might be dangerous to criticise the conditions on the mines.

Apart from this it is clear that this young migrant and all his brothers and sisters form part of one extended household, headed by the father. The fact that all these full-grown brothers just hand over their total earnings to the parents without asking any questions (and many interviews show this to be the common pattern) shows that parental authority is, indeed, very strong.

The parents own enough cattle to plough with, and they are likely to be able to provide the sons with enough cattle for **bogadi**, once they intend to marry, also considering that **bogadi** cattle will come **into** the household in case of the daughters marrying. On the other hand, there is not a very big herd to share between 9 children, when the parents die. Each son will then have to start with a few heads of cattle; to keep going to the mines to increase his herd; to maintain a field while he is away; and to get many children who can, in due time, go to the mines or elsewhere, **just to keep the system going.** A breakdown of the parental authority could lead to disastrous consequences. Cohesion within the extended family provides the only - very feeble - life insurance for everybody involved. Without money coming in from the sons working in the mines, the parents, the young children, the unmarried sisters with their children, etc., would not be able to make a living - in the literal sense of the word. Parental authority and the system of **bogadi** help to preserve this system of reproduction, but at the same time to keep the level of material reproduction very low.

(b) The deceased parents

Another case could demonstrate some of the difficulties faced by a migrant, whose parents are both dead. His attitude towards minework is at the same time not quite as docile as the first one.

He is 23 years old, his father died when he was a baby and his mother died

in 1969. He lives in Ranaka village some 40 kms from Kanye and the household consists of 4 brothers and 2 sisters. He is the last-born. The sisters stay at home, heading the household, while all the brothers work on the mines.

Q: Do you own any cattle?
A: Well, not me, I don't own cattle, but my parents have 15 head of cattle.
Q: Now that your parents are long dead, you mean that their cattle have not yet been divided between you and your borthers and sisters?
A: Yes, they still belong to my parents, even if they are dead.
Q: Who looks after these cattle?
A: My uncle lives nearby, he looks after them.
Q: Does he get the milk then?
A: Yes, but he gives some to my sisters for their children.
Q: Would you like to marry sometime?
A: Yes, I want to, but I have not made my final decision yet. It is very difficult, because I have so many problems.
Q: What kind of problems are you thinking of?
A: Well, it is hard because I don't have any money and I don't have any cattle, so I will just have to wait and prepare myself to be able to marry. It will take a long time.
Q: So you want to save money and buy cattle?
A: Yes, I want to buy cattle, because I don't have a father who can help me.
Q: Could your brothers not help you?
A: No, they can't help me, because I don't have a mother or a father who can persuade them to take a cow from the kraal to help me with **bogadi**, I can only help myself. If the cattle had only been divided, it would have been much better. Now it is only the older brothers who want to keep the cattle for themselves. It is very bad, but what can I do?

(The discussion turns to the work on the mines. He has been there 3 times before, at Blyvoor, Durban Deep, and Randfontein).

Q: Do you like working on the mines?
A: Yes, I like it.
Q: Is it not a very hard job?
A: I am used to it now, so it is not so hard. In the beginning it was hard.
Q: Don't you think it is very hot working underground?
A: Well yes, it is hot, but now I am used to it.
Q: Are you satisfied with the way you are treated by the whites there?
A: Well, I am not satisfied, because the treatment is very bad. But it doesn't

mean anything, because there is nothing else to do but to accept it. I mean, we can't leave the job.

Q: What do you mean when you say the treatment is very bad?

A: Oh, you see, anything can happen. If you make a mistake, the Boers can easily kick you, or just give you some cust, or they can just tell you to go out from the job. They don't treat us well at all.

Q: Is it because you are from Botswana, or do they treat the other workers the same way?

A: If you are from Botswana, if you are from Lesotho, even if you are from South Africa, as long as you are black they don't treat you like a human being, they just treat you like monkeys. They kick you for nothing. It is just because they are Boers, these people are very rough. A Boer is a Boer, they always do this kind of thing, without any reason. They just call us **kaffirs** and insult us. They don't call us by name, they just say "Kaffir, come here."

(So much for the Boers. Equally generalised statements about other groups appear).

Q: How is your relationship with the other groups of mineworkers, who are not Batswana?

A: Well, it is alright for the most part.

Q: Are there any groups that you like or dislike in particular?

A: The Xhosas are often very difficult people, because they don't like other tribes. These Xhosa boys can fight you or stab you when you are along. They always go together and live together. The **indunas** sometimes try to make them co-operate, but they don't want to. Also some **indunas** are Xhosas themselves, they don't care.

Q: Can you communicate with each other except in **Fanakalo** (the simple **lingua franca** used in the mines)?

A: We all know **Fanakalo**, so that is what we can talk.

Q: Do you think it is easy to have good discussions in **Fanakalo**? After all, it is a very limited language with only a few words in it?

A: It is easy enough for working, but when you want to relax it is no good. For example, we like telling stories in the evening. But how can you tell a proper story in **Fanakalo**? You must plan it before and make it short. It is not very interesting that way.

Summing up this interview it will be seen that the migrant attributes a major part of his troubles to the confusion in the household due to the fact that both parents are deceased and he is not himself able to tell the older brothers what to do.

While this worker's particular situation is untypical of the family circumstances of most migrants (as represented by the first interview), deviations of one kind or another from the norm, and variations within the norm, are common. The 'deviations' referred to could typically be: the migrant never having known his father, and his mother's parents being old or dead with their household dissolved, old or disabled relatives and a dis-proportionate number of small children, who must be supported, an 'unequal' balance between the sexes in the household, e.g. many unmarried sisters with children; any of the above combined with having no cattle for security.

The statements about the conditions in the mines show that the migrant typically starts out with a fatalistic attitude (''It is not so bad when you are used to it. I like it. There is nothing else to do''), but ends up with a different story. It is obviously not out of love for any 'bright lights' that he is on the way to the mines again.

(c) The man with the brick house

The following interview is with an older migrant. He is 40 years old and married with 5 children of whom 2 are attending primary school. Like the others he never went to school himself. He is going to the mines for the seventh time. The family lives in Kanye village.

Q: How long have you stayed home since your last contract, and what have you been doing?
A: It is about a year now since I returned. I haven't been doing anything except enjoying life.
Q: Did you not plough this season?
A: Oh yes, I ploughed and looked after my cattle.
Q: How many head of cattle do you have?
A: 4 head.
Q: That is not enough cattle to pull a plough?
A: No, but I borrowed some from my brothers for the ploughing.
Q: How did you get your 4 cattle?
A: Well, I bought the first cow when I worked in Lobatse. Then I got one from my father when he died. Since that time I bought one, and one of them had a calf.
Q: Are you planning to buy more cattle?
A: Oh yes, I want to buy more.
Q: Did you pay **bogadi** when you married?
A: Yes, my father gave me 4 cattle for **bogadi.**
Q: You are 40 years old now. How long do you intend to keep going to the

mines?

A: Well, I don't know, but I have just completed building a house, so I need to buy a lot of things. When I have bought all the house equipment, I think I can stop going to the mines.

Q: What kind of house have you built - a rondavel or a brick house?

A: It is a 4-cornered house with a tin roof.

It would be a safe guess to say that this man will not be able to 'retire' to farming before he has at least one child old enough to support him and his wife. Four cattle and a bit of farming in a very unreliable climate will not be sufficient to see the family through - even if they own a brick house with a tin roof.

(d) The special case

The last case to be quoted here is again a young man - 20 years old - who follows the general pattern to a large extent, except that he has a 'special' problem (which again may not be totally uncommon....)

He is the first-born and lives with his parents and 3 younger ones who all go to school. He never attended school himself. They live at Sekgogo, a 'lands area' 20 miles Southwest of Kanye. His father and himself are the only ones to earn wages, both work in the mines. It is his second time there.

Q: Does your mother farm while you and your father are away?

A: We don't have our own fields, so she does not farm.

Q: Doesn't she cultivate anything at all?

A: Well, sometimes she does, but she mostly works for people. She helps them with picking up the beans, or with harvesting. Sometimes they give her money or some grain or beans. She doesn't plough herself, but sometimes we have borrowed part of a field from somebody, then she has cultivated it. But we don't have a plough, so she has been using a hoe.

Q: Do you have any cattle?

A: Yes, we have 5 cattle, they are all female. And then we look after some cattle for a certain man, and now he is to give us one calf every year for doing that. We have just received the first one. Before we only had 4, now we have five.

Q: How did you get the other four?

A: My father inherited 2, and then he bought one and then my brother got one for herding somebody else's cattle.

Q: Do you like farming, or would you rather be a mineworker?
A: Well, I prefer to stay in the village and be a farmer, but now I have some problems, so I must go to the mines.
Q: What kind of problems do you have?
A: Well, you see, since I came home I had some girlfriends. Now my two girlfriends are pregnant. So I must pay a lot for that.
Q: Doesn't sound very good. What are you going to do?
A: I just don't know, because the girls' parents have not yet reported it to my parents, so I don't know what they are going to demand. I haven't told my parents yet, but I am sure I must earn some money.
Q: Are you going to marry one of them?
A: Maybe, but I don't know as that is a matter for my parents to decide. Myself, I am still young. If my parents say I must marry, I shall try to tell them that I am too young, because it is necessary to have money in the bank or something if you marry, in order to provide for your wife.

The precarious circumstances of this landless family headed by a migrant made it probable that the next generation of males would also go to the mines. Combined with unwanted pregnancies, it becomes a certainty.

The Generalised Picture

It should be safe at this stage to present a few statistical data on the mine-workers. The following results are not intended to be regarded as conclusive, as they are based on the present writer's relatively small sample from Kanye which has not been fully analysed as yet. On the other hand, it has been possible to compare the results with those of Birgitte Krogh (from Lobatse) and David Massey (from Mochudi), and since these samples all match very closely, it would seem that they are not too far off the mark.

The general impression is that the majority of mine migrants are very young with little schooling; live with their parents; are unmarried; own no cattle yet, but are eager to buy some; and bring home some R300-400 in cash + some commodities bought in South Africa.

(a) Age and marriage

The ages of returning workers differ according to the time of the year (1977) they are recorded. This is mainly because of the restrictions imposed by the mines during most of that year, i.e., supply of labour exceeded the demand, so the mines could afford not to take on any 'novices' (first-timers). The consequence of this with regard to age distribution is a higher average,

as most of the young applicants were turned away.

At different times of the year, the median age varied from **23-25 years,** i.e. half of the recruits were below this age, and the other half older. Only 3-4% were above the age of **45 years.** Put differently, the major age group was **18-29 years,** which made up between 70% and 80% of the total number of recruits.

Twenty five per cent were married (or engaged with children) (n equals 286).★ Most of the men (even those who were married) were found to have their residence with, or next to, their parents' homestead. Half of the married men had paid **bogadi**, the rest said they intended to, but had not managed so far.

(b) Schooling

Seventy seven per cent had never been to school, while 23% had spent some time at school (n equals 205, going + returning).

Table I Schooling

Level of Education	% migrants	Accumulated
No education at all	77%	77%
Standard 1	3%	80%
Standard 2	5%	85%
Standard 3	2%	87%
Standard 4	1%	88%
Standard 5	3%	91%
Standard 6	1%	92%
Standard 7	5%	98%
Secondary School	3%	100%

(c) Cattle ownership

As could be expected the migrants, being mostly very young, don't own many cattle themselves. Usually a herd is only divided between the children at the time of the parents' death, so it is necessary to know the size of their herd as well, in order to get a picture of the (actual and potential)

★ n equals size of sample, in this case a mixture of going and returning migrants.

cattle ownership of the son. In some cases,one or more head are 'given' in advance by the father to the son, although they usually stay in the father's kraal until the proper time of inheritance. These cattle are called **tswaiso** and are regarded as the son's property as in the following table. About **11% of the parents** had **mafisa** cattle, i.e. cattle on loan. The **mafisa** holder has a right to use **mafisa** cattle but not to dispose of them. Since **mafisa** cattle are not automatically inherited from father to son, they are not included in this breakdown.

Table II Cattle Ownership

No. of cattle	migrant's own cattle	Accumulated Total	Parents' cattle	Accumulated Total
no cattle	64%	64%	30%	30%
1-2 head	16%	80%	2%	32%
3-10 head	15%	95%	28%	60%
11-20 head	3%	98%	18%	78%
more than 21	2%	100%	22%	100%

While hardly any of the migrants had more than 10 head of cattle (95% had less), 64% had none at all. As could be expected, the figures are much different for the parents: 30% had no cattle, but about 20% had more than 20 head. About half of the cattle-owning migrants were found to have bought some of their cattle with money earned on the mines. This applied in particular to the older miners.

The Rural Income Distribution Survey of 1974 (RIDS)[4] in Botswana concluded that 45% of the rural households owned no cattle at all. In the present survey the corresponding figure is only 30%, suggesting that the households with migrant workers are generally better off. However, it would be dangerous and probably wrong to draw such a conclusion, since the definition of a **household** in the RIDS is much narrower than the one used here.[5] According to RIDS a household is more or less the group of people who are eating from the same pot, whereas the present survey is concerned with the migrant's own idea of the extended family he belongs to. It is very likely that many of these families would be regarded a number of adjacent households by the RIDS. Nevertheless, it is suggested that the definition used here is more close to reality, since it is within the framework of this extended family that social reproduction should be seen. It is within the extended family that cattle ownership has a significance, as well as the amounts of

money remitted by the migrants. The parental authority has already been mentioned as one important factor in this particular kind of reproduction.

(d) The economic impact

Money or goods can be sent or brough home in the following ways (this applies especially for men recruited by TEBA, the Chamber of Miners' recruiting agency):

Remittances: money sent from the mineworker to a relative either through TEBA or the Post Office, while he is still on the mines.

Voluntary Deferred Pay [VDP]: usually a major part of the earnings which are paid out to the migrant once he has returned to the recruiting office in Botswana after finishing his contract.

Cash held by the migrant when he returns from South Africa.

Goods bought in South Africa and brought back by the migrant.

About half of the men send home remittances, typically amounting to an average of R100 per contract (each contract usually lasting 9 to 12 months). Table III shows a sample of Voluntary Deferred Pay, paid out at Kanye in March-April 1977.

Table III Voluntary Deferred Pay (n = 153)

Amount in Rand	% of migrants	Accumulated Total
Nothing	6,5%	6,5%
R 0-100	11%	17,5%
R100-200	23,5%	41%
R200-300	19%	60%
R300-400	14%	74%
R400-700	19%	93%
more than R700	7%	100%

About half the migrants had amounts exceeding R250 paid out to them after returning.

It has sometimes been argued, for example in the RIDS report, that the migrants blow all their money on women and wine, and bring home very little.[6] The RIDS claims the median value of **cash and goods** brought home to be around R60, i.e., half of migrants brought home more than that, and the other half brought less. Although the wages were considerably lower in 1974 than 1976,[7] this is certainly not likely to hold true. The Central Statistics Office in Gaborone has made an estimate of the value of all transfers in cash and kind brought home by approximately 27 000 migrants in 1974.[8] The amount is R6 430 000, which averages **R238 per miner.** The corresponding figures for 1976, after the wages had risen, are R18 460 000 and 39 000 miners, an average of **R473 per miner.**

A word of warning is necessary here. If someone might consider this a 'substantial donation to Botswana from the Chamber of Mines' they ought to think again. Firstly, when talking about mine wages, we are talking about very small sums of money. It should be kept in mind that the amounts mentioned are related to almost a year of working and living under dangerous, hard and thoroughly unpleasant conditions. **Secondly,** these amounts have to go a long way to keep a big family going. **Thirdly,** inflation is running very fast. The R238 brought home per miner in 1974 must be matched with R300 in 1976,[9] and probably R400 in 1978 to make up for inflation. Rather than showing prosperity, the figures indicate an impressive determination on the part of the migrants to save as much as possible out of the little they earn.

Finally, to indicate the importance of these transfers in a different way, one could mention that the total amount transferred in this way in 1974 (R 6 430 000) is roughly equal to **the total income of the poorest 28% of all rural households,** according to RIDS.[10] That is to say, the poorest 28% of all rural households, all having annual gross incomes of less than R328, had a total income equalling this amount **between them.** One might add that the 'income' concept used in the RIDS includes value of such items as firewood and wild fruits gathered by the household itself; value of dwelling (hut); weight gained by livestock; value of meat from deceased livestock; etc. What these figures show is really **how poor** the majority of Batswana are, and how **dependent** they are on the continued availability of wage labour.

Social Reproduction in a Labour Reserve

In strictly economic terms, Botswana is 'developing' fast. The National Development Plan 1976-81 foresees a growth of the Gross Domestic Product of 9,6% per annum. A breakdown of figures shows, however, that the mining

sector is expected to have a growth rate of no less than 26,3% (mainly due to the expected development at the Jwaneng diamond mine), while the share from agriculture is only expected to grow at a rate of 4,3%.[11] The Plan also states that

'Agriculture is the backbone of Botswana's rural economy. It involves 80% of rural households and contributes 35% of total rural incomes.' [12] A little further on, the Plan continues: 'livestock production, mainly cattle, accounts for over 80% of total agricultural production.' [13]

This does not leave very much for arable production, and the often-used phrase 'subsistence farming' is in fact much too optimistic in that it indicates that this type of small-scale farming is sufficient to subsist on, whereas it is not. The vast majority of Batswana, while living in rural areas, are not really farmers at all, but very heavily dependent on wage labour. Yet they **do** farm a little, and they **do** try to become cattle-owners to the best of their ability, but without any significant success. The 'important livestock production' referred to above, does not in any way relate to the majority of the rural population, many of whom either don't own livestock at all, or have herds that are barely sufficient to pull a plough. Cattle owned by this large section of the population very rarely enter the market at all. Why is it then, that people bother to keep any agricultural production going at all? Are they just 'conservative' or 'traditional in outlook?'

Samir Amin suggests the following:

> "Emigration impoverishes the region, it also prevents the socio-economic structure from undergoing radical, progressive change; also to defend themselves, to survive, these societies react by reinforcing those aspects of their traditional structure, which enable them to survive this impoverishment. But at the same time, this impoverishment reinforces the push-effect on certain elements of the population, reproducing the conditions of emigration. The form that this development then takes is that of a degenerated agrarian capitalism, corrupted and poor." [14]

The Batswana migrants live in rural areas, because there is nowhere else they can stay. The rural home is more important as a **home** than as a farming unit, albeit any additional income from agricultural produce is welcome. The migrant labour system of Southern Africa is one based on **forced cyclical migration,** i.e. there is no way in which a migrant can ever hope to settle permanently near his place of work. This is one of the main reasons why it is

necessary to maintain strong ties to the village, and to keep all aspects of 'traditional' life and values alive. The context of social reproduction in the rural areas involves economic, political and ideological aspects of such institutions as the extended family, brideprice, **tswaiso** and **mafisa** loan systems, small-scale farming, chieftainship, religion, perhaps even witchcraft.

Many of these institutions have a completely different content today than they had a hundred years ago and are as such not really 'traditional' at all, even if they look so. The preceding sections should have revealed the importance of parental authority and brideprice, among others.

Of course, farming is not completely insignificant as a source of income. With good rains and no serious mishaps such as attacks by insects, birds, or livestock, a migrant's wife may produce enough grain, beans, sweet reed, etc., to cover most of the family's requirements. Nevertheless, the **market value** of a good year's crop rarely exceeds R50 to R100 partly because product prices for agricultural produce are roughly equal to the prices in South Africa, which in turn are fixed on the basis of large-scale and highly productive farming enterprises. The fruits of a whole season's labour for wife and children is consequently of a magnitude similar to what the husband earns in 2-4 weeks at the mines.

On this basis it is possible to sketch out what may be a typical reproduction cycle, involving both 'traditional' and 'modern' aspects. [15]

A young man goes to the mines several times and brings home money for his father. The father uses some money for consumption and some to buy cattle with. Some of the cattle are used to help his sons to get married by paying the brideprice. Thus his herd is quite small when he dies, and the children only inherit very few cattle. But marriage means children who can migrate in due time and help build up the father's herd, etc. It also establishes a permanent tie between two families, which may be very useful in time of need. Getting married with many children is the way to bring about security in old age, but it also means that each child inherits very little, and the cycle has to repeat itself all over again.

The situation is slightly different in the case of the increasing internal migration in Botswana. The rural-urban migrants may settle permanently in the towns some day, but the evidence seems to show that the very limited security in the urban situation forces them to maintain their rural ties for a

long time to come.

The Integrated Economy of Southern Africa

Migration is only one factor in the dependency pattern between South Africe and Botswana, although an important one. Other factors are the openness of the market and the differences in productivity levels, which at the same time serve to block any possibility of a diversified, capitalist production in Botswana. Anybody with capital to invest in, say, a manufacturing enterprise, would have to face competition from the big capital-intensive companies in South Africa; and he would have to deal with an unskilled labour force, high transportation costs, and a limited home market. If he wanted to go into farming, he would again compete with capital-intensive and state-subsidised South African farmers. What he typically does, then, is to buy a trading store, a bar, or cattle for his money, leading to an 'agrarian capitalism, corrupted and poor.'

This is what we mean by underdevelopment - a process of growing class differentiation and dependence upon the economic centre, in this case, South Africa.

Those who benefit by the present arrangement are obviously the mining capitalists in Johannesburg and elsewhere, since it makes it possible to pay the migrants extremely low wages. It could be said that the mines only pay for the reproduction of the **worker himself** and not for the **working class** as such, as this ought to include the wives, parents, children (next generation's migrants), etc., who are now being partly provided for in the rural areas - at an appallingly low material level of reproduction.

The government of Botswana can do very little to break this dependence, and - made up largely of wealthy cattle-owners - does not seem to have much interest in trying. The core of the problem lies within South Africa itself, and if the workers of Botswana want to play a part, they will serve their own interest best by siding with their fellow workers on the mines in South Africa.

Footnotes

1. Isaac Schapera: Migrant Labour and Tribal Life, London 1947.
2. The Studies referred to are Carol Kerven's work in Francistown, David Cooper's in Selibi-phikwe, David Massey's in Mochudi, Birgitte Krogh's in Lobatse and Serowe and my own in Kanye and Shakawe.

3. My thanks are due to Miss Florence Rakgole for helping with the interviews used here.
4. The Rural Income Distribution Survey in Botswana 1974/75, published by the Central Statistics Office, Gaborone, 1976.
5. Ses **RIDS,** p 147.
6. **RIDS**, p 72.
7. The average monthly wages were reported by the Chamber of Mines to be just over R100 in 1977.
8. **Botswana Mineworkers in South Africa,** p 7, mimeo by the Central Statistics Office, Gaborone, 1977 (unpublished).
9. Cost-of-living index for low-income groups (all items) shows an increase of 25% from June 1974 to June 1976. Central Statistics Office: Statistical Abstract 1976, p 50, Gaborone.
10. Calculated on the basis of the table on p 80 in **RIDS**.
11. National Development Plan 1976-81, p 55. Published by the Ministry of Finance & Development Planning, Gaborone.
12. **NDP,** p 135.
13. **Ibid.**
14. Samir Amin: "Introduction", p 104 in Amin (ed): **Modern Migrations in Western Africa,** Oxford University Press, 1974.
15. It ought to be pointed out that the importance of brideprice differs considerably from one area to another in Botswana. The following is based on the situation in the Southern part, where brideprice is absolutely necessary in any 'proper' marriage.