

CHALLENGING XENOPHOBIA:
MYTHS & REALITIES ABOUT
CROSS-BORDER MIGRATION
IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

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DAVID McDONALD, JOHN GAY, LOVEMORE ZINYAMA,
ROBERT MATTES, FION DE VLETTER

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Although a more balanced debate about cross-border migration in South Africa is starting to take place, xenophobic stereotypes about migrants of African origin are still common. Allusions to a “flood of illegal aliens” who bring disease and crime to the country and who are seen to be a threat to the social and fiscal stability of South Africa are, unfortunately, still rife in the mainstream press.

This paper is an attempt to challenge some of these stereotypes. Drawing on national surveys conducted by the Southern African Migration Project (SAMP) in Lesotho, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, we argue that much of the negative stereotyping around cross-border migration from the region into South Africa is simply unfounded. Our interviews present a very different picture of the migration process (past, present and future) with some important implications for immigration policy and public education.

There are six stereotypes that we deal with in particular, and these are summarised as follows:

- Myth 1: Every poor and desperate person on the African continent wants to get into South Africa.

Reality: The results of our surveys show that, by and large, people from the region prefer their home country to South Africa. On almost every front — with the important exceptions of job opportunities, costs of living and availability of health care — the home country was perceived equal to or better than South Africa. Despite the popular notion that South Africa is the most desirable place to live on the continent, most of those interviewed identified their home country as a better place to raise a family, with access to basic resources like land, water, and housing being the most important reasons. Levels of crime and safety were also seen to be much better at home, and even South Africa’s much vaunted democratic reforms would appear to carry little weight with people in the region with more than two-thirds of respondents saying that they find “peace”, “freedom” and “democracy” to be as good or better in their home country as in South Africa.

- Myth 2: People are jumping the borders in their millions using whatever means necessary to get into South Africa.

Reality: The surveys suggest that the movement across the South African border is not nearly as corrupt or chaotic as one might expect from press coverage in the country. Well over 90% of the people interviewed who had visited South Africa in the past crossed the border at formal immigration posts using formal modes of transportation (such as

bus, train or car). Moreover, 89% of these respondents had official passports from their home country before entering South Africa and 72% had the appropriate South African visa. Admittedly, this means that a significant number of people are still crossing the border without proper documentation, but once again the figures are not nearly as high as one would suspect from anecdotal reports in the press.

- Myth 3: People from the region “flood” to South Africa to find work or to use health and other social services.

Reality: Although jobs and access to services are an important part of what pulls people to South Africa, people also go to the country to visit friends and family, to buy and sell goods, and for holidays. The assumption that social, political and economic chaos at home pushes people to South Africa is also misleading. In fact, people from the region are largely satisfied (on a comparative basis) with their situation at home and it should not be assumed that the possibility of finding jobs in South Africa means that people are willing to uproot and move to another country.

- Myth 4: Cross-border migration has largely negative implications for the source country.

Reality: Generations of scholarly research has demonstrated the largely negative effects that the migrant labour system in Southern Africa has had on personal health, family relations and macro-economic stability in countries in the region. It is somewhat surprising, therefore, to discover that the overwhelming majority of respondents (both men and women) said that they consider cross-border migration to have a positive effect on them personally, on their family, on their community and on their home country. This is not to dispute the fact that cross-border migration has many negative implications for people and countries in the region, but the data raise some counter-intuitive questions about attitudes towards, and experiences with, cross-border migration.

- Myth 5: Governments and people in the region expect South Africa to throw open its doors to whoever wants to enter.

Reality: Citizens of Lesotho, Mozambique and Zimbabwe would like to see a relaxation of border regulations and consider it a “basic human right” to be able to move from one country to another, but they do not expect the South African government to abandon border controls altogether. Most people would like to see policies in place which make it easier to move from one country to another, and many question the legitimacy of borders that were created during the colonial era, but they do not advocate a radical dismantling of current borders. Even more important, most feel that the South African government should be able to restrict the number of (im)migrants allowed into the country and that they should also have the right to deport people. They would like

to see the South African government define these restrictions and categories in a humane and rational manner, but do not reject the idea of selective (im)migration and do not expect the government to grant amnesty to every non-South African currently living in the country.

- Myth 6: Conditions in the region are only going to get worse and, unless South Africa takes a tougher stand on immigration policy, the country will continue to be inundated with “illegal aliens”.

Reality: It is impossible to say for sure what the future of migration looks like for Southern Africa, given the uncertainties around the broader political and economic context within which cross-border migration will take place, but the results of our surveys suggest that the most likely people to go to South Africa are young, single men who have been encouraged by their families to migrate. They are also more likely, relative to other respondents, to possess documents permitting such migration, to have some education, to have family in South Africa, and to have been to South Africa before. Nevertheless, the decision to migrate will not be made easily. There are many aspects of life that are deemed to be much better at home than in South Africa, making the decision to migrate ambiguous at best. These are not the kind of circumstances that are associated with people leaving their homes in droves to go to South Africa.

The paper concludes with five policy recommendations:

- Cross-border migration from the region (at least from the three countries surveyed) is already a legal and regularised process and lends itself to the building of a more humane, management-oriented approach to immigration policy in South Africa.
- The South African government must address human rights abuses in the immigration system and make immigration policies more consistent with the Bill of Rights.
- Immigration policy in South Africa should recognise the importance of social and economic links in the region and incorporate these realities into policy developments.
- It is important that immigration policy distinguishes between short-term, purpose-oriented cross-border migration of the sort described by most respondents in this research, and long-term permanent immigration.
- There is a need to recognise the uniqueness of Lesotho’s relationship with South Africa in terms of cross-border migration. Some 41% of Basotho said that Lesotho and South Africa

should simply join as one country (as opposed to 7% and 9% of Mozambicans and Zimbabweans respectively). The reasons for this include the close economic, cultural, linguistic and familial ties between Basotho and a large section of the South African population. Also, a significant number of Basotho feel that large parts of South Africa's Free State province should become part of Lesotho. What this means in practical terms is beyond the scope of this report, but our research would suggest that it is indeed time for a new — and perhaps “special” — immigration compact between South Africa and Lesotho.

INTRODUCTION

This report comes at a time of dramatic change in cross-border migration in Southern Africa. Not only has the volume of cross-border migration increased significantly since the fall of official apartheid in the early 1990s, so too has the interest in reforming immigration policy — particularly in South Africa.

With the release in May 1997 of a Draft Green Paper on International Migration, the South African government dedicated itself to revamping what is perhaps the most incongruous and outmoded piece of legislation still on the books in South Africa — the Aliens Control Act. As the name implies, this immigration act is styled in the tradition of control and expulsion and is a legacy of South Africa's apartheid immigration policies and reliance on short-term, contract labour from the region.¹

But old ideas die hard, and it would appear that a conservative approach to immigration still permeates the bureaucracy and the security establishment, as well as the attitudes of many ordinary South Africans. Anecdotal reports in the press, research by apartheid-era institutions and the occasional xenophobic statement by senior politicians suggest there is a long way to go in addressing the immigration injustices of the past and dealing with complex immigration dynamics in the future.

The purpose of this report is to contribute to this policy reform process. Based on national surveys in Lesotho, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, this research captures, for the first time, a methodologically rigorous and nationally based sample of migration patterns and attitudes in the region.

It would be impossible to include all of the information from this massive research undertaking in one report so we have opted instead to

focus here on what can be called a “de-demonising” of migrants and the migration process. By looking at key stereotypes of migrants in South Africa and testing these stereotypes against our findings in the surveys, we hope to contribute not only to a more humane and rational immigration process in South Africa (and the region) but to challenge some of the problematic stereotypes that still plague the South African immigration system.

The report is structured around six stereotypes in particular: who goes to South Africa; how they get there; how long they stay; what the impact of cross-border migration is on the home country; what people’s policy preferences are; and what the future holds for cross-border migration. This discussion, which makes up the bulk of the report, is done in the format of a question and answer narrative and is illustrated with data from the surveys.

This analysis of stereotypes is followed by a discussion of policy implications arising from the research — with a focus on the South African immigration reform process. Although much of what we will have to say in this last section is implicit in the discussions of the various stereotypes, it is important to state these points explicitly and highlight their relevance to policy change.

A brief discussion of research methodology follows, to demonstrate to the reader the extensiveness and rigour of the surveys on which this discussion is based. In the light of some rather questionable research methodologies employed recently in South Africa on issues of undocumented migration, it is all the more important to define our methodological framework.

METHODOLOGY

As noted in the Acknowledgments to this paper, a considerable number of people worked on this research project — more than 65 people in five countries in total. More important, however, is the fact that all of this work was centrally co-ordinated and methodologically consistent. Beginning with a planning workshop in Harare in October 1996, and continuing through every stage of design work, sample selection, data input and report writing, the principal researchers worked together and were in constant contact with one another.

It should also be noted that these surveys form only one part of an even larger research initiative on public opinions on cross-border migration in the region. In addition to the surveys discussed in this report — formally called the Three Nations Surveys — we have also completed interviews with 3 500 South African citizens (about their attitudes

towards migrants and immigration policy), and are in the process of interviewing 600 migrants currently living in South Africa. These additional surveys were co-ordinated by the same research group and were designed to correspond with the questionnaire and methodologies used in this research.

This report deals strictly with interviews conducted in Lesotho, Mozambique and Zimbabwe about people's attitudes towards, experiences with, and future plans around (im)migrating to South Africa. In this respect, we do not purport to present the "full picture" of attitudes and practices with respect to cross-border migration. What we will discuss here are interviews with people who are currently living in their home country and who may or may not have been to South Africa. It is therefore important to note that this gives us a selective sample insofar as it does not include residents from the three countries who are currently in South Africa (and who could possibly provide a different picture of migration attitudes and experiences)². Nevertheless, these surveys do provide a representative sample of the in-house populations of the three countries in question.

The reasons for choosing Lesotho, Mozambique and Zimbabwe are twofold. First, these are by far the largest source countries in terms of documented migration into South Africa and, by all accounts, would appear to be the largest source countries of undocumented migration as well. Second, popular perception in South Africa is that these are the largest and most problematic source countries for migrants — Mozambique in particular — and popular perception is just as important as empirical reality when dealing with public policy. It should also be noted that the interviews in Mozambique only covered the southern half of the country — partly because this is where the overwhelming majority of Mozambican migrants originate from, and also because of the logistical challenges of including the northern half of the country.³

The surveys themselves consisted of a lengthy questionnaire of about 200 questions ranging from basic demographics to people's attitudes to immigration policy and their own migration behaviour. Given the volume of interviews, it was determined that Likert and scaled questions (questions ranking the strength of someone's opinion) as well as pre-defined response options (the interviewee was asked to say which of a number of statements s/he agreed with) were the only feasible options for data analysis and compatibility across countries. Admittedly, this form of closed-option response limited the scope and depth of answers that interviewees could provide, but this is a trade-off that had to be made in order to capture nationally representative samples. Nevertheless, the wide range of questions that were asked and the complex layering of issues offer an extraordinarily rich set of data.⁴

In total, 2 300 interviews were completed — 692 in Lesotho, 661 in Mozambique and 947 in Zimbabwe — over a four-month period beginning in February 1997. Fifty-six percent of the interviewees were men and 44% were women⁵, with the minimum age for an interview set at 15 years (see Table 1 for a more detailed demographic breakdown of the sample population).

| | Les | Moz | Zim |
|--|-------|---------------------|--------|
| Population of country ('000) ⁷ | 2 000 | 16 200 ⁸ | 11 000 |
| Number of interviews conducted | 692 | 661 | 947 |
| Gender (in percent) | | | |
| Male | 51 | 61 | 56 |
| Female | 49 | 39 | 44 |
| Race | | | |
| African | 99 | 95 | 99 |
| White | - | - | - |
| Coloured | - | 4 | - |
| Indian/Asian | - | - | - |
| Age Category (in percent) | | | |
| 15-24 | 26 | 32 | 26 |
| 25-44 | 48 | 46 | 50 |
| 45-64 | 25 | 16 | 17 |
| 65+ | 2 | 5 | 6 |
| Urban or Rural | | | |
| Urban | 59 | 51 | 52 |
| Rural | 41 | 49 | 48 |
| Marital Status | | | |
| Unmarried | 22 | 36 | 25 |
| Widowed | 9 | 5 | 3 |
| Separated/divorced/abandoned | 5 | 4 | 5 |
| Married | 64 | 55 | 66 |
| Household Status | | | |
| Other | 3 | 2 | 13 |
| Other family | 3 | 9 | 7 |
| Child | 21 | 32 | 20 |
| Spouse | 26 | 17 | 26 |
| Household Head | 47 | 40 | 34 |
| Years of Schooling | | | |
| Average number of years | 7 | 6 | 9 |
| Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding. A dash (-) signifies a value of less than 1% but greater than zero. | | | |

Sample lists were initially compiled using census data and/or aerial maps (depending on what was most available and reliable) to form a list of enumerated areas. In Zimbabwe, we used equally weighted enumerated areas randomly selected within various desired sub-strata (for example, the proper portion taken from a list of urban and rural enumerated areas). In Lesotho and Mozambique, the census data was used to weight the probability of drawing an interview point (from which five interviews were done) from given geographic areas (using the smallest geographic unit for which we had reliable data). Once this random list was drawn, interviewers would go to every nth dwelling in a given direction starting at a certain point. A card selection procedure was then used to select household members.⁶ Some sampling points in remote or dangerous areas were substituted with a point chosen from a geographic unit taken from a second, randomly selected, list.

The random selection procedure was, in and of itself, an enormous undertaking — particularly given the dearth of reliable census material in some areas and the logistics of sending researchers to remote parts of the country. We cannot overemphasise the importance that was attached to ensuring that sample selection was as representative and random as possible given the circumstances.

Random field visits by the principle researchers in each country served to further ensure that these procedures were being followed by field staff. The same kind of detailed and co-ordinated planning also applied to translations (and back-translations) of questionnaires, training of researchers, pilot tests, and data input procedures.

In the end we have an extremely rigorous, comprehensive and complex set of data that captures a representative and compatible set of national surveys on attitudes and experiences with cross-border migration. We hope that the data, and this report, contribute to a better understanding of what will continue to be an important phenomenon for many years to come.

STEREOTYPES OF CROSS-BORDER MIGRATION

WHO GOES TO SOUTH AFRICA?

WHAT ARE THE STEREOTYPES?

Illegal aliens are thought to make up 8.5 million of South Africa's approximately 40 million people...[and] on the whole are considered to be a threat to the socio-economic structure and safety and security of the country.⁹

*Colonel Brian van Niekerk
South African Police Services
Border Patrol and Policing National Co-ordinator*

Official estimates of the number of undocumented migrants living in South Africa range from 2.5 to 12 million people. Although these figures most likely grossly over-estimate the actual statistics there is little doubt that the number of visitors (documented and otherwise) from other SADC countries has increased dramatically in the past five years.¹⁰

More important than the actual numbers is the popular perception in South Africa that every poor and desperate person on the African continent wants to get into South Africa and that these largely "illegal immigrants" are a threat to the social and economic fabric of the nation.

WHAT ARE THE REALITIES?

The results of our surveys suggest a very different scenario. Although cross-border migration is an important part of life for many of the peo-

ple we interviewed in the region, and there are clearly a large number of people crossing the border for various reasons, very few have any desire to move to South Africa permanently and most prefer their home country to South Africa on key indicators such as freedom, democracy, safety and access to basic resources like land and shelter.

It is important to note, however, that cross-border migration is a

widespread phenomenon in the region, with 42% of respondents saying that they have visited South Africa at least once in their lives.¹¹ This is not an insignificant number, particularly when one considers that 50% of respondents said that one or both of their parents had been to South Africa in the past and 34% said one of their grandparents had been there. Clearly, cross-border migration is an important part of the lives of people in the region.

There are significant variations, however, in both the scale and make-up of visitors from the three countries surveyed. In Lesotho, 81% of the population has visited South Africa while the figures for Mozambique and Zimbabwe are only 29% and 23% respectively. Of these totals, there are also variations in terms of gender and socio-economic indicators (see Table 2). First, women make up a much larger part of the migratory population in Lesotho and Zimbabwe

| | Les | Moz | Zim |
|---|-----|-----|-----|
| Gender (in percent) | | | |
| Male | 54 | 88 | 61 |
| Female | 46 | 12 | 39 |
| Urban or Rural | | | |
| Urban | 62 | 44 | 92 |
| Rural | 38 | 56 | 8 |
| Age | | | |
| 15-24 | 20 | 14 | 17 |
| 25-44 | 50 | 46 | 58 |
| 45-64 | 29 | 34 | 17 |
| 65+ | 2 | 6 | 9 |
| Marital Status | | | |
| Unmarried | 18 | 19 | 22 |
| Widowed | 9 | 4 | 2 |
| Separated/divorced/abandoned | 5 | 3 | 3 |
| Married | 68 | 74 | 73 |
| Household Status | | | |
| Household head | 52 | 66 | 40 |
| Spouse | 27 | 9 | 25 |
| Child | 17 | 18 | 22 |
| Other family | 1 | 5 | 5 |
| Other | 3 | 3 | 8 |
| Home Ownership | | | |
| Live with others/illegally occupy | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| Accommodation as part of job | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Rent | 15 | 8 | 16 |
| Own | 84 | 87 | 78 |
| Income / Household member / per year (in rands)¹³ | | | |
| 160 or less | 19 | 17 | 11 |
| 161 – 450 | 14 | 18 | 19 |
| 451 – 1200 | 22 | 11 | 12 |
| 1200+ | 45 | 55 | 58 |
| Level of Employment Activity | | | |
| Inactive | 15 | 22 | 30 |
| Looking for work | 32 | 29 | 28 |
| Part-time | 19 | 17 | 9 |
| Full-time | 34 | 32 | 33 |
| Level of Education | | | |
| No schooling | 8 | 18 | 9 |
| Some primary | 38 | 30 | 14 |
| Primary completed | 17 | 14 | 18 |
| Some high school | 25 | 24 | 41 |
| High school completed | 9 | 10 | 12 |
| Post-grad and further | 2 | 4 | 6 |

than they do in Mozambique. In the case of Zimbabwe this reflects the large number of women travelling to South Africa to buy and sell goods, while in Lesotho it is more of a reflection of the number of women travelling to South Africa to visit relatives, go for medical care and to work. Second, the overwhelming number of migrants from Zimbabwe are from urban areas, while the majority of those from Mozambique are from rural areas. This difference may also account for the fact that average education levels of Zimbabweans who have been to South Africa are slightly higher than for the other two countries.

But there are also several important similarities among the three countries. Of particular interest is the type of people who have visited South Africa. Far from being the kind of rootless drifters that they are often portrayed to be in the South African media, most visitors from the countries surveyed would appear to be well-established, family-oriented citizens. As can be seen from Table 2, almost three-quarters of those who have visited South Africa are married, more than half are heads of household, over 80% own their own home, more than half have annual incomes per household member of at least R1 200 (this is slightly higher than the sample as a whole), almost half have full or part-time work, and at least one third have a minimum of some high school education — hardly the stuff of desperate, uneducated criminals threatening South African society.

The surveys also illustrate the short-term and temporary nature of cross-border migration in the region. This is particularly pronounced in

| | Les | Moz | Zim |
|---|-----|-----|-----|
| Average number of visits | 68 | 5 | 6 |
| Average number of visits in the last 5 years | 21 | 2 | 6 |
| How frequent have your visits been in the past five years? (in percent) | | | |
| More than once a month | 19 | 10 | 6 |
| Once a month | 13 | 1 | 18 |
| Once every few months | 21 | 12 | 12 |
| Once or twice a year | 18 | 25 | 26 |
| Less than once or twice a year | 17 | 19 | 18 |
| I have been just once | 12 | 33 | 21 |
| In general, how long do you tend to stay? | | | |
| less than 1 month | 66 | 20 | 71 |
| between 1 and 3 months | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| between 3 and 6 months | 5 | 9 | 2 |
| between 6 months and 1 year | 4 | 20 | 10 |
| more than 1 year | 11 | 42 | 7 |

Lesotho where the median for the number of times that people have been to South Africa in their life is 28 times — with some people having visited the country hundreds of times. These figures are significantly lower for Mozambique and Zimbabwe (with the median being three visits a person), but there is clearly a regular and frequent cross-border movement from these countries as well.

Moreover, the length of each visit is fairly short, with 60% of respondents

staying in South Africa for less than a month at a time. There are, however, important variations here, with people from Lesotho staying the shortest amount of time and people from Mozambique staying the longest (see Table 3).

It is also apparent from the surveys that most respondents are not

| TABLE 4: Desire and Likelihood of Moving to South Africa | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| What about you personally? Would you be able to go to SA if you wanted to? (in percent) | Les | Moz | Zim | Total |
| Yes | 64 | 76 | 68 | 69 |
| No | 35 | 17 | 30 | 28 |
| Don't know | - | 8 | 1 | 3 |
| To what extent do you want to leave your country to go and live in SA permanently? | | | | |
| A great extent | 17 | 14 | 8 | 13 |
| Some extent | 8 | 18 | 11 | 12 |
| Not much | 10 | 14 | 11 | 12 |
| Not at all | 66 | 46 | 66 | 61 |
| Don't know | - | 7 | 2 | 3 |
| To what extent do you want to leave your country to go and live in SA for a short period (up to 2 years) | | | | |
| A great extent | 15 | 15 | 22 | 18 |
| Some extent | 35 | 42 | 27 | 34 |
| Not much | 10 | 19 | 15 | 15 |
| Not at all | 39 | 19 | 33 | 31 |
| Don't know | 1 | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| How likely or unlikely is it that you would ever actually leave your country to go and live permanently in SA in the foreseeable future? | | | | |
| Very likely | 11 | 3 | 4 | 6 |
| Likely | 14 | 10 | 8 | 11 |
| Neither likely nor unlikely | 3 | 12 | 7 | 7 |
| Unlikely | 5 | 36 | 19 | 20 |
| Very unlikely | 64 | 33 | 58 | 53 |
| Don't know | 4 | 5 | 3 | 4 |
| How likely or unlikely is it that you would ever actually leave your country to go and live for a short period in SA in the foreseeable future? | | | | |
| Very likely | 16 | 6 | 13 | 12 |
| Likely | 42 | 34 | 26 | 33 |
| Neither likely nor unlikely | 2 | 20 | 7 | 9 |
| Unlikely | 5 | 20 | 16 | 14 |
| Very unlikely | 32 | 15 | 32 | 27 |
| Don't know | 4 | 6 | 5 | 5 |

interested in living in South Africa — at least not for an extended period. When asked “to what extent do you want to leave [your home country] to live in South Africa permanently”, two-thirds of respondents said “not at all” and another 12% said “not much”. Only 13% said that they wanted to leave their home country “to a great extent” — despite the fact that 69% of respondents said they would be able to go to South Africa if they wanted to. When asked how “likely” it was that they would go to live in South Africa permanently, only 6% of respondents said “very likely”.

Responses were slightly more positive when people were asked if they would like to live in South Africa for a “short period of time (up to two years)”, with 18% saying they would definitely “want” to go and 12% saying it was “very likely” that they would go, but 41% of respondents said it was “unlikely” or “very

unlikely” that would live in South Africa for even two years (see Table 4).

Further indication of the lack of desire to immigrate to South Africa can be found in a series of questions that were asked about how permanently people would want to stay in the country — with the number of negative responses increasing with the “degree of permanence”. Not surprisingly, Basotho are more inclined than Mozambicans and Zimbabweans to say that they would like to take up permanent residence (33% versus 14% and 13% respectively) but the overwhelming majority of Basotho do not even want permanent residence. Moreover, the percentages drop significantly as the stakes increase, with only 27% of Basotho saying they would like to retire in South Africa and only 17% saying they would like to be buried there. For Mozambique and Zimbabwe these figures are even lower yet, with only 1% of Mozambicans and 4% of Zimbabweans saying that they would like to be buried in South Africa. Clearly, “home is where the heart is” for most of the people interviewed (see Table 5).

This is not to deny that a significant number of those interviewed clearly do want to live or work in South Africa for a while. The point made here is simply that the stereotype that everyone in the region is desperate to get into the country is not borne out in the surveys.

The most revealing finding of all was the responses to questions asking people to compare their home country to South Africa. On almost every front — with the important exceptions of job opportunities, costs

of living and availability of health care — the home country was perceived equal to or better than South Africa. Despite the popular notion that South Africa is the most desirable place to live on the continent, most of those interviewed identified their home country as a better place to raise a family, with access to basic resources like land, water and housing being the most important reasons. Levels of crime and safety were also seen to be much better at home, and even South Africa’s much vaunted democratic reforms would appear to carry little weight with people in the

| TABLE 5: Desire to Stay in South Africa Permanently | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| Would you want to become a permanent resident of SA | Les | Moz | Zim | Total |
| Yes | 33 | 14 | 13 | 19 |
| No | 61 | 83 | 85 | 78 |
| Don't know | 6 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Would you want to become a citizen of SA? | | | | |
| Yes | 34 | 7 | 15 | 18 |
| No | 60 | 90 | 83 | 79 |
| Don't know | 6 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| Would you like to live in SA when you retire? | | | | |
| Yes | 27 | 4 | 7 | 12 |
| No | 67 | 95 | 90 | 85 |
| Don't know | 6 | - | 3 | 3 |
| Would you like to be buried in SA? | | | | |
| Yes | 17 | 1 | 4 | 7 |
| No | 76 | 96 | 93 | 90 |
| Don't know | 6 | 3 | 3 | 3 |

region, with more than two-thirds of respondents saying that they find “peace”, “freedom” and “democracy” to be as good, or better, in their home country as in South Africa.

Not surprisingly, job opportunities were deemed far better in South Africa than at home, as were opportunities for buying and selling goods, but this perception of job opportunities does not necessarily translate into a flood of migration. As noted above, only a small percentage of those interviewed said it was likely that they would go to live in South Africa for even a short period. The trend, therefore, is for people to take advantage of limited-term jobs and/or buying and selling opportunities in South Africa and then return home.¹⁴

In other words, not everyone in the region wants to live in South Africa or even visit South Africa, and it is essential for policy-makers to differentiate between short-term, purpose-oriented migration that happens on a regular basis, and long-term or permanent immigration. The former would appear to make up the bulk of cross-border movement in the region, suggesting that the actual number of people wanting to settle in South Africa is much lower than one would be led to believe by the popular press.

A point to note is the perception that for every foreigner of African origin who gets across the border a dozen family members will follow. No less an authority than the South African Minister of Home Affairs has claimed that “each illegal alien is likely to bring with him his parents, a wife, the parents of the wife and an average of four children”.¹⁵ This generalisation is not supported by the research. When asked if they would send for friends and family members if they were living in South Africa, only 48% of respondents said “yes”, with the average number of people they would bring being only three persons.

HOW DO PEOPLE GET INTO SOUTH AFRICA?

WHAT ARE THE STEREOTYPES?

Various methods are used by illegals to enter South Africa. The most common is simply to cross the border clandestinely. In the case of Mozambican and Zimbabwean borders this may be difficult where there are border fences (some electrified) and other obstacles to cross first - not to mention crocodiles in the rivers that need to be swum across, the lions in the game reserves and even land mines.¹⁶

*Anthony Minaar and Mike Hough
Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)*

As this quote implies, there is a common perception in South Africa that the country’s borders are routinely crossed in an “illegal” fashion. Electric fences, crocodiles and lions are seen as South Africa’s only hope for keeping out the ravenous hordes, with the Minister of Defence, Joe Modise, even apparently threatening at one point to turn the fence on the Mozambican border up to “lethal mode” if clandestine border crossings were not significantly reduced.¹⁷

There is also a perception in South Africa that border officials are irretrievably corrupt and that non-citizens gain entry into the country en masse with false passports, bribes and other forms of corruption.¹⁸

WHAT ARE THE REALITIES?

There can be no doubt that clandestine border crossings occur in South Africa on a regular basis and that corruption exists within the immigration system — no country is immune to this. The question that needs to be asked is “How serious are these problems?”.

Our research would suggest that “illegal” and clandestine cross-border movement is relatively minor (at least from the three nations surveyed), and that the general

picture is one of a highly organised and regularised movement of people. As a case in point, of the 40% of respondents who said that they had been to South Africa in the past, 49% crossed the border on their last visit by car or combi, 22% by bus, 14% by train, and 4% by plane or other formal modes of transport.

Of the remaining 8% who crossed the border “on foot”, many took a bus or combi to the border, went through immigration on foot, and then took another bus or combi to their destination in South Africa — a particularly common phenomenon at the Zimbabwean border posts. In other words, there are relatively few people sneaking into the country under fences or swimming across rivers.

| Have you ever been to SA? | Les | Moz | Zim | Total |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| Yes | 81 | 29 | 23 | 42 |
| No | 19 | 71 | 76 | 58 |
| Don't know | 0 | 0 | 1 | - |
| How did you get there? | | | | |
| Foot | 4 | 14 | 14 | 8 |
| Bus | 17 | 20 | 35 | 22 |
| Plane | 0 | 3 | 5 | 2 |
| Car | 6 | 19 | 8 | 8 |
| Horse or donkey | - | 1 | 1 | - |
| Train | 5 | 38 | 19 | 14 |
| Combi or taxi | 68 | 4 | 16 | 41 |
| Other | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| Were you able to obtain a passport before you went? | | | | |
| Yes | 98 | 75 | 77 | 89 |
| No | 2 | 23 | 23 | 11 |
| Don't know | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Were you able to obtain an entry visa/permit before you went? | | | | |
| Yes | 88 | 73 | 30 | 28 |
| No | 12 | 23 | 70 | 72 |
| Don't know | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 |

Moreover, 89% of these respondents had official passports from their home country before entering South Africa and 72% had the appropriate South African visa.

Admittedly, this means that a significant number of people crossed the border without proper documentation on their last visit, but the figures are not nearly as high as one would suspect from claims in the press (see Table 6).¹⁹

The reason that most respondents without proper visas were from Zimbabwe is partly because it is so difficult and time consuming to get a visa for South Africa in that country.

At the time this research was conducted, there were only two places in Zimbabwe to get a South African visa (Harare and Bulawayo) and these two offices had to process up to 30 000 visas a month.²⁰ For those who made the trek to these two locations (a rather expensive and time consuming task for those in rural areas — especially those in the southern part of the country who have to travel north before travelling south again to South Africa) queues at the visa offices would begin well before dawn each day.

The fact that so many Zimbabweans make the effort to get the proper visas — despite all the costs and obstacles involved — serves to reinforce the argument that clandestine border crossings are very much the exception rather than the rule.

This image of the “law-abiding citizen” is also apparent in people’s perceptions of the South African border (including those who have never been to South Africa). When interviewees were asked a series of questions about whether they would know how to get across the border and stay in South Africa without the proper travel documents if they had to, more than three-quarters said they “did not know about this and do not know how to find out about it”.

Only 10% of respondents said they “know about this” with another 12% saying they “do not know about this but could [or might be able to] find out about it” if they tried.

When asked how concerned they would be about getting caught by the police and sent home if they went to South Africa without the proper travel documents there was a similar level of concern among the respondents — suggesting once again that people from the countries surveyed take borders seriously and are not wantonly violating immigration rules and regulations.

There are important differences among the different countries, with people from Lesotho being most concerned about border regulations. But the differences are really a matter of degree with citizens in all of the countries surveyed clearly wanting to operate within the bounds of the law (see Table 7).

| TABLE 7: Perceptions of Borders | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| If you were deciding to leave for SA, how would you describe the state of your knowledge about the following things? | | | | |
| If you could not get travel documents, how to get there without being caught by the police | Les | Moz | Zim | Total |
| I know about this | 12 | 10 | 9 | 10 |
| I do not know about this, but I know how I could find out | 3 | 6 | 7 | 5 |
| I do not know about this, but I might be able to find out | 3 | 13 | 6 | 7 |
| I do not know about this, and I do not know how to find out about it | 83 | 71 | 78 | 78 |
| If you could not get travel documents, how to stay there without being returned by the police | | | | |
| I know about this | 12 | 9 | 8 | 10 |
| I do not know about this, but I know how I could find out | 2 | 6 | 5 | 5 |
| I do not know about this, but I might be able to find out | 3 | 11 | 6 | 7 |
| I do not know about this, and I do not know how to find out about it | 83 | 74 | 80 | 80 |
| If you decided to go without travel documents, how likely is it that you: | | | | |
| Would get across the border without being caught by the police? | | | | |
| Very likely | 4 | 4 | 7 | 5 |
| Likely | 6 | 13 | 7 | 9 |
| Not very likely | 15 | 20 | 11 | 15 |
| Not at all likely | 72 | 35 | 43 | 50 |
| Don't know | 4 | 29 | 30 | 22 |
| Would be able to stay in SA without being returned by the police | | | | |
| Very likely | 4 | 4 | 7 | 5 |
| Likely | 7 | 13 | 8 | 9 |
| Not very likely | 14 | 21 | 11 | 15 |
| Not at all likely | 71 | 34 | 43 | 49 |
| Don't know | 5 | 29 | 31 | 23 |
| What about these matters? How much would each of these things discourage you from going to SA? | | | | |
| Getting the necessary travel documents | | | | |
| A great deal | 83 | 27 | 40 | 51 |
| To some extent | 7 | 27 | 20 | 18 |
| Not very much | 3 | 21 | 13 | 12 |
| Not at all | 7 | 17 | 23 | 16 |
| Don't know | - | 7 | 4 | 4 |
| Not being sure whether you could get into SA legally | | | | |
| A great deal | 82 | 31 | 39 | 50 |
| To some extent | 11 | 28 | 22 | 20 |
| Not very much | 2 | 20 | 15 | 12 |
| Not at all | 5 | 13 | 18 | 13 |
| Don't know | 1 | 8 | 6 | 5 |
| If you could not get a permit, not being sure that you could get across without being caught | | | | |
| A great deal | 84 | 34 | 49 | 56 |
| To some extent | 10 | 29 | 23 | 21 |
| Not very much | 1 | 17 | 10 | 9 |
| Not at all | 5 | 9 | 11 | 8 |
| Don't know | - | 11 | 7 | 6 |
| If you could not get a permit, not being sure that you could stay without being returned | | | | |
| A great deal | 83 | 32 | 47 | 54 |
| To some extent | 8 | 33 | 25 | 22 |
| Not very much | 2 | 14 | 10 | 8 |
| Not at all | 7 | 9 | 11 | 9 |
| Don't know | - | 12 | 8 | 7 |

WHY DO PEOPLE GO TO SOUTH AFRICA?

WHAT ARE THE STEREOTYPES?

*Africans consider the new South Africa a paradise where they are welcomed. But they are wrong. Our country cannot take the entire continent's misery on its shoulders.*²¹

Piet Colyn

Former Director-General, Home Affairs

Immigrant-receiving countries can develop a very distorted view of migration. People are coming to their country for what they believe to be clear and obvious reasons: for economic opportunity and a better quality of life. Residents of the receiving country assume that everyone in the world would want to come to their country, first, because the large number of newcomers reinforces that impression, and second, because residents of receiving nations, like anyone else, are proud of their country and biased in their beliefs about its virtues: Wouldn't everyone want to live here!

Not surprisingly, then, South Africans have the impression that residents of neighbouring countries are all anxious to leave home and come to South Africa. It is assumed that Africans from other countries are either pulled to South Africa by the country's superior social, economic and political climate, or pushed from their home countries by poverty, chaos and a lack of opportunity. The perception that South African borders are relatively porous adds to the belief that the country is the destination of choice for the continent as a whole.

WHAT ARE THE REALITIES?

It is impossible to say with absolute certainty what motivates people to cross (or not to cross) borders. Decisions of this nature involve a complex set of criteria, some of which may not even be conscious on the part of the decision-maker (such as peer pressure or gender expectations).

Nevertheless, the questionnaires do suggest some revealing trends, and the large and representative sample sizes allow us to make some generalised statements on the decision-making process.

We have already addressed one of the myths alluded to in the stereotype above (that South Africa is the best place to live on the continent). As discussed earlier, the overwhelming majority of respondents see their home country as a better place to raise a family than South Africa and are happier with democracy, freedom and peace in their

home country — all of which puts a damper on the notion that everyone from the region wants to get across the border.

There are several other revealing points about people's desires to migrate that should be highlighted here as well. First, it is clear that the overwhelming majority of respondents are proud of their home country. No less than 95% of respondents said that they "agree" or "strongly

| TABLE 8: Pride of Citizenship and Government Approval Ratings by Respondents | | | | |
|---|------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| It makes me feel very proud to be called a citizen of my country | Les | Moz | Zim | Total |
| Strongly agree | 81 | 58 | 61 | 66 |
| Agree | 14 | 40 | 34 | 29 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Disagree | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Strongly disagree | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| Don't know | - | - | - | - |
| Being a citizen of my country is a very important part of how I see myself | | | | |
| Strongly agree | 79 | 47 | 52 | 59 |
| Agree | 13 | 45 | 40 | 33 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 1 | 6 | 3 | 3 |
| Disagree | 5 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Strongly disagree | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Don't know | - | - | 1 | - |
| We would like to know whether you disapprove or approve of the way that your national government has performed its job over the past year. Do you: | | | | |
| Strongly disapprove | 27 | 8 | 9 | 14 |
| Disapprove | 17 | 49 | 19 | 27 |
| Approve | 33 | 21 | 50 | 37 |
| Strongly approve | 12 | 4 | 12 | 10 |
| Don't know | 10 | 17 | 10 | 12 |
| About how much of the time do you think you can trust the national government to do what is right? | | | | |
| Just about always | 21 | 17 | 11 | 16 |
| Most of the time | 12 | 17 | 36 | 24 |
| Only some of the time | 40 | 48 | 34 | 40 |
| Never | 23 | 8 | 8 | 13 |
| Don't know | 4 | 9 | 9 | 8 |
| On the whole, are you dissatisfied or satisfied with the way democracy works in your country? Are you: | | | | |
| Very dissatisfied | 32 | 8 | 10 | 16 |
| Dissatisfied | 24 | 20 | 17 | 20 |
| Satisfied | 27 | 45 | 44 | 39 |
| Very satisfied | 13 | 7 | 10 | 10 |
| My country is not a democracy | 1 | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| Don't know | 4 | 16 | 15 | 12 |

agree” when asked if they are “proud to be called a citizen of [their home country]”, and 92% responded in this way when asked if “being a citizen of [their home country] is a very important part of how [they see themselves]”. Respondents were more circumspect when asked whether they approve of the way that their government has performed over the past year and whether or not they can trust their governments “to do what is right”, but the approval ratings are still high. Moreover, disapproval of the government should not necessarily be seen as a sign of being “unpatriotic” or desiring to emigrate (see Table 8).²²

Second, although most respondents consider jobs, opportunities for trade and access to health care to be better in South Africa than in their own countries (Mozambicans in particular), economics and services are not the only reasons people go to South Africa. As Table 9

| What was the purpose of your most recent visit? | Les | Moz | Zim |
|---|-----|-----|-----|
| To look for work | 8 | 22 | 14 |
| To work | 17 | 45 | 15 |
| Buy and sell goods | 3 | 2 | 21 |
| School | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Study at university/technikon | - | 0 | 1 |
| Shopping | 19 | 4 | 21 |
| Business | 2 | 2 | 8 |
| Visit family or friends | 34 | 12 | 13 |
| Holiday, tourism | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| Medical treatment | 6 | 4 | 2 |
| Other | 8 | 2 | 3 |
| Why have you returned to your country? | | | |
| Returned after holiday or visit ended | 35 | 15 | 26 |
| Wanted to come back home | 15 | 22 | 25 |
| Family reasons | 8 | 9 | 7 |
| Sick/injured | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Contract ended | 2 | 18 | 9 |
| Retired from job | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Lost job or retrenched | 11 | 10 | 2 |
| Found job at home | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Travel documents expired | 4 | 2 | 5 |
| Expelled or deported from SA | 1 | 11 | 4 |
| Studies ended | - | 0 | 1 |
| Goods sold out | - | 2 | 9 |
| Other | 18 | 5 | 9 |

demonstrates, visiting friends and family, shopping and holidays constitute a major part of the reasons that people made their last visit. There are important differences among the three countries, however, with Basotho going to South Africa predominantly to shop and visit, Mozambicans to work (or look for work), and Zimbabweans to work, buy/trade goods, shop and visit friends and family.

Table 9 also suggests that there was both a freedom of choice and a desire to return to one’s home country — contrary to popular opinion in South Africa. With the notable exception of Mozambique, very few of the respondents were deported from the country.

Nevertheless, jobs and services would appear to be an important part of what pulls people to South Africa and the stereotypes do, to some extent, apply in this case. But the would-be push factors tell a different story, bringing into doubt the

explanatory value of any simple push/pull model of cross-border migration. As outlined in Table 10, the pull factors are counter-balanced by a strong set of factors that would work to keep people at home as opposed to pushing them out.

This push/pull ambiguity is all the more apparent when one considers that even though most respondents rate their own country as better

| TABLE 10: Push/Pull Factors in the Migration Decision-Making Process | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| Of the things we have just discussed that would cause you to go to South Africa, which is the most important to you? | Les | Moz | Zim | Total |
| Land | - | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Water | - | - | 1 | - |
| Food | 1 | 2 | - | 1 |
| Houses | - | - | 1 | - |
| Jobs | 50 | 40 | 35 | 42 |
| Treatment by employers | - | 1 | 1 | - |
| Trade | - | 4 | 8 | 5 |
| Overall living conditions | - | 14 | 5 | 7 |
| Safety of myself and family | - | 1 | - | 1 |
| Crime | - | 1 | - | - |
| Peace | - | - | - | - |
| Education, schools | 9 | 7 | 2 | 5 |
| Health care | 10 | 14 | 3 | 9 |
| Place to raise your family | - | - | - | - |
| Diseases | - | 1 | - | - |
| HIV/AIDS | - | - | - | - |
| Freedom | - | - | 1 | - |
| Democracy | - | - | - | - |
| Getting necessary travel documents | - | 1 | 1 | - |
| Shopping | 17 | 9 | 26 | 18 |
| Nothing | - | - | 8 | - |
| Other | 8 | 3 | 6 | 8 |
| Of the things we have discussed that would cause you to stay in [your country], which is the most important to you? | | | | |
| Land | 40 | 17 | 14 | 23 |
| Water | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Food | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Houses | 6 | 6 | 2 | 4 |
| Jobs | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| Treatment by employers | - | 1 | - | - |
| Trade | - | - | - | - |
| Overall living conditions | 7 | 5 | 5 | 6 |
| Safety of myself and family | 1 | 13 | 12 | 9 |
| Crime | 5 | 4 | 6 | 5 |
| Peace | 10 | 17 | 23 | 18 |
| Education, schools | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Health care | - | - | 1 | - |
| Place to raise your family | 1 | 5 | 5 | 4 |
| Diseases | 1 | - | 1 | 1 |
| HIV/AIDS | - | - | - | - |
| Freedom | 10 | 3 | 6 | 6 |
| Democracy | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Getting necessary travel documents | - | 6 | 1 | 2 |
| Shopping | - | - | - | - |
| I grew up in [this country] | 2 | - | 11 | 5 |
| Other | 6 | 12 | 7 | 7 |

than South Africa in several important categories, the majority also have a favourable overall impression of South Africa. Moreover, most respondents (even those who have never been to South Africa) claim to have a strong network of friends and family in South Africa and/or are very confident in their knowledge of how to get into the country (safely and legally), how to find a job, and how to find a place to stay when they get there. Most respondents even have a positive or neutral view of how they will be perceived and treated by South Africans — police, employers, whites and border officials included!

Despite all of this, only 13% of respondents say they want to leave their home country “to a great extent” and only 6% say that it is “very likely” that they will do so. Clearly, being impressed with a country does not necessarily constitute wanting to live or even to visit there and one must be extremely cautious when making inferences about people’s decision-making processes based on their opinions of another country. In other words, South Africa may very well be seen as an attractive place by many people but this does not mean that the attractions outweigh the benefits of being at home or that people are willing to uproot and move to another country — particularly if their home country rates well on a comparative basis in other important areas.

And finally, the people interviewed for this research do not see the South African border as a porous joke, easily crossed at any time. As will be discussed in more detail, borders and border controls are taken very seriously by the people we spoke to and, if anything, act as a deterrent to cross-border migration — not an inducement.

WHAT ARE THE PERCEIVED IMPACTS OF CROSS-BORDER MIGRATION?

WHAT ARE THE STEREOTYPES?

Illegal immigrants, most of whom live in Gauteng, are aggravating the crime situation and robbing South Africans of jobs...[T]hey have added R1 900 million to the country’s bill for health, education and housing [and] are also proving to be a drain on Reconstruction and Development Projects.²³

Daryl Swanepoel

National Party’s Gauteng Legislative Spokesperson

There are really two issues at play here. The first is the stereotype — characterised by the above quote — that migrants and immigrants from the region steal jobs and take resources from South Africans. Other SAMP research in progress will illuminate the issue of the impact of

migration on South Africa. We focus instead on the impact of migration on the source country.²⁴

The problem with this second point is that there really is no stereotype — at least not among the general public. For the most part, the average South African does not seem to think (or care) about the impact of cross-border migration on the countries where migrants originate from and the discussion would appear to be limited to a handful of academics and NGOs. Nevertheless, there are some stereotypes within this group that are important to identify and discuss — if only briefly.

At the risk of over-simplifying a long history of scholarly research on the subject, it can be said that the bulk of the literature on cross-border migration points to the negative consequences of migratory labour and apartheid-era immigration laws.²⁵ From exploitative labour practices and

deferred pay systems to the transmission of AIDS and the splitting up of families, there is ample evidence to suggest that cross-border migration has served to undermine the social, cultural and economic integrity of SADC states. This is not to suggest that all cross-border movement has been seen to be negative, or that it affects all people in the same way, but the overwhelming sense from the literature is that cross-border movement has had a deleterious impact on individuals, families, communities and states in the region.

WHAT ARE THE REALITIES?

Given the scholarly evidence one would assume that our interviews would also be full of negative attitudes towards migration. And yet, we received an overwhelmingly positive response from interviewees when they were asked about the impact of migration. Important variations among the three countries notwithstanding, more than half the people

TABLE 11: Perceived Impacts of Migration on Person, Family, Community, Country

| Many people from this country are going to SA to stay or work. Has this had any impact on you personally? | Les | Moz | Zim | Total |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| Very positive | 11 | 22 | 13 | 15 |
| Positive | 41 | 46 | 35 | 40 |
| No impact | 12 | 20 | 46 | 28 |
| Negative | 27 | 8 | 4 | 12 |
| Very negative | 8 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| Don't know | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Many people from this country are going to SA to stay or work. Has this had any impact on your family? | Les | Moz | Zim | Total |
| Very positive | 10 | 19 | 12 | 13 |
| Positive | 37 | 50 | 34 | 40 |
| No impact | 13 | 17 | 46 | 28 |
| Negative | 27 | 17 | 5 | 13 |
| Very negative | 6 | - | 1 | 2 |
| Don't know | 7 | 4 | 3 | 5 |
| Many people from this country are going to SA to stay or work. Has this had any impact on your community? | Les | Moz | Zim | Total |
| Very positive | 9 | 9 | 10 | 9 |
| Positive | 41 | 51 | 40 | 44 |
| No impact | 4 | 15 | 25 | 16 |
| Negative | 24 | 12 | 6 | 13 |
| Very negative | 9 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Don't know | 12 | 11 | 19 | 15 |
| Many people from this country are going to SA to stay or work. Has this had any impact on [your country]? | Les | Moz | Zim | Total |
| Very positive | 10 | 11 | 11 | 10 |
| Positive | 36 | 47 | 36 | 40 |
| No impact | 3 | 7 | 14 | 9 |
| Negative | 28 | 17 | 12 | 19 |
| Very negative | 12 | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| Don't know | 10 | 15 | 24 | 17 |

interviewed see cross-border migration as having a positive (or at least neutral) impact on them personally, on their family, on their community and on their country as a whole (see Table 11). Interestingly, the most positive responses came at the personal and family level where most see the impact as “positive” or “very positive”.

Even more surprising, perhaps, is that women also have a largely positive outlook on migration — despite the enormous impact that the migrant labour system has had on family life and relationships in these countries in the past. Even on a personal level, 14% of the women interviewed said cross-border migration has had a “very positive” impact on them personally, 39% said “positive”, and 27% said “no impact”.

Women’s attitudes to migration and their perspectives on life in South Africa are, in fact, remarkably similar overall to the men interviewed. Almost to a percentage point, women gave the same responses as men on virtually every opinion-based question in the survey. Their perceptions of South Africa, their reasons for going to South Africa (or for not going), their expected treatment by South African authorities and citizens, and their comparisons of South Africa with their home country were almost identical to that of the men interviewed. And although women were slightly less knowledgeable and slightly less sure of themselves in terms of their ability to get into South Africa and to find accommodation and work if they so desired, the differences were not great.

Women outlined a similar pattern of family and friend networks in South Africa as did the men, and they expressed a similar understanding (or lack thereof) of how one lives as a foreigner in South Africa. In other words, women have the same general perceptions of South Africa *vis-a-vis* their own countries, and they have a very similar sense of what it takes to be a migrant in the Southern African context.

Interestingly, these similarities exist despite the very different first-hand experiences that men and women have with respect to migration to South Africa. As might be expected, more men have been to South Africa than women, men tend to stay for longer periods of time, and men tend to work in more formal, pre-arranged occupations than women (such as mining or manufacturing).

More men claimed to be the “head of the household” than did women (57% versus 18% respectively), more men claimed to be the person who “makes the final decision as to whether to go to South Africa or not” (57% versus 29% respectively), and more men claimed that they “would be able to go to South Africa if [they] wanted to” (76% versus 61% respectively). The questionnaire did not, unfortunately, capture the dynamics of joint decision-making between men and women — often an important part of the decision-making process in

African households — but the statistics clearly imply that men are more in control of decision-making about cross-border migration than women.

Whether these differences and similarities between men and women have any direct policy implications is unclear and we should stress that this is a very preliminary and cursory discussion of what will inevitably prove to be a complex set of gender data that needs to be looked at in more cross-sectional detail and compared with more focused gender-oriented household surveys. There is also the possibility that women's opinions on cross-border migration are largely shaped by the men in their households.²⁶ Nevertheless, the data do raise some counter-intuitive questions about women's attitudes to cross-border migration and would appear to challenge the notion that women see migration in a negative light.

In conclusion, then, despite the many negative impacts that cross-border migration has had in the region, people also see benefits for themselves, their family, their community and their country. The fact that people say they like something does not necessarily mean it is in their best interests to be doing it, but it is important not to represent individuals in Southern Africa as mere "victims" of a migratory system.

WHAT KIND OF IMMIGRATION POLICIES DO PEOPLE FROM THE REGION WANT TO SEE?

WHAT ARE THE STEREOTYPES?

If a relatively safe and prosperous country (as South Africa is within the African context) opens its borders, it risks being overwhelmed by an influx of immigrants from poor or violent countries. Other countries have made use of control measures with great success.²⁷

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We have already debunked the myth that everyone in the region wants to live in South Africa. Equally problematic, however, is the belief that everyone in the region expects the South African government to throw open its borders to migrants. The South African press is full of articles which imply — directly or indirectly — that South Africa must "hold the line" on border controls and not fall prey to the entry demands of other SADC states. The rather vitriolic reaction of the South African media, as well as some policy makers and academics, to the 1996 SADC

proposal to gradually phase in a “freer movement” of peoples in the region illustrates this fear, and has heightened suspicions that there is a concerted effort to undermine South Africa’s border controls.²⁸

WHAT ARE THE REALITIES?

Once again, the realities are very different to the stereotypes. Although citizens of Lesotho, Mozambique and Zimbabwe would definitely like to see a relaxation of border regulations and consider it a “basic human right” to be able to move from one country to another, they do not expect the South African government to abandon border controls altogether. As seen in Table 12, most people would like to see policies in

| TABLE 12: Attitudes Towards Borders | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| It is a basic human right for people to be able to cross from one country into another without obstacles | Les | Moz | Zim | Total |
| Strongly agree | 61 | 16 | 23 | 32 |
| Agree | 20 | 33 | 40 | 32 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 0 | 6 | 4 | 4 |
| Disagree | 16 | 27 | 25 | 23 |
| Strongly disagree | 1 | 10 | 5 | 5 |
| Don't know | 2 | 6 | 4 | 4 |
| It is ridiculous that people from this country cannot freely go to another country, all because of some artificial border | | | | |
| Strongly agree | 56 | 10 | 12 | 25 |
| Agree | 20 | 28 | 27 | 25 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 0 | 14 | 12 | 9 |
| Disagree | 20 | 33 | 34 | 30 |
| Strongly disagree | 2 | 9 | 7 | 6 |
| Don't know | 2 | 6 | 8 | 6 |
| People who live on different sides of borders between two countries are very different from one another | | | | |
| Strongly agree | 33 | 11 | 11 | 18 |
| Agree | 35 | 32 | 30 | 33 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 1 | 15 | 10 | 9 |
| Disagree | 25 | 29 | 36 | 31 |
| Strongly disagree | 3 | 4 | 7 | 5 |
| Don't know | 4 | 8 | 5 | 6 |
| It is very important for [the respondent's country] to have a border that clearly differentiates it from other countries | | | | |
| Strongly agree | 24 | 25 | 29 | 27 |
| Agree | 20 | 41 | 41 | 35 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 1 | 8 | 7 | 5 |
| Disagree | 46 | 14 | 11 | 22 |
| Strongly disagree | 8 | 2 | 5 | 5 |
| Don't know | 2 | 10 | 6 | 6 |

place that make it easier to move from one country to another, and many question the legitimacy of borders that were created during the colonial era, but they do not advocate a radical dismantling of current border systems.

About a third of respondents disagree with the suggestion that people should be able to move “freely” across borders and more than half feel that borders are an important part of defining who they are. Even more important is the fact that most respondents feel that the South African government should be able to restrict the number of (im)migrants allowed into the country and that they should also have the right to deport people who are there “illegally”, are “not contributing to the well-being of the country”, or have “committed serious criminal offences”.

As Table 12 illustrates, respondents would like to see the South African government define these restrictions and categories in a humane and

rational manner, but do not reject the idea of selective (im)migration and do not necessarily expect the government to grant amnesty to every non-South African currently living in the country. Nor do the majority expect preferential or privileged treatment for people from their own

| TABLE 13: Attitudes Towards Immigration Laws | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| How about people from other countries going to SA? Which one of the following do you think the SA government should do? | Les | Moz | Zim | Total |
| Let anyone into SA who wants to enter | 68 | 13 | 22 | 34 |
| Let people into SA as long as there are jobs available | 25 | 67 | 35 | 41 |
| Place strict limits on the number of foreigners who can enter SA | 6 | 15 | 36 | 21 |
| Prohibit all people entering into SA from other countries | - | 1 | 4 | 2 |
| Don't know | 1 | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| How about people from other Southern African countries who are presently in SA? Which one of the following do you think the SA government should do? | | | | |
| Send them all back to their own countries | 2 | 2 | 11 | 6 |
| Send back only those who are not contributing to the economic well-being/livelihood of SA | 12 | 27 | 32 | 21 |
| Send back only those who have committed serious criminal offences | 68 | 57 | 30 | 51 |
| Send back only those who are here without the permission of the SA government | 10 | 8 | 27 | 16 |
| The government should not send back any people to their own countries | 6 | 3 | 8 | 6 |
| Don't know | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| The SA government should offer amnesty to all foreigners now living illegally inside the country | | | | |
| Strongly disagree | 10 | 11 | 21 | 15 |
| Disagree | 18 | 20 | 21 | 20 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 1 | 17 | 7 | 8 |
| Agree | 32 | 39 | 26 | 32 |
| Strongly agree | 37 | 5 | 15 | 19 |
| Haven't heard enough about it | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Don't know | 1 | 6 | 7 | 5 |
| Do you think that people from countries in Southern Africa should receive special immigration treatment (compared to people from the rest of Africa or elsewhere)? | | | | |
| Strongly disagree | 21 | 5 | 16 | 15 |
| Disagree | 45 | 20 | 33 | 33 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 3 | 17 | 10 | 10 |
| Agree | 20 | 38 | 25 | 27 |
| Strongly agree | 10 | 5 | 7 | 7 |
| Haven't heard enough about it | 1 | 6 | 2 | 2 |
| Don't know | 2 | 10 | 7 | 6 |
| Do you think that people from [your country] should receive special immigration treatment (compared to people from all other countries)? | | | | |
| Strongly disagree | 20 | 5 | 16 | 14 |
| Disagree | 43 | 24 | 35 | 34 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 3 | 16 | 11 | 10 |
| Agree | 19 | 31 | 20 | 23 |
| Strongly agree | 15 | 16 | 10 | 13 |
| Haven't heard enough about it | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Don't know | - | 8 | 6 | 5 |

country — despite their history of cross-border relations and proximity to South Africa.

It must be noted, however, that there are significant differences in attitudes towards borders between Lesotho and the other two countries surveyed and that Lesotho is, in many ways, a “special case” (see Table 14). This difference is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that 41% of Basotho said that Lesotho and South Africa should simply join as one country (as opposed to 7% and 9% of Mozambicans and Zimbabweans respectively). The reasons for this are no doubt rooted in the exceptionally high number of contract workers from Lesotho (by far the largest of all the SADC states) as well as the close cultural, linguistic and familial ties between Basotho and a large section of the South African population (that is, Sotho and Tswana speakers).

The fact that Lesotho is completely surrounded by South Africa also contributes to the image of Lesotho as more of a province of South Africa than an independent state. There are also a significant number of Basotho (40% of those who think the two countries should join as one) who feel that large parts of the Free State province in South Africa should become part of Lesotho.

Another interesting finding is that respondents do not necessarily expect to have all the same rights and privileges as South African citizens. Although most respondents feel that non-citizens should have the same access to jobs and basic resources, such as education, medical services and housing, as South African citizens, they were far more hesitant when it came to questions of a more political nature: the right to vote, the right to become a permanent resident or a citizen of the country, and the right to request amnesty for non-nationals (see Table 15). In other words, people from the countries interviewed want the same basic human rights and the same economic opportunities as South

TABLE 14: Attitudes Towards Incorporation

| What about the relationship between your country and South Africa. Which of the following would you like to see happen? | Les | Moz | Zim | Total |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| The two countries joining together under one government | 41 | 7 | 9 | 18 |
| Both countries keeping their own government, but there being complete freedom of movement of people and goods across the border | 40 | 67 | 71 | 61 |
| Total independence between the two countries | 19 | 22 | 16 | 19 |
| Don't know | 1 | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| You said that you would prefer the two countries joining together. Would you prefer to have: | | | | |
| Your country becoming a new province within South Africa | 45 | 43 | 28 | 41 |
| Your country becoming part of [nearest province in South Africa] | 12 | 7 | 16 | 13 |
| [Nearest province in SA] becoming part of Your country | 40 | 14 | 25 | 33 |
| Don't know | 4 | 36 | 31 | 14 |

TABLE 15: Attitudes Towards Rights for Non-Citizens

| The South African government should offer people from other African countries who are in South Africa: | Les | Moz | Zim | Total |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| The same chance at a job as South Africans | | | | |
| Strongly disagree | 1 | 5 | 6 | 4 |
| Disagree | 5 | 9 | 14 | 10 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | - | 5 | 6 | 4 |
| Agree | 32 | 61 | 52 | 49 |
| Strongly agree | 62 | 18 | 16 | 31 |
| Haven't heard enough about it | - | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Don't know | - | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| The same access to medical services as South Africans | | | | |
| Strongly disagree | 1 | 5 | 6 | 4 |
| Disagree | 1 | 5 | 5 | 4 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | - | 3 | 4 | 2 |
| Agree | 33 | 61 | 60 | 52 |
| Strongly agree | 65 | 23 | 20 | 35 |
| Haven't heard enough about it | - | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Don't know | - | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| The same access to a house as South Africans | | | | |
| Strongly disagree | 4 | 5 | 6 | 5 |
| Disagree | 6 | 8 | 11 | 9 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | - | 10 | 6 | 6 |
| Agree | 38 | 59 | 57 | 52 |
| Strongly agree | 52 | 14 | 13 | 25 |
| Haven't heard enough about it | - | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Don't know | - | 2 | 4 | 2 |
| The same access to education as South Africans | | | | |
| Strongly disagree | 1 | 6 | 6 | 4 |
| Disagree | 2 | 6 | 7 | 5 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | - | 5 | 6 | 4 |
| Agree | 33 | 61 | 58 | 52 |
| Strongly agree | 65 | 18 | 17 | 31 |
| Haven't heard enough about it | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Don't know | - | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| The right to vote in South African elections | | | | |
| Strongly disagree | 15 | 30 | 24 | 23 |
| Disagree | 18 | 35 | 31 | 28 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 1 | 10 | 6 | 6 |
| Agree | 33 | 12 | 20 | 22 |
| Strongly agree | 32 | 3 | 7 | 14 |
| Haven't heard enough about it | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Don't know | 1 | 7 | 9 | 6 |

African citizens, but they do not necessarily expect (or want) the political rights of citizenship — with the notable exception of Basotho.

It is also interesting to note that these attitudes to immigration policy are largely reciprocal.

To the extent that respondents would like to see South Africa relax its immigration laws, people from Lesotho, Mozambique and Zimbabwe are also willing to allow a freer movement of people and goods from South Africa into their own country. However, in Lesotho and Zimbabwe, there is a reluctance to make land available to foreigners for farming — no doubt due to the critical shortage of arable land in both countries. The fact that Mozambicans were significantly more agreeable on this point may be due to the fact there is a considerable amount of arable land still available in that country.

Far from expecting the South African government to throw open its doors to whoever wants to enter, most people in the region have a strong respect for the sanctity of borders. Even in Lesotho — where independence of the nation is itself in question — there is a pragmatic and selective

approach to questions of sovereignty, immigration and border controls with South Africa.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

WHAT ARE THE STEREOTYPES?

When our people went into exile they did not go to those countries to sell drugs, to steal, kill or look for jobs — they went to further the liberation struggle against the apartheid rulers. What is the reason for their people streaming into South Africa in the millions?

*Letter to the Editor, Weekend Star [Johannesburg],
February 4-5, 1995*

Based on the majority of stereotypes discussed so far, it is not difficult to imagine what the images of cross-border migration are for the future. Without a dramatic reversal in the political and economic fortunes of neighbouring countries — or a draconian tightening of immigration laws and border controls in South Africa — it is expected that the number of people crossing the border will continue to increase dramatically. As a result, political and economic conditions in South Africa will worsen and there will be increased pressure on limited resources, jobs and services.

| TABLE 15 continued | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| The right to become a permanent resident of South Africa | Les | Moz | Zim | Total |
| Strongly disagree | 7 | 15 | 13 | 12 |
| Disagree | 10 | 33 | 26 | 23 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 2 | 18 | 12 | 11 |
| Agree | 44 | 23 | 30 | 32 |
| Strongly agree | 36 | 5 | 8 | 16 |
| Haven't heard enough about it | - | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Don't know | 1 | 4 | 7 | 5 |
| The right to become a citizen of South Africa | | | | |
| Strongly disagree | 6 | 19 | 13 | 13 |
| Disagree | 9 | 35 | 26 | 23 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 2 | 18 | 12 | 11 |
| Agree | 46 | 20 | 29 | 32 |
| Strongly agree | 35 | 3 | 8 | 15 |
| Haven't heard enough about it | - | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Don't know | - | 4 | 8 | 5 |

WHAT ARE THE REALITIES?

It is impossible to say for sure what the future of migration looks like for Southern Africa given the uncertainties around the broader political and economic context within which cross-border migration will take place. What can be discussed, however, is people's propensity to migrate or immigrate to South Africa based on their stated intentions. Although by no means a foolproof measure of future migratory patterns, we can

nevertheless make some defensible comments on likely migration trends in the region — trends that once again challenge the stereotypes of gloom and doom.

On a general note, we have already discussed the fact that not every-

| TABLE 16: The Demographics of Future Migration | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------|----------|---------|--------|-------------|---------------|----------|---------|--------|-------------|
| How likely is it that you will go and live in South Africa for a short period of time (up to two years), or a long period of time? | Short-term | | | | | Permanently | | | | |
| | very unlikely | unlikely | neutral | likely | very likely | very unlikely | unlikely | neutral | likely | very likely |
| Country | | | | | | | | | | |
| Lesotho | 33 | 5 | 2 | 44 | 16 | 66 | 5 | 3 | 14 | 11 |
| Mozambique | 16 | 21 | 21 | 36 | 7 | 35 | 38 | 13 | 11 | 4 |
| Zimbabwe | 34 | 17 | 7 | 28 | 14 | 61 | 20 | 7 | 9 | 4 |
| Gender | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 25 | 14 | 10 | 37 | 14 | 52 | 21 | 8 | 12 | 7 |
| Female | 33 | 15 | 9 | 33 | 10 | 59 | 20 | 7 | 10 | 5 |
| Age | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15-24 | 20 | 12 | 11 | 41 | 16 | 45 | 23 | 10 | 13 | 9 |
| 25-44 | 25 | 16 | 11 | 37 | 12 | 55 | 20 | 8 | 12 | 5 |
| 45-64 | 44 | 14 | 6 | 26 | 10 | 66 | 18 | 5 | 6 | 5 |
| 65+ | 53 | 16 | 5 | 19 | 8 | 72 | 18 | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| Employment | | | | | | | | | | |
| Inactive | 33 | 16 | 10 | 31 | 10 | 56 | 22 | 8 | 9 | 5 |
| Looking for work | 20 | 12 | 7 | 44 | 17 | 49 | 20 | 7 | 16 | 8 |
| Part-time | 23 | 11 | 14 | 41 | 11 | 51 | 20 | 11 | 12 | 6 |
| Full-time | 32 | 16 | 9 | 30 | 12 | 59 | 21 | 7 | 9 | 5 |
| Education | | | | | | | | | | |
| No schooling | 38 | 18 | 10 | 29 | 5 | 57 | 19 | 10 | 9 | 4 |
| Some primary | 31 | 14 | 10 | 33 | 12 | 61 | 17 | 7 | 9 | 7 |
| Primary completed | 35 | 13 | 7 | 32 | 13 | 59 | 19 | 7 | 11 | 5 |
| Some high | 24 | 14 | 10 | 39 | 14 | 51 | 23 | 9 | 12 | 6 |
| High school completed | 22 | 18 | 9 | 38 | 13 | 47 | 24 | 6 | 16 | 7 |
| Post-grad & further | 11 | 10 | 16 | 40 | 23 | 46 | 28 | 9 | 11 | 7 |
| Been to SA | | | | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 26 | 10 | 5 | 41 | 19 | 57 | 15 | 6 | 13 | 9 |
| No | 30 | 18 | 13 | 31 | 8 | 53 | 25 | 9 | 10 | 4 |
| Family in SA | | | | | | | | | | |
| None | 34 | 17 | 7 | 31 | 11 | 61 | 19 | 7 | 9 | 5 |
| Few | 24 | 12 | 11 | 40 | 13 | 51 | 22 | 8 | 12 | 7 |
| Most | 19 | 17 | 13 | 38 | 14 | 37 | 30 | 11 | 16 | 6 |
| Almost all | 17 | 13 | 8 | 25 | 38 | 33 | 21 | 0 | 29 | 17 |
| Overall impression of SA | | | | | | | | | | |
| Very unfavourable | 52 | 14 | 12 | 14 | 9 | 74 | 13 | 8 | 1 | 4 |
| Unfavourable | 42 | 11 | 6 | 33 | 8 | 70 | 16 | 3 | 9 | 3 |
| Neither | 34 | 15 | 18 | 26 | 7 | 52 | 24 | 12 | 9 | 3 |
| Favourable | 23 | 16 | 10 | 40 | 10 | 52 | 23 | 8 | 13 | 4 |
| Very favourable | 20 | 13 | 6 | 39 | 22 | 48 | 20 | 7 | 13 | 12 |

one in the region wants to live in, or even visit, South Africa. The popular notion that South Africa is an island of tranquillity and prosperity in a sea of chaos and poverty does not bear itself out in the minds of most respondents — that much is clear. There are concerns about safety in South Africa and finding affordable housing and jobs, and there are concerns about leaving family and assets at home. Unless these underlying concerns change dramatically over the next several years one can expect people's opinions about migrating to South Africa to remain much the same.

But there were also questions in the survey, as noted earlier, which asked people directly about their “desire” to go to South Africa (for a short and long period of time) and the “likelihood” of their going to South Africa. These four questions were combined to create a single composite measure to identify those respondents who are most likely to (im)migrate to South Africa in order to give us a demographic profile of the possible migratory population in the future.

The results of this analysis suggest that the people most likely to go to South Africa (on a temporary or permanent basis) are young, single men who have been encouraged by their families to migrate. They are also more likely, relative to other respondents, to possess documents permitting such migration, to have some education, to have family in South Africa, and to have been to South Africa before. This is by no means an exhaustive list of the various factors that would appear to influence people's propensity to migrate in the future, but it does provide a general indication of the kind of person most likely to go to South Africa.

Table 16 provides an additional breakdown of migration potential in the region and is divided in to temporary “migration” (up to two years) and permanent “immigration”.

On the other hand, the decision to migrate will not be made easily. Although economic opportunities are deemed to be much better in South Africa the quality of life on other dimensions is less positively perceived. Indeed, there are many aspects of life that are deemed to be much better at home than in South Africa, making the decision to migrate ambiguous at best. These are not the kind of circumstances that are associated with people leaving their homes in droves to go to South Africa, which may help to explain the fairly large discrepancies noted earlier in the paper between those who said they want to go and those who said they will go.

It should also be noted that regression analyses of the data indicate that the questions related to peoples' desire to migrate to South Africa and the perceived likelihood of doing so provide valid statistical measurements of their intended constructs and can be used as a reliable

measure of different dimensions of migration.²⁹ We can be confident, then, that the results from the survey are a reliable indication of both the desire and the likelihood of moving to South Africa on a temporary or permanent basis. Ideally, one would want to track the actual migratory behaviour of respondents over a number of years to validate these responses, but in lieu of this information we can still have some confidence in the existing data.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are at least five important policy lessons to be drawn from this research. The intent of this section, however, is not to offer detailed advice on immigration policy in the region but rather to identify (and reinforce) broad conceptual themes which have been taken up in some form or other in the South African Draft Green Paper on International Migration³⁰ and which need to be addressed in the current phase of immigration policy reform.

IMMIGRATION MANAGEMENT

The first, and perhaps the most important, conclusion to be drawn from the research is that cross-border migration into South Africa (at least from the three countries surveyed) would appear to be much less chaotic and overwhelming than has been previously thought. The volume of traffic and the methods of crossing the border, as well as the type of people crossing the border and their stated plans for the future, present a much more regularised, decriminalised and manageable picture of the migratory process than reports in the press and other research initiatives on undocumented migration would indicate.³¹

The upshot of these findings is that a rights-regarding, management-oriented approach to immigration is not only a feasible option in South Africa, there is a highly regularised migration process already in place on which to build. If South Africa creates a more onerous, control-and-expulsion oriented approach to migration, it risks forcing people underground (quite literally) and therefore eroding the goodwill and legal practices that currently exist as well as undermining efforts to build on this regularised movement in the future.

This is not to suggest that there should be no border controls at all. Effective border monitoring and immigration law will always be needed at some level. It should also be reiterated that this particular piece of research did not investigate migrants currently living in South Africa, which does bias the sample. Nevertheless, the fact remains that South

Africa is at a crossroads in its immigration policy and it can either take the path of “fortress South Africa” or it can recognise both the need and the feasibility of managing the growing levels of cross-border migration in a humane and rational manner.

IMMIGRATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Concurrent with the previous point is the need for the South African government to address human rights issues within the immigration system and to create immigration legislation that is consistent with the new Bill of Rights.³²

The increasing criminalisation of migrants from neighbouring countries lends itself to the kinds of human rights abuses that continue to plague South African security and immigration authorities — not to mention the abuses that take place on the farms and factories that employ both documented and undocumented labourers from the region — and aggravates what could be a very civil and regularised movement of people. If the profile of visitors from our surveys is any indication of the kind of person visiting South Africa from the region there would appear to be little grounds for the paranoia and xenophobia that continues to permeate parts of the South African immigration system.

REGIONAL INTEGRATION

As Southern Africa moves towards an era of greater integration, effective management of cross-border migration can strengthen and build on existing regional linkages. From the personal to the national, from the familial to the regional, cross-border migration is an integral part of the social, political and economic lives of people in Southern Africa.

This research has demonstrated many of these linkages, but it is perhaps at the economic level that we can draw our most concrete conclusions. As discussed earlier, the buying and selling of goods, working in South Africa, and sending remittances home are some of the core motivations for cross-border migration.

Although difficult to quantify in absolute terms, these cross-border economic activities (both formal and informal) make up an important part of the national and household budgets in the three nations surveyed. In Mozambique, for example, official remittances in the form of “deferred payments” from Mozambicans working in South African mines alone make up 55% of the non-aid budget of the Mozambican government and is an essential part of the household budgets of most miners’ families.³³

If one were to include goods brought back from South Africa, as well as other formal and informal income, the importance of cross-border

movement on the economy of Mozambique would be difficult to overstate.

In terms of informal remittances we found that 67% of the people who had worked in South Africa in the past had sent money home — an average of R321 a month (which worked out to more than half the average monthly income). It is impossible to estimate an aggregate value for these remittances due to the different lengths of time that people worked in South Africa, but with close to a third of the entire national sample saying that they have worked in South Africa in the past and have sent money home this is a significant source of revenue indeed. We also found that 85% of the respondents said they would send money home if they were to work in South Africa in the future. Forty-five percent said they would send money to their parents, 26% said they would send money to their spouse, and 18% said they would send money to their children (with the rest divided among other family members and friends).

We are not saying anything particularly new here, of course. We are simply reinforcing the point that immigration policy must take into account not only the macro-economic linkages in the region but also the ground level, micro-economic connections that are an essential part of building a robust regional economy.

Having said this, it is also essential that policy-makers understand the dynamics of these micro-economic linkages. Recent trends in South Africa towards the blaming of non-citizens for stealing jobs and competing for scarce resources are not only disturbing in terms of their implications for violence against foreign workers and residents, but also because they do not necessarily represent the realities of non-citizen participation in the South African economy. As noted earlier, research by SAMP has demonstrated that non-citizens in South Africa also create jobs and that competition for scarce resources such as housing need not be a conflict-ridden process.³⁴ If handled properly, cross-border migration can work to the economic benefit of everyone in the region — South Africans included.

MIGRATION VERSUS IMMIGRATION

It is important to distinguish between short-term, purpose-oriented cross-border migration of the sort described by most respondents in this research, and long-term permanent immigration. The Draft Green Paper on Immigration Policy in South Africa makes a point of differentiating between these two forms of cross-border movement and discusses the implications of these differences on immigration policy and management at some length, so we will not go into further detail here. What should be noted, however, is that the empirical evidence from our

research supports the need for this distinction and lends credence to the argument that managing short-term migratory flows is feasible.

SPECIAL STATUS FOR LESOTHO?

The South African government has already made special concessions to non-citizens from SADC countries by granting amnesties in 1996 to foreign miners and unauthorised migrants from these countries, and by granting amnesty to certain refugees from Mozambique. As we have seen in this paper, there is good reason for this special treatment: citizens of SADC states make up the overwhelming majority of visitors to the country (both authorised and unauthorised); there are important social and economic linkages in the region; and colonial boundaries have little to do with the geographic and ethnic realities of the sub-continent.

But what about Lesotho? With 81% of Basotho having visited South Africa an average of 28 times in their life, and 41% of Basotho saying that the two countries should simply join under one government, there is clearly a need to at least recognise the uniqueness of Lesotho's relationship with South Africa. What this means in practical terms is beyond the scope of this paper, but one can easily envision an easing of visa and passport restrictions between the two countries and perhaps an extension of certain employee benefits (such as pension plans) and other social welfare benefits (access to housing subsidies for homes built/purchased in South Africa).

Although most Basotho (63%) disagreed with the statement that "People from Lesotho should receive special treatment" when it comes to immigration policy in South Africa (compared to 29% in Mozambique and 51% in Zimbabwe), the number of Basotho who visit South Africa, the frequency with which they visit the country, their stated desires to see an easing of border restrictions, and their stated desires for equal rights and benefits in South Africa (significantly higher, on all accounts, than Mozambique and Zimbabwe) would suggest that it is indeed time for a new — and perhaps "special" — immigration compact between South Africa and Lesotho.

FOOTNOTES

1. Sally Peberdy and Jonathan Crush, "Rooted in Racism: The Origins of the Aliens Control Act" In J Crush (ed), *Beyond Control: Immigration and Human Rights in a Democratic South Africa*, Cape Town, 1998.
2. The results of SAMP's interviews with 600 migrants currently living in SA will be released in late 1998.
3. The population of the provinces covered is approximately 6.5 million.
4. These data sets will be made available to other researchers in late 1998.
5. This overall bias in favour of men is largely a result of a gender imbalance in the Mozambican sub-sample where the male/female ratio was 61/39. Although this bias can be attributed, in part, to the fact that many Mozambican women were away from their homesteads for an extended period harvesting in the fields, it is not entirely clear why this should have produced such an imbalance.
6. To ensure as balanced a household representation as possible, researchers used a card selection process whereby each member of the household over the age of 15 who was going to be at home that evening was eligible for selection (this included those members who were not currently present in the household but would return later that day). Household members then selected a card from the researcher and the card with the mark on the back of it was the person who would be interviewed. If the card belonged to the person who was not at home the researcher would return later in the day for the interview.
7. Figures taken from World Bank, *World Development Report 1997*, World Bank, Washington DC, 1997.
8. Only the southern half of Mozambique, with an approximate population of 6.5 million, was surveyed.
9. Taken from a press release in *The Star*, Johannesburg, September 18, 1995.
10. See Matthias Brunk, "Undocumented Migration to South Africa: More Questions Than Answers", Public Information Series, Idasa, Cape Town, 1996; Jonathan Crush, "Covert Operations: Clandestine Migration, Temporary Work and Immigration Policy in South Africa", SAMP Migration Policy Series No 1, Cape Town, 1997.
11. With sampling error this figure could range from 38.5% to 45.5%.
12. Note that these figures are for the total sample within each country, and not within each sub-group. For example, women make up only 12% of Mozambicans who say they have been to South Africa but this represents over 30% of the female population interviewed in Mozambique. Limited space unfortunately requires that we limit the number of tables.
13. These figures are calculated by dividing the total stated household income by the "number of people who usually share the main meal" at the household.
14. On a related point it is interesting to note that most respondents felt that "treatment by employers" was the same or better in South Africa than at

home. Post-apartheid labour reforms in South Africa may go a long way to explaining this perception, but given the abysmal record of labour relations in South Africa in the past, the implication is that labour conditions at home are that much worse.

15. As quoted in the *Sunday Times*, Johannesburg, March 3, 1996. The remark was in response to the Cabinet's decision to offer an amnesty to non-citizens who had been living in South Africa for up to five years (among other criteria).
16. Anthony Minaar and Mike Hough, *Who Goes There?: Perspectives on Clandestine Migration and Illegal Aliens in Southern Africa*, Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria, 1996, p 134. The authors go on to describe in some detail how long it takes a "fence jumper" to get through two eight-foot game fences and several layers of stacked razor coils (pp 144-5). The rather macabre image of researchers watching this "staged demonstration" illustrates the unfortunate fixation on control and security that has dominated much of the work on cross-border migration in South Africa.
17. Although Modise later retracted the statement, it is clear that he gave serious consideration to this option: "if we are not coping with the influx of illegal immigrants and our people are being threatened, there will come a time when we will switch on the fence to lethal mode" (as quoted in *The Star*, Johannesburg, May 6, 1997).
18. See for example, Minaar and Hough, *Who Goes There?*, pp 153-9.
19. The fact that these people were selected for an interview also demonstrates that many "illegals" also return to their home country.
20. Mr JNK Mamabolo, South African High Commissioner, Harare, Zimbabwe, personal interview, November 19, 1996. To its credit, the South African High Commission was very concerned with this problem of visas at the time and had been asking for additional offices and flexibility for visa applications for Zimbabweans. At the time of writing the situation had improved but still remains a serious concern.
21. *Le Monde*, Paris, October 27-28, 1996 (Colyn was director general at the time the comment was made). Note the use of "Africans", as though people from other countries were on a completely separate continent.
22. The fact that so many Basotho gave negative responses to these last two questions may be due, at least in part, to the constitutional crisis taking place in the country at the time of the interviews (ie. April/May 1997).
23. As reported in *The Star*, Johannesburg, April 15, 1996.
24. We refer readers to other research by SAMP which indicates that foreigners create jobs as well as take jobs and do not necessarily benefit from social assistance programmes in South Africa due to their (im)migrant status. On the question of jobs see CM Rogerson, "International Migration, Immigrant Entrepreneurs and South Africa's Enterprise Economy", SAMP Migration Policy Series No. 3, Cape Town, 1997; and Sally Peberdy, "Trading Places:

- Cross-Border Traders and the South African Informal Sector”, SAMP Migration Policy Series No. 6, Cape Town, 1998. On housing see David McDonald, “Left Out in the Cold?: Housing and Immigration in the New South Africa”, SAMP Migration Policy Series No. 5, Cape Town, 1998. It is also interesting to note that the respondents in the countries surveyed were split on the question of jobs in South Africa, with 40% saying that they agree with the argument that foreigners steal jobs from South Africans and 39% saying they disagree (11% were neutral and 10% did not give a response).
25. Colin Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry*, London, 1979; Marion Lacey, *Working for Boroko: The Origins of a Coercive Labour System in South Africa*, Johannesburg, 1981; Colin Murray, *Families Divided: The Impact of Migrant Labour in Lesotho*, Cambridge, 1981 ; Ruth First, *Black Gold: The Mozambican Miner, Proletarian and Peasant*, New York, 1983; Randall Packard, *White Plague, Black Labour: Tuberculosis and the Political Economy of Health and Disease in South Africa*, Berkeley, 1989; Jonathan Crush, Alan Jeeves and David Yudelman, *South Africa's Labor Empire*, Boulder, 1992.
 26. We should note that the survey instrument recorded the number of people besides the interviewer and interviewee who were present when the interview was being done (if any) and whether there was any intimidation or prompting of responses by those present. Neither are of significant concern here.
 27. *The Star*, Johannesburg, August 6, 1996. Hussein's example of “successful” border control is that of US/Mexico where he claims that “border patrols along the Rio Grande have managed to reduce the flow of illegal Mexicans into the US by 60%; achieved with the extensive use of floodlights, motion detectors and heat sensors”. What Hussein fails to point out is that border patrols have merely served to push clandestine border crossings to other parts of the US/Mexico border. Despite having spent \$2.3 billion on border enforcement since 1994 — nearly doubling the size of the Border Patrol and erecting more than 50 miles of new fences and acquiring high-tech equipment — results of a recent audit were “inconclusive” as to whether the objectives of reducing “illegal border crossings” had actually been achieved (*The Washington Post*, December 15, 1997). It is also worth noting that floodlights have had a devastating impact on wildlife on the Rio Grande, and threaten the extinction of at least 35 species of flora and fauna (*Los Angeles Times*, October 18, 1997).
 28. “The Draft Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons in the Southern African Development Community”, SADC, March 16, 1996.
 29. A factor analysis of the four items led to the emergence of a single, strong factor, both in the full sample and in the three source-country sub-samples. A reliability analysis of the measure yielded values of $\alpha = .72$ in the full sample, $\alpha = .77$ in the Lesotho sub-sample, $\alpha = .65$ in the Mozambican sub-sample, and $\alpha = .73$ in the Zimbabwe sub-sample. It should be noted that the Mozambican data is not as reliable as the full sample or the other two sub-

sets.

30. "Draft Green Paper on International Migration", *Government Gazette*, Government Printer, Pretoria, May 13, 1997.
31. We are thinking here, in particular, of the survey work done by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and the book cited earlier by Minaar and Hough (see footnote 16).
32. For a more detailed discussion of this issue, see Jonathan Crush (ed), *Beyond Control: Immigration and Human Rights in a Democratic South Africa*, Cape Town, 1998.
33. The first figure is taken from a meeting with the Mozambican Minister of Labour, HE Guilherme Mavila, in Maputo, November 11, 1996. The point about household incomes is derived from research conducted by SAMP with the spouses of Mozambican miners (to be published in a forthcoming SAMP Migration Policy Series publication). Similar results — both at the micro and macro levels — are to be found in Lesotho (see Sechaba Consultants, "Riding the Tiger: Lesotho Miners and Permanent Residence in South Africa", SAMP Migration Policy Series No. 2, Cape Town, 1997).
34. On jobs see CM Rogerson, op. cit., and Sally Peberdy, op.cit. On housing see David McDonald, op. cit.

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