

RURAL URBAN STUDIES UNIT



UNIVERSITY OF NATAL DURBAN

**BLACK FARM LABOUR ATTITUDES
AND PERCEPTIONS
ON EMPLOYMENT AND
MIGRATION PATTERNS IN THE
NATAL MIDLANDS**

by

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DEVELOPMENT STUDIES UNIT

Centre for Applied Social Sciences

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IN THE NATAL MIDLANDS

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The Rural Urban Studies Unit was founded in 1983 by the Human Sciences Research Council for the purpose of studying the dynamics of the links between the rural and urban areas of South Africa. It is situated at the University of Natal, Durban and works in close co-operation with the Development Studies Unit.

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Introduction¹

Agricultural development in South Africa has almost always been a central theme in the policy planning of successive governments, from the earliest times of European settlement in the Cape to present times. Because of the strategic importance of a healthy agricultural sector, a variety of protective measures have been implemented through time, in order to ensure its stability. The provision and stability of labour has remained at the core of most of these state policies, although the emphasis and direction of this policy has periodically altered.

Until the relatively recent era of mechanization, the agricultural sector had been traditionally engaged in activities aimed at retaining labour on the farms and in the rural areas at large. There is new evidence emerging that suggests that these trends may have been reversed during the past 15 years and that the distribution of the population may be in the process of a substantial change. Thus changes in future employment and migration patterns will be of great consequence to contemporary planning.

Thirty percent of the total black population in South Africa, reside in the white rural sector, the majority on white owned farms. According to the 1985 Population Census (Report No. 02-85-03), 16,2 percent of all economically active and employed blacks in South Africa are employed in the commercial agricultural sector.

1. My thanks are due to my supervisor Jill Natrass and my colleague Julian Day who commented on earlier drafts of this paper, parts of which are included in my masters dissertation. Any faults remain my own. I should also like to acknowledge financial assistance from the HSRC.

The aim of this paper is to provide an overview of some black farm labour attitudes and perceptions on selected factors of employment and migration. Results of a survey undertaken, during 1986, in the Natal Midlands magisterial districts of New Hanover and Umvoti, will be used to illustrate these factors. It was concluded that the survey area, in terms of: land area under cultivation (crop and pastoral production); average farm size; percentage number of farms and farm area under different type of ownership; proximity to and distance from a homeland, white urban area and black township; and white farmer and black farm labourer characteristics, was representative of Natal as a whole. (See Appendix, Maps 1 and 2).

A total of 201 black farm labourers on 50 white farms were surveyed, from whom data concerning 1288 individual members of their households was collected. This paper attempts an analysis of the attitudes and perceptions of the 201 respondents on their reasons for departing from their previous place of employment and for choosing their present workplace, and their perceptions on possible future patterns of migration, concerning both themselves and their children.

The analysis of the empirical data collected is preceded by a brief, and by no means definitive, discussion of a theory of migration within the context of the South African Tri-Sectoral Economy.¹

1. For a comprehensive account of a theory of migration within the South African context, see Mattrass (1976) from which the major issues for this section have been taken.

A Three Sector Migration Model

At a very naive level, migration can be explained by the law of supply and demand. However, to remain within the confines of pure economic theory is a very limited view of the process especially as migration is a multifaceted phenomenon and can most usefully be seen from different perspectives (Nikolinakos, 1975/6:6). However, migration theory must take into account both the supply and demand side of the labour market in both the emigrant and immigrant sectors. Various push pull forces facilitate migration, which then acts as a mechanism whereby any existing disequilibrium between supply and demand in the labour market may be removed.

In most areas of the world, migration is a reasonably stable process whereby individuals migrate with their families from one area to another. Resettlement may be either permanent or temporary, as individuals migrate and resettle with their families and the wage earners seek new occupations (Nattrass, 1976:4). Overpopulation in one sector of an economy may thereby be reduced, and a more favourable demographic balance within the overall economy emerges. Therefore in order to understand the mechanisms that initially give rise to migration it is necessary to go beyond the theory of supply and demand.

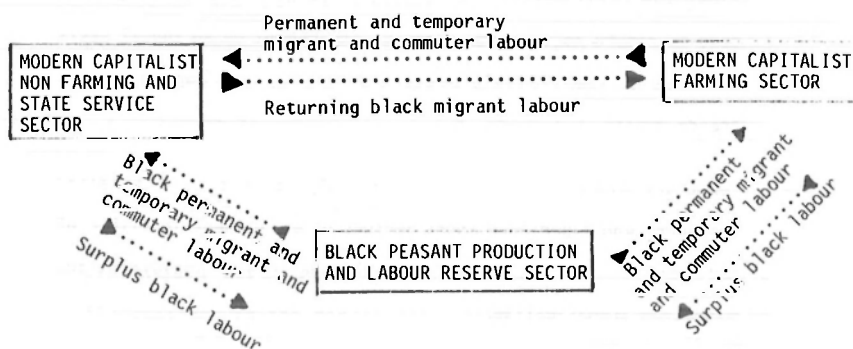
It can however be argued, that migration does not primarily arise in order to facilitate a balance between the supply and demand of labour, but is engendered by the perpetuation of an existing dependency relationship between an economically dependant and peripheral region

and its capitalist core. Nikolinakos (1975/6:9) generalizes in arguing that overpopulation in the outmigration area may have initially been due to a more backward social process which in turn would have resulted in comparatively high birthrates. Furthermore, the surplus labour in the emigrant centres and the prevailing unemployment might also have, as a result of a low accumulation of capital and an allied economic backwardness, been due to a past dependance on a more advanced capitalist core economy (Amin, 1974; Frank, 1978).

Unlike migrant labour in most other regions of the world which is subject to demands from two major sectors - urban and rural - black migrant labour in South Africa is often subject to the demands of three sectors. Urban and white agricultural capital have manipulated the socio-political economy in such a manner as to create large reservoirs of cheap black labour located in insulated rural reserves (Arrighi, 1971; Legassick and Wolpe, 1976). Unable to provide an adequate level of subsistence, the economically active members of rural black families migrate to the capitalist centre in order to seek wage employment. Racially selective legislation, primarily in terms of the Group Areas Act and the recently repealed Urban Areas Act, has prevented migrants families from joining them, consequently, the majority of black migrants in this country spend most of their working life as oscillating migrants. These migrants work for most part of the year in white, urban or rural areas, returning at sporadic intervals to their traditional homes for short periods of rest time (Wilson, 1976; Hattrass, 1971).

These traditional homes are located in either a homeland or white farming areas. White farms have historically been suppliers of urban-bound black migrant labour, but at times have also acted as net importers of black migrant labour. White commercial agriculture has drawn migrant labour from both the modern capitalist non-farming and state sector and the traditional peasant sector (see Figure 1 below). Simultaneously, it has also released labour to the other two sectors, and by continuing to do so, plays a central role in existing migration patterns in South Africa.

Figure 1: A Three Sector Migration Model



Original Model of the Tri-sectoral South African Economy: Hattress (1985:22)

Nattrass (1976) describes migrancy in South Africa as a response to a series of push pull factors, which simultaneously entice and force a migrant to oscillate between the workplace and family home. It has been the combination of these push pull factors that have effected the persistence of this system and in the process, created the various types of migration patterns that have manifested themselves within South Africa's socio-economic infrastructure. Black labour migration from homeland to the urban and white rural sectors takes on three distinctive forms. These are listed below:

- Oscillating permanent migration is most commonly found amongst mine and sugar plantation labourers, the latter concentrated along the Natal coastal belt. Oscillating migrants generally tend to return to the same place of employment on an annual basis and thus an identifiable pattern of employment and migration trends exists.
- Temporary migration occurs predominantly amongst those homeland labourers who experience short periods of employment in either of the other two sectors. No identifiable pattern of employment and migration trends exists.
- Frontier commuting is the third type of migration, and is limited to those areas where homeland residents are in close proximity to a work situation in one of the other two sectors. However, commuter labourers reside in the traditional rural sector not only because of a close proximity to their work-place but also due to the lack of residential facilities, the desire to retain

land rights, or personal preferences, or prohibitive legislation.

The current labour migration flows that occur between the three major sectors of the South African economy are illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Nattrass argued, that although migration decisions are made by individuals, "... the factors which influence these decisions are in the main products of the nature of the development path of the economy, i.e. they are the out-come of the social and economic changes that are taking place" (1984:35). Hence, Nattrass concluded that from an analytical perspective one can isolate four main classes of forces acting upon would be rural migrants. These are listed below:

- Urban pull forces, which include: the availability of employment at relatively higher wage rates and psychological and sociological factors such as the relative attractiveness of an urban lifestyle, a greater level of social mobility and a reduction in kinship obligations that occur as people move to towns (Schapera in J. Nattrass, 1984:35).
- Urban push forces, which include: seasonal or economic fluctuations in the demand for labour, which in the event of prolonged periods of recession may result in long periods of unemployment. Also included are factors such as the relative unattractiveness of an urban environment, particularly given the recent escalation in urban unrest. Finally, as urban remuneration is often geared to supporting only the migrant worker and not his/her rural family, thus long term migrancy may

often become an uneconomic proposition.

- Rural push forces, which include: increasing rural poverty exasperated by increasing demographic pressures on decreasing productive land and a lack of employment opportunities.
- Rural pull forces, which include: a familiarity and attractiveness of the rural way of life, the presence of family members, kinship ties and security offered to the migrant by his/her rural landholdings (Natrass, 1984:36). To this may be added the fact that for many black migrants, the traditional rural sector offers the only possibility of reducing the almost total control that the South African State and the white ruling class exercise over their daily lives.

The capitalist agrarian sector simultaneously assumes the role of both a core and peripheral region. This sector acts as an economic core, in terms of demand for labour, to the traditional sector by displaying to a varying degree the same push pull characteristics as the urban sector. However, the commercial agrarian sector continues to remain peripheral to the urban capitalist core, particularly in the supply of labour, and, therefore, also to a certain extent displaying the same push pull characteristics as the rural sector.

The rest of the paper will deal with an analysis of the abovementioned push pull factors whilst attempting an overview of black farm labourers attitudes to employment and migration patterns. It must be stressed however, that although these push pull factors suggest a

system whereby migrants move from their rural homes to urban areas and back, in search of work or social and domestic security, there is no explanation as to how these push pull forces came into being (Hay, 1985:2). In order to do this, it would be necessary to analyse the entire socio-political and economic system, to determine its mechanisms and how they have come to manifest themselves within this particular socio-economic entity, before examining how individuals conform within it. Thus, although a push pull analysis refers only to individual decisions and does not assist in understanding the system as a whole, it is useful in understanding the "last instance" factors influencing prospective migrants. With the current socio-economic system and particularly the agricultural sector, experiencing stress. These "last instance" factors could assume an increasingly more important role. For this reason the broad socio-economic matrix is abstracted.

Reasons for Departing from Previous Place of Employment - Push Forces

This section attempts to establish what push factors were most prevalent in influencing those black farm labourers who were previously employed and resident elsewhere to depart from there. Farm labourers were asked to state their reasons for leaving their previous work-place and in order to ascertain a detailed breakdown of these reasons, the data is analyzed in terms of different farm labour categories; based on current residency, skill category and origin characteristics. A total of 120 (59,7 percent) of the 201 black farm labourers surveyed, had prior to being employed at their current work-place previously worked and resided elsewhere.

Reasons by Residency

The relevant labourers were divided into two separate categories based on whether they were presently either permanent residents on the farm on which they were employed or farm migrant labourers (oscillating, temporary or commuter), whose primary home was located elsewhere.¹ Of

Table 1
Reasons for Departing From Previous Place of Employment
by Residential Status

Reasons	Farm Labourers		Total %
	Resident %	Migrant %	
Personal reasons	37,0	38,4	37,5
Retrenched	29,6	15,4	25,0
Low wages	19,8	28,2	22,5
Evicted by landowners or State	7,4	12,8	9,2
Poor residential conditions	3,7	2,6	3,3
To improve future prospects	2,5	2,6	2,5
	100,0	100,0	100,0
n =	81	39	120

Note: Personal reasons included factors such as: a lack of family attachment and an inability to cope with the previous social or political environment. These reasons are presented under one heading, as they were often linked by the farm labourers who in most instances saw them as inseparable i.e. the townships are bad places for the children, too many "skelms" in the towns and they influence one's family and the government won't let us all live together, were a few of these responses.

1. No distinction was made between those permanent residents that, prior to having worked elsewhere, had lived on a white farm and those who had previously never resided in the white rural sector but had immigrated from one of the other two sectors.

these 120 farm labourers, 81 (67,5 percent) were currently permanent residents on the farm on which they were interviewed and 39 (32,5 percent) were farm migrants. The major reasons given by these labourers for departing from their previous place of employment, are illustrated in Table 1 below.

Thirty seven percent of the farm residents and 38,4 percent of the farm migrants departed from their previous place of employment because of personal reasons and not primarily due to any economic considerations. Nearly double the number of the resident labourers - 29,6 percent - as opposed to migrant labourers - 15,4 percent - were retrenched from their previous place of employment. This could be indicative of the fact that many of the present farm labourers who had worked elsewhere continued to reside in the commercial agricultural sector and on being retrenched instinctively return to that sector. A total of 28,2 percent of the migrant labourers who had previously worked elsewhere had left because of low wages whilst only 19,8 percent of the residents had done so for the same reason. Finally, it must be noted that only 2,5 percent of all the farm labourers who had previously worked elsewhere, departed simply in order to improve their job prospects. It can be argued that this may indicate a lack of choice in terms of career opportunities with which most rural black labourers are faced rather than a lack of interest on the part of the workers, in improving their lot.

Reasons by Skill Category

Labourers were divided into three skill categories - skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled - in order to establish whether there were any

marked discrepancies in the reasons why different skill categories of present farm labourers who had previously worked elsewhere had departed from their last place of employment. Skilled labourers included; all farm labourers that occupied any managerial or administrative post, as well as licenced drivers and mechanics, and anyone who was course qualified for their particular tasks. Semi-skilled labourers included; indunas, supervisors, non-licenced but practicing drivers, on-farm trained mechanics and any other personnel who had acquired a traditional skill (thatching, building) and were being utilized because of their knowledge. Finally unskilled labourers constituted the balance of the labour force.

A skill category mobility breakdown, illustrating the reasons why the present farm labourers who had previously worked elsewhere had departed from their last place of employment, is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2
Reasons for Departing From Previous Place of Employment,
by Skill Category

Reasons	Skill Category			Total %
	Skilled %	Semi-Skilled %	Un-Skilled %	
Personal reasons	28,6	40,6	36,8	37,5
Retrenched	28,6	24,3	25,0	25,0
Low wages	42,8	5,4	28,9	22,5
Evicted by landowners or State	0,0	21,6	4,0	9,2
Poor residential conditions	0,0	2,7	4,0	3,3
To improve future prospects	0,0	5,4	1,3	2,5
	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
n =	7	37	76	120

Retrenchment emerges as the most consistent reason given by farm labourers for leaving their previous place of employment, accounting for an average of one-quarter of each skill category. Amongst skilled labourers wages were clearly conceived as the important determinant in job selection, with 42,8 percent, nearly double the overall average of 22,5 percent, having departed from their previous place of employment because of low wages. Personal reasons accounted for 40,6 percent of all semi-skilled and 36,8 percent of all unskilled labour migration, but only 28,6 percent of all skilled migration. From the above data, it may be suggested, that the more skilled the worker the more likely it would be that an economically related reason would motivate a change of employment.

Reasons by Origin

The farm labourers were asked in which economic sub-sector their previous place of employment was located in. It was found that 83 (69,2 percent) of these 120 farm labourers had previously worked in the white rural sector, which encompasses both white villages and commercial farms. Thirty two (26,7 percent) of the present labourers had migrated from a white urban sector, which include peripheral formal and informal townships, which may or may not be located within a homelands boundaries. Finally, five (4,1 percent) of the labourers had previously worked in the traditional black rural sector.

Table 3 below illustrates the reasons why the present farm labourers

who had previously worked elsewhere departed from that place of employment in terms of the economic sector in which they were previously employed.

Table 3
Reasons for Departing From Previous Place of Employment
by its Economic Sector

Reasons	Economic Sector			Total %
	White Rural Sector %	White Urban Sector %	Traditional Rural Sector %	
Personal reasons	39,8	28,1	60,0	37,5
Retrenched	25,3	28,1	0,0	25,0
Low wages	26,5	12,5	20,0	22,5
Evicted by landowners or State	3,6	25,0	0,0	9,2
Poor residential conditions	3,6	3,1	0,0	3,3
To improve future prospects	1,2	3,1	20,0	2,5
	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
n =	83	32	5	120

A much greater number of farm labourers who had previously worked in a white urban area - 25,0 percent - had been forced to leave their jobs because they had been evicted from their place of residence by their landlord or a State official, than those who had worked in a white rural area - 3,6 percent. While this is not to imply that the ratio of forced evictions between urban and rural black labourers is 7:1, it could be argued that there is a greater likelihood that an urban black labourer would be evicted from his or her place of employment and/or residence, than it would be for a rural black labourer. Finally, over twice as many farm labourers who had previously worked in a white

rural area - 26,5 percent - as opposed to those who had worked in an urban area - 12,5 percent - left their place of employment because of low wages. This is understandable due to the fact that on an average urban wages are relatively higher than rural wages.

In summarizing, it may be argued that four major push factors are prevalent in "forcing" current black farm labourers in migrating to or within the commercial agricultural sectors. Personal reasons are the most dominant of these and are more likely to be found amongst the semi skilled and unskilled rather than the skilled labourers. These reasons are also the most prevalent in influencing intra-rural migration but also apply to those labourers who had previously worked in a white rural area. One quarter of all black farm labourers had been retrenched from their previous jobs, however, the incidence of eviction was highest amongst ex-white urban sector workers. Low wages were clearly an important issue amongst skilled labourers and most likely to occur amongst skilled labourers within the white rural sector rather than the white urban sector. These reasons would thus seem to correlate with those described in the theoretical section earlier in the paper, to which eviction by landowners or the State may be added as an important urban push force.

Reasons for Choosing Present Place of Employment - Pull Forces

Having ascertained the reasons why the farm labourers surveyed had departed from their previous place of employment, an attempt was made to analyse the motivating reasons as to why these labourers chose their present place of employment. This was done in order to identify

the pull factors that the rural sector, in particular those in the white commercial agricultural sector, influenced the current black farm labourers to migrate to it. Unfortunately this was done only in terms of residency and economic sector origin because a poor return on the data relating to skill category and employment search, meant that this section was omitted. The major reasons given by the farm labourers, for choosing their present work-place in terms of residency, are illustrated in Table 4 below.

Table 4
Reasons for Choosing Present Place of Employment by Residential Status

Reason	Farm Labourers		Total %
	Resident %	Migrant %	
Only job offered	54,3	71,8	60,0
Offered a "good" job (wages & residence)	19,8	12,8	17,5
This farm is close to home	13,5	5,1	10,8
Had relatives here	9,9	10,3	10,0
Had previously worked here	2,5	0,0	1,7
	100,0	100,0	100,0
n =	81	39	120

The majority of both residents - 54,3 percent - and migrants - 71,8 percent - chose their present place of employment simply because it was the only job available that was offered to them at the time. On the other hand 19,8 percent of the residents and 12,8 percent of migrants exercised some form of economic rationale in their decision making process prior to accepting the job. This would seem to suggest that there are limited opportunities available to take up better

employment and are confined to a limited number of skilled rural black residents. The fact that the white farm was close to home and/or relatives resided on the farm prior to their employment account for one-fifth - 20,8 percent - of all the respondents. However, it may be concluded that because of a lack of choice that exists in terms of employment opportunities in the white rural sector, job searching has simply been reduced to whatever employment is available particularly amongst the present farm migrant labourers.

Reasons by Origin

Table 5 below illustrates the reasons behind farm labourer present choice of employment, in terms of their economic sector origin.

Table 5
Reasons for Choosing Present Place of Employment,
by its Economic Sector

Reason	Economic Sector			Total %
	White Rural Sector %	White Urban Sector %	Traditional Rural Sector %	
Only job offered	67,5	43,8	80,0	60,0
Offered a "good" job (wages & res)	14,4	21,9	0,0	17,5
This farm is close to home	8,4	15,6	20,0	10,8
Had relatives here	8,4	15,6	0,0	10,0
Had previously worked here	1,3	3,1	0,0	1,7
n =	100,0 83	100,0 32	100,0 5	100,0 120

In choosing their present place of employment, the major difference, to emerge between those labourers who were previously employed in a white rural sector as opposed to a white urban sector, lay in the amount of personal choice in their decision making process which each enjoyed. A total of 67,5 percent of those farm labourers who had previously worked in a white rural sector chose their present job simply because it was the only job available, whilst 14,4 percent were influenced by the terms offered. In contrast to this, 43,8 percent of those labourers who had previously worked in a white urban sector, chose their present place of employment because it was a only job offered to them and 21,9 percent because the terms were good. This would seem to suggest that intra-rural migration is also likely to be influenced by whatever employment is available rather than the prospects of bettering one's financial and/or career prospects. A total of 31,2 percent of ex-white urban sector labourers chose their present place of employment in order to be close to home or because of relatives, which was nearly double that for intra-rural migrants - 16,8 percent.

In conclusion, it may be claimed that personal reasons, such as the presence of family members, kinship ties and the security offered by access to rural holdings, remains an important pull factor influencing black labourers into the white rural sector. Nevertheless, for the majority of black farm labourers the main pull factor influencing their decision in choosing their current work-place, is simply the fact that the job was available and offered to them.

Prior to analysing the reasons why black farm labourers might, in the future, migrate away from the white farming sector, it was necessary to discover why those farm labourers had no intentions of migrating and would continue to remain within this sector. Just over half - 50,2 percent - of the farm labourers interviewed felt that they were unlikely to migrate in the foreseeable future. Nearly half - 47,4 percent - of these labourers felt that they could not compromise the security of farm life for what they perceived as a hostile urban environment and/or a barren homeland sector. A further 35,5 percent felt that they did not have an adequate level of education and were thus ill equipped to meet the more rigorous challenges of the urban labour market. The balance - 17,1 percent - felt that they were too old and/or that neither the urban nor the homeland sector could offer them a better lifestyle. Security of farm life and a poor educational level are perceived as major reasons for the reluctance of black farm labourers to leave the white farming sector and must therefore, be treated as pull factors. An interesting point lay in the fact that only 7,5 percent of all the respondents felt that influx control had in the past been instrumental in keeping them confined in the white rural sector, whilst a further 7,0 percent felt that it was an important reason although not the main reason.

Having analysed some of the current black farm labourers perceptions on why they chose to depart from their previous place of employment (push forces) and chose their present place of employment (pull forces) the paper will now attempt an analysis of black farm labourers' perceptions as to why, in the future, they might depart from their present place of employment (push forces) and choose a new

place of employment (pull forces).

Perceptions on Future Patterns of Migration - Push Forces

In order to establish what the main reasons pushing black farm labourers off white farms are, it was necessary to distinguish between those labourers who intended remaining and those who might depart in the foreseeable future. Almost half - 49,8 percent - of the farm labourers interviewed indicated that in the near future they might possibly move away from the white rural sector. The only noticeable difference between farm resident and migrant labourers was that, among those not intending to move, migrant labourers constituted 12,5 percent of the total, whilst making up 35,0 percent of those who might possibly migrate from the sector. No other significant differences existed between the two groups; the mean age of those not contemplating a move was 25 years and 4 months and those thinking about a move was 21 years and 7 months. Both groups had the same average education level and there was an even spread amongst the different skill occupation categories for both groups.

Table 6 illustrates the major reasons influencing black farm labourers to move away from the white commercial agricultural sector in terms of their residential status.

Table 6
Reasons Influencing Black Farm Labour to Move Away
From the White Commercial Sector by Residential Status

Reasons	Farm Labour		Total %
	Resident %	Migrant %	
Future prospects on a white farm are poor	66,1	37,1	56,0
Do not like life on a white farm	23,1	37,1	28,0
In order to join family	6,2	20,0	11,0
In order to build a home	4,6	5,8	5,0
n =	100,0 65	100,0 35	100,0 100

Clearly, the majority of residents - 66,1 percent, as well as 37,1 percent of the farm migrants, felt that their future long term employment prospects, in a white farm were poor. They perceived a decline in the demand for their employment and would seek to pre-empt any future possibility of being unemployed and perhaps of also losing their residential rights, by departing to seek employment elsewhere. A total of 23,1 percent of the residents and 37,1 percent of the migrants would depart because they did not like the social environment within which they lived. A much smaller number - 5,0 percent of the total - would leave in order to seek security of tenure, all these labourers would migrate to the homeland sector.

The above three reasons - poor future prospects on a white farm, dislike of life on a white farm and the lack of security of tenure - may be said to constitute push factors, influencing black farm labourers to depart from the white commercial farming sector. The fourth reason given was, in order to join family which resided

elsewhere, must be classified as a pull factor pertaining to the area where their family resided. Having thus investigated what factors pushed and pulled black farm labourers into the white rural sector and what factors act to push them away, it remains to identify what factors act to pull farm labourers away from this sector. Prior to attempting to identify these factors, it was necessary to establish which sector the farm labourers would migrate to in order to discover the reasons why they would be attracted to that sector.

Preferred Area of Migration

Those farm labourers - 49,8 percent of the total - who indicated that they might possibly move away from the white rural sector were asked to which sector they would migrate and if possible to specify the exact geographical location. The answers are illustrated in Table 7 below.

Table 7

Preferred Economic Sector (including specific geographical locations) in Terms of Possible Future Black Farm Labour Migration by Residential Status

Location	Resident %	Farm Labour Migrant %	Total %
White urban sector	92,3	91,4	92,0
Durban - Pinetown	44,6	54,3	48,0
Pietermaritzburg	40,0	25,7	35,0
Witwatersrand	7,7	11,4	9,0
White rural sector (Natal)	6,2	5,7	6,0
Traditional rural (KwaZulu) sector	1,5	2,9	2,0
n =	100,0 65	100,0 35	100,0 100

Two (2,0 percent) of the farm labourers that would consider migrating away from the white rural areas would go to KwaZulu, whilst six (6,0 percent) would migrate to another part of white rural Natal. The remaining 92,0 percent would migrate to the white urban sector.

The Durban-Pinetown industrial centre emerged as the most popular destination to which both migrant farm labourers, - 54,3 percent - and resident farm labourers, - 44,6 percent - would migrate. Pietermaritzburg was favoured by 40,0 percent of prospective resident emigres and 25,7 percent of prospective farm migrant emigres. The reason for these preferences may be that migrant farm labourers, having already migrated at least once (to their present job in the white rural sector) may be more adventurous in terms of the distance they are prepared to travel and thus more likely to migrate to the Durban-Pinetown and Witwatersrand complexes, as opposed to farm residents who preferred Pietermaritzburg. Furthermore, as Pietermaritzburg is close enough to the survey area to enable of commuter or weekly migrant patterns to develop, resident farm labourers felt that should they work there they might still continue to retain the foothold, for their families, they already have in the white rural area. Only 9,0 percent of all the labourers who would considered migrating from the white rural areas, were prepared to migrate to an area outside the Natal/KwaZulu region.

Perceptions on Future Patterns of Migrations - Pull Forces

Having identified which sector and specified the urban area that black farm labourers perceived the most likely to which they might possibly

migrate to, it now remains to establish why they would be attracted to that specific location.

Reasons by Residency

The farm labourers who would move to KwaZulu - two labourers - would do so in order to build a house, whilst and all six of those who intended relocating within the white rural sector would do so in order to be closer to their family. These labourers were thus excluded from table 8 below. This table gives the reasons motivating the choice of the specific urban location that black farm labourers would migrate to.

Table 8
Reasons Why Black Farm Labourers Chose a Specific Urban Location by Residential Status

Reasons	Resident %	Farm Labour Migrant %	Total %
Have relative there	43,3	43,8	43,5
Have worked there before	21,7	40,6	28,3
Heard there was work to be found	25,0	15,6	21,7
Closest to rural home	10,0	0,0	6,5
n =	100,0 60	100,0 32	100,0 92

Just under half the prospective emigrees, 43,3 percent of the farm resident labourers and 43,8 percent of the farm migrant labourers, chose this destination because of the presence of relatives. This

would therefore seem to indicate that the existence of a relative in an urban area, is the variable most likely to influence a farm labourers decision in terms of which specific urban location they would migrate to.

Nearly twice as many residents - 25,0 percent - than migrants 15,6 percent - would migrate to an area on the assumption that there was work to be found. This may be due to past experience on behalf of the 32 farm migrant labourers, concerned as 37,1 percent of them had previously worked in the white urban sector compared to 21,5 percent of the 60 resident labourers who had previously experience in the white urban sector. Proximity of the urban centre to the rural home is not an important issue in the migration decision making process of a rural black farm labourer.

In concluding this section, it may be argued that the predominant pull factor, in both another rural area and the urban sector is the presence of a relative. All the farm labourers answering so argued that a relative would be expected to act as both a primary contact in the search for employment and would fulfill a social role, acting as a substitute for the family that a prospective migrant would leave behind. Amongst both farm migrants and residents, those who had worked in a particular centre before, claimed that their past experience would be the most influential reason as to why they might possibly return. Amongst those farm labourers who had neither any relatives in an urban centre nor any past experience in that sector, hearsay about job opportunities may be a sufficient pull factor. Finally, it is interesting to note, that although, a large number of

young labourers were included in the group of prospective emigres, none indicated that they would move to an urban area in order to enjoy the "bright lights". However, it is possible that once they have migrated, this pull factor may act to keep them there.

Having ascertained the various contradictory factors both attracting and repelling black farm labourers to and from white farms, it was then decided to establish the perceptions of the current farm labourers about the future of their children in the white commercial sector.

Perceptions and Attitudes on the Future of Children in the White Commercial Rural Sector

The final section of this paper will deal with the black farm labourers perceptions and attitudes on the future of their children in the white commercial sector. It was felt that this information is important, as the major pull push factor influencing patterns of migration was the presence of relatives in either an urban or rural sector. Thus, should there be any change in the rate of out-migration of young blacks from the white rural to the urban sectors, this could become a major factor influencing their parents or relatives to join them.

Seventy nine percent of the farm residents and 87,0 percent of the farm migrants felt that their children would almost definitely depart from the white commercial agricultural sector. However, reservations

were made about the poor educational levels of their children and the fact that they could be leaving the security of farm life for a sector of which they knew little about. A total of 37,3 percent of the the resident and 47,1 percent of the migrant labourers who themselves would not have departed from the white rural sector, might do so in order to join their children should they migrate away from the white farming sector. This, therefore, confirms the theory that the presence of a relative is the most important push pull factor influencing patterns of black labour migrations.

Conclusion

This paper has focused upon the forces which push or pull individual black farm labourers to and from the white rural and urban centres.

A total of 120 (59,7 percent) of the 201 black farm labourers surveyed, had prior to being employed at their current work-place worked and resided elsewhere. The major factors acting to push these labourers away from the white urban areas were; personal reasons which included a lack of family attachment and an inability to cope with the social and/or political climate - 28,1 percent, retrenchment and thus unemployment - 28,1 percent and eviction by either a landlord or the State - 25,0 percent. Intra-rural migration was found to occur because of personal reasons 39,8 percent, low wages - 26,5 percent and retrenchment 25,3 percent.

Clearly, there is no "most important" initial pull factor operating from the white rural sector and 60,0 percent of those labourers had

exercised no real choice, but had merely accepted the job as it was the only one available. This occurred more so amongst farm migrants 71,8 percent than farm residents 54,3 percent. Nevertheless, for 34,3 percent of ex-urban sector labourers, the proximity of the farm to their home and relatives and prior links to the farm were important factors influencing their decision to migrate to this sector. However, the security of farm life was perceived as the major reason as to why, 47,4 percent of all the farm labourers interviewed, did not in the past depart from this sector, and must thus be viewed as a pull factor. A further 35,5 percent, perceived their lack of education as an inhibiting factor when contemplating a move away from this sector and this may therefore also be regarded as a pull factor. For 85,5 percent of all the labourers interviewed, influx control played no role whatsoever in immobilising them at all.

Almost half - 49,8 percent of the respondents would contemplate a move away from the white rural sector, of which just over half - 56,0 percent felt that they would eventually be pushed off the farms because future prospects were poor. Twenty eight percent were unhappy with the environment within which they resided, and for that reason would depart. Seventy nine percent of the farm residents and 87,0 percent of the farm migrants would depart from this sector because there would be no future prospects for them. A total of 37,3 percent of the residents and 47,1 percent of the migrants would follow their children away from the farm sector, should it be economically and legally feasible to do so. Thus, the out migration of farm labourers children would also push them out of this sector and pull them into

another.

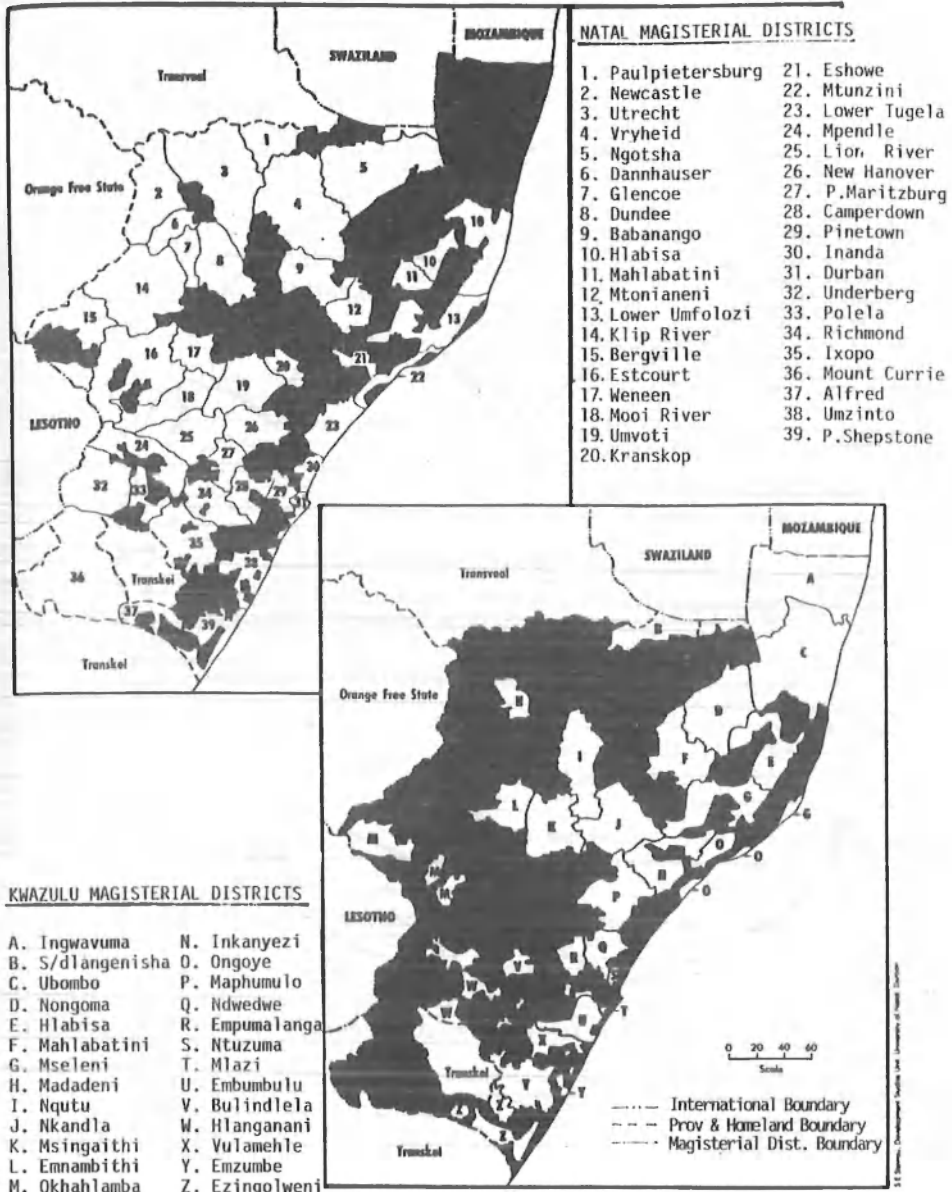
The majority - 92,0 percent, of the farm labourers who would leave the farm, would migrate to an urban centre. The presence of a relative in a particular urban centre would be the single most important reason pulling the migrant to that specific location. Past working experience - 28,3 percent, was the next most important reason, whilst an attraction to an urban way of life clearly did not rate as an important initial pull factor.

In conclusion it is important to note that a total of 15,4 percent of all the respondents interviewed had previously worked in a white urban centre. When the data collected concerning the respondents households was analysed, it was found that only 6,0 percent of employed household members were currently working in a white city. This latter statistic correlates with Ardington's research in the Natal Midlands which found that only 4,0 percent of the household members surveyed had migrated to white cities to find employment (1985:19). Should the same overall pattern hold true for the entire region, it seems that the rate of out-migration of black farm labourers towards white urban areas may have now been overtaken by a reverse slow in-migration back to white farms. This was certainly the case in the survey area. Therefore, it could be suggested that the current, urban sector push forces and white rural sector pull forces exert a greater influence over the white rural sector push and urban sector pull forces. It is a combination of both sets of these forces that act to shape the overall perceptions of black farm labourers on their employment and migration patterns.

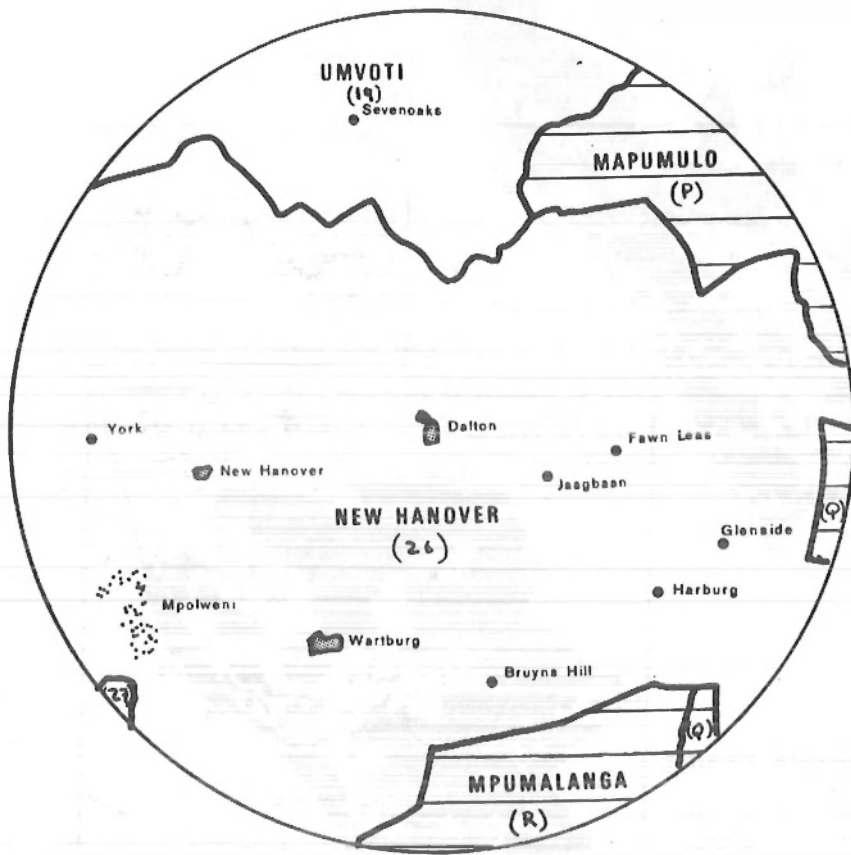
With regard to the usage of a push pull mode of analysis itself it should be remembered that an institution is shaped, not only by the rules and regulations which are formulated within its character, but also by the people who pass through it (Holler, 1984:4). Migrant labourers, therefore, in reacting to the migrant labour system have helped to determine its character and how it operates today. Nevertheless, although it would be very difficult to argue against the fact that migration in order to seek employment in South Africa is not optional but a necessary condition for survival (May, 1985:33). However, a certain degree of personal choice does exist. Whether this personal choice is forced upon individuals or is a voluntary process, is rational or irrational, motivated by economic or social factors and whether it is of a permanent or temporary nature, it is a real choice. This paper has sought to analyse what and how real these choices are for black farm labourers in the Natal Midlands and their perceptions and attitudes to the whole process.

Map One

Natal and KwaZulu Magisterial Districts



Map Two
Survey Area



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