Have Migration Patterns in post-Apartheid South Africa Changed?

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Introduction

Migration has been the studied extensively in South Africa across a wide range of disciplines. During the 1970s and 1980s, much of this research focused on the particular nature and implications of the migrant labour system in South Africa. During the 1990s, however, attention shifted away from migrant labour to concerns with immigration.

An assumption underlying this change in focus seems to be that migrant labour would not be part of a post-Apartheid South Africa. The system of circular internal labour migration was associated with legislation that inhibited and controlled the urbanisation of Africans (see, for example, Beinart, 1980; Spiegel, 1980; Murray, 1981). In the ‘new South Africa’, people would choose not to be labour migrants but would rather migrate to, and settle permanently at, the places where they work. This assumption may help explain why the coverage of labour migration in national survey instruments in South Africa declined during the 1990s, and then ceased in 2000.

Questions of immigration, including the “extent of immigration, its legality and its responsiveness to South African and other country economic conditions” (Standing et al, 2000:61) clearly are pressing, and they demand investigation. However, in this paper I suggest that there is no evidence nationally to support the assumption that circular labour migration ‘ended’ or even declined during the 1990s. On the contrary, temporary labour migration within the country appears to have increased, driven particularly by the rise in female labour migration.

In section 1 of the paper, I provide a brief review of the migrant labour system in South Africa, highlighting two themes in the literature: the gendered nature of migrant labour and remittances sent by migrants. Section 2 outlines the shift in focus of current research on migration. In section 3, I sketch the coverage of labour migration in national household surveys and I present data from four surveys, over the period 1993 to 1999, which illustrate that labour migration patterns within South Africa have not changed in the ways that were perhaps expected.

1. The Migrant Labour System and Patterns of Labour Migration in South Africa: A Brief Review

The history of migration in Southern Africa has been identified as being "one of the most researched and well-documented academic fields in the region" (Crush, 2000:13). The proliferation of research on labour migration, in particular, was not surprising given the particular institutional conditions under which labour migration within, and into, South Africa occurred, and the role of this migration in the development of the South African economy.

Movements of people between rural and urban areas in South Africa became entrenched in the economic system through a series of state interventions to mobilise and control labour as well as a range of measures that made permanent urban settlement impossible for most migrants. Foreign African contract labourers were subject to similar restrictions on their employment and settlement. South African labour policy required that, at least once every two years, foreign African contract workers could be repatriated. If thereafter, their future services were required, they had to be re-attested (Spiegel, 1980:115). Like many African workers from South Africa's rural areas or Bantustans, they were also not permitted to bring their spouses and families with them to their places of work.[1]

Historically most labour migrants within, and into South Africa, were men. Few studies sought to account for this gendered pattern of migration, but many presented the rural household as "a harmonious unit in which all members were united in maximising resources and resisting threats to its integrity" (Walker, 1990:177). Male migration would be predicted in such a household if men have a comparative advantage over women in waged work relative to rural production. In his study of the "farm-household" in Southern Africa, Low (1986) makes this argument explicitly to account for male migration in the region.

In South Africa, feminist historians particularly were highly critical of explanations that reduced migration patterns (explicitly or implicitly) to the workings of a unified household, arguing that these accounts ignored the ways in which the gender division of labour had been upheld by "internal structures of control" in rural communities, including social pressure, gender ideology and women's economic dependence (Walker, 1990). Chiefs, fathers and husbands had the ability to restrict the mobility of women and thereby reinforce women's traditional roles in rural production (Bozzoli, 1983; see also Posel, 2001).

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[1] Measures introduced to control the movement of Africans to urban areas and the conditions of their employment included: the regulation that all Africans in South Africa who were sixteen years and older were required to carry passes, and later a comprehensive reference book; and the creation of labour bureaux at which

That women remained behind "to keep the home fires burning" may be consistent with the predictions of a unitary household model. But it would also be predicted in a model of the household where men control decision-making and resources in the household, but they use the control to maximise their own income. If, as is common, men gain more through migrating than through remaining in the rural household and receiving a remittance share of wage income, then men may 'choose themselves' as migrants (Posel, 2001a; see also Cerrutti and Massey, 2001 for a critique of the unitary household approach to explaining female migration).

A more critical appraisal of household relations in understanding migration patterns requires also that closer attention be paid to whether and why labour migrants retain ties with their households of origin. Altruism may be one reason why members of a household who have migrated to areas of employment transfer income. But migrants may not be equally altruistic to everyone in the recipient household, and they may respond more to the needs of some family members than to others (Posel, 2001b). People may also share resources with others because of more self-regarding motivations.

There are good reasons, in addition to those motivated by altruism, why migrant workers in Southern Africa would have remitted in the past. Migrants faced insecure employment opportunities, and they legally were not permitted to settle permanently in places of employment. They therefore may have sought to retain economic ties with their households of origin, both as insurance against unemployment, and for their long-term retirement (see Stark, 1991; Stark and Lucas, 1988; Lucas and Stark, 1985, for a rigorous theoretical discussion of remittance behaviour and the motivations to remit).

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all work-seekers had to register.

This is not to suggest however that there were no competing claims on the migrant's income[2]. As rural-urban migration became more extensive in South Africa, so many communities sought to develop 'internal moral sanctions', making migrants feel morally bound to their groups of origin, and to increase the incentives for migrants to remit income. In their study of migration among the Xhosa in South Africa, for example, Mayer and Mayer write that "filial piety, fear of ancestors, and love of home (were) all invoked to rub in the lesson that town is 'bad' and absconding an ultimate sin" (Mayer and Mayer, 1974:93). Migrants were also encouraged to visit home as often as they could, an event that was "associated with pleasures" (Mayer and Mayer, 1974:96). There was no expectation that the migrant would have to work in the homestead during these visits; rather, his days were to be spent socialising, drinking and catching up with friends and kin. At the same time, no important decisions about homestead production (and reproduction) were made without the migrant's prior consultation or presence.

2. Expected Changes and the Current Focus of Migration Research

During the 1990s, the focus of migration research in Southern Africa moved away from questions about labour migration to questions about immigration and permanent migration. There are two possible explanations for this shift in emphasis.

First, formal restrictions on African urbanisation within South Africa were lifted in the late 1980s. With this came the increased possibility for families rather than individuals to migrate, and the expectation that circular or temporary migration within South Africa would be replaced by the permanent settlement of people at places of employment.

With a decrease in circular labour migration, it would also be expected that remittances to rural areas would fall. Migrant workers can migrate with, or be joined by, their spouses and families in places of employment. Furthermore, with urbanisation, migrants are likely to develop new and permanent ties that increasingly would crowd out remittances to households of origin. The extension of the social pension to all (age- and means-qualified) South Africans in 1992, and the high incidence of pension receipts in African rural households[3], may also have reduced the need, or the perceived need, for the migrant to remit income.

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[2] In the early system of migrancy in South Africa, migrant workers were frequently paid in the form of cattle advances, where cattle were central to rural production and social reproduction and were also favoured as a store of wealth (Beinart, 1980). The advance of cattle meant that neither the migrant nor his family received any cash and it allowed the worker's family to control the wage and thereby, Beinart writes, prevent it from being "wasted on liquor, prostitutes, and consumer goods in town, (or) stolen on the way home" (Beinart, 1980:84). The early external enforcement of remittance transfers from African urban migrants to rural households in South Africa perhaps derived more from the politics of racial segregation than from some paternalist intervention. But it alludes to the competing claims on the migrant's income and to the concern that migrants would not maintain rural ties.

One of the questions that has dominated recent research on internal migration in the country, therefore, concerns where people are *settling*, and why (cf. Collison, 2001; Collison and Wittenburg, 2001; Cross et al, 1998a, 1998b; Mbhele, 1998; Todes, 1998, 2001; Tomlinson, 1998; Vaughan, 1997). Have settlement patterns, for example, become 'normalised' during the 1990s, with people migrating out of old and artificially created settlement and rural areas and settling in places with greater economic opportunities, and in urban areas in particular?

A second reason why labour migration, as it has been understood historically in South Africa, has received little attention in recent literature is that concerns with immigration, particularly at the level of policy, are far more immediate and pressing. Legislation governing the movement of people into the country changed little with the ending of Apartheid. However, the number of people entering South Africa from other African countries (and not only bordering countries) is thought to have increased. Exactly how many people have entered the country in recent years is not known[4]. However, the dominant view, popularised in the press[5], is that people are entering the country illegally (i.e. without the requisite documentation), that they intend settling permanently in the country (hence they are immigrants), and that this has adverse economic and social implications for South Africa.

A particular concern fuelling xenophobia is the association between increases in 'illegal immigration' and rising rates of unemployment among South Africans. During the 1990s, labour market conditions in South Africa deteriorated – employment creation declined and the labour-absorption capacity of the formal economy fell (Loots, 1996, quoted in Barker, 2003). At the same, not only 'foreign' labour supply to, but also domestic labour supply within, South Africa increased considerably (Casale and Posel, 2002). A distinguishing characteristic of the post-Apartheid labour market, therefore, has been very high and rising rates of joblessness. Under these circumstances, immigrants are easy targets to blame for growing unemployment in the country.

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[3] In 1993, for example, more than 1.3 million Africans in rural areas in South Africa were identified in the SALDRU data as being age-qualified for the pension, with just over a million reporting pension receipts (Case and Deaton, 1998).

[4] Official statistics of undocumented immigrants provided by the South African Police Service suggest that in 1995, there were between 5.5 million and 8 million illegal immigrants in South Africa. In the same year, the Ministry of Home Affairs estimated that there may have been approximately 4 million undocumented immigrants in the country. However, as Standing et al (2000:61) remark: "It is unclear how anybody calculated such numbers" (see also Crush, 1996 for a critique of official estimates).

[5] This view is also articulated by academics. In a text on the South African labour market, for example, Barker (2003:70) writes: "In recent years the problem of illegal migrants from neighbouring countries has taken on

Much of the recent research on migration in Southern Africa interrogates the negative stereotypes of immigrants and undertakes a critical review of South Africa's immigration policy from the perspective both of human rights and of regional development. One of the key suggestions from case-study research of cross-border "immigrants" in particular, is that there has been no fundamental change in those patterns and modes of migrant behaviour that had been established historically (Crush, 2000). Many people entering South Africa continue to see themselves as circular migrants, rather than as immigrants: they come to South Africa for employment or income-generating opportunities for a definite period, "and have very little interest in staying in the country permanently" (McDonald, 2000:2-3; see, for example, studies of cross-border migrants in Mozambique and Zimbabwe by de Vletter (2000) and Zinyama (2000) respectively)[6].

As I will suggest below, these findings resonate with current national trends in internal migration in South Africa: given the data available, there is no convincing evidence to suggest that temporary labour migration in the country is being replaced by the permanent settlement of people at places of employment. On the contrary, between 1993 and 1999, the number of labour migrants who are reported as retaining membership in and economic ties with their households of origin within South Africa increased.

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much larger proportions".

[6] Further evidence challenging the assumption that all cross-border migrants seek to settle permanently in South Africa is provided by Crush and Williams (1999): In 1995, the option of permanent residence was offered to migrant miners who had worked in the country for more than ten years, but less than half of the miners who were eligible applied.

3. Trends in Internal (Labour) Migration in South Africa, 1993-1999

An expectation that permanent migration would take the place of internal temporary labour migration perhaps helps explain why there has been waning concern with questions of labour migration in the design of national household surveys in South Africa (Posel, 2003). Between 1993 and 2002, national household surveys have become more restrictive in the definition of the household, and less sensitive to the links between absent migrant members and households of origin.

In the first comprehensive and nationally representative household survey conducted in South Africa in 1993, (the Project for Statistics on Living Standards and Development, PSLSD), a broad definition of the household was adopted, allowing for the inclusion of household members who had lived in the household if only for *15 days of the previous year*. Between 1993 and 1999, subsequent annual household surveys (the October Household Surveys, OHSs) undertaken by the official statistical agency in South Africa (now known as Statistics South Africa) specified a stricter residency requirement in defining the household, collecting information only on those household members who normally were resident in the household for *at least four days during the previous week*. In some of these later surveys (the OHS 1997 and the OHS 1999), an additional module on labour migrants (defined as "someone who is absent from home for more than a month each year to work or to seek work") was included. However, by 2000, all questions making it possible to identify labour migrants had disappeared from national household surveys in the country.

There has been a corresponding decline in information collected on remittance transfers made by migrant household members. In 1993, comprehensive information was collected on how much was remitted and how often. By 1999, households were asked to report only whether or not migrant workers remitted income, but not how much was remitted. From 2000, no information on remittance transfers specifically was collected. Households were asked only broadly to identify the main source of income support for the household, with remittances being included as one option.

Coverage of labour migration in the national census has similarly fallen. The 1996 Census asked respondents to identify "any persons who are usually members of this household, but who are away for a month or more because they are migrant workers". Respondents were also asked to indicate the total value of remittances received by the household over the previous year. In the 2001 Census, however, no questions on migrant workers were included and it does not seem possible to identify migrant household members in their households of origin through other questions in the survey[7]. The recent census also collects no information on remittance transfers (see Posel, 2003 for a more detailed description of problems with the data capture of migration in recent household surveys in South Africa).

Notwithstanding the limited data available, three national trends can be identified for the period 1993 to 1999:

1) ***Internal labour migration has increased (see Table 1):***

Rather than labour migration declining, an additional 300 000 rural African households reported household members who were away from the household for at least one month of the year to work or to look for work. In 1993, 32.6 percent of rural African households contained (labour) migrant household members; by 1999 this had risen to 35.8 percent.

2) ***Female labour migration specifically has risen (see Table 2):***

There was little change in the proportion of rural African men who were reported as labour migrants between 1993 and 1999. However, the proportion of African women identified as migrant members of rural households increased. Consequently, there was a small but identifiable shift in the gender composition of labour migrants in the 1990s: in 1993, an estimated 30 percent of African migrant workers in South Africa were women; by 1999, this had increased to approximately 34 percent.

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[7] It is possible to identify the migration of individuals across place. Individuals are asked whether they lived in their current place for the past five years, and if not, when (and from where) they moved. Migrants therefore would be identified in the destination household, but there is no way of establishing which individuals are migrant workers who retain membership in another household, and which individuals have moved permanently. The 2001 Census asked of everyone who was resident in the household on census night whether they usually live in this "dwelling" for at least four nights a week, and if not, where they "usually live". Among those visiting but not usually resident in the household would be labour migrants, but not all visitors would be labour migrants, nor would all labour migrants be visiting their household of origin. In a later set of questions on employment, individuals are asked whether the person "works in the same sub-place in which s/he *usually lives*?" (Census 2001: A8, own emphasis). If "usually lives" is interpreted as spending four nights a week in a household, then this question would seem to be identifying commuters rather than migrant workers.

3) *Rural African labour migrants continued to retain economic ties with their households of origin (see Table 3):*

A large and growing proportion of rural African households that reported at least one migrant worker as a household member also reported receiving remittances at least once in the previous year.[8] In 1993, approximately 79 percent of all rural African households with migrant workers received remittance income; in 1999 this had increased to 85 percent. Furthermore, between 1993 and 1997, average yearly remittances in nominal terms increased by about 40 percent (from approximately 2 300 Rands, to 3 200 Rands a year).

It is possible that migration patterns in South Africa are changing in ways that are not being picked up in the available data. For example, shifts in the rural-urban composition of the population during the 1990s cannot be examined because all survey data are currently weighted to national figures using population estimates derived from the 1996 South African Census. Furthermore, it may be that in some cases, what is identified as circular or temporary migration signals the permanent out-migration of individuals who have no intention of returning to their households or communities of origin. In this regard, it is perhaps significant that estimates of labour migration in 1995 are significantly lower than estimates in the other years.

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[8] In the 1997 OHS, out of a total of 6609 observations, there were 1454 African rural migrants whose remittance value was reported as zero, and 79 with missing data for the question on how much money the individual had remitted over the previous 12 months. Those with missing values were also coded as non-remitters. In 1999, the survey asks how often a migrant remits. Out of a total of 4638 observations, 503 African rural migrants were reported as remitting less than once a year, and for a further 445 there were missing data. It was also assumed that this latter group did not remit, as the question did not offer as an option the response ‘does not remit’.

Table 1: The extent of temporary labour migration across households

Number of households with at least one migrant worker:	**1993 PSLSD**	**1995 OHS**	**1997 OHS**	**1999 OHS**
All households	1 469 300	803 000	1 610 100	1 779 800
African households	1 313 300	753 800	1 557 000	1 722 400
African rural households	1 170 200	-- [9]	1 287 500	1 418 400
Percentage of households with at least one migrant worker:				
All households	17.8	8.8	17.4	16.5
African households	22.5	11.6	23.1	21.6
Rural African households	32.6	--	37.6	35.8

Note: Household weights are used in all years.

Table 2: African migrant workers by gender (15 years and older)

Percentage of all migrant workers who are:	**1993**	**1997**	**1999**
Female	29.7	32.4	33.7
Male	70.4	67.6	66.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: The data are not weighted.

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[9] Because migrant workers were captured in the destination household and not in the sending household in the 1995 OHS, it is not possible to identify migrant workers who migrated out of rural areas. By implication, for 1995 we cannot calculate the number or proportion of rural households with migrant workers in Table 2 or the proportion of rural adults who are migrant workers in Table 3.

Table 3: Remittances received in rural African households

	1993	**1997**	**1999**
Percentage of households with reported labour migrant/s receiving remittances	78.5	84.2	85.4
Average yearly value of individual remittances sent by all labour migrants	2300.37 (2117.89)	3238.88 (2800.25)	---
Remittances by sole labour[10] migrants aged:			---
20 – 34 years	2577.58 (2230.79)	--	
35 – 49 years	3383.79 (2522.27)	--	---
50 – 65 years	3655.72 (2918.77)	--	---

Notes: The Rand values are not weighted. Standard deviations are in parentheses.

In 1993, 1997 and 1999, migrant workers were identified and counted in the household from which they had migrated. In 1995, in contrast, migrant workers were identified in the households to which they had migrated. Household respondents were asked to report whether there were any household members who spent most of their time in the household, but who were also members of another household, in the sense that they were either 'working or looking for work away from what they call "home" ' (1995 OHS questionnaire, p. 20). One possible explanation for why the 1995 estimates of labour migration are lower than in other years, therefore, is that there may be differences in the identification of membership in the household of origin, by those who have remained behind and by those who have out-migrated. For example, parents may view their children who have left the household as continuing to have membership in that household, while the children living in another household do not[11]. Nonetheless, it is surely also significant that individuals identified as migrant household members by their households of origin mostly continued to retain economic ties with these households.[12]

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[10] Although the 1993 PSLSD collected the most comprehensive information on labour migrants of the surveys available, it is not possible to identify which labour migrant remitted income with these data. The only way to infer the identity of the remitter is to restrict the sample to all households that contained one labour migrant and that received one set of remittances.

[11] In addition, there is no prompt in the 1995 questionnaire on the time period an individual could be away from the household and still be considered a migrant household member. The 1997 and 1999 OHSs specify that a person can be absent for up to 11 months of the year and still be reported as a member of the sending household. In the 1995 OHS, because a time period is not specified, it is possible that a person spending 11 months of the

An interesting trend between 1993 and 1999 is the increase in female labour migration. This trend may signal a change in household strategising because of a shift in women's and men's comparative advantage in wage work over household production. But it may also reflect the loosening of (male) restrictions on women's mobility.

A probit regression, estimating the individual and household characteristics that affected the probability in 1993 that African women (aged between 15 and 60 years) from rural areas would be migrant workers, is reported in Table 4 below.

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year in the destination household is reported as being fully assimilated into that household.

[12] In fact, household members who have migrated, and who continue to be identified as members of the household of origin, may be precisely those individuals who are more likely to be remitting. Excluded from the sample of migrant workers, therefore, are those former household members who have migrated to places of employment, and who are not longer considered members of the sending household, perhaps because they have not retained (economic) ties with the household.

Table 4: Estimating African female labour migration from rural areas, 1993

	Dependent variable **1 = African female migrant worker**
Married	-.97138*
	(.06793)
Resident employed men	-.09620**
	(.04888)
Male migrant workers	.27329*
	(.02942)
Land size	-.06978*
	(.02761)
Children aged 6 years or younger	-.04268**
	(.02069)
Children aged 7 to 14 years	.03528**
	(.01809)
Women of pension age (60 and older)	.14308*
	(.05326)
Years of Education	.02270*
	(.00712)
Age	.22038*
	(.01607)
$(\text{Age})^2$	-.00271*
	(.00022)
Constant	-5.47417*
	(.33343)
Number of observations	6041

1. Indicator variables for province were included in the estimation although the results are not reported here. 2. The regression is weighted. 3. Standard errors in parentheses. 4. * Significant at the 1 percent level; ** Significant at the 5 percent level.

The results of this regression suggest that women's traditional roles in childcare and farming reduced the probability that they would migrate to work. Women's relationships to men were also significant in affecting the probability of migration. Women who were married were significantly less likely than other African rural women to be migrant workers. Furthermore, women were also less likely to migrate from households in which employed men were resident.[13] It is not possible to replicate this regression[14] for any of the subsequent surveys because of their incomplete coverage of the demographic characteristics of labour migrants. Nonetheless, at the same time as female labour migration increased, two changes in marital rates and household composition can be identified.

First, marital rates among African women fell. In 1993, some 35 percent of adult African women were married[15]. In 1999, this had fallen to 30 percent.

Table 5: Marital rates among African women (15 years and older)

	1993	**1995**	**1997**	**1999**
Percentage who are:				
Married	34.6	34.4	31.2	30.2
Absent spouse/divorced/ separated	% absent spouse = 13.4	% divorced/ separated = 3.0	% divorced/ separated = 3.1	% divorced/ separated = 3.4
Never married/not married	38.4	49.7	50.6	51.5
Widowed	13.6	9.0	10.4	9.3
Living together	not identified	3.9	4.7	5.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Notes: Individual weights are used in all years.

Second, the average number of employed men resident in rural African households decreased, and the proportion of households with no employed male members increased:

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[13] For more discussion of this regression, and the estimated coefficients, see Posel and Casale, 2003.

[14] It is therefore not possible to decompose the increase in female migration into changes arising from movements in the characteristics of the population and change resulting from the underlying structure in the "migration decision".

[15] A comparison of the 1993 PSLSD data with the OHS data on marital status should be treated with some caution. The OHS surveys directly question the current marital status of household members, offering six possible responses: never married; married (civil); married (traditional); living together; widower/widow and divorced or separated. In contrast, the PSLSD survey does not directly question the marital status of each household member but asks rather whether or not the spouse of the individual is a household member. If the spouse is not a member of the household, then the spouse can either be "deceased" or "absent" (not resident for at least 15 days of the past year), or there is no spouse (indicating not married). There is no way of establishing whether women whose spouses are reported as "absent" are in fact divorced or separated. The marital rate reported here for 1993 assumes this to be the case, but where it is not, the statistic will underestimate the percentage of rural African women who are married in this year, and the decline in marital rates between 1993 and 1999 would be greater than that represented in Table 5. It is also not clear how household members who were living together but not married to their partners would have reported in 1993 – as married or as having "no spouse".

Table 6: Rural African households with no employed men (aged 15-64 years)

Percentage with no employed men:	**1993**	**1997**	**1999**
With female labour migrants	79.3	86.2	83.1
Without female labour migrants	59.2	68.3	62.6
Average number of employed men resident:			
With female migrants	0.24	0.16	0.20
Without female migrants	0.46	0.35	0.41

Notes: Weights are used in all years.

The increase in female labour migration may be consistent with the maximising decisions of households in which women are less likely to be married and to be living with men (and particularly men with employment). But changes in household composition and marital rates may also have meant that women faced less (male) resistance within the household to their migration. If men restrict the mobility of women, then we would expect that women who are not married or who do not live with men have more freedom to move.

There is no evidence to suggest that during the 1990s, however, labour market conditions in South Africa favoured women. Rather female rates of unemployment rose and were considerably higher than male rates of unemployment. In 1995, some 38 percent of all economically active women and 23 percent of all economically active men were broadly unemployed; in 1999, this had increased to 47 percent and 32 percent respectively. Furthermore, where women have found work, this seems to have been principally in self-employment in the informal sector, where women are creating work for themselves (Casale and Posel, 2002).

Insecure labour market conditions may be a key reason explaining why migrants are retaining a rural base and membership in rural households of origin, and why individuals rather than households are migrating. Furthermore, although permanent settlement in urban areas is possible, land in rural areas may continue to represent a “sense of security, identity and history” (James, 2001: 93) and a preferred place for retirement.

In 1993, older migrants remitted more on average than younger migrants. This finding may partly reflect a positive relationship between earnings and age. However, using the same data, Posel (2001a) found that even after controlling for the migrant's expected wage, migrant workers older than 50 years still remitted significantly more than other migrants.[16] One explanation that would be consistent with this finding is that migrants closer to retirement age remit more in anticipation of their retirement to the rural household.

In the same study, Posel also found a negative relationship between remittances and adult equivalent (pre-transfer) income of the recipient household, suggesting that migrants respond (altruistically) to household need. It is possible therefore that during the 1990s, urban-rural ties may also have been sustained by an income shortfall in the rural household. With the absence of comprehensive data on labour migrants and remittance transfers after 1993, however, it is not possible to further explore these arguments in a multivariate context.

Conclusion

With the lifting of formal restrictions on African urbanisation in the late 1980s and the ending of apartheid, numerous changes in patterns of migration may have been expected in South Africa: Temporary, circular labour migration within the country would be replaced by the permanent migration of individuals (and families more generally) at places of employment; and with the shift towards permanent settlement, remittances sent to rural households would fall. Labour migration, as it has been understood historically in South Africa, therefore, would become a vestige of the past.

Although restrictions on immigration were not loosened during the 1990s, immigration into the 'new South Africa' may also have been expected to increase, particularly as economic and political conditions in neighbouring African countries deteriorated.

However, in this paper I have suggested that migration patterns in South Africa may not be changing in ways that would have been expected. National data for the period 1993 to 1999 suggest that migrant labour is still an important feature of the South African labour market. Recent case-studies of immigration also cast doubt on the extent to which patterns of migration into South Africa have fundamentally changed. What is frequently presented as immigration may simply be the continuation of circular (cross-border) migration.

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[16] Employment and earnings information for migrant household members was not collected in the 1993 PSLSD. Expected wages for migrant workers were calculated from an estimated wage equation for all Africans with employment.

There are a number of possible reasons why people continue to migrate ‘temporarily’ within (and into) South Africa, retaining membership in, and ties with, their households of origin. In an environment of increasing labour market insecurity and rising unemployment, for example, the household of origin may provide ‘insurance’ for work-seekers, care of children, and a preferred place for retirement. With the absence of comprehensive national data on both internal migration and immigration, however, more insight into what explains patterns of migration will have to come from regionally specific, case-study and ethnographic research.

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