

Wilfrid Laurier University

Scholars Commons @ Laurier

Southern African Migration Programme

Reports and Papers

4-2012

No. 27: Migration and Development in Contemporary Mauritius

David Lincoln

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholars.wlu.ca/samp>



Part of the [African Studies Commons](#), [Economics Commons](#), and the [Migration Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Lincoln, D. (2012). Migration and Development in Contemporary Mauritius (rep., pp. 1-21). Waterloo, ON: Southern African Migration Programme. SAMP Migration Policy Brief No. 27.

This Migration Policy Briefs is brought to you for free and open access by the Reports and Papers at Scholars Commons @ Laurier. It has been accepted for inclusion in Southern African Migration Programme by an authorized administrator of Scholars Commons @ Laurier. For more information, please contact scholarscommons@wlu.ca.



SOUTHERN AFRICAN MIGRATION PROGRAMME

**MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN CONTEMPORARY
MAURITIUS**

SAMP POLICY BRIEF NO 27

APRIL 2012

DAVID LINCOLN

© SAMP

Editorial Note

An initial draft of this paper was presented at the Contemporary Mauritius Conference, Mahatma Gandhi Institute, Mauritius, 14-16th September 2011. The author gratefully acknowledges the support of the University of Cape Town's Research Committee.

Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction	3
2.0 Migration and Development	4
3.0 Mauritius and Migration	7
4.0 Labour Migrants in Contemporary Mauritius	9
5.0 Discussion and Conclusion	15
Endnotes	17

List of Tables

Table 1: Occupational Permits by Category, 2006 to 2008.....	8
Table 2: Occupational Permits by Country, Oct 2006 to June 2008.....	9
Table 3: Work Permits in Issue by Workers' Countries of Origin, 2005 to 2010.....	12
Table 4: Work Permits Issued by Sector, 2005 to 2010.....	12

List of Figures

Figure 1: Migrant Workers from Selected Countries in Mauritius, 2005 to 2012.....	12
Figure 2: Unemployed Workers and Migrant Workers in Mauritius, 2005 to 2010...	12

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Mauritius is a society descended of involuntary and voluntary migrants. After two-and-a-half centuries of settlement as a plantation colony and by the time of its independence from colonial rule in 1968 the island nation's population had grown to seemingly insupportable levels. But having faced the afflictions of overpopulation, social division and economic despair (and sizeable emigration) at the dawn of its independence, it took just a decade and-a-half for despondency to fade and for Mauritius to begin resembling a tropical idyll of sorts. Though poverty persisted as the small island successfully transformed its economy from colonial plantation to mostly industrial (light manufacturing) and service (tourism and financial services) activity, rapid economic growth became a normal condition and living standards improved markedly under conditions of parliamentary democracy. If the threat of overpopulation had initially hung over the fledgling republic, the subsequent period of prodigious economic growth saw a vast expansion of formal employment and a decimation of unemployment. During this growth spurt the Mauritian economy resumed its reliance on contractual labour migrants from abroad.

1.2 Contemporary Mauritius enjoys a reputation of developmental success and it is frequently held up as a model to be emulated by other aspiring developers. While the last quarter of a century of this success coincides with a phase of systematic and unabated contractual labour migration, the Mauritian government has more recently embarked on further migration schemes, on the one hand to attract highly qualified and 'high net worth' individuals to the country and on the other hand to encourage circulatory out-migration. Both the decades-old system of contractual labour migration and these more recent movements are closely aligned with the country's development trajectory, providing a test of widely-held assumptions about the relationship between migration and development.

1.3 Focusing mainly on international labour migration, and viewing it within the context of a global division of labour, this policy brief provides an account of migration and development in contemporary Mauritius. The first part deals with conceptions of the migration and development relationship, the second introduces current patterns of migration into and out of Mauritius, the third examines labour

migration to Mauritius, and the final part offers some conceptual and policy-related generalisations arising from the study of the migration-development relationship in Mauritius. Concentrating on the period 2005 to 2010 and focusing especially on the migration of clothing and textile factory workers, the study relies primarily on official statistics and media reports for its empirical content and it draws also from published and organisational sources.

2.0 Migration and Development

2.1 The relationship between migration and development has long been a concern of social scientists. Conceptual and policy concerns about the relationship were raised to a new order of significance at the United Nations' High-Level dialogue on Migration and Development in 2006. If something of a convergence was reached in the recognition of migration's positive impacts and in identifying the obstacles to achieving migration's full developmental potential (notably the high transaction costs of remittances), the UN Dialogue did not lead immediately to any practical, co-operative resolutions.¹ Since 2006, however, analytical interest in the relationship between migration and development has grown amidst an intensified search for policy guidelines as well as for a deeper understanding of migration's social impact.² At the level of international policy analysis and advocacy the relationship has come to be appreciated for its potential all-round advantages, sometimes expressed in 'win-win' or even 'win-win-win' terms. The United Nations' Development Programme's 2009 *Human Development Report* has further invigorated thinking about the relationship between migration and development in the international policy arena, drawing attention amongst other topics to the responsibilities of the state, notably where the basic rights of migrants are concerned.³

2.2 The by-now standard indicators of migration's impact take the form of costs and benefits for migrants and the countries between which they migrate in response to diverse opportunities and impulses.⁴ Difficult though it may be to calculate and compare these costs and benefits, there is a deepening consensus among academic and policy analysts that the balance is favourable; that international migration actually or potentially has overwhelmingly positive developmental consequences. Certainly

voluntary labour migration between countries might contribute to a more productive global division of labour as well as to the transfer of skills, finances and welfare, and in these senses it may be considered positive. However the link between migration and development is seldom as straightforward and the association between them at the local level is neither inevitably nor, when it exists, unconditionally positive. While the advance of the global division of labour may be accepted as development in the broadest sense,⁵ international labour migration is one of the subsidiary processes involving contradictions and adaptations that reflect and result in uneven development.

2.3 The developmental prospects of migration are determined largely by the particular form of migration in question. Empirical studies on the impact of globalisation (conceptualised along similar lines to development) conclude that outcomes are dependent upon each given context.⁶ Globalisation (or development in our analysis) “creates winners and losers both between and within countries. Specific research is needed to identify who are most likely to be negatively affected by changes in integration with the global economy.”⁷ In the case of Vietnam, for example, intensified competition in the global clothing industry turned skilled and permanent workers into losers while labour migrants became winners in the sense of being able to achieve some poverty reduction.⁸

2.4 In the uneven process of global development, with its winners and its losers in the Global South in a constant search for opportunity and competitive advantage, the state performs a crucial institutional role. While vast international power differentials persist, numerous former colonies have seen their once direct ties with seats of empire being displaced by more complex relationships within the global division of labour, all the more so when they have become dependent upon maintaining positions as manufacturers within global value chains. Instead of having diminished relevance in the era of globalisation, then, the state in the Global South has, if anything, an expanded purpose particularly where developmental responsibilities are concerned.

2.5 Overseeing the pursuit of optimal developmental outcomes and trying to prevent the creation of losers, the state in the Global South faces a particular challenge in the management of labour migration. While the context-dependency of

migration's developmental outcomes obliges policy-makers to tailor policies accordingly, the international nature of labour migration between countries demands more than solely national responses. Whereas there is a tendency for analysts to concentrate upon receiving countries, Portes encourages a comprehensive analysis of the migration-development relationship.⁹ His own analysis leads him to identify cyclical migration as the developmentally optimal form of migration for both source and receiving countries.

2.6 Migrant workers are widely employed at labour-intensive points in certain global value chains. The chains that incorporate labour-intensive plants located mainly in the Global South, and whose output is mainly consumed in the Global North, tend to exhibit intense competition over labour costs that renders plants and their workers insecure. The global clothing chain with its highly volatile production conditions is a case in point. Clothing enterprises participating in such global chains in the Global South are under constant pressure to lower wages or to upgrade products and/or the productivity of labour. National or local labour markets do not necessarily hold prospects for the upgrading of labour productivity; manufacturers in small countries of the Global South being especially constrained. Meanwhile, product upgrading possibilities may be circumscribed by conditions of increasing competition, stagnating demand and shrinking opportunities.¹⁰ Sub-contracting offers relief to some, with case studies in Turkey and India revealing how manufacturers “seek to outsource their own insecurity in global production networks” through local sub-contracting.¹¹

2.7 The employment of international migrants represents a clear alternative,¹² and these workers enter global clothing chains either to enable labour costs to be lowered or held constant, or to raise productivity. The economic rationale underlying international labour migration may seem obvious but the varied and contradictory meanings that the process has for migrants themselves is generally concealed. The institutions of workers' representation are seldom functional and disregard for workers' rights and labour standards can be seen in conditions of work and of accommodation, in wages and a range of restrictions endured by international migrants in most global clothing chain sites. These conditions point to the need to find

“ways and means to advance the rights agenda ...[and]... enhance the development benefits of migration.”¹³

3.0 Mauritius and Migration

3.1 Mauritius occupies a high position within the UNDP’s ranking of countries by Human Development Index (HDI = .701 in 2010). A significant factor underlying this high index is the country’s GDP growth, which between 1970 and 2010 was the 9th fastest of all countries in the world.¹⁴ And according to national statistics, Mauritius has relatively low income inequality which has not varied significantly since the early 1990s, while households have become smaller (the average is now under 4 persons) and average household income has risen. The survey-based measurement of inequality by Mauritius’s Central Statistics Office shows that in the period 1991/92 to 2006/07 the country’s gini coefficient fluctuated between 0.371 and 0.388 and the ratio of the 20% of households deriving the highest incomes to the 20% deriving the lowest incomes fluctuated between 6.8 and 7.8.

3.2 Mauritius has been deemed a ‘high migration state’, largely on account of the size of its diaspora, but also due to the combination of in- and out-migration.¹⁵ Today Mauritius experiences five distinct types of migration: (a) Emigration continues as a seeping and episodic brain drain although there is renewed optimism and improved financial means within the diaspora to precipitate a minor return flow; (b) Movement between Rodrigues and Mauritius; a migratory flow within the country’s national limits which adds an internal dimension to the migration-development relationship. The small island of Rodrigues forms the poorest administrative region in the republic of Mauritius. Using half the median monthly household income per adult equivalent as a poverty line, the state’s statistics office found that 15.6% of the inhabitants of Rodrigues lived in poverty in 2001/2 while 7.3% of those living on the island of Mauritius did so; by 2006/7 the poverty index for Rodrigues had risen to 17.9% while for Mauritius it was 7.4%.¹⁶ This suggests a strong impulse for economic migration from Rodrigues to Mauritius; (c) Circular migration for a very small number of young workers to take limited term and relatively low-skill employment in Canada; (d) Fourth are those who have arrived in Mauritius since 2006 either under a land-owning

residential programme designed to attract private investment or as investors and professionals;¹⁷ and (e) By far the most numerous type of migration, workers who are recruited abroad to work in Mauritius under contract.

3.3 The temporary migration of contractual workers to Mauritius, the taking up of residence by wealthy expatriates, the arrival of investors and professionals, and the departure of young Mauritian workers under circular migration arrangements, together constitute what may be referred to as state-led migration. While any other form of migration may involve the state and its agencies, these particular movements to and from Mauritius are deliberately tied to the state's efforts to promote economic growth and attract investment from abroad.

3.4 Tables 1 and 2 show the extent of state-led migration of investors and professionals into the country. Although the numbers of investors and professionals are relatively small, the influx of expatriate landowners may signal a potential new force in the economy.¹⁸ Regarding the sale of land to foreigners – accompanied by growing land scarcity and the inflationary effects of land speculation – Bunwaree observes that 'Mauritians benefit very little'.¹⁹ It is not for economic reasons alone that the presence of these expatriates has been a source of disquiet. Governmental concern has been expressed about the apparent inclination of many such newcomers to remain socially apart, with the prime minister using his 2010 Independence Day address to explain the necessity of employing foreigners while expecting them to respect the Mauritian way of life and become integrated into the population.²⁰

	2006	2007	2008	Total
Professional	178	1035	643	1856
Investor	71	328	75	574
Retired non-citizen	26	112	92	230
Self-employed	7	62	26	95
Total	282	1537	936	2755

Table 2: Occupational Permits by Country, Oct 2006 to June 2008²²

France	1030
Germany	48
Italy	99
United Kingdom	193
Other European	193
China	93
India	498
South Africa	275
Other countries	326
Total	2755

4.0 Labour Migrants in Contemporary Mauritius²³

4.1 Post-independence labour migration began in the mid-1980s when the state assumed an active role in facilitating the importation of workers for Mauritius's budding Export Processing Zone (EPZ). Over the next two decades the continued and generally increasing migration of contractual workers from a few specific Asian sources became associated with the fortunes of EPZ manufacturing. Initially – during a decade of relatively low unemployment between the late 1980s and late '90s – the recruitment of workers abroad was justified by shortages of Mauritian workers for EPZ work.²⁴ The late 1990s and early 2000s however saw the EPZ being dramatically unsettled by changes in both the global context and local conditions. The relationship between unemployment and labour migration rates was altered, with attendant social disruption.

4.2 As effective as the EPZ policy had been in lifting many Mauritians – especially women – out of poverty, the factory closures and dismissals of local workers in the late 1990s and early 2000s exposed the EPZ's limitations as a long-term panacea for unemployment. Whereas in 1998 some 10,000 workers, or 2% of the country's workforce, came from abroad, steady annual growth took this number to about 18,200, or 3.3% of the workforce by 2003. Meanwhile the unemployment rate among local workers had climbed to 7.7% in 2003 and reached 9.6% in 2005. In 2003 the unemployment rate for women was twice that for men and by 2005 the unemployment rate of 16.4% for women was almost three times as high as that for

men.²⁵ The continued growth of migrant labour numbers while local workers were experiencing rising unemployment and a ‘feminisation of poverty’, represented an acute development paradox.²⁶

4.3 The paradox is perhaps best understood in terms of Mauritius’s participation in the global clothing chain.²⁷ Gibbon reveals that although the country’s clothing manufacturing industry has generally adopted the principles of upgrading, competition in the buyer-driven clothing chain has given rise to varied strategies.²⁸ Manufacturers who have ‘de-localised’ their more labour-intensive and lower-quality operations have tended to be suppliers to the EU, while manufacturers supplying the US have favoured the use of foreign labour migrants. Gibbon sees these latter manufacturers – usually large employers, subsidiaries of Hong Kong- or Singapore-based firms – adopting the employment of foreign labour migrants as their principal business strategy from the mid-1990s²⁹:

Maximization of foreign contract labour was thought by managers to offer an important means of offsetting local labour shortages and to provide enhanced levels of flexibility generally. Near-full employment and rising living standards had reduced the desirability of clothing sector employment for Mauritian women and had increased the bargaining power of those remaining in the industry. It had become impossible for employers to enforce the mandatory ten hours per week overtime requirement, which technically they could insist upon under Mauritius’s EPZ labour legislation. Foreign contract workers (mostly Chinese women) were perceived as willing to work ‘all the hours that God could send’. Hence, having a large complement restored employers’ ability to respond instantly to changes in demand. Foreign contract workers were also thought to have higher individual levels of productivity than Mauritian ones....³⁰

4.4 During the recent period covered by Tables 3 and 4, the year 2007 was a watershed. The overall number of contractual migrants peaked, with both the manufacturing and the construction sectors employing their largest ever numbers of migrants. China and India yielded their largest numbers of migrants to Mauritius in 2007. Although the numbers of migrants from Bangladesh and Sri Lanka continued to grow in 2008, there was a marked fall-off in 2009 as the number of migrant men from Bangladesh dropped significantly.

4.5 Tables 3 and 4 also show that 7 or 8 of every 20 migrants in the years 2005 to 2010 were women. Most of these migrant women were employed in the

manufacturing sector's clothing and textile plants. While both women and men were recruited in all four of the major source countries over this period, China and Sri Lanka (and Bangladesh in 2009 and 2010) sent more women than men to Mauritius as migrants.

4.6 The changing trends amongst the major sources are shown in Figure 1. India has remained the major (and still growing) source while China's downward trend has seen Bangladesh displace it as second largest source. Although Madagascar supplies a relatively small number of migrants, its upward trend line has recently intersected Sri Lanka's. Not shown in Figure 1 is the next minor but growing source, namely Nepal.

4.7 Another significant though short-term trend is seen in the roughly inverse correspondence between the numbers of unemployed nationals and employed migrants in the 2005 to 2010 period (Figure 2), suggesting a new form of association between the two variables that calls for closer scrutiny. Although many employers express disappointment at the local labour force's skill levels and work ethic, the cost of local labour appears not to be nearly as much of a concern, pointing perhaps to a changing labour market. A Mauritius Employers' Federation survey of employers at the end of 2010 had 94 respondents who employed about 30,000 workers across the economy. On the one hand, the scarcity of skilled labour was cited as a constraint to business by half (50.7%) of the respondents, and a poor work ethic in the work force was cited as a constraint by just under half (47.2%) of the respondents. On the other hand, a minority (16.4%) cited the cost of labour as a constraint.³¹

4.8 If employers have in the past explained their dependence on international migrants to offset labour and/or skills shortages, the effects of upgrading, 'delocalisation' and other changes in the clothing industry may now mean that migrants are no longer directly displacing local workers in the ways that employers had once sought to justify.³² The Ministry of Labour's *Employment Service Monthly Bulletins* show that the single biggest category of migrants receiving work permits in recent years is that of sewing machine operators; on a much smaller scale is that of 'general masons' (i.e. construction workers); i.e. workers with the near lowest skills in their particular work contexts. A general view from the employers' perspective expressed by the MEF's economist is that "above all, the use of foreign labour,

particularly in textiles and clothing, has given a definite productivity and competitive advantage to our enterprises”³³; an advantage without which many more relocations would likely have occurred.³⁴

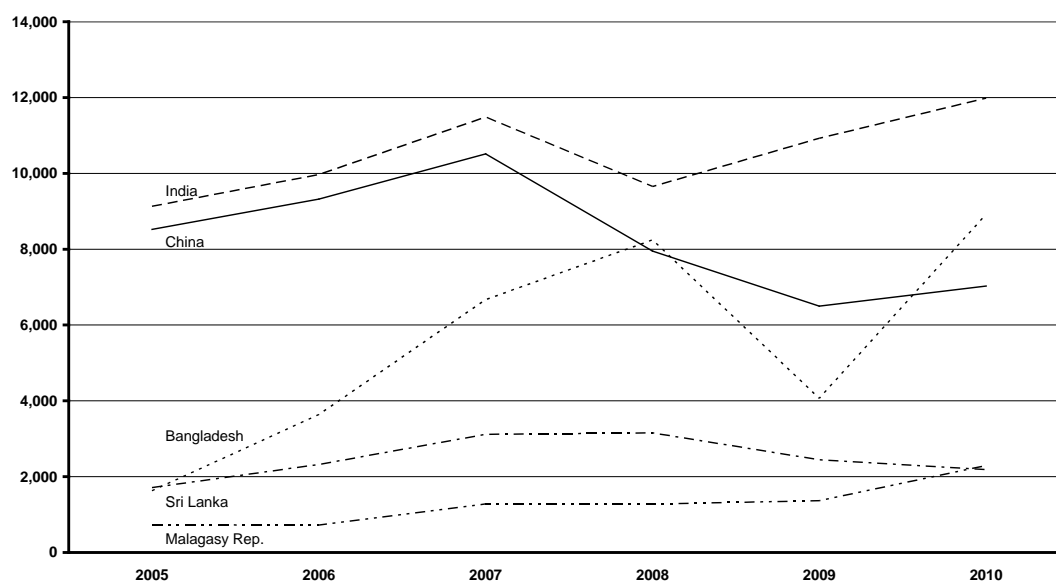
Table 3: Work Permits in Issue by Workers’ Countries of Origin, 2005 to 2010³⁵

	Bangladesh		China		India		Sri Lanka		Others		Total
	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	
2005	762	865	2096	6427	8794	337	297	1417	2282	743	24020
2006	2415	1221	2500	6824	9678	292	402	1921	2475	753	28481
2007	4904	1766	3577	6937	11185	297	536	2580	2893	858	35533
2008	5828	2417	2639	5310	9424	230	551	2606	2131	733	31869
2009	778	3290	2658	3839	10682	243	607	1840	1900	837	26674
2010	3063	5856	3442	3586	11719	265	591	1596	2533	1164	33815

Table 4: Work Permits Issued by Sector, 2005 to 2010³⁶

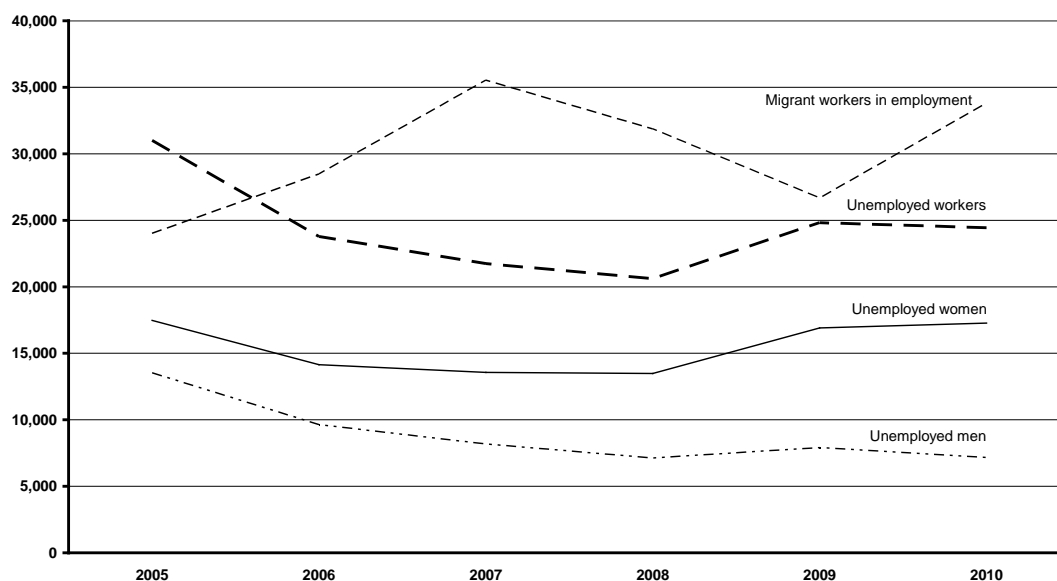
	Construction	Manufacturing	Other	Total
2005	1584 (6.6%)	19022 (79.2%)	3415 (14.2%)	24021
2006	1971 (6.9%)	22694 (79.7%)	3816 (13.4%)	28481
2007	3766 (10.6%)	27762 (78.1%)	4005 (11.3%)	35533
2008	2583 (8.2%)	26586 (83.4%)	2700 (8.5%)	31869
2009	3476 (13.0%)	20668 (77.5%)	2530 (9.5%)	26674
2010	5454 (16.1%)	25655 (75.9%)	2699 (8.0%)	33808

Figure 1: Migrant workers from selected countries in Mauritius, 2005 to 2010



Based on data from: Republic of Mauritius, Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations & Employment

Figure 2: Unemployed workers and migrant workers in Mauritius, 2005 to 2010



Based on data from: Republic of Mauritius, Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations & Employment

4.9 International labour migrants have displayed considerable dissatisfaction with conditions in Mauritius. There have been many confrontations between workers and their employers over labour standards and workers' rights. These have occurred at particular moments and thus appeared as discrete events, but the underlying causes evidently persist. The Ministry of Labour's Special Migration Workers' Unit (established in 2001) conducts inspections and responds to complaints. The Ministry reports that every month between 33 and 76 inspections were conducted and between 15 and 44 complaints were registered during the period January 2009 to May 2010. Besides the steady stream of complaints during this period, the total sum of money recovered during the inspections (would this be fines and/or unpaid wages?) was about Rs5.5 million, suggesting sustained and significant transgression by employers. As in preceding years, the period since 2005 has seen numerous outbursts by migrant workers, by and large reflecting the weakness of the country's industrial relations institutions. Although focussed on bad conditions of work and accommodation or on recruiters' unmet promises, the recurrent yet dispersed protests reflect inadequacies in terms of workers' representation, workplace monitoring, and conciliation machinery, and resolution is typically piecemeal and often dependent upon ministerial intervention.³⁷

4.10 The incidence of confrontations and the high frequency of governmental and even ministerial involvement in their resolution are indicative of the weight of demands placed on the state when an entire national economy is significantly dependent on manufacturing within a particular global value chain. Given the dependence of Mauritius on the global clothing chain, the strategic importance of these demands sees governmental involvement extending from workplace relations to relations with labour source countries' governments and even with the media over reports likely to be read by final consumers. Several recent episodes provide a sense of the nature and depth of governmental involvement in migration issues.

4.11 The first of these was the strike in February 2007 by women clothing factory workers from Sri Lanka. The strike was notable for a combination of its scale and complexity, its occurrence at one of the country's leading companies, the extensive media coverage it received, and for the public emotion it appeared to evoke. It was not the first time that there'd been a strike on a large scale involving workers from a single source country, but perhaps the general public had not previously gained such a close familiarity with striking migrant workers nor expected their highly-reputed employers to attract the sort of criticism made by the passive strikers. The strike precipitated high level intergovernmental dialogue.³⁸

4.12 The second episode reflects how overseas media reports about conditions for migrant workers in Mauritius are handled as national concerns. When migrants employed in Mauritius's clothing and textile sector were described in London's *Sunday Times* as 'slave labour' and their factories as 'sweatshops', the indignation of factory owners was complemented by strongly-worded ministerial repudiation.³⁹

4.13 A final noteworthy episode was the temporary shutting out of men from Bangladesh. Workers from Bangladesh had been in several confrontations with their respective employers during previous months but in early 2009 men from Bangladesh became embroiled in a confrontation with government on the basis of their nationality and unrelated to their places of work. A number of print-shop workers from Bangladesh were the first to discover that their contracts to work in Mauritius would not be renewed.⁴⁰ Their employers were especially concerned about the loss of skills represented by this action. Soon thereafter workers from Bangladesh mounted a

public protest against forced repatriation before the expiry of their contracts.⁴¹ Later clothing workers from Bangladesh were in Port Louis protesting in front of the ministry of Labour about the non-renewal of their two-year contracts.⁴² The protests were to no avail and eventually thousands of labour migrants from Bangladesh failed to have their contracts renewed. Deliberate governmental action had been taken to shut out men from Bangladesh and no workers were newly recruited in Bangladesh until mid-2010 when the embargo appeared to lift. Public speculation about the underlying reason for this intervention was never confirmed or refuted.

4.14 The significance of these three episodes for our purposes lies in what they say about the way in which government relates to migrant labour issues, and what this tells us generally about how responsibility for migration is unilaterally defined and assumed by the state.

5.0 Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Each of Mauritius's state-led migration schemes has developmental connotations, whether related to investment, employment abroad or domestic production. This brief has concentrated on the largest of these schemes which relies on supplies of contractual labour migrants from a few countries under arrangements commonly advocated as having good developmental prospects.⁴³ To the extent that development can be achieved at the national level while economic and political competition continues internationally, Mauritius can be counted as one of the few successes in the Global South. For all the positive statistical evidence about the Mauritian case however, developmental success has come at considerable social cost.

5.2 Ancharaz finds for Mauritius that "the best way to meet the challenges of globalization is by embracing globalization."⁴⁴ Peedoly, on the other hand, weighs the burden imposed by inferior working conditions (notably for labour migrants), the erosion of employment (while the number of labour migrants paradoxically increases), and the erosion of social cohesion.⁴⁵ Assessments of the contribution of labour migration to developmental success clearly reflect divergent interpretations of development, notably its social dimensions and geo-political scale. But conceptual

differences aside, drawing up the developmental balance sheet is further complicated by international variation and differences between national objectives and the objectives of individuals who are driven by personal aspirations and steered by international inequality.

5.3 The unevenness of global development allows some nations to “employ the comparative advantage of other nations to maintain their own labour-intensive industries.”⁴⁶ While China for instance is motivated by a form of labour surplus to maintain outward labour migration, Mauritius derives specific advantage from the recruitment of labour migrants in that country. For Ancharaz the direct impact of labour migration from China on the Mauritian economy has been complementary and competitive; complementary in terms of cheap labour migrants contributing to the country’s export drive and competitive in terms of displacing local export-oriented factory workers.⁴⁷ In China by contrast labour migration functions within that country’s labour dispatch system to relieve the pressures of internationally competitive production and rural unemployment as its manufacturing workers face increasing individualisation in the liberalising economy.⁴⁸ It follows that state institutions in both source and receiving countries have a crucial role to play in facilitating labour migration and, potentially, in seeking to ameliorate conditions for migrants and ‘losers’ displaced by the system.

5.4 The post-2006 surge of interest in the migration-development relationship has drawn particular attention to the importance of related policy and, consequently, to the significance of the state. For developmental outcomes to be equitably favourable for all concerned would require a co-ordinated range of solutions from the level of multilateral international accords to the level of communities and households. A fruitful linking of migration and development demands appropriate, context-specific national policies. In the case of Mauritius, the overriding contextual feature is the country’s dependence on maintaining or improving its role in the global division of labour.

5.5 Power differentials between states and between participants in global value chains – notably those that are ‘buyer-driven’ – expose small countries such as Mauritius to vulnerabilities and disproportionately complex developmental

alternatives. Indeed, Mauritius as a small island country exhibits the contradictions and challenges of development in sharper detail than larger countries. Given the small size of Mauritius's population and economy, and its geographical location, the relationship between migration and development has special significance. The Mauritian state, having committed itself to pursuing development through economic growth and global competitiveness, aligns its approach to migration with this pursuit. Some four decades after being menaced by overpopulation it is selectively encouraging temporary and permanent in-migration and currently managing migration primarily as an economic growth factor. Yet questions of national identity, culture and integration have arisen and government is beginning to show an active interest in the social consequences of its economically strategic migration regime. How these matters are understood, how government assesses and responds to the social impacts, will influence migration policy in the longer term. Certainly economic growth theory cannot be expected to provide appropriate answers.

5.6 The developmental outcomes of migration are closely linked to the developmental success enjoyed by Mauritius today. However, there is a danger that positive evidence that development is occurring may lead to an unquestioning justification of migration in whatever form it takes. The current wave of policy analysis linking migration and development deserves a closer examination to establish the state's responsibilities. A strong case has been made for countries of the Global South to integrate their migration policy and development planning.⁴⁹ The argument is all the more compelling for Mauritius, with Hein identifying the need for a single comprehensive migration policy that is articulated with development policy.⁵⁰ For all the outcomes of migration over the long term to be internationally developmental and for the country's prevailing migration systems to survive without there being appropriate public policy intervention – that would be as miraculous as anything that has happened with the country's economic growth.

Endnotes

¹ Philip Martin, Susan Martin and Sarah Cross, "High-level Dialogue on Migration and Development" *International Migration* 45(1) (2007): 7-25.

² See Nicola Piper, “The Complex Interconnections of the Migration-Development Nexus: A Social Perspective” *Population, Space and Place* 15(2) (2009): 93-101.

³ United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2009: Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development* (Houndmills and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 101.

⁴ Ian Goldin and Kenneth Reinert, *Globalization for Development: Trade, Finance, Aid, Migration, and Policy* (Houndmills and New York: The World Bank and Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 171-85.

⁵ William Robinson, “Remapping Development in Light of Globalisation: From a Territorial to a Social Cartography” *Third World Quarterly* 23(6) (2002): 1047-71.

⁶ Rhys Jenkins, “Globalization, Production, Employment and Poverty: Debates and Evidence” *Journal of International Development* 16 (2004): 1-12; Rhys Jenkins, “Globalisation of Production, Employment and Poverty: Three Macro-Meso-Micro Studies” *European Journal of Development Research* 17(4) (2005): 601-25.

⁷ Rhys Jenkins, “Globalization, Production, Employment and Poverty: Debates and Evidence” *Journal of International Development* 16 (2004): 10; see also Raphael Kaplinsky, *Globalization, Poverty and Inequality: Between a Rock and a Hard Place* (Cambridge, UK and Malden, USA: Polity, 2005).

⁸ Rhys Jenkins, “Globalisation of Production, Employment and Poverty: Three Macro-Meso-Micro Studies” *European Journal of Development Research* 17(4) (2005): 601-25.

⁹ Alejandro Portes, “Migration and Development: Reconciling Opposite Views” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 32(1) (2009): 5-22.

¹⁰ Jennifer Bair, “Regional Trade and Production Blocs in a Global Industry: Towards a Comparative Framework for Research” *Environment and Planning A* 38(12) (2006): 2233-52.

¹¹ Caroline Arnold, “Where the Low Road and the High Road Meet: Flexible Employment in Global Value Chains” *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 40(4) (2010): 631.

¹² Vicki Crinis, “Sweat or No Sweat: Foreign Workers in the Garment Industry in Malaysia” *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 40(4) (2010): 598.

¹³ Piyasiri Wickramasakera, “Globalisation, International Labour Migration and the Rights of Migrant Workers” *Third World Quarterly* 29(7) (2008): 1247–64.

¹⁴ United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2010: The Real Wealth of Nations: Pathways to Human Development* (Houndmills and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 29.

¹⁵ Robert Lucas, “Integrating Migration Issues into Development Planning” International Migration Papers No. 93, International Migration Programme, Geneva, International Labour Office, 2008.

¹⁶ Republic of Mauritius, Ministry of Economic Development, Financial Services and Corporate Affairs, Central Statistics Office. “Poverty Analysis 2006/07” 2009, p. 17.

¹⁷ Vishal Ragoobur, “Foreign Workers in Mauritius: An Answer to Low Productivity and Skills Shortage” *L’Express*, 5.3.2008.

¹⁸ Tijo Salverda, *Sugar, Sea and Power: How Franco-Mauritians Balance Continuity and Creeping Decline of their Elite Position*. (Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit, 2010), p. 128.

¹⁹ Sheila Bunwaree, *Governance, Gender and Politics in Mauritius*. (Mauritius: ELP Publications, 2010), p. 36.

²⁰ Excerpt from prime minister Navin Ramgoolam’s address to the nation on Mauritius’s Independence Day, 12th March 2010.

²¹ Mauritius Board of Investment.

²² Mauritius Board of Investment.

²³ The National Economic and Social Council of Mauritius notes the discrepancy between data published by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) and the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment (MoL). Whereas the CSO reports regularly on medium and large employers, it does not collect data from small, family-run businesses ‘which are currently known to be employing significant numbers of expatriate workers.’ The MoL, by virtue of its official mandate, has full records of all migrants in the country with work permits. See National Economic and Social Council, “The Employment of Foreign Workers in Mauritius: A Review of Current Policies and Proposals for their Update” NESC Report 09, Port Louis, 2008, p. 5.

²⁴ Mauritius Employers’ Federation, 2002, “Memorandum on Wages Policy.”

²⁵ Republic of Mauritius 2003 – 2008.

²⁶ Sheila Bunwaree, “Export Processing Zones – A Tool of Liberation or Oppression for Women in Mauritius” In Sheila Bunwaree and Roukaya Kasenally, eds, *Rights and Development in Mauritius: A Reader* (Redit: Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern & Southern Africa, 2007), pp. 167-88.

²⁷ Besides warning against using GVC analysis as an explanatory theory, Bernstein & Campling question some of Gibbon’s generalisations about Mauritius. This paper does not deal with the points of contention; see Henry Bernstein and Liam Campling, “Commodity Studies and Commodity Fetishism I: Trading Down” *Journal of Agrarian Change* 6(2) (2006): 239-64.

²⁸ Peter Gibbon, “Segmentation, Governance and Upgrading in Global Clothing Chains: A Mauritian Case Study” In Niels Fold and Marianne Nylandsted Larsen, eds, *Globalization and Restructuring of African Commodity Flows* (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2008).

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., p.199.

³¹ Mauritius Employers’ Federation, 2011, “Annual Business Trends Survey”, p. 18.

³² Mauritius Employers’ Federation, 2002, “Memorandum on Wages Policy”; Mauritius Employers’ Federation, 2006, “Memorandum on Wages Policy: A Paradigm Shift.”

³³ Vishal Ragoobur, “Foreign Workers in Mauritius: An Answer to Low Productivity and Skills Shortage” *L’Express*, 5.3.2008.

³⁴ National Economic and Social Council, “The Employment of Foreign Workers in Mauritius: A Review of Current Policies and Proposals for their Update” NESC Report 09, *Port Louis*, 2008, p. 5; Vishal Ragoobur, “Foreign Workers in Mauritius: An Answer to Low Productivity and Skills Shortage” *L’Express*, 5.3.2008.

³⁵ Percentages are rounded and therefore do not always total 100. Table based on data from: Republic of Mauritius, Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations & Employment.

³⁶ Table based on data from: Republic of Mauritius, Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations & Employment.

-
- ³⁷ David Lincoln, “Labour Migration in the Global Division of Labour: Migrant Workers in Mauritius” *International Migration* 47(4) (2009): 129-56.
- ³⁸ *L’Express, Port Louis. Daily*, 13-15.2.2007.
- ³⁹ Claire Newell and Robert Winnett, “Revealed: Topshop Clothes Made with ‘Slave Labour’” & “The Billionaire and the Sweatshops” *The Sunday Times*, London, Weekly (12.8.2007).
- ⁴⁰ *le Mauricien*, 9.3.2009; *L’Express, Port Louis. Daily*, 13.3.2009.
- ⁴¹ *le Mauricien*, 20.3.2009.
- ⁴² *L’Express, Port Louis. Daily*, 2.7.2009.
- ⁴³ Alejandro Portes, “Migration and Development: Reconciling Opposite Views” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 32(1) (2009): 5-22.
- ⁴⁴ Vinaye Ancharaz, “David v. Goliath: Mauritius Facing up to China” *European Journal of Development Research* 21(4) (2009): 643.
- ⁴⁵ Aveeraj Peedoly, “Global Competition, Employment and the Right to Decent Work” In Sheila Bunwaree and Roukaya Kasenally, eds, *Rights and Development in Mauritius: A Reader* (Redit: Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern & Southern Africa, 2007), pp. 146-166.
- ⁴⁶ Vicki Crinis, “Sweat or No Sweat: Foreign Workers in the Garment Industry in Malaysia” *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 40(4) (2010): 608.
- ⁴⁷ Vinaye Ancharaz, “David v. Goliath: Mauritius Facing up to China” *European Journal of Development Research* 21(4) (2009): 622–43.
- ⁴⁸ Monina Wong, “Chinese Workers in the Garment Industry in Africa: Implications of the Contract Labour Dispatch System on the International Labour Movement” *Labour Capital and Society* 39(1) (2006): 68-111.
- ⁴⁹ Robert Lucas, “Integrating Migration Issues into Development Planning” *International Migration Papers No. 93*, International Migration Programme, Geneva, International Labour Office, 2008.
- ⁵⁰ Philippe Hein, “Options for Migration Policies in the Long Term Development of Mauritius” *International Migration Papers No.71*, International Migration Programme, Geneva, International Labour Office, 2004, p. 25.