

The impact of labour migration on the Swazi rural homestead as solidarity group

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Since the end of the last century labour migration has become a major feature of societies in southern Africa. Much attention has been paid to the labour migration from the 'BLS countries' (Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland) to South Africa (see for example Elkan 1978, Kowet 1978, De Vletter 1985). The single most important feature of this labour migration is that it is circular and purely temporary, hardly ever for more than two years (Elkan 1978: 145). Migrants return home, though the likelihood is that in the course of their lives they will migrate several times. The main reason for this circular migration is that the South African Government does not permit migrants to stay longer than two years and accommodation is provided for the worker alone. This regulation forces the migrant's family to stay in the country of origin.

As labour migration to South Africa is a pronounced feature of Swazi society, its impact on Swazi society is substantial. In 1990, 14,638 Swazi were recruited for mines in South Africa, which is 13.5 percent of the Swazi labour force reported to be in paid formal employment (Central Statistical Office 1990). The importance of labour migration for Swaziland is reflected in the number of publications on this subject.¹ Most of these studies deal with labour migration at a macro-level and analyze nation-wide figures on this phenomenon, investigate its causes and discuss its economic, social and political implications. This paper seeks to make a contribution to the discussion on what labour migration means to the social security role of the Swazi rural homestead. It is widely acknowledged in the literature on social security that in the rural areas of devel-

oping countries the domestic unit of production and consumption plays, among others, an important role in providing social security to its members. In rural Swaziland the homestead performs this role, and according to custom "a Swazi is entitled to assistance and protection from his *umuti* (homestead, A.L.) in time of need, as when he is ill or infirm, disabled or too old to fend for himself, or else afflicted with misfortune. In short, it provides him with a comprehensive security he can scarcely find in any alternative institution or body" (Ngubane 1983: 103). Many studies on the Swazi rural homestead (Kuper 1947 and 1963, Marwick 1966, Ngubane 1983, Russell 1983 and 1984) emphasize its social security role and the entitlement of the homestead members to this social security.

An important question remains, however: whether or not the homestead as a social group is actually able to meet the social security demands that come from within the homestead. As Partsch (1983: 62-8) noted, the size of a social group, its composition, its durability, its capacity to raise means, and the existence of a 'normative insurance' largely determine whether or not a social group can also act as a solidarity group. A solidarity group can be understood as a group in which goods, money and labour are transferred from active members, who mostly are able to provide themselves with sufficient means for subsistence, to inactive members who cannot, because of old age, sickness, unemployment, and so forth. By discussing the relationship between labour migration and the conditions mentioned for a solidarity group, the impact of labour migration on the rural homestead as soli-

darity group will be estimated. For this purpose a group of homesteads with migrants in South Africa is compared with a group of homesteads without them. Data are derived from a 1990 survey among 115 rural homesteads situated on Swazi Nation Land (SNL).²

A good understanding of the influence of labour migration on the homestead as solidarity group requires some insight into what the homestead is. In the next section the view on this question adopted in this article is briefly explained. Followed by an analysis of the impact of labour migration on the economic position of the homestead. The last three sections will analyze the impact of labour migration on, respectively, the size and composition of the homestead, its durability, and the existence of a 'normative insurance', and are followed by the main conclusions, to struck the balance.

The Swazi rural homestead

The homestead as the basic social and economic unit in Swaziland has been widely discussed by social scientists.³ What exactly is a homestead? The term 'homestead' already highlights that it is neither a village nor simply a household. Hughes (1972: 69) indicates that the term 'homestead' is used to refer to a physical entity (huts, cattle byre and arable lands) as well as to a specific social group. To avoid confusion I adhere to the common practice of most social scientists in Swaziland of designating by 'homestead' the social group.

In its earliest descriptions (see Kuper 1947 and 1963, Marwick 1966) the homestead (*umuti*) is described as a family group having large membership, male household heads, agnatic relationships (plus affinal relationships of wives marrying into the homestead), multiple marital links through polygyny and married sons remaining in the homestead, and a three or four generations' depth (Allen 1973: 45). In this ethnographic or classic model (Allen 1973, Standing 1987) the homestead is subdivided into several households (*tindlu*). These households may centre around the headman's wife or wives and their (unmarried) children, or around married brothers and sons with their wives and children. Kuper (1964: 20) describes these households as semi-

independent social and economic units that nevertheless stay an integral part of the homestead. Economically the homestead is considered to be self-sufficient in agricultural production, and may send out migrants to supplement its income and to satisfy specific cash needs. Social and economic relations within the homestead have a reciprocal and redistributive character, which are vested in kinship relations. Inequalities among homestead members are offset in time and have a temporary character. Men accumulate livestock to set against future marriage payments, and the redistributive pressures of kinship obligations militate against long-term strategies of accumulation, whether in livestock or in cash (Standing 1987: 129).

In the classic model the starting point for the homestead's dynamics is the access to SNL (Swazi Nation Land), and the customary right of all Swazi adult men to claim parcels of land from a chief on which to set up independent homesteads. These claims arise from the homestead development cycle and from Swazi inheritance practices. The practices of patrilineality and primogeniture extrude women and younger men from the homestead. Married women leave the parental homestead and live on the husband's homestead; younger men eventually set up replica homesteads elsewhere. The process is cyclical and repetitive, generated endogenously by intra-homestead growth and fission. It is also self-contained and self-producing, being carried on in relative isolation from wider processes. Such a self-contained unit, then, is considered to be able to perform the many functions it has in Swazi society: economic, educational, ceremonial, and legal.

However, even from simple observations made when travelling through rural areas in Swaziland, one begins seriously to doubt the accuracy under present conditions of the ethnographic model of the homestead. Standing (1987: 129) doubts whether "in the light of Swaziland's history of continual social transformation, (...) this has ever been an adequate representation of rural social relations". Low (1986: 80) concludes that "while such groupings still exist, they now no longer constitute the norm". Russell (1989) comes to the same conclusion when arguing that the classic model "tends to stress the norm rather than reality". Recent data confirm these statements.

The latest population census revealed that only 16.5 percent of the homesteads on SNL contained two or more households (Central Statistical Office 1986). De Vletter (1983) recorded only 5 percent of homesteads that were polygynous. In other fieldwork reports one can read that the three-generation homestead also is less to be found on SNL (Holleman 1964, Allen 1973, Russell 1989). In the sample analyzed in this article 18.5 percent of the homesteads consist of two or more households, and 44.4 percent of the sample are two-generation homesteads.

Besides differences in size and composition other research has shown that economic differences among homesteads have also increased (Central Statistical Office 1985, De Vletter 1983, Neocosmos 1987). Larger differences in wealth and income among homesteads can be observed than the representatives of the classic homestead model proclaim. This is the result of the different positions homesteads have in the Swazi economy, in which for a century market relations have increasingly come to dominate. The observation made by the ethnographers that all homesteads live simply from subsistence production, occasionally supplemented with cash income from migrant labour, is hard to sustain nowadays. In sum, there is substantial agreement among social scientists that nowadays the ethnographic homestead model may represent one type of homestead, but will certainly not be representative for all Swazi rural homesteads on SNL.

The above observations have strong repercussions for our analysis. It is very likely that the impact of labour migration on the homestead as solidarity group will vary with the differences among homesteads on SNL. Therefore, the social and economic differences among homesteads should be incorporated in the analysis. A useful attempt to model social and economic differentiation among homesteads is made by Low (1986), who introduced his theory of the 'homestead development cycle'. Low's views reflect the ideas of Fortes (1970), Goody (1971) and Chayanov (1966) on the existence of developmental cycles in domestic groups. The main idea is that each homestead has a lifecycle. In each stage not only the size and composition of the homestead changes, but also its economic position and the

so called consumers/workers ratio. Low (1986: 79) distinguishes five stages in what he calls the homestead development cycle:

1. *Establishment*: when a house is built and an enterprise (farm) is established. At this stage Fortes recognized that there may still be a continued dependence on the parental group with the transfer of capital resources and the courting and marriage of a spouse.
2. *Expansion*: the homestead becomes more clearly independent and children are born.
3. *Consolidation*: expansion to its fullest point, embodying the highest ideas of family development.
4. *Fission*: the stage where children marry and leave the parental homestead. This may be associated with the relinquishing of control of domestic resources from the parental to the filial generation.
5. *Decline*: the final stage, which is contemporaneous with and often contributes to the expansion stage in the filial group if the ageing couple are located within one of their children's homesteads.

It should be noted that the stages might not be as clear-cut as presented. Fortes (1971: 5) argues that the stages may overlap each other and, therefore, he prefers to use the term 'phase' instead of 'stage'. For example, often the filial generation will remain in the parental group through marriage and the birth of the first children. A new domestic unit will then be established by parents already with young children. At the other end of the cycle, the fission stage is delayed and, if the delay is long enough, the decline stage may be avoided altogether. And in a polygynous homestead the five stages will be coincidental in subsections of the homestead, which makes it very difficult to estimate the phase of the homestead.

Low's view on the Swazi homestead is adopted in this article. The main reason is that the model explicitly refers to most of the conditions for a solidarity group, including size, composition, durability, and, indirectly, economic position. Using Low's criteria for classifying homesteads (see Appendix A), the sample of 115 homesteads is stratified as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Classification of homesteads according to phase in the development cycle

	Homestead development cycle					Multi-household homesteads	Total
	Establishment	Expansion	Consolidation	Fission	Decline		
Homesteads with migrant labourers	9 12.7 %	13 18.3 %	22 30.9 %	7 9.1 %	2 2.6 %	18 26.4 %	71 61.7 %
Homesteads without migrant labourers	7 15.9 %	10 22.7 %	5 11.4 %	8 18.2 %	10 22.7 %	4 9.1 %	44 38.3 %
Total	16 13.9 %	23 20.0 %	27 23.4 %	15 13.0 %	12 10.4 %	22 18.5 %	115 100 %

Source: 1990 survey

Given the type of survey, whereby homesteads were interviewed at one moment in time only, and less information on the history of the homestead was collected, it is important to remember that there will be a continuous shift of homesteads from one phase to another. Table 1 presents static data only. For the analysis it is, however, necessary to discern that a homestead in the establishment phase will in a few years be in the expansion phase, and so on. Another qualifying remark relates to the type of homesteads that are used. As argued above, for homesteads with two or more households it is very difficult to estimate their stage in the development cycle. Therefore, the homesteads with two or more households are included in the analysis as a separate category. This small group can be considered as representing the classic homestead model, but in contrast with the ethnographic view, this group is the exception rather than the rule.

Labour migration and the economic position of the homestead

The production and income that is realized by the homestead's productive activities, and the wealth that can be built up, are important factors for a homestead to be able to function as solidarity group. When there are no means present to

be redistributed between active and non-active members, the homestead cannot perform its social security role. Labour migration influences four major elements of the homestead's economic position: the level of production and income, the economic vulnerability, the intra-homestead income distribution, and its wealth.

The first important effect of labour migration on the homestead's economic position is its positive contribution to the homestead's income by migrants sending home remittances. What is actually the contribution of those remittances from South Africa? From Table 2 it becomes clear that homesteads with migrant labour have on average a higher disposable income in all stages of the development cycle than homesteads without migrant labour. This also holds for the disposable income per resident homestead member (given in brackets). When the composition of the disposable income is considered, it is interesting to observe that the homesteads without migrant labour in most stages mainly depend on income from other income-generating activities (rural industry), and not on income from agricultural activities. Agricultural income does at the most constitute 50 percent of total disposable income (expansion stage). As is outlined elsewhere (Neocosmos 1987), the economic conditions prevailing in the agricultural sector in Swaziland are unfavourable to small 'peasant' producers. To go into more detail on this question would go

beyond the scope of this article. This section concentrates further on the role of labour migration in the homestead's economic position. Looking again at the impact of labour migration on the homestead's income, a decline of the share of remittances in the disposable income can be observed through the homestead development cycle. Homesteads in the establishment stage are highly dependent on remittances, while for homesteads in the consolidation stage and the multi-household homesteads the remittances have a minor share in the total disposable income. These differences can partly be explained by having a closer look at the reasons for labour migration through the homestead's development cycle.

Freiburg-Strauss and Jung (1988: 230) state that the extent to which a homestead will have means available for social security purposes depends on the continuity of its income-generating activities in time. This, in turn, requires that the younger generations on the homestead ultimately must have access to resources, which is realized

by the prevailing system of property rights and succession, and the options to engage in economic activities. Although every young male adult in Swaziland has the customary right to a parcel of SNL, and the eldest sons of a family will inherit most of the parents' wealth, this is insufficient nowadays to start an own enterprise and homestead.

Land is becoming scarce, and the parents' wealth should not be overestimated in rural areas where poverty is the rule. For the younger sons it is, therefore, necessary to raise funds themselves with which they can establish their own homesteads. Such a fund can be established by working as family labourer for the parents, or initially working as sharecropper for the parents, who advance part of the resources. However, working as family labourer is not very profitable, and in many cases parents do not have funds to advance. Labour migration is one of the remaining options, then, for young man to accumulate

Table 2. Disposable homestead income from productive activities in Emalangeni (see note 4); disposable income per resident homestead member in Emalangeni (presented in parentheses in the column Disp. Inc.); the incomes from different productive activities in Emalangeni, and the share of these incomes in the total disposable homestead income in percentages; all figures distinguished by homesteads with and without migrant labour and by stage in the homestead development cycle.

Stage in dev. cycle	Homesteads with migrant labour					Homesteads without migrant labour			
	Income from productive activities (in E.) (share in total disposable income)					Income from productive activities (in E.) (share in total disposable income)			
	Disp. Inc. per head	Subs. Agt.	Com. Agt.	O.I. G.A	Remitt. S.A.	Disp. Inc. per head	Subs. Agt.	Comm. Agt.	O.I. G.A.
Establishment	2,743 (756)	330 9.3%	100 2.8%	80 2.2%	2,030 74.0%	2,850 (580)	285 10.0%	495 17.4%	2,070 72.6%
Expansion	2,950 (420)	240 8.1%	170 5.7%	430 14.6%	1,170 39.6%	2,430 (590)	507 20.8%	740 30.5%	890 36.6%
Consolidation	5,790 (560)	570 9.8%	960 16.5%	1,570 27.1%	1,270 21.9%	4,480 (230)	518 11.6%	508 11.3%	3,034 67.7%
Fission	3,750 (570)	200 5.3%	320 8.5%	430 11.5%	1,940 51.8%	2,310 (310)	260 11.3%	620 26.8%	990 42.9%
Decline	1,900 (410)	100 5.3%	350 18.4%	140 7.4%	1,200 63.2%	1,180 (380)	140 11.9%	210 17.8%	610 51.7%
Multi-h.h. homesteads	5,780 (390)	470 8.1%	810 14.0%	1,350 23.3%	1,370 23.7%	6,280 (412)	708 11.3%	1,795 28.6%	3,780 60.2%

Source: 1990 Survey

funds. This motive for labour migration will prevail among migrants from homesteads in the consolidation and fission stage (see also Rosen-Prinz and Prinz 1978). The lower remittances can also be explained, then. Young men want to accumulate funds and keep these funds for themselves. They are not so much concerned with the economic position of the parent's homestead, but more with the establishment and economic position of their own future homesteads. In this way their labour migration does not contribute much to an increase in the economic position of the parent's homestead.

Having established own homesteads the reasons for labour migration might differ. One reason might be that the young homestead head does not have access yet to sufficient land and other agricultural resources to start a profitable farm. Additional income is necessary to buy food and to fulfil other cash needs. In this case labour migration is to supplement low agricultural income. It is now the young men's own homestead he migrates for; he is the head and as such responsible for the economic welfare of the homestead members. It is not surprising to find, then, that the amount of remittances is considerable in the establishment stage, and forms a large part of the homestead's disposable income. In the expansion stage other income-generating activities will start to rise, because children grow up, which gives the wife on the homestead opportunities to be engaged in income-generating activities.⁵ She will normally be engaged in what is referred to as 'rural industry'. Labour migration might still be a must when the access to agricultural resources is restricted or other income-generating activities are difficult to achieve. But in this stage labour migration might also be a choice, when labour migration turns out to be more profitable than agricultural or other income-generating activities. In the latter case it is rather taking advantage of different economic opportunities which are open to male and female homestead members, than reasons of sheer necessity that determine labour migration.

Of course, also the growth of the new homestead will come to an end, and the consolidation stage starts. In this stage, as described, one or more of the sons might consider labour migration as an option to raise funds and become independent of their parent's homestead. The

homestead cannot expect many remittances and will have to rely on the other income-generating activities. Agricultural activities and rural industry will form a large part of the homestead's income. In the fission stage children will marry and leave the homestead. For the ageing parents it becomes more difficult to realize an own income, and this will be a point in time when the control over domestic resources is relinquished. When children are engaged in labour migration at this stage of the homestead, still with the purpose to collect own funds, social obligations, however, for taking care of the parents will result in higher remittances than in the consolidation stage. Combined with the declining production of the parents, remittances will take a large share in the homestead's income. The same argument can be followed for the decline stage. But in this stage the situation might be such that the ageing couple has already transferred the homestead headship, and thereby the control over the domestic resources, which means that at the same time a new homestead is established. Remittances are made, then, to support the aged and to supplement the new homestead's income.

In sum, the contribution of labour migration to the homestead's income varies to a large extent with the motives underlying labour migration. The reasons for labour migration reflect the different positions male homestead members have through the homestead development cycle. In daily practice this might mean that homesteads have migrants in all stages of their development cycle, and that this has become a structural feature of Swazi rural homesteads.

Besides the contribution of labour migration to the homestead's disposable income, another dimension of labour migration is its impact on the homestead's vulnerability to fluctuations in income as a result of changes in the economic conditions. A well-known strategy of rural households in developing countries is to reduce their economic vulnerability by diversifying income sources and types of produce. Income generation is spread over productive activities that do not share the same risks. In this way homesteads can prevent the simultaneous loss of all produce or income in times of adversity. Table 3 presents the extent of diversification of income sources.

Table 3. Homesteads and the number of income sources (in % of homesteads in each stage)

Stages in homestead development cycle	Homesteads with migrant labour				Homesteads without migrant labour		
	Number of Income Sources (besides subs. agr.)				Number of Income Sources (besides subs. agr.)		
	subs. agr.	1	2	3	subs. agr.	1	2
Establishment	87.5	55.6	33.3	11.1	100.0	57.1	42.9
Expansion	83.3	23.1	38.5	38.5	100.0	50.0	50.0
Consolidation	95.5	4.5	36.4	59.1	80.0	80.0	20.0
Fission	83.3	14.3	71.4	14.3	100.0	37.5	50.0
Decline	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	50.0	80.0	20.0
Multi-h.h. homesteads	94.1	0.0	44.4	100.0	100.0	0.0	100.0

Source: 1990 Survey

It can be concluded that homesteads with and without migrant labour have spread their activities to the same extent, except for the homesteads in the consolidation stage. Homesteads without migrant labour mostly have one income source, which nevertheless seems to provide a relatively high income (see Table 2). Homesteads with migrant labour in the consolidation stage have two or three sources of income. This may be explained by the above observation that migrants in this stage do not send significant remittances home. Homestead members have therefore also to be engaged in other income-generating activities in order to secure an income.

With respect to labour migration and vulnerability two remarks can be made. Firstly, the homesteads with only one source of income, of course, are the most vulnerable. These homesteads can, also not surprisingly, be found among relatively 'young' homesteads of both categories in the expansion stage and the relatively 'older' homesteads without migrant labour in the consolidation and decline stage. Homesteads in the establishment stage usually have a limited resource base (labour force, labour time, land and capital), while homesteads without migrant labour in the decline stage usually are confronted with a diminishing resource base. Being heavily dependent on one source of income makes the homesteads at both ends of the development cycle the most vulnerable for a large collapse in

income when the sole source of income is disturbed.

The second remark refers to the conditions under which production and income are generated. The presence or absence of migrant labour places the two groups of homesteads differently in the wider economy. The success or failure of income-generating activities of homesteads without migrant labour depend heavily on the operation of agricultural and industrial input and output markets. This makes these homesteads' incomes vulnerable to fluctuations in these markets: prices of inputs and output may suddenly change, inputs may not be available at the time they are needed, demand may collapse, and so on. Moreover, agricultural activities are also subject to fluctuations in ecological and natural conditions. With one storm or one dry season all production can be lost. In contrast, the homesteads that depend heavily on migrant labour are dependent on the fluctuating and highly unstable labour market in South Africa. Unemployment is a serious threat to their income base, but also decline in wages, illness, and employment injuries, will, with the absence of sufficient state-organized social security provisions, affect the homestead's income.

The third way in which labour migration affects the homestead's economic position, and thereby its role as solidarity group, is by influencing the

intra-homestead distribution of the disposable income. This intra-homestead distribution is important from a social security point of view, because in Swaziland, as elsewhere in the region, the daily care of the non-active homestead members (mainly children and the old) is a task of women. It can be assumed, then, that of the income which accrues to women a larger part will be spent on the welfare of these homestead members, while income that accrues to men will also serve other purposes than the welfare of the non-active homestead members. Studies (SSRU 1990, Russell 1984) on this issue confirm this assumption. Labour migration to South Africa is male dominated. This means that the wages earned accrue in the first instance to male homestead members. Rural industry activities are female dominated. Income from these activities will accrue to women. Income from agricultural activities accrues to both men and women. Men often receive the revenues from commercial maize and cotton production, while women receive money when they sell vegetables from their garden. Table 4 presents the shares of women and men in the homestead's disposable income.

Table 4 shows considerable differences between homesteads with and homesteads without migrant labour. Three reasons can be given for these findings. Firstly, remittances are mostly sent to women (wives or mother) in the homestead (see also Russell 1984). Secondly, in homesteads with migrant labour, women have freedom to engage in income-generating activities and more control over their monetary earnings, because the male members are absent. And thirdly, when men

are absent, women are very likely to obtain the money that is raised with commercial maize and cotton production. Although this money in a strict sense belongs to men, women receive the money and will spend it. In most cases it will suffice to tell her husband what she spent it on.

From Table 4 it can also be concluded that the intra-homestead distribution of disposable income differs through the homestead development cycle. In the establishment and expansion stages disposable income will largely accrue to women, as the, often, only adult male will be absent. In the consolidation stages more males will be available and stay on the homestead, which will direct disposable income more to them. In the fission and decline stages income will accrue more to women again, because more remittances are sent home (see also Table 2), and in this group of homesteads more widows can be found who have to take care of their own economic affairs.

In sum, it can be argued that with respect to intra-homestead distribution of income, labour migration positively influences the role of the homestead as solidarity group. Women receive a larger share of disposable income, and other research has shown that women spend their income more in favour of the non-active homestead members.

The last issue in this section is whether there is any relationship between the wealth of homesteads and migrant labour. Because land cannot be privately owned, private savings are the main form of wealth. In situations of low real interest

Table 4. Shares of female and male homesteads members in homestead disposable income

Stages in development cycle	Homesteads with migrant labour		Homesteads without migrant labour	
	Female share in disposable income	Male share in disposable income	Female share in disposable income	Male share in disposable income
Establishment	77%	23%	31%	69%
Expansion	62%	38%	27%	73%
Consolidation	54%	46%	10%	90%
Fission	75%	25%	47%	53%
Decline	n.a.	n.a.	47%	53%

Source: 1990 Survey

rates, savings can be best invested in 'real estate', which in Swazi rural areas is mainly cattle. Table 5 shows that differences with respect to cattle ownership do exist between homesteads with and without migrant labour. However, it is difficult to say whether this can be attributed to migrant labour or not. As in many African societies, cattle are only partly obtained from the market. As cattle are, besides money, the main units in which the bride price is paid, homesteads obtain cattle also in other ways. Partly for this reason homesteads in the consolidation stage have more cattle than in other stages: daughters are getting married and homesteads receive cattle when the daughter leaves. Moreover, in the course of the homestead's development cycle, cattle are accumulated through breeding and through the market, in order to pay the bride price when sons of the homesteads get married. All these reasons, however, may explain differences between stages in the development cycle, but not between migrant and non-migrant homesteads.

Tentatively two possible explanations for the impact of labour migration on cattle wealth can be put forward. Firstly, as we saw, homesteads with migrant labourers have more money income available than homesteads without. This means that homesteads with migrant labour can more easily acquire cattle from the market and are not solely dependent on non-market transfers of cat-

tle. As far as the migrant's income is not spent on daily necessities and his own maintenance, it is very likely that the 'surplus' income will be invested in cattle. As said, cattle are a safe form of saving, will keep their value and can easily be sold in case of contingencies. In this respect labour migration may contribute to a stronger position of the homestead as solidarity group.

A second explanation is related to the motives for migration. In homesteads with migrant labour, and in the later stages of the development cycle, the migrants are usually young men who still have to pay their bride price or part of it, and spend part of their income on buying cattle. The cattle they buy are not meant to be a form of savings in times of need, but serve the purpose of accumulating resources in order to start an own homestead. By doing wage labour in South Africa, these cattle can be accumulated.

Labour migration and the size and composition of the homestead

For a group to be a solidarity group the size and composition of the group are important conditions, because they determine on how many members the burden falls of taking care of the inactive members of the group. The larger the size the less the burden for each productive member.

Table 5. Percentage of homesteads owning cattle and average number of cattle owned (by stage in the development cycle)

Stages in development cycle	Homesteads with migrant labour		Homesteads without migrant labour	
	% Homesteads owning cattle	Average number of cattle	% Homesteads owning cattle	Average number of cattle
Establishment	100.0	8.3	71.4	4.6
Expansion	85.3	10.2	50.0	3.2
Consolidation	85.7	12.0	75.0	10.5
Fission	100.0	11.0	37.5	6.9
Decline	n.a.	n.a.	50.0	8.1
Multi household homesteads	88.9	17.5	75.0	19.0

Source: 1990 Survey

Partsch (1983: 65) suggests that a group, therefore, should be larger than the nuclear family, to discuss in a sensible way social protection within family groups. Homestead sizes do vary widely, depending on both the stage of the development cycle and the extent to which they contain one or more households. In the total sample of 115 homesteads the average homestead size was 10.1 persons, but behind this average a variation could be found from 1 to 30 persons constituting the homestead.

Labour migration influences, of course, negatively the average size of the homestead in terms of homestead residents. Table 6 shows that for homesteads with migrant labour the average homestead size differs considerably from the homestead size when only resident members are included. Of course, the effect of absentee members on the total size of the homestead is larger in the already relatively small homesteads (establishment and decline stage). The group of multi-household homesteads has a relatively high figure of absentees that can be attributed to each household having its 'own' migrant labourer. Although the differences between total homestead size and resident size can be largely explained by absent migrant labourers, differences can also be attributed to absent children. These young absentee children are temporary resident on other

homesteads, because their own parents cannot maintain them or because they live nearer to school.

The impact of labour migration on the size of the homestead is evident. Far more important than size, however, is the composition of the homestead, and how this is influenced by having migrant labourers. The composition of the group must be such that at any point in time sufficient active members are present to raise and transfer means to the non-active group members. This, in turn, requires that not all members face the same risks at the same time in order not to lose all the homestead's income when a risk occurs. To speak with Platteau (1991: 139), one could say that the relative absence of covariate risks makes a group better suited to function as solidarity group. This can be reached by having the population of the solidarity group spread over several age groups, both sexes, and different income-generating activities. To the impact of labour migration on the spread of income sources we already gave attention in the previous section. In this section we concentrate on the relationship between labour migration and the ratio actives/non-actives. In Table 7 data on this question are presented.

Table 6. Average homestead size, average homestead size of resident members, average absentee ratio as percentage of average total homestead size

Stages in development cycle	Homesteads with migrant labour			Homesteads without migrant labour		
	Average homesteads size	Average size excluding absentees	Absentee ratio	Average homesteads size	Average size excluding absentees	Absentee ratio
Establishment	5.3	4.1	0.22	4.9	4.9	0.00
Expansion	8.3	7.3	0.12	8.0	7.8	0.03
Consolidation	13.3	10.8	0.19	11.2	10.2	0.09
Fission	8.8	6.5	0.26	8.0	7.5	0.06
Decline	6.0	4.0	0.33	3.4	3.4	0.00
Multi household homesteads	19.2	15.9	0.17	16.2	16.0	0.01

Source: 1990 Survey

Table 7. Number of active resident producers, number of children and elderly on homestead, and percentage of female headed homesteads

Stages in development cycle	Homesteads with migrant labour					Homesteads without migrant labour			
	No. of active res. producers	No. of children (<16)	No. of elderly (>55)	Dependency ratio	% female headed homesteads	No. of active res. producers	No. of children (<16)	No. of elderly (>55)	Dependency ratio
Establishment	1.1	2.9	0.0	2.9	71.4	1.8	3.0	0.0	1.8
Expansion	2.2	4.9	0.0	3.2	30.0	2.8	5.1	0.0	1.9
Consolidation	3.8	6.5	1.0	2.3	0.0	3.8	6.6	1.0	2.5
Fission	2.0	3.1	1.4	2.8	0.0	3.1	3.9	1.0	1.8
Decline	2.0	1.5	1.0	2.0	0.0	1.7	1.4	1.0	1.0
Multi household homesteads	6.1	9.3	1.1	1.9	0.0	6.2	8.5	1.5	1.7

Source: 1990 Survey

As said, important for a solidarity group is the number of active members it has versus the number of non-actives. We took as proxy for the number of active members the homesteads members aged between 16 and 55 years old. For reasons outlined below, we consider the number of resident active members more important than the number of total active members. Non-active members are the children under 16 years and homestead members above 55 years old. Although both groups are seldom completely inactive - children are often engaged in light domestic activities, and the elderly are engaged in income-generating activities - it can be safely stated that their contribution to the homestead's production is insufficient to provide for their subsistence. Neither will they contribute much when one of the active homestead members is temporarily indisposed. From Table 7 we can read that the numbers of resident producers are not the same between the two groups of homesteads: in the group with migrant labourers fewer people are available on the homestead to perform domestic and agricultural activities. More important in our context is that fewer producers are present to take daily care of the non-producers. This can be seen when looking at the dependency ratio, which is defined as the total number

of residents divided by the number of active resident members. While in homesteads without migrant labour the dependency ratio is in most stages below 2, this figure is above 2 for homesteads with migrant labour in all stages.

Why is the migrant excluded as active member when calculating this dependency ratio? One can argue that migrants send home remittances and in this way contribute to the welfare of those left behind. To some extent this is true, but when we consider the contents of daily care of non-active members the exclusion can be justified. Daily care of non-active members consists mostly of activities such as preparing and providing them with food, providing for their water and fuel, cleaning their house, doing their washes and repairing their clothes, going shopping for them, and so on. So, daily care mainly consists of labour activities, that can only be done by resident homestead members. Sending remittances does provide means, but at the same time entails a loss of resident labour power. Means have to be converted into daily care as described. This work will fall upon the resident active members, who, moreover, will be mostly female.

Another effect of labour migration in this respect is that the absence of male resident homestead

members means that their 'traditional' tasks have to be taken over by women. Especially in the earlier stages of the development cycle, the migration of male members leads to a complete absence of male active members on the homestead. In the establishment stage of the homestead 85.7 percent of the homesteads with migrant labour had no such members. This means that tasks like ploughing the fields, herding the cattle, construction and repairing, harvesting and representing the homestead become the task of women in addition to their already heavy workload. The time available for taking care of the non-active members - in the first stages of the development cycle mainly children (see Table 7) - will be less, and this may have negative consequences for their welfare.

The above observations are narrowly related to the discussion of the so called 'female headed households'. Table 7 shows that in the establishment and expansion stage of the homesteads with migrant labour, 71.4 and 30.0 percent, respectively, are female headed homesteads, because of labour migration. Although women are allowed to perform male activities in cases as described above ('necessity has no law'), they have great disadvantages when trying to obtain the means to perform these activities. Appeals for receiving more land from the chief, getting a tractor or oxen in time for ploughing, receiving help in construction activities, or help with legal disputes, or in hiring in labour, all have less chance to be heard and honoured when made by a woman. Thus, while doing male activities on top of their female work, women are also hampered in these activities because of lack of support and cooperation.

The arguments mainly apply to relatively 'young' homesteads with young children who need intensive daily care and supervision. The relatively 'older' homesteads have more (male) active members left behind, who will be better able to cope with the extra workload as it can be spread over several persons. Moreover, part of the inactive members are elderly people, who compared to children will be better able to take care of themselves and need less daily care and supervision.

Labour migration and the durability of the homestead

The durability of a group of people is the third social condition for functioning as a solidarity group. For all members it must be certain that the group will continue to exist when contingencies occur and during the whole period in which consequences are felt as result of the contingency. Therefore, especially social groups that are able to replace departing members over time are suitable as solidarity groups. Extended families or clans are perfect solidarity groups from this point of view. Although it would be too easy to suggest that the homestead is an extended family in its strict sense, its continuing existence is certain to its members. Because the relations between homestead members are based on kinship ties, the individual becomes a member of a kin group when he or she is born, and will stay a member till his or her death. In this way the homestead is far better suited as a solidarity group than groups based on neighbourhood, friendship or contract. In contrast to the latter forms, kinship exists relatively independent of the will of the individual and will survive the lifetime of an individual. Furthermore, Partsch (1983: 100-1) states that this condition is best fulfilled through kin groups of which the existence is not threatened when one of the members falls out. In two-generation families the marriage of the children or the death of the parents will finish the existence of the group. In three-generation families this problem does not occur. Through birth and marriage new members are included, and the presence of three generations ensures relatively easy care for children and the elderly.

The durability of the homestead, and the impact labour migration has on it, can only be analyzed when it is placed in the overall process of change in Swazi economy and society. A general idea in development literature is that in a society that develops from a traditional subsistence society toward a modern economy, extended families develop towards nuclear families, that is husband, wife and children (Murray 1981, United Nations 1986). I distinguish between the process whereby multi-household homesteads are replaced by one-household homesteads and the process whereby three or more generation homesteads are replaced by two generation home-

steads. Multi-household homesteads generate from polygyny, as well as from married sons staying on their parents' homestead. The decrease of polygyny was already observed by Kuper (1947) and later by Allen (1973). The introduction of Christianity at the beginning of this century has slowly led to a decline of polygyny. Furthermore, there has been a decreasing incidence of married sons staying with their own households on the parental homestead. Kuper (1947: 16) reported in this context, that the homestead was decreasing from the old "multi-household" ideal, because of "less need for defence, greater independence of married couples (particularly Christians) and limitations of land". It has already been argued that married sons or brothers leave the homestead, because migrant labour gives young men early opportunities to raise an income allowing them to establish their own homesteads. For homesteads in the establishment and expansion stage an average age of the head of 36 and 42 years respectively was found. Given the average age of 55 years of the heads of homesteads in the consolidation stage, one might suggest that homesteads in earlier stages have broken away from their parent's homestead. A further indication for households breaking away is the finding that homesteads in the later stages of the development cycle (fission and decline) consist only of one household in which a widow or elderly couple live alone with only one (unmarried) son or daughter. Other children have left the homestead and established their own homestead. It should be noted, however, that migrant labour cannot be the only reason. Furthermore, in the group of homesteads without migrants, 'young' homesteads can be found that broke away from their parent's homestead. This might indicate that, besides migrant labour providing early cash opportunities, the other reasons mentioned above are equally important, but we have no idea of frequency and no idea why these homesteads broke away. Respondents in the survey frequently indicated that the reasons for households to stay together on the same site are subject to rather individual decisions nowadays, and not on what society expects them to do. Labour migration providing cash could well influence this decision, but this proposition cannot be supported by data.

It is also thought that the durability of a solidarity group is strengthened when it consists of three or more generations. A consequence of the earlier break-up of homesteads as described above is that 'young' homesteads consisting of two generations are created and 'older' homesteads with only one or two generations are left behind.

Table 8 shows that in the consolidation and fission stages the majority of homesteads have three or more generations, but in the earlier stages and in the decline stage two generations prevail, as could be expected given the way homesteads are classified.

Do homesteads increasingly resemble a model of nuclear families, consisting of wife, husband and children? As can be seen in Table 8, many nuclear homesteads can be found in the establishment stage and in the expansion stage. This means, from a durability point of view, that the homestead as a social group still exists, but its base has become smaller in several stages of the homestead development cycle (establishment and expansion stage). In contrast with the multi-household homesteads, which can be considered as being continuously in the consolidation stage, one-household homesteads go through some stages in which they can be considered relatively vulnerable from a durability point of view. This is aggravated for homesteads with migrant labour, as the husband is absent most of the year. Although migrants send money home, their labour efforts cannot be used at home when the wife is not able to work because of contingencies. This might threaten the continuation of the young homestead. Murray (1981) has shown for Lesotho that these nuclear homesteads are very vulnerable. Social and economic contingencies can hardly be coped with, and the homestead will frequently break down. The wife and her children return to her parents' homestead or to her husband's parents' homestead.

Murray (1981: 102-4) warns, however, that nuclear families in developing countries often appear as nuclear, but this is neither a structural feature of these families nor does it mean a social and economic independence. Firstly, and confirmed with data from Table 8, the homestead consisting of a nuclear family is just a stage in the development cycle, and will develop into a more than two generation family. Secondly, nu-

Table 8. Number of generations on homesteads and percentage of nuclear homesteads (by stage in the development cycle)

Stages in homestead development cycle	Homesteads with migrant labour		Homesteads without migrant labour	
	Number of generations on homestead	% Nuclear homesteads	Number of generations on homestead	% Nuclear homesteads
Establishment	1:11.9 % 2:88.9 %	86.0	2:100.0 %	100.0
Expansion	2:18.2 % 3:23.1 %	30.8	2:80.0 % 3:20.0 %	40.0
Consolidation	2:18.2 % 3:63.6 % 4:18.2 %	0	2:20.0 % 3:80.0 %	0.0
Fission	2:14.3 % 3:85.7 %	0	2:12.5 % 3:62.5 % 4:25.0 %	0.0
Decline	n.a.	n.a.	1:40.0 % 2:40.0 % 3:10.0 % 4:10.0 %	0.0
Multi-household homesteads	3:77.8 % 4:22.2 %	0	3:75.0 % 4:25.0 %	0.0

Source: 1990 Survey

clear families might appear isolated from their wider environment because of separate sites, but family gatherings take place for all sorts of reasons. The conclusion that separate sites of nuclear homesteads at the same time indicates social and economic independence, as is the case in industrialized countries, does not always hold. Observations in Swaziland showed that young homesteads, when sited in the same community, have strong relationships with the parent homestead. Sometimes the social and economic interaction is so intensive that homesteads are separated only geographically, but no more than this. The above conclusions with respect to 'nuclearization' on Swazi Nation Land should be treated with care.

In sum, the effect of labour migration on the durability of the homestead is difficult to trace. Migrant labour provides young homestead members with sufficient cash to establish their own homesteads. This gives them the opportunity to

break away from homesteads sooner than in earlier times. This process also leads to the creation of a group of homesteads which are very 'young', and consist of a nuclear family only. These homesteads are relatively vulnerable and unstable, and their ability to function as solidarity groups must be questioned. When young people leave the parental homestead, the homestead left behind will also become more vulnerable, which may threaten also their durability. Homesteads in the decline stage have just one or two generations, consisting of mainly elderly people. The social protection of these people is not guaranteed and becomes more uncertain. All depends, of course, on the strength of social ties between former homestead members. Breaking away from the parental homestead does not mean that social obligations are not fulfilled, as will be shown in the next section.

In this section, there is one other influence of migrant labour on the durability of the homestead which I would like to mention. Among so-

cial scientists (including economists) it can frequently be heard that oscillating migration for the homesteads involved is a 'way of life', of which the consequences are fully accepted and integrated in the social and economic organization of the homestead. However, the prolonged absence of one of the two adults in young families distorts family life to a large extent and often creates psychological problems for the migrant and those left behind. The stress on women increases and feelings of neglect and loneliness are more common than superficial surveys suggest. This, in turn, creates its own social problems like divorces, alcoholism and broken families. These problems undermine the homestead as solidarity group, and, with a lack of alternative mechanisms that provide social protection, a group of people is created for whom life becomes highly uncertain and full of insecurity.

Labour migration and 'normative insurance'

A final social condition for a group to be a solidarity group is a principle that obliges members to support other members when necessary; norms or values that force members to redistribute means from those who have to those who have not. The existence of such a 'normative insurance' (Partsch 1983: 67) is a prerequisite because it ensures that individual members will contribute, and will contribute sufficiently at times that this is needed. Customary law and rules, moral principles and community norms constitute a powerful means of assuring each group member that cooperation will ensue and the obligation created will be enforced (Platteau 1991: 139). Within the homestead such moral principles exist. Ngubane (1983: 104) says on this point: "it is the *umuti* which has first claim on a member, for its support of its members and especially those of his own house (*indlu*, A.L.) as well as generally for the maintenance of the physical structure, its land and its livestock, as his or her circumstances permit and his or her age, sex and marital status dictate more specifically. Even if only by sending money, or bringing goods when he or she can, he or she should make his or her contribution". In sum, homestead membership

implies having strong obligations and rights toward other homestead members. These obligations and rights are well defined, and vary between homestead members, given their sex, age, marital status and social position in the homestead.

Being male or female is an important factor determining the obligations homestead members have toward each other. The gender division of labour forces women into domestic and (subsistence) agricultural activities. This results in a restricted access to monetary earnings of female homestead members and, therefore, women traditionally made their economic contributions to the homestead directly in labour (Russell 1984: 19). And, as was already discussed, and more specific to the role of women in the homestead as solidarity group, their contribution is derived from the gender division of labour: as domestic activities also include daily care of the children, the elderly, sick, and disabled, women have an important role in the provision of social protection to the inactive members of the homestead. Male members have far more access to monetary earnings and their contribution includes the provision of goods, agricultural inputs and money. In case unproductive members need money for treatment or specific goods, male members will be responsible for this.

Age is another important factor determining obligations and rights within the homestead. Children have few obligations in Swazi society, although they are expected to contribute to labour, like cattle herding (young boys) or some light domestic activities (girls). When marrying, women and men have reached complete womanhood and manhood in Swazi society. In this stage both married men and women are responsible for the welfare of both the younger and the elder generations. When they themselves become older, they have less to do with economic activities. Younger generations will take the major part in the economic pursuits of the homestead, and the older people have an increasingly important position in the social sphere (Marwick 1966: 68-71).

The marital status of the homestead member influences the direction of the economic obligations. The unmarried female stays at her parents' homestead and her labour efforts and her earnings accrue to her parents. When she marries,

her productive efforts will accrue to her husband's (father's) homestead. A young unmarried male is in the same position as an unmarried woman. His earnings should accrue for the largest part to other members of the homestead, especially his father. When he is married, earnings accrue to his own household, even though strong obligations to other homestead members continue, but these result from age or kin relations rather than from being married or not.

Although Swazi make a distinction between homestead membership and kinship ties, in practice these relationships often coincide. But kinship in itself determines also obligations and rights homestead members have toward each other. Within the homestead the main kin relations are between children and parents, among siblings, and between wife and husband (affinal kin relations). The obligations and rights between children and parents change over a lifetime. Parents are obliged to give to their children as long as they are not able to produce their own means. As soon as the latter happens, children begin to take care of their parents. The classificatory kinship system gives Swazi several 'fathers' and 'mothers' and, consequently, 'sons' and 'daughters', but the obligations to the biological par-

ents and children remain strongest. Full brothers and sisters have strong obligations toward each other, while the obligations between half siblings are less strict.

With regard to labour migration, it can be stated in general that the migrant's position as absentee and wage labourer does not change his obligations and rights within the homestead. Homestead membership continues notwithstanding someone's absence. Some members might be away for many years, but will still be considered as homestead members. Physical distance seldom means social distance. For the homestead as solidarity group this would theoretically mean that labour migration would not undermine the pattern of rights and obligations homestead members have toward each other. What happens, however, in social practice? To answer this question we need to know some main characteristics of the migrant. These are produced in Table 9.

Firstly, and not surprising, we see that all migrants are male. Secondly, their age is in all stages around 30 years. But in the different stages the migrants are different members. This can be clearly shown when the marital status and the position of the migrant in the homestead are con-

Table 9. Main characteristics of migrants by stage in the homestead development cycle

Characteristics migrants	Stages in homesteads development cycle				
	Establishment	Expansion	Consolidation	Fission	Multi-household homesteads
Sex	100 % male	100 % male	100 % male	100 % male	100 % male
Age	30.4	29.4	31.1	30.4	35.4
Married	77.8 %	61.5 %	54.5 %	57.1 %	66.7 %
Position in homestead	81.0 % head	57.8 % head	27.3 % head	28.6 % head	27.8 % head
Remittances per resident homestead member	E 603	E 170	E 130	E 285	E 125
Remittances as % of migrant's income	27%	18%	19%	26%	19%

Source: 1990 Survey

sidered. In the establishment stage and expansion stage migrants are young men, who are married or about to be married (they already live together with their future spouse, but the bride price has not yet been completely paid). In many cases these migrants are also heads of homesteads.

Combined, these characteristics can give an explanation for the amount of remittances sent home and the share remittances have in the migrant's total income. A male migrant who is married and also homestead head has large responsibilities toward the welfare of the other homestead members, and is reflected in the large share of his income sent home and high remittances per resident homestead member. There can be no doubt that in these stages migrants are seldom neglecting their obligations. In the later stages of the development cycle and in case of multi-household homesteads, migrants are mostly unmarried and a minority heads of homesteads. In the latter case the elderly head has already transferred his 'headship' to his son. As the majority of the migrants in the later stages are, however, young unmarried men, one would expect them to send a lot of money home, given the outlined obligations they have toward their parents. The opposite can be observed. It was already explained that these young men migrate to collect funds to be able to establish their own homestead. The tendency of homestead members wanting to leave the parental homestead brings a tension between the obligation as unmarried male, to give his income to other homestead members, and the creation of a fund, which is necessary to establish an own homestead. The interests of the individual collide with the interests of the homestead as a whole to take care of the welfare of all its members. It is at this point that labour migration undermines the general principles of distribution.

Besides his homestead position in terms of age, sex, marital status and being head or not, the migrant's place in the kinship system will determine his obligation also. Migrants from homesteads in the establishment and expansion stages send money home, among other reasons, for the welfare of his children; migrants from homesteads in later stages send money home for the welfare of their parents. This is all part of the

intergenerational contracts based on reciprocity, in which parents take care of their children in order to be taken care of by them in times of old age. An important observation in this context can be derived from a study by Russell (1984) on the redistribution of cash in Swazi society. A major conclusion of her study is that remittances are not just sent 'home', but sent to a range of specific individuals to whom, because of specific relationships, migrants feel a particular obligation (Russell 1984: 4). Kinship relations indicate the lines of responsibility. Therefore, a migrant will send money to the household in whose kitchen he eats, the kitchen of the woman feeding his children, the women he sleeps with, his mother and father (which may be several 'fathers' and 'mothers' because of the classificatory kinship system) and grandparents.

Notwithstanding the case of the young unmarried male, there are no further indications that the migrant in general wants to escape his obligations which derive from homestead membership and kinship. An important reason for fulfilling his obligations is, of course, that the migrant can foresee that his migrancy will be temporary, and, eventually, he will have to return home. Moreover, he will be dependent on his homestead when he falls sick, or becomes unemployed. It is precisely these social security reasons, of not losing his rights that he needs when he returns home, which will force migrants to keep close social links with their homestead and send remittances. His rights will be like those of any other man in Swazi society. Although little information is available, my own observations seem to confirm that being a migrant does not influence someone's rights to resources and help in Swazi society.

In the context of this section, another interesting observation of Russell (1984) is that the control over money in Swazi society is highly individualized, and the spending is at the discretion of the earners. However, the exchanges of the earned money are still part of the broader pattern of reciprocity, which is highly generalized. This generalised reciprocity ensures a (re)distribution of means that to a large extent will provide each member of the homestead or kinship group with what he needs. But the incorporation of money into the gifts circuit cannot alter the fact that

money is frequently not considered as a gift in the sense described above. According to Russell (1984: 2) money has introduced calculation, which is one of its functions in the market economy. People will start to calculate their debts or credits toward each other. The result might be that people who cannot give themselves, do not any longer receive what they need, with serious consequences for their welfare. In this way migrant labour might indirectly undermine the principle of generalized reciprocity underlying the homestead's capacity to function as solidarity group.

Conclusions

For the rural population in Swaziland the homestead is the most important social and economic unit in Swazi society. Providing social protection to its members is one of its functions. In this paper the central question was how labour migration of homestead members to South Africa affects the homestead as a solidarity group. To answer this question I tried to indicate relationships between labour migration and several conditions that make a social group function as a solidarity group.

In the previous sections some major conclusions have already been drawn. An overall estimation of the impact of labour migration on the homestead as solidarity group will be difficult to make. This article has clearly shown that the impact differs according the type of homestead we are talking about. The homestead development cycle theory was adopted to capture the socio-economic differences among homesteads nowadays. Labour migration can be found in all stages of the development cycle, but the motives underlying migration are different between stages. For young homesteads labour migration is often a must, for older homesteads labour migration is a choice of individual homestead members who are looking for own income and independence.

The major conclusion that can be drawn is that, as a solidarity group, homesteads in the establishment and expansion stage are far more affected by labour migration than homesteads in the other stages. To some extent this seems paradoxical. For homesteads in the establishment and

expansion stage labour migration is precisely for social security reasons, to secure the subsistence base of the homesteads, when no other options for income generation are open. At the same time labour migration has a large impact on the ability of the homestead to function as a solidarity group. The social and economic characteristics of homesteads in the earlier stages of the development cycle are already more unfavourable for their role as a solidarity group, compared with homesteads in other stages or multi-household homesteads. Although labour migration raises a relatively high income for the 'young' homesteads, and may give more freedom to women to engage in income-generating activities (expansion stage), it negatively influences the size, composition, economic vulnerability, and durability of the homestead; all important conditions for a social group to function also as a solidarity group. In the latter stages of the development cycle these negative influences are felt less, although they may return in the decline stage.

It is assumed that each homestead more or less follows the pattern of the homestead development cycle as outlined in this article. The negative effects of labour migration for the homestead as a solidarity group will then be felt only temporarily and offset in time. This nevertheless means that homesteads go through stages in which they are less able to function as a solidarity group than in other stages, and that labour migration might further weaken these 'weak' stages. In these stages they will be less able to cope with contingencies and setbacks themselves, and will have to rely on external support relations. The main question for the homesteads involved will be whether or not these external relations can be operationalized when they are needed. The survival of the homestead members may depend on it.

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Notes

1. See for example, Booth (1986, 1988), Fransman (1982), Kowet (1978), Levin (1985), Low (1986), Neocosmos (1987), Rosen-Prinz and Prinz (1978), Russell (1984, 1988), and De Vletter (1982, 1983).
2. Swazi Nation Land is communal land and covers two-thirds of the total land surface in Swaziland. Part of Swazi Nation Land is divided into 172 chiefdoms, headed by chiefs. The chief takes charge of the distribution of this communal land among homesteads in his chiefdom in the name of the King. Another part of Swazi Nation Land falls under the direct jurisdiction of the King and belongs to him and the royal family. The remaining one-third of the total land surface is privately owned, and is either given in concession by the Swazi state to forestry and sugar companies, their plantations covering almost one-fourth of the country, or belongs to individual tenants, whose land is referred to as Individual Tenure Land or Title Deed Land.
3. See, among others, Allen (1973), Holleman (1964), Hughes (1972), Kuper (1947, 1963), Marwick (1966), Neocosmos (1987), Ngubane (1983), Russell (1983), Sibisi (1979), and De Vletter (1983).
4. Disposable Homestead Income (column Disp. Inc.) is calculated as the sum of the sales value of Maize Subsistence Agriculture (column Subs. Agt.), the monetary earnings from Commercial Agriculture (column Com. Agt.) and Other Income-Generating Activities (outside agriculture and wage labour) (column O.I.G.A.), plus the Remittances received from South Africa (column Remitt. S.A.). The figures are presented in Emalangeneni (sing. Lilangeneni); one Lilangeneni is approximately 0.39 US Dollar (September 1990).
5. With the absence of her husband and with young children at home, the wife will not be able to leave the homestead to go to the markets and sell her products. When children grow older the care of the youngest children can be transferred to older children for a few hours a day.

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Appendix A Criteria used for the classification of homesteads

For the classification of homesteads according to their stage in the development cycle, the criteria outlined in Table A were used.

Table A. Criteria used to classify homesteads according to their place in the homestead development cycle

As can be derived from Table A.1., the classification adopted is based primarily on homestead size. Three size groups are isolated: those with populations of or to six, seven to ten, and eleven or more persons. A homesteads in the latter category are assumed to be the consolidation stage. The smallest homesteads with six persons or less are presumed to be in the establishment stage if (a) there are no children on the homestead, the homestead has three persons or less and the homestead head is less than 40 years of age, and (b) the homestead head is less than 50 years old and any children under 15 years are present. The '1 group' of homesteads in the establishment stage consists of homesteads for which the decline stage is the same time the establishment stage. These homesteads are clear examples of young homesteads leaving the parent's homestead. The establishment stage takes only a few years, because with children on the homestead will soon enter the expansion stage. All other homesteads with six persons or less are assumed to be in the decline stage. In the latter group one of the children has taken over the parent's estate and stays with them till their death, or the old people stay on themselves.

Homesteads with seven to 10 persons are in the expansion stage if (a) the homestead head is less than 50 years old and 25 percent or more of the members are children under 16 (child/population ratio larger than 0.24), and (b) if the homestead head is less than 50 years of age and 50 percent or more of the ho-

stead members are children under 16 years old (child/population ratio larger than 0.49). The expansion stage will last until the completion of the homestead's family of procreation. The biological limiting factor is the duration of the wife's fertility. All other homesteads with seven to ten members are assumed to be in the fission stage. The fission stage starts with the marriage of the oldest child and continues till all of them are married. They will subsequently leave the homestead. Homesteads with more than 10 members are assumed to be in the consolidation stage, a stage in which younger children grow up and the family stays together.

It must be noted that the above classification procedure does not strictly categorize homesteads in terms of their position in the domestic development cycle. Rather it places homesteads into stages of an idealized development cycle on the basis of size, age and compositional characteristics that best fit the idealized stages (see Low 1986: 89, note 4). The number of persons has been taken as the number of living persons belonging to the homestead as recorded in the 1990 survey.

Table A.
Criteria used to classify homesteads according to their place in the homestead development cycle

Criteria / homestead frequency	Homestead development cycle				
	Stage 1 establishment	Stage 2 expansion	Stage 3 consolidation	Stage 4 fission	Stage 5 decline
Homestead size	(a) 1 - 3a (b) 1 - 6b	7 - 10	> 10	7 - 10	1 - 6
Age of head	(a) < 40a (b) < 50b	(a) < 50a (b) < 55b	--	Other	Other
Children < 15 years	(a) = 0 (b) > 0	--	--	than	than
Child / population ratio	--	(a) > 0.24 (b) > 0.49	--	Stage 2	Stage 1
Frequency own sample	16	23	27	15	12
% of Total	17.2	24.7	29.0	16.1	12.9
Sample Low	12.0	22.1	26.5	20.3	19.1

Sources: Adapted from Low (1986: 83), Table 7.17, and Survey 1990