

Poverty and the Production of World Politics

Unprotected Workers in the
Global Political Economy

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- be 70%; in Spain, Germany and Italy at least half of the persons who prostitute are foreigners' (Danna, 2004b, p. 185).
8. Carchedi (2004) may be overly optimistic as the conditions set for acquisition of the permit – that sex workers must denounce their exploiters and enrol in programmes to help them quit prostitution – have been severely criticized as jeopardizing women's safety and right to choose.
 9. Complaints about the Italians' 'colonial mentality' and racism were commonplace among the women interviewed by Kennedy and Nicotri (1999).
 10. Many deported prostitutes, however, return after a brief period of time, particularly those from Albania.
 11. Starting in the late 1980s, more than 90 per cent of media references to prostitution concerned cases of enslavement or of punitive expeditions by the police and local residents. Typical headlines in Italian papers were as follows: 'Night of fear in Val D'Aosta: 200 people threaten women who were coming down the train ... blitz conducted by the mayor, Nigerian women saved by the police' (*Stampa*, 8 April 1990); 'Death contract for Albanian women: ... if I don't keep my word they will cut me up' (*Corriere della Sera*, 18 July 1996); '50,000 on the road of slavery' (*Manifesto*, 23 April 1998); 'Nigerian women controlled by a "voodoo priest" ' (*Manifesto*, 29 April 1998).
 12. This view is also held by an organization that occupies a third position in the debate: the Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAAT), which distinguishes between 'voluntary' and 'forced' prostitution and proposes that the laws prescribed for other immigrant workers be extended to voluntary prostitutes.

6 Migration and Unprotected Work in Southern Africa: The Case of the Mining Sector

Michael Niemann

This chapter draws and elaborates on Harrod's (1987) analytical framework in an analysis of the political economy of unprotected work in the specific context of the mining sector in southern Africa. It builds on a previous work on migration (Niemann, 2003) that incorporated the concepts of social space developed by Lefebvre (1991a). The main argument of that article was that by paying attention to the social spaces and lived experiences of migrant workers in southern Africa, international relations (IR) theory would gain a broader understanding of the international relations of southern Africa and begin to ask questions that might allow it to move from describing the politics of the region to challenging power structures in ways that matter in the everyday lives of people there.

Harrod's sophisticated analysis of the social relations of production offers important insights that can usefully be adapted to understand the everyday work experiences of migrants, not just at the current juncture but also as part of an understanding of the historical trajectory of southern Africa. It complements the work of Lefebvre in that it provides concrete examples of how social relations of production emerge in specific spatial forms and contribute to the emergence of new spatial forms. The intention here is to show that the changing nature of the social space we call southern Africa has been intricately related to the changing forms of migrant work, particularly in the mining sector, and that these relations have produced a specific postapartheid IR in the region.

Following what Harrod (1987) calls the subsistence pattern of social relations of production, which prevailed prior to the widespread use of migrant labour, we can identify the steady emergence of multiple

patterns of paid labour for migrants, ranging from occasional waged work to extended work under trade union contracts. Since the formal end of apartheid there has been a significant move towards subcontracting, with an attendant undermining of trade union power. As social space has become increasingly marked by market relations, many migrants have had to take up unprotected work, with all the attendant shifts from formally organized to informal migration. In short the international relations of southern Africa in the postapartheid era have been characterized in part by the contradiction between flows of people driven by market forces and the assertion of territorial control to limit such flows.

The next section provides an outline of Lefebvre's (1991a, 1991b) approach to everyday life and social space. This will be followed by a short introduction to Harrod's various patterns of social relations of production. The remaining three sections analyze the contradictions of social space and the manifestations of these contradictions in the social relations of production for migrants in southern Africa. Finally, the conclusion will discuss the relevance of these analyses for our understanding of IR in the region.

Social spaces and everyday life in IR

Just as it has ignored the topic of work, IR theory has on the whole been silent on the question of space, in part because this question is assumed to have already been settled. IR practitioners and analysts have been happy to adopt a dominant view of 'space as container' in their treatment of the state and the global system. Even if it has been problematized in terms of power relations rather than in institutional terms, the state continues to be seen as a fixed unit 'of secure sovereign space' (Agnew, 1994, p. 106) and thus as a container of society (Taylor, 1994b). Taylor (1994a, p. 1918) has shown that this 'embedded statism' did not occur accidentally as the evolution of the social sciences has mirrored the evolution of the modern territorial state – the two emerged as 'state sciences' as it were. However, while the social sciences cannot be faulted for the fact that their 'spatial ontology was ... materially based upon a very real spatial congruence of social activities' (ibid., p. 1919), their failure to problematize statism begs the question '[was] it error or [was] it ideology? The latter is more than likely. If so, who promotes it? Who exploits it? And why and how do they do so' (Lefebvre, 1991a, p. 94)?

The answer to this question, according to Lefebvre, lies in a critical analysis of the spaces of everyday life, contested places that are characterized

by the mystifications of a hegemonic capitalist system and the struggles to overcome them. He proposes that this critique should focus on the totality of social life – the contradiction between the ideological concept of the autonomous individual and the actual loneliness of the atomized person confronting the machinery of capitalism – rather than on social practices or representations of these practices. One significant aspect of this critical analysis of everyday life is the relationship between work and leisure and the complex articulation of these conflicting but mutually constituted categories. For Lefebvre, the goal of a critical analysis of everyday life is to create opportunities for humanity to face 'a new imperative: the practical, effective transformation of things as they are' (ibid., p. 134).

Lefebvre's critique of everyday life anticipated the emphasis on social space in his later work. In this he aims to transform the traditional dialectic of historicity and sociality into what Soja (1996) calls a trialectic of sociality, historicity and spatiality. In Lefebvre's words, '[s]pace does not eliminate the other materials or resources that play a part in the socio-political arena. ... Rather, it brings them together and in a sense substitutes itself for each factor separately by enveloping it' (Lefebvre, 1991a, pp. 410–11). Work again appears in this analysis both as the force that produces social space and as a reflection of this space. It is, however, embedded in a system of two dialectical movements – the dialectic of spatial terms and the dialectic of spatial history (Dimendberg, 1997) – that define everyday life at any given moment.

The dialectic of spatial terms comprises a 'conceptual triad' that consists of spatial practice, representations of space and spaces of representations (or lived space – *espace vécu*). Spatial practice refers to the manner in which social forces produce the spatial structures through which they organize their practices and which are directly apprehensible by the senses. It 'is thus presented as both the medium and the outcome of human activity, behavior, and experience' (Soja, 1996, p. 66). Representations of space express the manner in which space is conceived in a society by those who participate in the creation of dominant discourses, the imposition of forms of order. 'Such order is constituted via control over knowledge, signs, and codes: over the means of deciphering spatial practice and hence over the production of spatial knowledge' (ibid., p. 67). Spaces of representation, finally, incorporate both of the previous legs of the triad and refer to 'space as directly *lived*, with all its intractability intact, a space that stretches across images and symbols that accompany it, the space of "inhabitants" and "users" '(ibid.). This focus on actual, lived spaces enables us to imagine and find 'counter-spaces, spaces of resistance to the dominant order' (ibid., p. 68).

The working of the dialectic of spatial terms is intricately linked to the dialectic of historical spatial forms, which outlines the various forms of social space that have existed in human history so far and one that may emerge in the future. Lefebvre identifies four historical spatial forms: absolute space, historical space, abstract space and differential space (Dimendberg, 1997). At first glance this categorization may appear to be yet another 'stage theory', especially as Lefebvre considers that these forms appeared in chronological order. But the emergence of a new form of social space does not imply the elimination of previous forms. Rather, true to the dialectical process, earlier forms of social space are both preserved and transcended in later forms. There is also no implicit or explicit teleology that necessitates the development of new spatial forms. The logics of emergence and transcendence are driven by the socioeconomic forces that develop in societies. Social space is produced and is thus subject to the same constraints as all other production processes. As these constraints change over time, so too does the nature of the social space that is being produced. For Lefebvre, abstract space is currently the dominant form of social space. Its primary characteristic is the generalization of abstract labour through universalized commodity exchange. Abstract space is global in nature, subject to expanded market relations and dominated by representations of space that reflect and advocate the neoliberal or Washington consensus (Lefebvre, 1991a, p. 282).

The spaces of social relations of production

Given the central role of labour in both the production of social space and everyday life, it is only logical to link Lefebvre's work to that of Harrod's treatment of work and production. Harrod (1987) begins his analysis of work with a focus on power, which he situates at four levels: power in production, social power, political power and world power. Rather than viewing these levels of power as separate categories, he considers that they are interconnected, with power in production constituting 'the basis for a better comprehension and subsequent discussion of social, political and world power' (ibid., p. 13). In other words the exercise of power in production and the attempts of workers to resist it determine the nature and organization of production, which in turn affect the nature and exercise of power at the social, political and ultimately the global level.

Throughout history the universal human need to engage in productive activity has always been in the context of specific social relations that differ from one historical period to another as well as within the

same period (ibid., p. 13). A pattern of social relations of production therefore refers to a very specific and historically contingent arrangement of production relations. In his analysis of production in the contemporary world, Harrod identifies twelve patterns of social relations of production. These range from subsistence to state corporatism to central planning, with subsistence constituting the most dispersed form of power in production and the latter two forms representing the most centralized modes of social relations of production, where power is concentrated in the hands of corporations or the state bureaucracy. Of course these forms are ideal types, and any concrete example of production relations is likely to be more complex.

By now it should be clear that Harrod's patterns of social relations of production represent the interplay of Lefebvre's spatial practice/representations of space/lived spaces at particular moments in the historical trajectory of social space. The key here is to understand production in the broadest sense of a society producing itself. The 'who gets what' (ibid., p. 9) of production reflects not only the power relations between any given worker, employer and the state but also the larger power relations expressed in the trialectic of spatial practice/representations of space/lived spaces of any given social formation at any given point in history. The organization of any specific production process is limited by existing spatial practices, but at the same time it creates new spatial practices. In the process the representations of space, be they ideological or technical, change to conform to the new practices. The contradictions generated by this interplay are then experienced in the lived spaces.

The next section will consider different moments in the history of southern Africa, in order to demonstrate the utility of embedding Harrod's modes in Lefebvre's spatial framework. Space will not permit an extensive historical analysis. Instead what might be called vignettes should provide a sufficient basis for the final section, which focuses on the postapartheid era. For the purposes of these vignettes, the subsistence, casual, enterprise and self-employment patterns of social relations of production are of interest. In conjunction with Lefebvre's conceptualization of social space, these modes will help shed light on the changing forms of work and everyday life among migrants in southern Africa.

Land and cattle: absolute space and the production of historical space

Absolute space was the space of 'cosanguinity, soil and language' (Lefebvre, 1991a, p. 48). It arose from fragments of nature that were

chosen for their inherent qualities of place (often for ritual reasons) but lost their naturalness the moment they were consecrated and thus became occupied by political forces. Absolute space was both 'civil and religious' (*ibid.*), preserving unmediated relationships while establishing the beginnings of an administrative apparatus. Spatial practice, representations of space and lived spaces were not yet marked by significant internal contradictions. Between the eleventh century and the European incursions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, many segments of southern Africa's social space resembled such absolute space.

Cattle herding resulted not only in status distinctions in these communities but also in the extension of power over a larger areas, leading to sociopolitical agglomerations characterized by 'a substantial central settlement ... surrounded at a distance by several smaller centers, each at the hub of network of smaller villages and hamlets' (Omer-Cooper, 1994, p. 8). Expanded reproduction facilitated larger political communities and more complex political processes. As political communities split, chiefly families migrated and established their rule over new constituencies with less centralized forms of rule. The mixture of herding, hunting and limited agriculture reflected a relationship to nature that was still characterized more by appropriation than by domination, yet these spaces already contained within them the potential for transformation in that cattle herding enabled a process of accumulation that transcended daily life.

The social relations of production resembled in many ways Harrod's subsistence model. Social practices and distinctions were determined as much by extraeconomic as by economic factors, given that the relations to the production process were not highly differentiated. Households engaged in communal relations in which authority structures were not the result of opposing interests (Harrod, 1987).

However, expanding production and technology sowed the seeds of a new form of social space. In his discussion of the Karanga states, Newitt (1995) points out the similarities between the establishment and maintenance of states in Europe and southern Africa, particularly in respect of the manner in which the power of emerging states was underwritten by the separation of labour from the reproduction of the family, where Kiteve peasants, for example, were required to work on the chief's fields for a certain number of days each year.

The addition of peasant social relations of production to the subsistence pattern therefore predated European incursion into the subcontinent and made for a more complex situation than was often assumed. Social status and ownership of resources (often cattle) represented a

crucial distinction through which differences in power increasingly reflected differences in interest between producers and appropriators. Nevertheless these two patterns of social relations existed side by side and often overlapped in that any individual could easily experience multiple contexts in his or her daily life.

Increased surplus production in turn facilitated another crucial development in the production of historical space: the deepening of regional trade flows that linked the wealth of East African port cities and the trade of goods produced in the interior along routes that 'criss-crossed the high veldt and linked its communities with neighbors beyond the Limpopo or north of the Zambezi' (*ibid.*, p. 50). In short, while not yet broadly present, certain aspects of historical space had already been created prior to European incursion.

Historical space is the space of the town, which controls its surrounding countryside, the space of accumulation, beginning with but not limited to the primitive accumulation described by Marx. Historical space is characterized by production for exchange, where 'exchange value becomes general through the circulation of gold and silver [and] relational networks of markets and communications' (Dimendberg, 1997, p. 23). For Lefebvre the crucial characteristic of historical space is the separation of productive labour from the 'the process of reproduction which perpetuated social life' (Lefebvre, 1991b, p. 49). European settlement in southern Africa – first in Mozambique and then in the Cape Colony – was an intrusion that greatly sped up the production of historical space and initiated the production of abstract space in southern Africa. While they initially participated in established circuits of exchange, the European settlers' different ambitions quickly brought them into conflict with Africans. Driven by these conflicts, followed by the conflicts between the *voortrekkers* and the British and then between various African states, a new north-south pattern of migration and labour flows emerged in the early part of the nineteenth century and established new links between the Cape and all points north to Lake Tanganyika. These movements in turn led to the establishment of fewer but larger African states that were far more organized and bureaucratized than the small chiefdoms that had coexisted with one another (Martin, 1987; Omer-Cooper, 1994; Thompson, 1995).

European demands for resources, and particularly for labour, added new contradictions to the historical space and set in motion the process that led to the production of abstract space. For Lefebvre, the key contradiction in historical space is the separation of productive labour from the general process of reproduction, which in turn leads to the

emergence of abstract labour, labour as a commodity and thus a generalized system of accumulation and abstract space. The three following sections provide vignettes of the manner in which these changes in social space coincided with changes in the pattern of the social reproduction of labour.

Gold and diamonds: the emergence of abstract space

Although labour shortages had caused European employers in Africa to look for workers beyond the fluid boundaries of their respective territories since the mid 1800s, the discovery of diamonds in Kimberley led to a significant increase in the circulation of workers attracted by the higher wages paid at the mines. De Kiewiet (1941) estimated that about 100,000 Africans worked in diamond fields between 1881 and 1895, providing support and livelihood for the 400,000 or so dependents who joined them. While the formal recruitment of labour beyond the borders of the Orange Free State and Natal was organized quickly in response to the increase in demand (Newitt, 1995) a large number of other Africans made their way to the mines along clandestine routes.

Although Harrod (1987) concentrates on the urban context in much of his discussion of the casual pattern of social relations of production, the emerging employment patterns in the early days of mining conformed to a large extent to the casual pattern. Rather than being displaced from rural to urban areas where they served as 'unskilled, undifferentiated, and interchangeable units of labor' (*ibid.*, p. 136), African migrants went to Kimberley in search of casual employment to supplement income from other sources. Harrod describes the primitive labour market as a 'buyers' market', implying a relative abundance of uprooted or landless workers seeking employment in the informal sectors of cities (*ibid.*, p. 134). In southern Africa, in contrast, the shortage of workers permitted labourers to seek out more generous employers. Furthermore work at the mines or other locations was only one aspect of the palette of work opportunities available and African migrants exploited this to the best of their ability, leading to a constant fluctuation and circulation of labour. The power relations implied by Harrod were therefore not yet present in southern Africa.

Because proletarianized labour had no choice but to sell its labour power, migrants resisted the process of proletarianization. Most viewed their migration to the mines in strictly utilitarian terms as a means to acquire resources not available at home. In this sense their view of work

was hardly different from that of their employers. Connections to their homes were maintained even though poor transportation made this difficult. In the early years they left the mines when the hunting season came or the cold winter temperatures made life in Kimberley or Johannesburg too miserable. Harvest time was also an important point at which to leave for home (Harries, 1994). However, once the diamond business had been monopolized by de Beers this flexibility was eliminated.

Despite these differences, a casual pattern along the lines suggested by Harrod was created through the coercive and racist policies of both corporations and states. Race permeated the social relations of production in that the dominant groups' attitude towards migrant workers during this period was increasingly characterized by fear and repression (Harrod, 1987). Efforts to limit the mobility of workers, changing pay cycles and the emerging compound housing system all created a situation of artificial abundance that over time became real as alternative means of social reproduction for Africans were eliminated. Fear, repression and the occasional feeling of guilt were assuaged by racist ideologies that located the explanation of the treatment of the dominated group in their very racial nature.

The discovery in 1886 of gold in Witwatersrand closed off alternative modes of labour organization for ever. Gold mining in South Africa involved deep underground work that was both capital- and labour-intensive. Whereas diamond mining had quickly been monopolized by de Beers, gold mining remained a relatively competitive business. The varying quality of the ore posed a problem in that the richer mines had an incentive to improve labour conditions and offer higher wages in order to attract labour while the poorer mines had to pay lower wages in order to remain profitable. With the support of the state the mine owners solved the competition problem by adopting a binding system of labour recruitment, which flooded the market with migrant workers while pushing down wages (Harries, 1994). By 1899, 70,000 Mozambicans worked in the gold mines, or 75 per cent of the total labour force. 'The phenomenal success of management in bringing through and holding a wage reduction of well over 25% while at the same time increasing the workforce by 21% depended on the recruitment of cheap Mozambican labour' (*ibid.*, p. 140). Ultimately the very success of the gold mining industry in South Africa depended on the availability of Mozambican workers, without whom the relatively marginal ores could not have been extracted profitably.

The casual pattern that predominated during the early period was thus replaced by what Harrod (1987) calls the enterprise pattern of social

relations of production. Under this the employer had 'complete power to dismiss workers, to fix wage levels, to reject unions and ... to change the pace and conditions of work' (ibid., 1987, p. 183). On the surface this pattern seems little different from the casual pattern since both were characterized by the exercise of unchecked power by the employer. However, whereas the casual pattern did not presuppose the organizational structures of a complex firm, the enterprise pattern did. Within the context of these complex structures the need for specific skills, the regularity of labour and the impact of state influence combined to create a model of social relations of production that imposed some structural limitations on employers' power (ibid., p. 184).

In the employment of migrant workers in South Africa these limitations manifested themselves in ubiquitous fixed-term contracts, the common recruitment of workers, at least in the mineral sector, and increasingly specialized work, which led to fixed patterns of recruitment and the formalization of these through treaties with neighbouring states. While individual workers were still unprotected in that they had no organization to fight for their rights, the process of recruitment and work organization created patterns that were difficult to deviate from, even for employers.

Such changes in the patterns of social relations of production were intricately related to larger changes in social space in the region. The struggle over political space was eventually settled in the proclamation of the Union of South Africa in 1910. Thus while the emergence of the enterprise pattern was driven by conflicts over the profitable exploitation of mineral resources, it can also be linked to changing spatial configurations in the region. Similarly the deeper entrenchment of racism and the ever-stronger policy of exclusion challenged the nationalist representation of social space.

It is here that the link between Harrod's framework of social relations of production and the IR of the region becomes clear. The operation of the enterprise pattern of social relations of production required and generated the following:

- Spatial practices that produced unified but multilayered social spaces in South Africa. The latter was unified in that alternative sources of power were eliminated, but it was multilayered as prior forms of social organization continued to exist.
- Representations of space that depicted these spaces as a national territorial state, despite the fact that the vast majority of the population was not considered to be part of the nation.

- Lived experiences, especially those of migrant workers, that functioned within but also overstepped and undermined these practices and representations. The need for labour combined with the exclusion of the indigenous population set in motion migratory patterns that negated the image of the modern territorial state as a coherent, self-contained entity.

It was therefore not surprising that migrants made every effort to evade the organized recruitment efforts in order to maintain control over their choice of employment location and time period. In the early years of the Kimberley mine, large numbers arrived on their own and then served as informal referees for family members or friends who were interested in working in the mine. Even after the implementation of the large-scale recruitment apparatus of the enterprise market, migrants from southern Mozambique and other areas made every effort to circumvent the formal recruitment mechanisms:

Clandestine emigration allowed the African miner an element of choice as to where and for how long he worked, and of course enabled him to evade the deferred pay arrangements. In 1967 it was estimated that although only 80,000 Mozambicans were working on official contracts in South African mines, there were altogether 300,000 workers in South Africa. (Newitt, 1995, p. 498)

This clandestine migration has continued to be significant to this day. While the current claims about illegal immigration into South Africa are certainly overblown, there is nevertheless evidence that migrants continue to view South Africa as a place for potential employment and are willing to cross borders, legally or illegally, to seize the opportunities available.

The period between 1880 and 1970 thus witnessed the gradual transition from historical space to abstract space in southern Africa. This transition was driven by the contradictions inherent in the dialectic of spatial terms of that period. These contradictions manifested themselves in the everyday lives of migrants. The spatial practices of both the Chamber of Mines and the migrants built a regional network of flows with a firmly established north-south pattern. At the same time southern African space was increasingly conceived in terms of fixed territorial units containing clearly identifiable societies. Workers' resistance to proletarianization was pronounced and to some extent slowed the formation of abstract space. By the 1970s, however, their labour had indeed become abstract labour.

The end of apartheid and the consolidation of abstract space

A key aspect of Lefebvre's (1991a) dialectic of spatial history is that earlier forms of space do not cease to exist but are subsumed into the later forms. Absolute space, for example, survives in part as the basis for lived spaces, as places of political or religious symbolism. Similarly, in southern Africa aspects of historical space, such as the village embedded in its surrounding countryside, survived in the context abstract space, enabling a limited opportunity to maintain the unity of labour and reproduction. This survival was directly related to the racially stratified nature of southern African space, where the families of migrants were generally not permitted to join them at their place of employment and thus maintained village life, albeit in a form quite different from the premigration era. The racist structures of minority rule also persisted much longer in southern Africa than in the rest of the continent, and it took persistent struggles in the Portuguese colonies, Zimbabwe, Namibia and finally South Africa to bring these to an end by the mid 1990s. Finally, the combination of racist social structures and the linkage between state and capital in the minority-ruled states of the region resulted in a web of regulations, laws and administrative structures that on the surface resembled the Fordist systems of Europe and North America. As a result abstract space as a space predominantly governed by the logic of capital accumulation and commodity exchange was never quite completed. The apartheid years, and particularly between the 1970s and 1994, can therefore be best described as an attempt to consolidate abstract space without ever quite achieving that goal.

As pointed out above, abstract space is one in which spatial practice and lived spaces recede into the background while representations of space dominate. In southern Africa the experiences of migrant workers, especially miners, were therefore increasingly determined by rationalization, planning and bureaucratic control as mining became one of the largest sources of formal employment in South Africa, reaching a level of 534,255 in 1986 (Chamber of Mines, 2000, p. 21). These bureaucratic manipulations were evident in the fluctuating share of foreign workers in mining labour total. As James (1992) has pointed out, the degree to which foreign miners were employed was subject not only to internal dynamics in that they were utilized as a means to blunt the power of South African miners, but also to external dynamics, for example when Zimbabwe and Malawi changed their stand on migration.

Up to the late 1980s the social relations of production in the mining sector morphed into patterns that resembled the tripartite model

proposed by Harrod (1987, pp. 16–17) and discussed in some detail by Cox (1987, pp. 74–80). This model recognizes the emergence of worker organizations as a counterbalance to the growing power of employers and the intervention of the state in the resulting conflict. More specifically, it recognizes that the development of workers' organizations changes the dynamic of power relations from one of domination to one of bargaining. The inclusion of state power in the bargaining relationship further complicates this process in that the state plays an active role in shaping labour–capital negotiations and coordinating these along the lines of national economic policy.

In South Africa this process began in 1982 when the Chamber of Mines formally recognized the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). In only six years the NUM had signed up 360,000 members, or about 60 per cent of the total mining labour force (James, 1992). While the system in South Africa seemed on the surface to be similar to arrangements in Western Europe, the persisting racism that permeated South African society limited the ability of the NUM to achieve many of its objectives. The intervention of the state was never neutral and power relations were such that the workers could never count on their own mobilization to force the hand of the state in their favour. Indeed state repression was often the answer to efforts at mobilization. The institutional arrangements were also stacked against the NUM and '[i]n defending workers' rights to job security, as in protecting their health and well-being, the NUM faced an uphill battle' (ibid., 1992, p. 103).

Nevertheless the NUM made progress in its negotiations with the Chamber of Mines, resulting in larger wage increases than initially offered. However its attempt to procure a massive increase under the 'living wage' slogan ultimately failed and its power waned after the failed strike of 1987. Moreover inflation, particularly during the 1980s, undermined the wage increases and workers' purchasing power was actually lower than it had been before the recognition of the NUM (ibid., pp. 106–8). Nonetheless wages were certainly higher than they would otherwise have been.

The apartheid era, particularly the first 30 years, can therefore usefully be described as characterized by a racist version of Fordism. According to Jessop (1994, p. 252), Fordism is a 'mode of economic regulation' that combines the tripartite pattern of social relations of production with specific monetary and fiscal policies to secure effective demand; that is, 'state sponsored social reproduction oriented to the generalization of norms of mass consumption and the provision of infrastructure and means of collective consumption and ... state involvement in managing

the conflicts between capital and labor over both individual and social wage' in order to secure and maintain a virtuous cycle of economic growth. In South Africa the white population was the primary beneficiary of this mode of growth. The struggle of African workers, and migrants in particular, for better living and working conditions in the face of state repression yielded far fewer benefits. Nevertheless the relationship between labour and employers became embedded in a set of bureaucratized rules aimed at managing the economy in such a fashion as to maintain economic growth and its redistribution, some of which did flow to workers and migrants in the mineral sector.

In this system the positions of state and capital were often quite at odds. Their struggle over the colour bar – the job reservation system that formed the basis for white economic advancement – highlights their conflicts. While capital, as represented by the Chamber of Mines, was interested in promoting Africans because it was able to pay them less, white workers resisted what they perceived as the erosion of their privileges. In the initial compromise a significant amount regulatory power was reserved for the state, a position that satisfied white miners since they assumed that racial solidarity would outweigh the demands of capital. The NUM opposed this compromise and thus found itself in agreement with the Chamber of Mines (James, 1992). The final regulation, adopted in 1988, specified competence requirements that while not coded in racial language continued to provide some advantages to white workers. However the long effort to eliminate the official colour bar was accompanied by the promotion of Africans into positions that historically had been off limits (*ibid.*):

Since the late 1980s the mineral sector has gone through a massive retrenchment which, in the case of gold mining, has brought down employment levels to 176,090 in 2002 (Chamber of Mines, 2002, p. 21). Much of this retrenchment was the result of global competition in gold production and the neoliberal emphasis on non-inflationary monetary policies. The burden of retrenchment was borne more by South African miners than their regional counterparts. Between 1978 and 1984 the share of foreign miners declined from almost 48 per cent to about 42 per cent, but it increased again to almost 50 per cent by 1997 (Chamber of Mines, 1994, 1998).

The dramatic retrenchments in the gold mining sector have been directly related to a relatively new phenomenon, the emergence of subcontractors who employ retrenched miners (as well as novices), often in positions that are no different from the ones they occupied before they were laid off, but at dramatically reduced wages and virtually without

benefits (Crush *et al.*, 1999). Foreign miners constitute 33 per cent of total subcontract employees and this is due to the more specialized nature of the jobs that subcontractors are hired to perform. In particular some core production activities require the expertise of experienced workers predominantly from Lesotho and Mozambique (*ibid.*, pp. 16–18).

In Harrod's terminology, the past decade has been marked by a move away from the tripartite pattern of social relations of production and back either to the enterprise or to the casual pattern. The latter has emerged mostly because the reduced availability of employment opportunities through formal migration channels has increased the degree of informal migration, not just to South Africa, the most publicized case, but also to other states in the region (see for example McDermott Hughes, 1999).

A further factor in the decline of mine-worker migration is postapartheid South Africa's changed economic and political roles in the region. The adoption of the GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution) programme in 1996 represented a significant departure from the more radical rhetoric of the pre-1990 ANC. As Ahwireng-Obeng and McGowan (1998) have pointed out, the key principle underlying the GEAR strategy is that the inequalities brought about by the long history of discrimination and apartheid cannot be remedied by internal redistribution but require a strategy of economic growth that is founded on a significant expansion of non-mineral exports to the rest of Africa, and particularly southern Africa.

In line with this goal, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has become not only a proponent of a regional free trade zone and but also a vehicle by which South African capital, as the springboard of global financial interests, has extended its penetration of the region. While this is not a new phenomenon in that the spatial practices of the past century have always been based on such penetration, as Mlambo (1998, p. 102) points out the 1970s and 1980s were characterized by a significant degree of capital flight from the region in general and South Africa in particular. Since the end of the apartheid era capital flows have increased within the region, thus significantly increasing South African penetration. Hence the region's integration into the global economy is currently being rearticulated according to the abstract logic of neoliberalism.

The effort to regulate and curtail the inflow of migrants, especially in light of the high level of unemployment, will clearly have an impact on the international relations of the region. The debate on the redrafting of the Immigration Act and the 1997 green paper that served as its basis

highlighted the contradictory social forces at work. On the one hand the mining companies wanted to retain the preferential position their labour recruitment system supported, while the government and non-mineral businesses were interested in a migration control system that was in line with the labour requirements of the GEAR strategy. However as South Africa dominates regional trade and investment, its neoliberal restructuring policies and the retrenchment of traditional migrants' jobs have led to growing unemployment in the migrants' home countries, so the flow of undocumented migrants into South Africa is likely to increase. 'Put differently, as South Africa closes the main gates ... it unconsciously opens up the back door for undocumented migration' (Matlosa, 1998, p. 37).

In response to the perceived increase (the actual numbers are very much in dispute) in legal and illegal immigration, various sectors of society and the government have called for decisive action to curtail the inflow. Migration has emerged as a crucial area in which domestic concerns clash with regional reality. A gut-level reaction to immigrants has led to increased use of barriers and fences, some of which are electrified. The policy of closed borders is, however, unlikely to have the desired effect since the regional spaces already created through the actions of migrants limit the ability of the government to implement its policy. Even during the apartheid years the efforts to control influx and police the movement of Africans were of limited success. The needs of employers and the desire of women to join their husbands, and of families to visit relatives, were all translated into spatial practices that defeated any attempt to tighten borders. Today such efforts are bound to be even less effective.

Conclusion

This section began with the proposition that Harrod's work on unprotected workers and Lefebvre's conceptualization of social space would complement each other and provide a fruitful set of questions for investigating international relations. Using the example of labour migration in southern Africa, the efficacy of this approach has become evident. From precolonial days to the legal end of apartheid, the changing forms of social space were clearly matched by relevant forms of social relations of production. Although there is a danger of oversimplification, we can detect a connection between absolute space and the subsistence pattern of social relations of production, historical space and the peasant and casual patterns of social relations of production, and abstract space and

casual, enterprise and bipartite/tripartite social relations of production. Equally important, Lefebvre's claim that different historical forms of social space exist side by side is supported by Harrod's conceptualization of multiple coexisting forms of social relations of production.

Surprisingly, in the case of southern Africa the highpoint of apartheid rule in South Africa was associated with the most protected form of social relations of production (in the context of capitalist production) for mine-worker migrants – the tripartite pattern. Since the end of apartheid, retrenchments in the mining sector and changing forms of labour organization have turned the clock back to the enterprise labour market form of social relations of production. However this development should not come as a surprise. In Western Europe and to some extent in North America, similar changes have occurred with the post-Fordist restructuring of production structures. This suggests that the years of formal apartheid rule (1948–94), can be characterized as a racist variant of Fordism.

Finally, the international relations of southern Africa were intricately bound up with the changing forms of social relations of production. The racist variant of Fordism required sustained access to regional labour resources in order to protect the status of the white population. The end of apartheid as a legal system therefore constituted a further step towards the deepening of abstract social space. The sad irony is that the achievements of the anti-apartheid struggles also furthered the penetration of abstract space into new spheres of life, both at the level of the individual worker and at the level of regional politics. Postapartheid southern Africa, although now free of racist power politics, is marked by new international relations, driven by market forces rather than the desire to further human development.