1980

Women, migrant labor, and social change in Botswana

WOMEN, MIGRANT LABOR, AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN BOTSWANA

By Barbara B. Brown

W.P. No. 41

African Studies Center

1980

WORKING PAPERS
NO. 41
AFRICAN STUDIES CENTER

Boston University
10 Lenox Street
Brookline, MA 02146

WOMEN, MIGRANT LABOR AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN BOTSWANA

By Barbara B. Brown

To understand the course of development in Botswana one must first understand the role women play in that society. Though women may not visibly be in the forefront of production for development - as cattle owners or miners - they play no less a crucial role. In order to understand their role in Botswana, I undertook a six-month research project, in 1978, focusing on one district of the country, Kgatleng.

The core of the research was an in-depth investigation of women's lives in Kgatleng. In addition to this study, information was collected on education, health and patterns of economic change for the country as a whole. This "national" data included information on differences in educational opportunity and achievement, nutritional levels according to sex and several socioeconomic variables. Finally, the research included a review of the growing body of literature on patterns of migration, family structure and agriculture in Botswana.

For the study of Kgatleng District, my primary method of investigation was household interviews. In order to obtain a representative cross-section of the district, interviews were conducted in one large village, one small village and one cattle post area. (In southeastern Botswana, medium and large cattle owners tend to keep their stock near water sources in grazing areas far from the main villages.)

The two villages chosen were Ramonaka, a small village on the South African border (near Sikwane) and Mochudi, the district headquarters. In order to avoid a biased sample, I interviewed a complete sample of Ramonaka's 46 households and two complete wards in Mochudi. Families who were away from the village homes, tending to their farms, were traced and interviewed there. Finally, I interviewed several blocks of households in Boseja, one of the "new" areas of Mochudi, where people can come to build when there is no longer room in their home wards, an increasingly common phenomenon. (I lived with a Tswana family in Boseja.) My colleague David Massey who was conducting similar interviews in Kgatleng has kindly allowed me to aggregate some of his data with mine. He interviewed a complete sample of households at Leshibitse - a cattle post area - plus a complete sample of households in Mochudi, and a nearly complete sample of households in Boseja. In all, there were 210 household interviews carried out in areas representative of the district as a whole. (See Table 1.)

Table 1. 1978 Kgatleng Sample

Village Type and Name	Number of Households Interviewed	% of Households Interviewed
Small Village: Ramonaka	45	100
Cattlepost: Leshibitse	45	100
Large Village/"Old" Wards: Mochudi +	61	96*
Large Village/Bosega: Mochudi +	59	90*
TOTAL	210	96

*These figures are approximate as it was difficult in some instances to determine if certain houses were permanently or temporarily abandoned.

+Approximately one-half of the district's population live in Mochudi, according to the 1971 national population census.

The purpose of these interviews was to obtain a basic social and economic profile of the family: household members, including absentees and makgwelwa (absentees who have disappeared) with the age, sex, marital status, education and work history; arable agricultural practices and stockholding, with details about who does what work and makes which decisions; and finally household members' contacts with extension workers, their knowledge of elected officials and their organizational memberships.[1] In addition, I talked to clinic and hospital staff and to agricultural officers in the district and I examined the civil and criminal record books and the District Commissioner's office and at two traditional courts (kgotla) - the major one and a smaller one.

Women's role today in Botswana is not the result of some Biblical or "traditional" ordering, but is the result of a confluence of historical, cultural, ecological and economic factors. A brief theoretical overview of these factors is necessary before we launch into a more detailed description of women in Kgatleng today. Otherwise, the reader might mistakenly view women's situation today as the result of a pre-ordained social order and not as part of an historical process which is difficult but also possible to change. As no proper study exists of women before the twentieth century, I will begin with colonialism. In general, colonialism in Botswana not only underdeveloped the country, but it also undermined the position of women.[2] A dovetailing of British and South African capitalist interests rapidly led to making the country into a labor reserve for South Africa.[3] South Africa required cheap labor for economic development. The easiest way to obtain such labor was to "semi-proletarianize" the black population, pushing them into wage-labor but simultaneously requiring them to depend on the rural areas for part of their subsistence and for their family life and the raising of children. In this way capital would not be "wasted" on the provision of wages and social services (family housing in town and on the mines, hospitals and schools, a full service of water and sewerage, etc.) required to reproduce

another generation of labor.[4] The South African capitalists have received other benefits from enforcing a system of oscillating migrant labor, among them, greater political and economic control over the workers (and their dependents) and the maintenance of a labor reserve which allowed them to meet any fluctuations in demands for labor at minimal economic and political cost. As South Africa itself did not have a population large enough for the kind of labor reserve needed, people from neighboring countries such as Botswana were drawn into the South African system.

The benefits to South Africa from this system have largely been costs to Botswana, with rural development in particular adversely affected. However, within Botswana migrant labor has not affected all groups equally or in the same way; women have been hurt differently than men. Women's economic position has been undermined and, with it, some of their social status. Migrant labor has to take part of the blame for the serious social problems which burden Batswana today - chief among these being a breakdown in family structure which has led to further problems.

To examine women's socioeconomic position, I will first analyze women's work and women's role in the family and then turn to their experience in school. Together these factors will provide an explanation of the difficulties women face in bettering their lives.

Women's Socioeconomic Position in Kgatleng

The Kgatleng District in 1971 had the highest percentage of migrant workers to South Africa of all districts in Botswana: 38 percent of all men between the ages of 14 and 54 and 18 percent of all women of these ages were reported to be absent from the country. The overall national figures for men were 26 percent and for women 5 percent.[5] Since 1971, an increasing number of people from the district have sought work within Botswana, but usually outside of Kgatleng. My 1978 Kgatleng sample shows that 48 percent of the men between 15 and 60 were employed, with only a third working in South Africa, an indication of the recent decrease in job opportunities in South Africa, both on and off the mines. Of the women, in my sample between 15 and 60, 25 percent had found employment - three-quarters in Botswana and one-quarter in South Africa.[6] Almost all (85 percent) women workers are single. Further, two-thirds of these single women workers have children under fifteen years old to raise. Single women with dependents are much more likely to be working than single women without dependents or than married women.

Table 2. Bakgatla Women (over 15 years old) and Wage Employment.

	Total Number	Single Women w/Dependents	Single Women w/o Dependents	Engaged & Married Women
A. Number in sample	585	191	222	172
B. Number who work	148	94	31	23
C. B as % of A	25%	49%	14%	13%

Source: Field Work, Kgatleng District, 1978.

The labor market is biased in favor of men: South Africa's needs and those of the modern Botswana economy, plus the views on what is acceptable work for each sex, ensure that men can find jobs where women cannot and that the jobs men do are better paying. With in Botswana, Bakgatla women find work in the economic sectors with the lowest pay and the greatest insecurity of employment. They are domestics, cooks and shop assistants, with pay ranging from less than $18 a month to $54 for the lucky few. In South Africa also, Bakgatla women are overwhelmingly employed as domestic servants, a job which is becoming increasingly difficult both to find and then to keep, in the face of rising unemployment and a security crackdown on those living illegally without a pass. In interviews women expressed grave reservations about working - or returning to work - in South Africa. Thus, there will be a growing unemployment problem for those who have in the past relied heavily on employment in South Africa. As a popular folk song goes:

> "Ramatlabama, go senkwa dipasa.
> Ga o sena pasa boela gae."
>
> [At Ramatlabama passes are needed.
> If you don't have a pass, go back home.]

Not that going home is a solution. The singer then continues:

> "Ko morakeng re disa pudi, re gana
> kgomo ga ena botshelo."
>
> [At the cattle post we herd (only) goats;
> we refuse cattle because they have no life
> (because they are dead)]

Migration plays a vital role in the economic life of Botswana. Most employment goes to men who must migrate in order to get to work. These migrants are not working simply so they can buy radios or bicycles but also so they can help sustain their families. Remittances and employment together are the primary source of household income for at least 50 percent of the households in the nation. According to the Rural Income Distribution Survey of 1974, the poorest 50 percent of the households counted on money transfers and employment as their primary source of income - this despite the fact that the 1974 harvest was very good and in some parts of the country a record.[8] My research in Kgatleng confirms the RIDS data and shows further that among female-headed households, reliance on migrant workers for income is even more common.

Arable agriculture seems to be a secondary activity for more households, one which may be neglected as soon as a job opportunity comes along, a not unreasonable decision, since jobs generally provide an income far above that generally possible from a harvest of five, ten or even thirty bags of sorghum. (A common rule of thumb is that each person requires two bags of grain for food each year.)

Table 3. Farming as a Means of Household Subsistence.

	% of households	Average herd size	Average harvest (in bags)
I. Households producing more than 2 bags of grain per member and/or owning more than 40 cattle	17	50	75
II. Households with insufficient agricultural production for subsistence.	83	6	3.6

Source: Field work, Kgatleng District, 1978.

Furthermore, jobs provide a more secure return on labor than farming. Nevertheless, most Bakgatla women are currently residing in the rural areas - either because they are unable or too old to find work or because they are bearing children and raising them. Many of those who are currently working in town will return sooner or later, taking their turn at child care and engaging in crop production. In other words, a Mokgatla woman cannot be fitted into any one discrete category such as "woman who farms" or working woman" or "mother," because the socioeconomic system in which she lives makes her all of these.

This majority of Bakgatla women who are in the rural areas today are financially dependent on the children (or husbands or fiancés) who are wage earners.[9] Though the women perform vital economic and social functions - plowing the fields, raising a family and caring for the sick and old - these activities offer the women few financial rewards. Women are now relegated to the least productive and most neglected economic sector: arable farming. (The only development in rural production has been in cattle raising. As this is controlled by men, it has increased economic independence and power for some men while doing little for women.) Women not only are unimportant as producers, they also have little control over the distribution of the main sources of income. Thus, they are economically weak and peripheral. Even their position as dependents is insecure: the male migrant workers may not remit enough and they may not remit regularly, leaving women with the chief responsibility of raising children (and often also grandchildren) but without the secure means of doing it. It seems that it is the exceptional migrant son who sends or brings money, food or clothing home regularly. Daughters are more likely to help regularly, but often they have left children of their own at home for their parents to feed, clothe and care for. It is hardly surprising that in such circumstances social and psychological problems arise: anger, jealousy and dissatisfaction.[10] Migrant wage labor also exacerbates the social problems caused by "agricultural migration." In Botswana people tend to live in large villages. As population pressure has grown on the land near the villages, farms have been established at greater and greater distances from people's principal homes. During the agricultural season, then, many families divide up with some going to the lands and others remaining in the village to attend school or look after the school children, and perhaps others going to the cattle post. Such separations (often accompanied by the parents' financial dependence on their children) lead to a breakdown in authority structures. Parents may not know what their children are doing and may find it difficult to prevent delinquency. As children grow up and become working adults, they may in turn become distant from their parents and not feel as responsible for them.

Not unrelated to these internal and external migration patterns is a growth in the number of female-headed households and an increase in the number of single mothers. Out of the 210 households interviewed by Massey and myself, 35 percent were de jure female headed households (in other words, households headed by women in their own right, as opposed to being households whose male head is temporarily absent). This is relatively high in comparison with other studies in eastern Botswana, but not unreasonably so. Widows were 20 percent of the households heads, a figure which matches Carol Bond's 20 percent for southeastern Botswana, while single women were the de jure heads of 15 percent of the households we interviewed in Kgatleng. Bond found only 8 percent of her households were headed by single women.[11] It may well be that where out migration is highest, the number of single women heading households will also be highest, because of the greater disruption of family life. Kgatleng has the highest outmigration of any district.

Nevertheless, most single women continue to live at their parents' home. Those that establish their own households are generally older (over 40), with several children and limited prospects of marriage, and perhaps also a desire to be more independent than they could otherwise be at their parents' home. Widows, on the other hand, tend to be much older, though, of course, they encompass a range of years.[12] They are also unlikely to be in wage employment, whereas a number of single household heads may be working.[13] The legal emancipation of women from male guardianship in some types of court cases and in matters before the Land Boards has helped female household heads. However, there is still a long way to go before women will be fully able to participate in legal process and the political system of which it forms a part.

Female-headed households are among the poorest in the district. As Carol Bond has also shown in her study of southeastern Botswana, they are badly off as farmers: many do not own or hold cattle; they tend to plow late or not at all; and they may lack sufficient labor power to hoe and scare birds (or to engage in labor-costing agricultural innovations).[14]
Compared to male-headed households, they are significantly lacking in access to the means of agricultural production - land and cattle. Those who do plow do so with significantly poorer results.

Table 4. Agriculture According to Type of Household.

	Female-headed households	Male-headed households
Access to the means of production:		
A. Number of households in sample	74	136
B. Number and % without fields	18 (24%)	21 (15%)
C. Number and % owning 0 cattle	59 (80%)	48 (35%)
D. Number and % owning 0-10 cattle	61 (82%)	83 (61%)
Agricultural activity, 1976-1977 season:		
E. Number of households in sample	74	136
F. Number and % plowing	27 (36%)	107 (79%)
G. Average harvest of those plowing (in bags of grain)	7 bags	29 bags

Source: Field Work, Kgatleng District, 1978

The majority of female-headed households do not own or hold cattle and, of those who do, it is an exceptional household with 10 head, the number generally needed for plowing. The lack of cattle not only affects plowing; cattle are also important in themselves for cash (through their sale), for financial security, and for milk and meat. Even if the household holds enough cattle for plowing, the difficulty may not be over, as there may not be an adult present who can inspan the oxen. Then the family will either have to join with others to share a plow and labor (tshwarisa), or hire a tractor or oxen. Hiring often entails a delay in plowing - a crucial factor for successful dry-land farming in Botswana, where one must time plowing and planting with the erratic rainfall. In Kgatleng, a large number of households do plow by hiring a tractor; this holds particularly true for female-headed households, where half of my female sample who plowed did so with a hired tractor. This practice imposes two constraints on the household: first, there can be a delay in getting hold of a tractor because of a long waiting list; second, tractor hire is expensive at $12-15 an acre, a price which has been going up by about a dollar a year. A household is thus using scarce resources to plow and may stand to lose that investment if the harvest fails or is small. Out of 29 female-headed households who plowed in 1977, 14 hired tractors and 6 of these did not harvest the equivalent of the cost of the tractor hire. Even when a family is able to plow at the right time, other obstacles to farming remain. The family must be able to gather sufficient labor to hoe and to scare birds properly. This is not necessarily an easy task when half of the men over 15 and a third of the women are employed, and the children are in school. Farming seems to be done by those unable to do anything else at the time: the old and the women, primarily. My impression from the interviews, conversations and direct observation is that younger women today are not as interested in farming as older people. Some seem reluctant to farm even when they have no immediate employment, arguing that the work is too hard and the returns too small. Only a few of the female-headed households interviewed harvested over 4 bags of anything in 1977. In fact, most female houselds interviewed did not plow that year, offering a variety of reasons for their decision: nothing to plow with (meaning no money to hire a tractor, no children to do the plowing for them, or no seeds to plant), not enough rain at the right time, the belief that they were too old or weak, or that it simply was not worth the risk and effort. The first reason, "nothing to plow with," was the one most frequently cited in interviews.

Some widows have a special problem concerning cattle. If a husband owned cattle at his death, his family may try to reposess them from the widow, something which is not impossible if the man or his family had been herding the cattle and the widow has no children able to take responsibility for them.

Many women in Botswana today are raising children without the help of the children's fathers. Some of these women have established themselves in their own homes, though most are still fairly young and living with their parents or working in town and considering their parents' home as their own. Unmarried mothers (that is, women with children whose families have not received bride price or bogadi) represent almost half of the female population 18 and over. Less than a third of these women have been promised marriage or are formally engaged.[15] At least half of the women without marriage prospects are not receiving any support from the fathers of their children. This represents a financial and psychological burden for the woman, and often for her parents as well, if she continues to live at home or to leave her children at home while she goes out to work. In addition, where fathers do not support their

children, the children may suffer nutritionally. The Ministry of Health conducted a small study of young children who were nutritionally at risk, defined as less than 80 percent of normal weight for age. Of these children, 42 percent received no support from their fathers. The study also found a strong correlation between a family's lack of livestock (both cattle and small stock) and nutritional deficiencies and concluded that economic factors were more important than lack of knowledge of good nutritional practices in explaining this health problem.[16]

Moreover, female children were found to be more likely to be nutritionally at risk than male children. In 1978 the Mininstry of Health collected information on 1693 children under the age of five who were nutritionally at risk. These children represented all those who were reported by clinics throughout the country to be at risk in January and February 1978. The results showed that significantly more girls than boys were below the normal weight for age. Of those at risk, 60.1 percent were girls and 39.8 percent boys. This ratio was roughly consistent from clinic to clinic across the country.[17]

Women have the legal right to obtain child maintenance support either through receiving a "seduction" (marebana) payment by negotiation with the man's family or through going to the District Commisioner's for maintenance (under the Affiliation Proceedings Act of 1970 and the Amendment Bill of 1977). However, my findings show that most unmarried mothers have not received support through such channels. There are many obstacles to obtaining assistance in these ways. First, a woman or her guardian may decide against asking for marebana, because they "do not believe in it" (an explanation which often covers several other reasons), or because it is the woman's second child and people consider a woman undeserving of support for more than one child, or because a woman has no immediate male guardian who is willing to face the man's family alone. Second, even if a woman is promised payment by a court ruling, the man may successfully avoid paying. In cases at the Mochudi traditional court (kgotla) in 1976 and 1977, only 21 out of 72 men who were sentenced to make marebana payments in fact paid the full amount required. Most paid a small portion of the amount. Before 1974 the support payment was $96 in Kgatleng. Then it was increased to $216 or four head of cattle, though no man had ever been so financially foolish as to pay cattle which would be worth considerably more than $216. Moreover, even if a woman does ask for marebana payment and does get paid, the sum of $216 is hardly sufficient for raising a child to adulthood.

As an alternative, a woman may take her case to the District Commissioner's Office instead of the kgotla. However, this procedure is apparently not a viable alternative for women. An average of only 13 cases a year were heard at the D.C.'s Office in Kgatleng between 1971 and 1976. One reason that women prefer to go to the kgotla is that the lump sum settlements assessed at the kgotla under customary law are easier to collect than the monthly payments stipulated for in the Affiliation Proceedings Act.

Thus, in sum, marebana laws and the affiliation act do not provide a simple financial solution to the problem of single mothers, although these laws can be of some assistance.[18] They can foster an atmosphere of greater responsibility on the part of the men who will be financially discouraged from impregnating a women and leaving her to raise the child or children alone.[19] However, these laws need to be enforced rather than flouted; mocking them only encourages men in their irresponsibility.

While the men who father these children can be considered financially irresponsible for not supporting them, the problem should be seen in its proper socioeconomic context. Decades of oscillating migration has led to a breakdown of authority in the family which might otherwise have brought pressure to bear on its irresponsible members. South Africa's political economy in particular has led to problems of this nature. South Africa needed a large labor reserve not just so that the reserve could bear part of the cost of subsistence, but also so that it will serve as a place for the social reproduction of the labor force: a place where women go into confinement, give birth and then raise the children at no cost to apartheid, while the men return to the mines and factories of South Africa to work, leaving the women behind. Though migrant men are victims of this system, the women bear a greater burden, being dependent on men who themselves have little control over the conditions under which they sell their labor.

Girls' Achievement in School

Women's economic problems are compounded by the difficulties girls face in the educational sphere. Unskilled jobs for women are scarce in Botswana. While men have been able to take contracts on the South African mines or find work as laborers within Botswana, such employment is not considered suitable for women.[20] With fewer unskilled jobs available to women, education becomes a crucial asset in order to compete for the skilled work.

In Botswana girls form a slight majority of pupils in primary school and then are gradually overtaken by boys in secondary school, until by the time they reach university the girls are outnumbered two to one by the boys. Before analyzing the probable causes of this weakness in female educational achievement, we need first to establish the basic facts about girls' education.[21]

Success on national examinations determines who may continue on in school. Exams occur at three points: (1) after seven years of school at the end of Standard 7, students must pass an exam in order to go on to secondary school; (2) after three years ("Forms") of secondary school, students sit for the Junior Certificate exam which decides who may continue on in school; (3) two years later, at the end of secondary school, students take the Cambridge exam.

The Standard 1 class of 1976 was a typical class in terms of its male/female ratio. It was made up of 53 percent girls and 47 percent boys.[22] Throughout primary school, the proportional enrollment of boys and girls remains fairly constant. The situation only begins to shift when the pupils sit for their Standard 7 exam. Boys outperform girls slightly on the exam and thus increase their representation somewhat in the Form I class of secondary school. For the J.C. exam and again for the Cambridge exam, boys pass somewhat more frequently than girls, as the table below shows.

Table 5. Exam Results by Sex and Frequency of Pass (% passing)[23]

	Standard 7		Junior Certificate		Cambridge	
	boys	girls	boys	girls	boys	girls
1975	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	55%	53%
1974	73%	77%	N.A.	N.A.	51	40
1973	77	79	84%	80%	49	45
1972	76	76	80	69	63	56
1971	87	83	72	62	68	69
1970	89	85	72	60	69	64
AV.:	81%	80%	77%	68%	59%	55%

Source: Education Statistics: 1971/70 - 1976/75.

In summary, girls lose out in education during the most critical years of school: at the secondary level. A Junior Certificate meets some job requirements, while a Cambridge pass provides a variety of job opportunities today. The girls' relatively low achievement in school has implications for both the girls themselves as well as for the government. The main loss for the girls is probably the damage to their future employemnt opportunities. Women need jobs to maintain a minimal living standard for themselves and for their families. In my Kgatleng sample, I found that the women most likely to be working are single mothers: 49 percent of the single women who had children were currently working in contrast to 14 percent of the single women without children. (See Table 2.) The government has an interest in women's education, because it pays most of the costs of education and cannot afford to lose potentially talented manpower.

As Table 6 shows, not only do boys pass more frequently, they also pass in a higher division than the girls, giving the boys a better opportunity to continue in school.

Table 6. Junior Certificate Exam Results by Sex and Division of Pass[24]
(% in each division)

	1974		1975	
	Boys (N=216)	Girls (N=279)	Boys (N=209)	Girls (N=173)
First	14%	5%	13%	5%
Second	35	31	46	45
Third	30	26	31	38
Fail	23	38	10	12
	100%	100%	100%	100%

The shift in enrollment from Form III to IV accords with these exam results: from 51 percent female in Form III in 1975 that class dropped to 36 percent female in Form IV in 1976.[25] The Cambridge exam results follow a similar pattern, according to the limited figures available.

Table 7. Molefi Secondary School: Cambridge Exam Results 1976 and 1977 (combined) (% in each division)[26]

	boys (N=88)	girls (N=76)
First	7%	4%
Second	26	16
Third	40	33
Fourth	27	47
	100%	100%

A cumulative result of this deterioration in girls' exam achievements is that twice as many boys as girls gain admission to university. In 1976 only 32 percent of the Batswana students at the University of Botswana and Swaziland were female.[27] A further result of this progression is that the middle- and top-ranking people in both the public and private sectors continue to be men, a factor which may reinforce the belief in girls (and boys too) that women may not aspire to higher education and to positions of authority and public responsibility. Aside from their poor exam results, there is another reason for the dramatic decline in the proportion of girls' in secondary school: "wastage" or the drop-out of girls from school. As noted in the Report of the National Commision on Education, girls suffer from a higher withdrawal rate than boys - 5 percent higher for the years 1972-1974.[28] My interviews with students, teachers, and school administrators indicate that a major cause of this difference in the male/female withdrawal rates is pregnancy.

If girls do not perform as well as boys in secondary school, what is the reason? In order to investigate this question, I carried out a questionnaire survey of secondary school students. I also discussed the issue of girls' achievement with a number of teachers and school administrators. The survey was carried out at Molefi and Linchwe II schools, the first a government school and the second one private. These schools draw the majority of their students from Kgatleng District.

The student sample consisted of 177 students, 105 female and 72 male. Following a pre-test of one Form I stream at Linchwe (after which several small changes were made in the questionnaire format), the questionnaire was administered to one complete stream of Form I and one of Form III from each school, plus one stream of Form V from Molefi. (Linchwe does not have a Form V.) The questionnaire was in Setswana to make it easier and quicker for the lower form students to understand; the one or two non-Setswana speaking students were excused. It took about sixty minutes for the students to answer all the questions.

The questionnaire consisted almost entirely of short answer questions: either fill-in-the -blank or check-offs. The first questions in the survey gathered information on the educational and economic background of the students' families. The heart of the survey covered various aspects of the students' expectations in regards to jobs, education and children. Questions were asked about the education and jobs the students expected to get, the ease with which they would find jobs, when they would have children and how many they wanted and what sex they preferred and who would support the children. I also asked the students to rate men's capabilities in comparison with women's

in terms of general intelligence and specific jobs. Finally, the students wrote a paragraph-long essay on what they each imagined they would be doing in five years' time.[29]

The major finding of the survey was that there is a marked difference in the aspirations of girls and boys in secondary school. Male and female students differ in their educatonal and career aspirations as well as in their self-image as future parents. These differences help explain the lower educational achievements of girls.

Secondary school girls aspire to the careers traditional to women: teacher and nurse were most frequently mentioned, followed by other jobs in social service, such as Family Welfare Educator and Community Development Officer. Neither teaching nor nursing require a Cambridge School Certificate or a university degree, thus reducing girls' incentives to continue their education past J. C. Of the boys who want to be teachers, 66 percent aspired to becoming graduate teachers with university diplomas; however, only 35 percent of the girls had similar aspirations.

Girls who received an "A" on their Primary School Leaving Exam, whom we might expect to be more achievement-oriented, had the same job aspirations as girls with lower passes. Furthermore, the high-scoring girls were not as likely as their male counterparts to seek a university education. For example, a girl who wanted to be a teacher only desired a secondary education plus Teacher Training College; while the five boys who wished to become soldiers also wrote they wanted to go to university first - as one put it, in order "to become a leader." Boys also tended to have a wider range of career goals than girls - doctor, engineer, agricultural demonstrator, journalist, mechanic, teacher, lawyer and others.

When asked above specific vocations, both girls and boys saw certain jobs as generally appropriate for only one sex - either the other sex could not do them or they could not do them as well. Jobs requiring political authority (tribal chief and national president) were deemed largely outside of women's capabilities in line with traditional Tswana views. The majority of boys and girls also considered women incapable of driving a tractor, of being a pumper, or of building a brick house. Students agreed that there are fewer jobs available for women - not surprising in view of the students' (and the wider population's) sex-stereotyping of jobs. Many of the jobs available are in mining and construction. Among the female students, these sex-stereotyped views were held more frequently by Form I than by III and more by this Form than by Form V. (Such a progression is less clearly indicated among the boys.) In other areas as well, the more educated girls held more egalitarian views. For example, girls in the higher forms were less likely to agree that wives should always obey their husbands or that boys are more intelligent.

Women's horizons are narrowed not only by their views on jobs and education but also by their views of themselves as mothers. In answer to the question as to how they envision themselves as adults - mother/father, job holder, farmer, a combination of these or something else - three-quarters of the girls picked "mother," while only 43 percent of the boys chose "father" as one of their answers. The same pattern emerged in the analysis of the essays on what students imagined they would be doing in five years. Boys were likely to write that they would not want children within five years, while girls not only mentioned having children but often would also write further about how they would manage to care for the child and provide for food, clothing and

school fees. Certainly there is nothing wrong with the girls' desire to be mothers. The drawback in these students' attitudes does not lie here. Rather, it is the exclusive emphasis many girls put on being mothers. These girls were limiting themselves to one role when they could also be good school principals or teachers or civil servants. It may be, however, that these students were simply acknowledging the greater burden women take on when they both raise a family and work at a paid job. In the survey, many of the female students recognized that they alone might have to feed, clothe and send their children to school. When asked who would provide financial support for their children, fifty percent of the girls answered that they alone would be financially responsible for their children's welfare.

In summary, boys outperform girls in school, especially at the secondary level. In both academic and career motivation, boys have higher aspirations than girls. These aspirations appear to push the boys to do better on their exams. With more education, the boys are then better equipped to obtain the semi-skilled and skilled jobs that are available.

Recommendations and Final Comments

There is much that the government could do to assist women in their efforts to improve their lives. To counter the effects of migrant labor, of family breakdown and poverty, and of educational inequality, the government of Botswana would need to engage in a wide range of ambitious undertakings involving both internal and foreign policies and leading to some fundamental changes in Tswana society. Such undertakings are beyond the immediate scope of this paper, although the reader (and writer) should not ignore their importance. For the present, however, I shall only mention more limited and specific measures which could be adopted with regard to women.

The most important area of assistance is in income generation. The government could undertake a variety of programs which would benefit the economy and allow women to become more self-reliant and less dependent on migrants' remittances.

Toward these ends the government should establish an arable lands policy to assist small farmers. Existing agricultural programs focus on animal husbandry and offer the most aid to owners of large herds of cattle. Cattle development is of limited use to women, few of whom own more than two or three head of cattle. Inheritance patterns and the cash economy are so biased against women that they are unlikely to buy or inherit this most important source of personal wealth and production in Botswana.[30]

In order to assist female farmers, the government should not only push ahead with its proposed arable policy but focus more efforts specifically on women. It is lamentable that the Agricultural Officer/Women's Extension program has been given such a low priority by government. Agricultural Field Services should put greater emphasis on small stock extension, as small stock are owned by the great majority of households in the district, including the poorer households and female-headed households. Currently, in Kgatleng, it seems that few households used (or knew about?) the extension facilities available for small stock husbandry. A small stock program would particularly benefit women, as they have the responsibility for, and can presumably keep, the income accruing from small stock.

In areas other than agriculture, government ministries might also be able to help women. The problem of female employment and the obstacles to fuller employment should be given special consideration. With 30 percent of the households in eastern Botswana and 35 percent of those in Kgatleng headed by women and with so many unmarried mothers, the problem of female employment should not be brushed aside on the basis of some "trickle-down" theory that jobs for men mean automatically better lives for women.

Several things need to be done to help girls stay in school longer, to achieve better, and thus to qualify for more skilled jobs. Although this will assist only a minority of women who get their J.C. or their Cambridge, its importance extends beyond them, as the influence and example of financially independent and successful women can encourage further changes.

In the educational sphere, improved career counselling to advise and encourage girls would be an important help to girls. They need more than just a list of jobs and educational requirements for obtaining those jobs; these students need to be encouraged to seek more education and to consider a wider range of careers. Perhaps women who now hold a variety of middle- and high-level jobs could visit the schools and talk to the students, thus serving as model for them.

The secondary schools are losing capable female students who are forced to withdraw when they become pregnant. From figures on withdrawals over the last ten years, it is evident that the problem is not going away and a more positive or constructive approach to dealing with it is advisable. In order to encourage the girls to continue with their education and to facilitate their re-entry into school, the government should modify its present policy of expulsion and readmission for pregnant girls. Such a shift in policy orientation might be of greater significance than a change in policy on family planning education in the schools. Women with children can make as great a contribution to Botswana's educated manpower as any other group. In losing these students, the country loses in several ways: not only are the girls themselves hurt in their quest for a good education and a more secure future, but the country loses part of the educated manpower it is seeking to develop.

A change in the family planning policy would also seem warranted in order to encourage greater responsibility among the boys and the girls about sexual matters. In the secondary school survey, the students overwhelmingly favored inclusion of family planning in their education, giving as their reasons their desire to avoid pregnancy and the subsequent curtailment of education for pregnant girls. In open-ended essays on their future, students in large numbers mentioned their desire to delay having children until they had completed their education and had established themselves as adults. The students explained that they wanted to be able to raise their children properly - a responsible and praiseworthy approach. Such responsibility among the students should be encouraged by proper education about family planning.[32] Allowing a mature adult to foster the further development of such attitudes and to set out basic information about family planning would counter misinformation and any immature attitudes which can flourish if not directly and calmly dealt with.

To help women ease some of their financial problems and to encourage more general responsibility in sexual and family matters, women should be encouraged to fight for their legal rights, as single mothers with the right to child support and widows with the right to their husbands property. More

could be done by the women themselves, by women's organizations - and by the courts to inform women of their legal rights - for example with regard to marebana. Also, women's problems could perhaps be given more sympathetic public attention in the media, in women's groups and by concerned government departments. Women have been accused in the media of prostituting themselves in order to obtain money from child support.31

Women's organizations could be a powerful tool for the betterment of women's lives, not only through courses they teach and through charity work but also, and more importantly, as women's advocates more generally: making representations to government on various matters from employment to legal issues, and publicizing women's problems and helping women come together to overcome these problems.

Other programs occur to me as of this writing; but the purpose of this paper has not lain in developing such ideas, though I have mentioned a few. Instead, the purpose was to raise the issue of women's involvement in social and economic development in Kgatleng and the country at large and to focus attention on the problems women face in trying to build a better life for themselves and their families.

APPENDIX

Below are some additional results from parts of the student questionnaire which did not deal exclusively with male-female differences but which may be of interest.

Six questions in the survey dealt with students' expectations of success in continuing their education and getting a good job. Although many students aspire to a university education, they are surprisingly realistic about the likelihood of admission. In their essays on what they will be doing in five years, one finds comments such as, "if I pass, I will do..., otherwise I will..." or "I will probably be working already." This finding differs from Torsten Husen's conclusion in the survey conducted for the National Commission on Education. Husen believes there is "considerable imbalance" between students' expectations and their actual opportunities.[33] Husen's findings are based on two short-answer questions in a survey of students, while my findings derive from student answers to five short-answer questions and one essay, where students described how their life would be in five years: what they would be doing and whether they would like doing these things.

Other findings from the survey are as follows:

1. Who goes to school?

   a. Cattle Ownership: the survey found that cattle-owning households were overrepresented in the secondary school population.

	% households owning Cattle	
No. of cattle:	student sample	national sample (Rural Income Distribution Survey)
0	32%	45%
1-20	16	34
21-50	39	16
50+	13	5
	100%	100%

   b. Education of Parents: the survey found that the secondary student population had relatively more educated parents.

	% with some secondary education	
	student sample	national adult population*
father	22%	9%
mother	19	4

*The national figures come from the 1971 Population Census. It includes adults who were between 25 and 54 years old in 1971 and thus roughly in the right age span for having children in secondary school seven years later in 1978.

2. Sex of household head: the survey found that 28 percent of the students' families were headed by women as compared to approximately 30 percent of the national population.

3. Do you think a wife should always obey her husband?

   answering yes: girls 53% boys 69%

4. Will you alone be financially responsible for your children?

   answering yes: girls 50% boys 67%

5. Do you want family planning taught in your school?

   answering yes: girls 79% boys 71%

6. How many children do you want?

   girls: 4.1 boys: 4.8

7. Do you want more girls or more boys, or doesn't it matter?

girls desiring more female children:	22%
more male children:	6
it doesn't matter:	72
	100%

boys desiring more female children:	13%
more male children:	19
it doesn't matter:	68
	100%

FOOTNOTES

[1]I would like to thank David's and my interpreters/assistants Mss. Segakweng Monowe, Malefsane Raiye and Joyce Molefi and thank the Seketemme family for their hospitality in sharing their home with David and me.

[2]Achola Pala and Ann Seidman, "A Proposed Model on the Status of Women in Africa," paper presented at the 1976 Conference on Women and Development, Wellesley College.

[3]See Barbara Brown, "South Africa's Expansion into Africa, 1652-1964," African Studies Paper, Boston University, 1980 and David Massey, "The Hut Tax and Migrant Labor in Botswana," Botswana Notes and Records, X, n.d., (1980?).

[4]Carmen Diana Deere, "Rural Women's Subsistence Production in the Capitalist Periphery," Review of Radical Political Economics, VIII, 1, spring 1976.

[5]Report on the Population Census 1971, (Gaborone, 1972), 113.

[6]There was a marked difference in employment location for both sexes between the border village of Ramonaka on the one hand and Mochudi and Leshibitse, in northern Kgatleng, on the other. People in the border village tend more to go to South Africa for employment.

[7]See Robert E.B. Lucas, "The Distribution of Wages and Employment in Botswana," (Mimeo), (Boston University, 1979).

[8]Rural Income Distribution Survey 1974-1975, (Gaborone, 1976), 101. "RIDS" was a national random sample survey of 1200 households. All forms of income, monetary and in-kind, were included in the calculations.

[9]Workers tend to be sons and daughters still living in their parents' homes and not the heads of household themselves.

[10]Several sociologists in southern Africa have noted the high incidence of mental illness among women and have found spicific links to migrant labor. Harriet Sibisi in particular has written of the destructive spirits arising from migrant labor: "Zulu Women in a Migrant Labor Situation in Southern Africa," in Women and National Development, (Wellesley Editorial Committee), (Chicago, 1978).

[11]C.A. Bond, Women's Involvement in Agriculture in Botswana, (Gaborone, 1974), 9. Bond found 8 percent of her sample of 204 household heads were single women. In another larger survey of eastern Botswana, 30 percent of the sample were female-headed households, although this figure was not broken down between widows and single women: A Study of Constraints on Agricultural Development in the Republic of Botswana, (Rome, 1974). See also other publications which include this data from the Ministry of Agriculture and the United Nations Development Program in Botswana: in these samples of eastern Botswana, the percentage of female-headed households ranges from 18 percent to 33 percent. Carol Kerven, author of Rural and Urban Female-Headed Households' Dependence on Agriculture, (Gaborone, 1979), vi, states that women head at least one-third of the households nationally.

[12]See Table 11 in the 1971 Census.

[13]It may be that households of single women and widows should not be lumped together as "female-headed households" due to some differences in composition, economic activities, and social and economic problems.

[14]Bond, op. cit.

[15]Lucy Syson's data from female clinic attenders corresponds with my findings in Kgatleng: "Unmarried Mothers: A Report of Clinic and Hospital Patients in Selected Centres in Southern Botswana," (Gaborone, 1972), Technical Note No. 1, 30. This report appears in abridged form in Botswana Notes and Records, V, 1973.

[16]J. Kreysler, "Some Aspects of Women, Health and Nutrition, with Special Reference to Kgatleng District and Serowe Village," (Gaborone, 1978).

[17]These figures agree with an earlier study of one of the country's five health regions. J. Kreysler, C. Mokwena and L. Osile, "Evaluation of Weight Chart Surveillance of the Gaborone Health Region" (Gaborone, Occasional Paper, No. 1, 1977).

[18]Thus, I do not share the enthusiasm of Comaroff and Roberts about the recent improvements in regulations concerning the bringing of marebana cases to court. Improvements, yes, but ones which have still to help women significantly. John Comaroff and Simon Roberts, "Marriage and Extra-Marital Sexuality: The Dialectics of Legal Change Akmong the Kgatla," Journal of African Law, No. 1, 1977.

[19]The Kgatla law on grounds for divorce gives some traditional impetus to male irresponsibility as well as illustrate women's subordinate status: a man may divorce his wife for adultery, while a woman only has grounds if the man engages in persistent adultery and at the same time does not have normal sexual relations with his wife. Simon Roberts, A Restatement of the Kgatla Law of Domestic Relations, (Gaborone, n.d.)

[20]Practically any able-bodied man could find work on the South African mines until 1977. Since then, demand for foreign labor has diminished considerably, making it more difficult for men to find employment in South Africa. See David Massey, "The Changing Political Economy Migrant Labor in Botswana," South African Labour Bulletin, V, 5, 1980.

[21]I would like to thank the following people for their assistance: the staff of the Education Statistics Unit of the Central Statictics Office for providing some of the figures in this article; the staff of Molefi and Linchwe II Secondary Schools for facilitating the administration of the student survey; and Mss. Segakweng Monowe and Malefsane Raiye for their translation work and for the their overall assistance in helping to carry out the survey.

[22]Education Statistics: 1976 Schools and 1975 Examinations, (Gaborone, 1976).

[23]It is a pity that the Ministry of Education no longer collects and publishes a comprehensive breakdown of exam results by sex. Without such figures, the problem of girls' achievement may be overlooked and ignored.

[24]Recent figures on exam results by sex exist only for a random group of schools and only for 1974 and 1975 exams. These (unpublished) figures,

however, have the advantage of being broken down by both sex and division of pass, something which does not exist for the earlier published figures. The schools represented are for 1974 - Gaborone Secondary School, Molefi, Linchwe II and Mahalapye - and for 1975 - Gaborone Secondary, Shashi, and Mater Spei. Even in this limited sample, however, the same trend occurs as with the earlier, less detailed, national sample.

[25]Calculated from figures in Education Statistics: 1975-1974 and 1976-1975.

[26]Figures for Molefi were provided to the author by the Education Statistics Unit of the Central Statistics Office.

[27]Education Statistics: 1976-1975.

[28]Education for Kagisano: Report of the National Commission on Education, (Gaborone, 1977), I, 104.

[29]See the attached appendix for results from the questionnaire which did not deal exclusively with male-female educational differences but which are of general interest.

[30]Among the Bakgatla, cattle are generally passed from a father to his sons with a preference to the oldest. A few may be allocated to daughters prior to the father's death (go tswaisa). S. Roberts, A Restatement of the Kgatla Law of Succession to Property, (Gaborone, n.d.).

[31]See for example, the Botswana Daily News of July 4, 1978 and February 15, 1979. In the 1978 article, the then leader of the Opposition in Parliament, Philip Matante, stated that "Girls nowadays misuse the law to make more money to make their lives comfortable."

[32]In addition, the government should exercise more control over the contraceptives used in family planning. The use of Depo Provera is increasing rapidly in Botswana which is cause for concern. The drug, banned for use as a contraceptive in the U.S., Britain and some other countries, is still under clinical trial. Preliminary studies indicate serious side effects, in particular, cancer. See Barbara Brown, "Some Aspects of Women and Health," Women's Role in Development in Botswana, (Gaborone, 1980).

[33]Education for Kagisano, op. cit., II, 1-18 and 1-79.