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MIGRATION, LABOUR FORCE ABSORPTION AND MOBILITY: WOMEN IN KINGSTON, JAMAICA

by

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Table of Contents

PREFACE

This paper is part of a study of labour force participation in the context of urbanisation in Jamaica. The focus of the general study is the sexual division of labour and in that context several previous papers have considered the high non-agricultural participation rates of women in an historical perspective, the factors behind the changing sexual division of labour in industrial employment, the micro-behavioural determinants of female labour supply, and the absorption of migrants to Kingston in the context of chronically high urban unemployment. The present paper contains evidence relating to the latter set of issues, examining the experience of migrant women and the process of labour market segmentation and labour force stratification. The focus is on women in Kingston, comparing migrant and non-migrant women as defined in the text, but it is hoped that the evidence tentatively presented will be a useful addition to the material on the process of labour absorption of migrants in urban labour markets generally.

With the usual caveat, I am grateful to Jacques Gaude, Peter Peek, René Wéry and Richard Anker for their useful comments.

Introduction

In many low-income countries the migration of women from rural to urban areas has been greater than that of men, most notably in Latin American and Caribbean economies.[1] The high rates of rural emigration can be attributed to the marginalisation of women in agriculture as land consolidation, mechanisation and the growth of wage employment have reduced women's productive role and left them increasingly dependent on men's insecure income. Moreover, population growth in conditions of strictly limited access to cultivable land has contributed to land fragmentation and thus to stagnant incomes. This general pattern of stagnant or declining rural living standards, common to many economies in which capitalist growth is occurring, has not only meant that young single women, in particular, earn pitifully little but have been, in the process, conditioned to expect low incomes. As such, they have either become dependent on men's income or left the rural area altogether. And since the great majority of men have also been affected by a lack of income-earning opportunities, the latter option has been commonly taken despite the lack of any substantial growth of urban-industrial employment.

In those circumstances, do these rural women become an identifiable and highly marginalised segment of the labour reserve in urban areas, with low rates of labour force participation and high rates of unemployment? Or do they enter the urban labour force and, in taking a wide cross-section of jobs, become indistinguishable from urban workers? Whatever the pattern of absorption, it has implications for subsequent levels of migration, the growth of urban unemployment, and urban income distribution. Thus clearly, to the extent that migrants entered the labour force and took jobs that would otherwise be taken by urban workers, the greater their impact on urban unemployment and the less likely that urban unemployment would deter migration.

If migrants to urban areas joined the end of a queue for urban-industrial jobs, as assumed by many neo-classical analyses of migration, then rising urban unemployment would unequivocably deter migration, as the queue for jobs grew longer. If, however, this queuing assumption was invalid, so that migrants did not generally enter the end of such a queue, then high and rising urban unemployment would have a much weaker deterrent effect on migration. Similarly, if migrants entered the labour force, secured employment and were upwardly mobile in terms of income, skills and status, migration would be more encouraged than if migrants entered the bottom strata of the labour market and remained in low-income, unskilled jobs. Correspondingly, the impact of migration on urban unemployment and income distribution would depend in part on the pattern of absorption of migrant workers. It is for such reasons that it is invalid to divorce the analysis of migration from the process of

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[1] For a brief review of studies showing this, see G. Standing: *Labour Force Participation and Development* (Geneva, ILO, 1978), pp. 207-211. Hereafter, Standing, 1978 (a).

labour force stratification and labour market segmentation in urban areas.[1]

Just as all labour forces are stratified to varying degrees and in many ways, in the sense that there is a hierarchy in which various groups of workers on average systematically earn more or less than others, so the labour market is segmented in the sense that certain clusters of jobs provide more or less opportunity for increasing levels of skill, responsibility and earnings than others. Neither the degree of segmentation nor the extent of stratification is fixed or immutable - nor should they be treated as somehow exogenously determined outside the labour process. But clearly a wide range of jobs provide little or no scope for 'upward' mobility. They are 'static' jobs and, as such, those workers entering them have little or no opportunity to move 'up' in terms of skill or income. Some workers who take such jobs may end up doing a more highly skilled job paying a higher income, but that would not be the result of having worked in the original job. Rather it would be related to exogenous characteristics of the workers, such as education, age, or sex, or other equally exogenous phenomena. And indeed there are sound reasons for assuming that a wide range of 'unskilled' and 'semi-skilled' jobs place a restraint on subsequent job and income mobility by curtailing certain traits and accentuating others inimical to skill acquisition and application. In short, a highly segmented labour market is characterised by a general lack of job-income mobility and a high proportion of static jobs (those not conducive to upward mobility *per se*).

Corresponding to a segmented labour market there is a social division of labour, involving a stratified labour force, by which certain groups are restricted to certain types of job. Thus typically stratification takes place along the lines of identifiable characteristics of workers, such as race, sex, age, education, and socio-economic background. It is this latter aspect with which this paper is concerned, in so far as migrants are a potentially identifiable group of workers.

The Labour Force Absorption of Female Migrants

As shown in many studies in Latin America and Caribbean countries in particular, a large proportion of the women who have migrated to the cities have done so for economic reasons, to acquire employment or earn higher incomes, and as such there is a *prima facie* case for expecting migrant women to have a high labour force participation rate in urban areas. This has been brought out in empirical studies which have

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[1] Of course, the pattern of absorption and the job-income mobility profile of migrants have direct implications for the most popular economic approach to migration, the essentially neo-classical 'expected income' model formalised by Todaro and others. Clearly, unless the expected mobility is known it is rather difficult to compute the potential migrants' expected income over any length of time. This is one of many problems with the neo-classical model, though the main one in many analysts' view is the practice of attempting to explain migration by reference to individual rationality. See, *inter alia*, J. Harris and M.P. Todaro: Migration, unemployment and development: A Two-sector analysis, *American Economic Review*, Vol. 60, No.1, March 1970, pp. 125-42. For a very sympathetic review of studies in this tradition, see M.P. Todaro: *Internal Migration in Developing Countries* (Geneva, ILO, 1976).

shown that migrants have a relatively high participation rate compared with other women in urban areas.[1] As such, migrants have not been marginalised in the sense of becoming a largely inactive ('latent') component of the labour reserve. The main reasons for this are that migrants have a relatively great need for income, having fewer relatives or friends on whom to rely for financial assistance, and that on account of their rural background they have low aspirations and expected incomes, which induce a corresponding willingness to take low-income jobs. That also could be expected to give migrants a relatively high probability of employment. In that case migrants would not be systematically pushed to the end of the queue for jobs, and as such would not have a relatively high unemployment rate. However, to the extent that there is a segmented labour market consisting mainly of static jobs, the tendency for migrants to enter low-income jobs means that they would be likely to occupy such low-income strata on a continuing basis.

If this was the pattern of labour absorption it would suggest that while migration would lead to a higher unemployment rate among urban workers, the level of unemployment among migrants would be less than implied by the over-all rate.[2] Obviously it would also mean that the income level migrants could expect to reach would be less than implied by the assumption that migrants enter the labour market and become indistinguishable from other workers, with similar upward paths of occupational and income mobility.

The following analysis considers a specific scenario of labour absorption, drawing on data from a survey of women in Kingston, Jamaica, conducted in 1974. It is not claimed that the pattern of absorption suggested by the data is the same as would be found elsewhere, but it seems likely that similar patterns would be found in many countries.

Migrant Women in Kingston

Migration into the capital city of Jamaica, the Kingston-St.Andrew Metropolitan area, has long been substantial and has been the principal factor in the rapid growth of the city.[3] This is so despite recorded rates of urban unemployment in excess of 20 per cent.[4] The majority of the migrants have been women, and they have

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[1] Standing, 1978(a), op.cit., pp. 211-18.

[2] This is borne out by studies in many countries, which have shown migrants with lower unemployment rates than other urban workers. See, e.g., B.H. Herrick, *Urban Migration and Economic Development in Chile* (Massachusetts, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1965); J. Nelson, *Migrants, Urban Poverty and Instability in Developing Nations* (Harvard University Centre for International Affairs, Occasional Paper No. 22).

[3] L. Hewitt, "Internal Migration and Urban Growth" in G.W. Roberts (ed.), *Recent Population Movements in Jamaica* (CICRED, 1974); K. Tekse, *Internal Migration in Jamaica* (Kingston, Department of Statistics, 1967). Actually, it is the population of the St. Andrew part of the city which has expanded, but for convenience the city will be called Kingston, as usual.

[4] G. Standing, "Aspiration Wages, Migration and Urban Unemployment", *Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 114, No. 2, Jan. 1978, pp. 232-248. Hereafter Standing, 1978 (b).

usually been young and gone to the city by themselves. As such they have been dependent on their own income-earning for subsistence, and this has usually remained so even after they have had children, as about three out of four children in Jamaica have been borne to "unmarried women".[1] During the twentieth century, developments in the plantation-dominated rural economy gradually eased women out of agricultural livelihoods, and migration to the urban areas was clearly an attempt by young women to acquire sufficient income to survive. One consequence was that the ratio of women to men in urban Jamaica has long been conspicuously higher than in rural areas, and despite a lower participation rate than men, women have comprised nearly half the urban labour force.[2]

In October 1974 a stratified-random sample survey of 540 women was conducted in the city, gathering data on their household and personal characteristics and labour market experience. Several questions on migration were included. First, the women were asked about their migrant status, being classified as migrants if they had been living outside the Kingston-St. Andrew area at the time they left school (or at the age of 15 if they left shcool before then). The migrants so identified were asked for the main reason for their move to Kingston, and as shown in Table I it was clear that they had done so mainly for economic reasons. In addition, many of those who gave a non-labour market reason as the main one, gave an "economic" motive as a second reason. This pattern accords with expectations and with most studies of urban migration elsewhere.[3]

Table 1

Main Reasons for Migration to Kingston Among Women (proportions of total)

"Economic" Reasons	
To seek employment	51.0%
To take job known to be available	5.1
Other Reasons	
To stay with 'relatives or friend'	25.7
General appeal of city life	7.8
To study	5.1
Education for children	1.6
Other	3.9

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1 These issues are discussed elsewhere. G. Standing, "Labour Force Participation in Historical Perspective: Proletarianisation in Jamaica", *Population and Employment Working Paper No. 50* (Geneva, ILO, 1977).

2 Ibid.

3 L.Y.L. Yap, "The Attraction of Cities: A Review of the Migration Literature", *Journal of Development Economics*, Vol. 4, 1977, pp. 239-264. Of course, such responses cannot be interpreted as reasons for having left the rural area, nor should reasons be interpreted as causes.

Having arrived in Kingston most migrants who entered the labour force who found employment did so within six months and nearly half did so within a month (Table II).[1]

Table II

Time Taken to Find Employment

(Proportions of those who found work)

One month or less	43.9%
Two to six months	25.4
Seven to twelve months	16.5
More than a year	14.3

That was so despite the chronically high rate of urban unemployment and is consistent with the hypotheses and evidence presented in an earlier paper in which it was argued that migrants would have a relatively high probability of employment because of their low aspiration wages and resignation to a higher effort bargain for any wage.[2] Admittedly, the evidence presented in Table II has to be interpreted cautiously because of possible selectivity bias. It is likely that those who had been unsuccessful in their search for employment would have been relatively likely to have left the urban areas. Unfortunately, little evidence on the pattern of return-migration has been gathered in past studies, so it is not possible to gauge the likely extent on this bias. Two points suggest that in the case of the migration of women to Kingston the bias is likely to be small. First, the very substantial net flow of migrant women is such as to suggest that few women returned to live in the rural areas. Second, to the extent that the migrant women did not have any prospect of earning an income in the rural area their failure to obtain an urban job quickly would be unlikely to encourage them to leave.[3]

The type of work initially obtained by migrants was predominantly of the type associated with low-incomes - so-called "unskilled" and "semi-skilled" jobs. Traditionally, the main form of employment taken by migrant women has been as domestic servants, and this was evident in the first jobs listed. No less than 48 per cent of all migrants had started work in the urban area as a domestic servant.

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[1] Almost all the migrants who had entered the labour force had found employment, the exception being some of the most recent migrants.

[2] Standing, 1978(b), op. cit. In a study based on 1960 Census data, it was found that migrants had a lower unemployment rate than non-migrants. Tekse, 1967, op. cit.

[3] There is also the possibility that those most likely to return moved to the city to earn an income for a specific purpose, and their inability to do so quickly would tend to prolong rather than reduce their stay.

Some observers of female migration have argued that migrant women having taken up domestic-type jobs are able to move up in the urban labour market.[1] However, as this form of work generally provides no training or opportunities to acquire other skills, there must be a presumption that the job as such had no impact on the migrants' potential mobility, even though it was clear that domestic service afforded a convenient means of assimilation into the urban labour market.

Compared with the non-migrant women, the migrants tended to be less educated (Table III) and a greater proportion of them had started their working life in "unskilled" jobs (domestics or general labourers). But the basic questions are whether or not migrants had a lower probability of obtaining jobs than other

Table III

Years of Schooling by Migrant Status,
Women aged 26-35
(proportion of total)

Years of Schooling	Non-migrants	Migrants
less than 8	5.1	17.8
8	45.8	54.8
9-11	35.6	21.9
12 +	13.6	5.5

Note: The $\chi^2 = 9.402$ with 3 degress of freedom. Thus the null hypothesis that there was no difference in the educational attainment of migrants and non-migrants can be rejected at the 2 per cent level. Similar results were obtained with other age groups.

workers because they were migrants and whether or not their probability of obtaining semi-skilled or skilled jobs was lower than that or urban women.

Migration and Labour Force Status

Using the same data, an earlier analysis of labour force participation suggested that, controlling for the influence of other factors, notably education and related qualifications, marital status, and the demand for childcare time, migrant women had a relatively high probability of being in the labour force and were prepared to spend a greater amount of time in labour force activity.[2] And as noted earlier, studies in other countries have also suggested that the participation rate

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[1] M.L. Smith, "Domestic Service as a Channel of Upward Mobility for the Lower-Class Woman: The Lima Case", in A. Pescatello (ed.), *Female and Male in Latin America* (Pittsburg, University of Pittsburg Press, 1973).

[2] G. Standing, "Female Labour Supply in an Urbanising Economy", in G. Standing and G. Sheehan (eds.), *Labour Force Participation in Low-Income Countries* (Geneva, ILO, 1978), pp. 87-122. Hereafter Standing, 1978(c).

of migrants tends to be relatively high. Since we are concerned with the process of absorption of migrant workers the present analysis will concentrate on two further questions - the probability of being in employment as opposed to either being unemployed or outside the labour force, and the probability of being in semi-skilled or skilled employment as opposed to unskilled work. In later sections incomes and career mobility will be examined to determine whether they were related to migrant status.

In all cases, it is to be expected that an important determinant is education. But for reasons outlined in the Appendix some such proxy as "years of schooling" is unlikely to be satisfactory in a society characterised by low attendance rates. Moreover a given number of years of schooling was likely to have a greater impact on the probability of employment and relative income in the past than when the average level of schooling had risen. And the positive correlation between schooling, exam success and post-school training may well be very weak. Accordingly, to capture the impact of these various qualifications, a weighted index (PERSHLTH) was created, taking account of years of schooling, literacy, examination success, health, training, and type of training, adjusted to allow for a "vintage effect" in the case of schooling.[1] This, of course is not ideal but it does have the merit of trying to overcome some of the deficiencies of a simple "years of schooling" measure. In addition, several interaction variables were computed to test whether there was any differential effect of rural and urban education, the suggestion sometimes being that migrants are placed at a disadvantage by virtue of rural schooling being worse than urban schooling.[2] Two such variables were considered, one which was merely an interaction of the general qualifications index with migrant status (PERSMIG) the second restricting the interaction factor to years of schooling (EDMIG).

To control for the independent effect of age a continuous variable and a set of dummies were computed. In an urbanising labour market such as Kingston, the prevalence of youthful workers tends to raise the relative employment prospects of older and, by assumption, more experienced workers; but beyond a certain age, such prospects would tend to decline because of the widespread assumption that older workers are relatively inefficient.[3] Also considered was an interaction term for age and migrant status, and a quadratic term for inclusion when the continuous age variable was used to allow for the expected non-linearity.

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[1] See the appendix for the details.

[2] P. Peek and P. Antolinez, "Migration and the Urban Labour Market: The Case of San Salvador", *World Development* Vol. 5, No. 4, April 1977, pp. 291-302.

[3] For a more detailed discussion of this relationship between age and relative probabilities of employment for the justification of the age categories selected for the computation of the age dummies used, see Standing, 1978(c), op. cit. In 1974, during the course of interviews conducted in manufacturing establishments in Kingston, one owner of a large cigar-making firm commented, "In general, young girls 17 to 25 are irresponsible, between 25 and 35 they do reasonably good work, between 35 and 50 they are dependable, and after 50 they experience some loss of energy, although they are still dependable". Although that was only one employer it seemed a fairly typical sentiment. Whether or not it was accurate is not the point. In itself, the language is revealing.

Finally, several variables were computed for migrant status. First, a straightforward distinction was drawn between migrants (those who had come to the city since leaving school or after reaching the age of 16) and non-migrants. Second, to allow for assimilation separate binary variables were created to distinguish short-term (MIG1) and medium-term (MIG2) migrants from the remainder, the dividing line being based on the hypothesis that recent migrants would be most likely to exhibit behavioural and expectional differences from non-migrants; after some time in the urban area they could be expected to adapt to urban norms and practices. Finally, an interaction term between age and migrant status was considered (MIGAGE), to control for the possibility that older migrants might be more likely to find employment than young, typically teenage migrants.

Thus the full list of independent variables considered were as follows:

PERSHLTH	=	index of qualifications
AGE	=	age in years
AGE^2	=	age squared
A	=	dummy variable; 1 if women less than 26 years old, 0 otherwise
G	=	dummy; 1 if women aged between 26 and 35, 0 otherwise.
E	=	dummy; 1 if women aged 46 to 55, 0 otherwise
D	=	dummy; 1 if women aged over 55, 0 otherwise
MIG1	=	dummy; 1 if woman had lived in Kingston for less than 2 years, 0 otherwise
MIG2	=	dummy; 1 if woman had lived in Kingston for between 2 and 5 years, 0 otherwise
MIGRANT	=	alternative dummy variable to MIG1, MIG2; 1 if woman was migrant, 0 otherwise
EDMIG, PERSMIG	=	interaction variables to allow for differential effects of rural and urban education: EDUC (years of schooling) x MIGRANT; PERSHLTH x MIGRANT, respectively.
MIGAGE	=	interaction variable to allow for differential effects of migration and age: AGE (in years) x MIGRANT

For the analysis of the probability of employment conditional on being in the labour force the most appropriate multivariate technique is the logit function, since the actual dependent variable is dichotomous.[1] Using this technique, the main results are summarised by the function presented in Table IV. In this case,

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[1] D.J. Finney, *Probit Analysis* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1971).

Table IV

Logit Function: Probability of Employment

Independent variables	Standardised coefficients	t-statistic
AGE	-0.0865	2.089**
AGE^2	-0.0011	-1.979**
PERSHLTH	0.1723	2.487**
MIG1	-0.1991	-0.638
MIG2	0.2171	0.840
PERSMIG	-0.1209	-1.146
Constant	-1.9119	-2.663**

Pseudo R^2 = 0.05

Likelihood ratio test = 18.08**

rather too little of the variance is explained to justify strong conclusions, but the primary importance of the qualifications index is clear, as is the non-linear relationship between age and probability of employment. The hypothesis that migrants would experience difficulty in securing employment because of qualitative differences between rural and urban schooling is not supported, although the sign of the coefficient of PERSMIG is negative.[1] It is apparent that migrants at least did not have worse prospects of employment than non-migrants. Moreover, the lack of any observed relationship could be interpreted as weak evidence of a positive relationship, simply because new migrants typically had gone to Kingston to search for work and necessarily took some time to find it and because, as found in the earlier study, migrants had a relatively high probability of being in the economically active labour force.

To continue to capture the picture of the process of labour absorption of migrant workers, the next question is whether or not migrants were disproportionately concentrated in low-income, unskilled jobs. The first task was to classify the jobs taken by women as unskilled (general labourers and domestics), semi-skilled (manual and low-level clerical workers), or skilled (white-collar, professional or technical workers, as conventionally defined). By this division a straightforward tabulation shows that migrants were relatively concentrated in unskilled occupations (Table V).

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[1] This is similar to the finding reported in the case of San Salvador. Peek and Antolinez, 1977, op. cit.

Table V

Type of Work by Migrant Status

Type of Work	Non-migrant	Migrant
Unskilled	43.2	65.3
Semi-skilled	19.2	19.8
Skilled	37.6	14.9

Note: The skilled group included certain manual jobs as well as "white collar" professional groups. $\chi^2 = 17.58$, which is statistically significant at the 1 per cent level, implying that the null hypothesis that there was no relationship between migrant status and type of employment can be rejected.

This concentration of course could have been due to differences in age or qualifications. So separate logit functions were tested, the interpretation of the functions being in terms of the probability of being in any specific job category conditional on being employed. The "best fit" result is presented in Table VI, and as expected, the qualifications index was again the single most significant variable. The function also strongly implied that migrants were relatively unlikely to have moved into skilled jobs, and that this was as true for long-term as for recent migrants. Thus the lack of any visible mobility of migrants suggests that the process of labour force stratification leaves migrants persistently in lower-income jobs.

Table VI

Probability of Employment in Skilled Jobs

Independent variable	Coefficient	t-ratio
A	1.7616	3.9653***
G	-0.0551	-0.1978
E	-0.9000	-2.0828**
D	-0.8543	-1.4993*
MIG1	-4.1789	-2.4412***
MIG2	-3.3005	-2.1699**
MIGAGE	0.0278	1.4482*
PERSHLTH	0.7066	7.3295***
EDMIG	0.2513	1.6178*
Constant	-2.2551	-6.5059***
Pseudo R^2	0.39	
Likelihood ratio	120.03***	

Migrants and Urban Income Levels

This is further supported by an examination of the relative incomes of migrant and non-migrant workers. Thus migrants in paid employment were far more likely to be earning relatively low weekly or hourly earnings, as suggested in Tables VII and VIII. Again the differences are striking, and again could be due to differences in education, training, age and past experience.

Table VII

Weekly Income by Migrant Status
(proportions of total)

Income	Non-migrants	Migrants
$15 or less	17.4	42.7
$16 - $30	40.7	41.5
More than $30	41.9	15.9

Note: X^2 = 19.5 with 2 d.f; significance = 0.0006. Therefore the null hypothesis that there is no relationship is rejected at the 1 per cent level.

Table VIII

Hourly Income by Migrant Status
(proportions of total)

Wage	Non-migrants	Migrants
50 cents or less	38.4	57.3
51 cents - $1	45.3	29.3
More than $1	16.3	13.4

Note: X^2 = 6.3 with 2 d.f; significance = 0.043. Therefore the null hypothesis that there is no relationship is rejected at the 5 per cent level of probability.

Accordingly several multivariate functions were tested, with various combinations of independent variables and using either weekly income or the hourly rate as dependent variables. As additional variables had little impact on the function a basic weekly income function is given in Table IX. The function was estimated in logarithmic form, so that the coefficients give the percentage change in income associated with a unit increase in the respective independent variable. Included in the function was a measure of the number of hours worked per week (H^n) which, as a control variable, had the expected positive effect on total income. The value of the R^2, adjusted for degrees of freedom, indicated that the function explained a large part of the variance and compared favourably with most empirical

earnings functions.[1] Again, as expected the qualifications index was of primary importance.[2] However, even controlling for differences in age and qualifications migrant workers were earning significantly less than non-migrants. And this was apparently the case for longer-term migrants as well as for those who had arrived only recently, for when the migrant status variable was replaced by the short-term and longer-term migrant dummy variables the negative longer-term migrant coefficient was actually larger than that of the short-term migrant variable.[3]

Table IX

Income Function (log.)

Independent Variable	Coefficient	Standardised (β) Coefficient
log PERSHLTH	0.4160***	0.4922
MIGRANT	-0.0742**	-0.1245
log H^n	0.5096***	0.3424
A	0.0424	0.0423
G	-0.0106	-0.0175
E	-0.0406	-0.0457
D	0.0533	0.0309
Constant	0.4743	

$\bar{R}^2$ = 0.40; F = 16.54***; Mean income: $28.2.

The functions estimated for hourly incomes gave similar results though the hourly rate was inversely related to the number of hours worked, merely confirming the common observation that those in low-level manual jobs tend to work long hours for low incomes. The standardised coefficient for migrant status was -0.13, implying that controlling for the other influences, migrants on average received a wage 13 per cent less than that received by urban workers.

This lack of improvement in incomes and the persistently low incomes received by migrants even after they had been in the urban labour force for some years are highlighted by Table X, which suggests longer-term migrants were actually more concentrated in low-income jobs.

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[1] For one of the most detailed empirical studies, and for a review of some individualistic earnings functions, see P. Taubman: *Sources of Inequality in Earnings* (Amsterdam, North Holland, 1975).

[2] The coefficient for PERSHLTH does not necessarily mean any particular relationship between education and productivity, since it would be consistent with the screening hypotheses as well.

[3] Since the distinction did not indicate any income difference by length of stay the results of that function are not presented.

Table X

Incomes by Migrant Status and Length of Stay
(proportions having various levels of weekly income)

Income ($)	Migrants		Non-migrants
	Short-term	Longer-term	
Less than 15	33.3	44.3	17.4
16-30	41.7	41.4	40.7
31+	25.0	14.3	41.9

Note: "Short-term" consisted of those who had been in Kingston for less than five years, "longer-term" for five years or more.

The interpretation of such findings is unclear. If migrants earn relatively low incomes and this is somehow associated with their status as migrants, and if they continue to earn low-incomes even after they have been in the urban labour market for some time, what are the reasons and main implications? As far as the reasons are concerned, several closely related aspects can be suggested as providing the core to an understanding of the process of labour absorption in an industrialising labour market.

In a period of rapid industrialisation, employers endeavour to create a "committed" wage-labour force of workers prepared to work hard, for long work-weeks, regularly and efficiently, with low rates of absenteeism and labour turnover. Rural migrants have often proved to be relatively easily converted into such a manageable urban proletariat. Partly because of their rural background and partly because they have fewer sources of financial assistance in urban areas than their urban counterparts, they tend to have lower income and job expectations and to be resigned to provide a greater "effort bargain" for any wage rate. This hypothesis was supported by the analysis of the income and job aspirations by another sample of migrant and non-migrant job-seekers in Kingston.[1] This tendency is likely to lead to some discrimination in favour of migrants for the more menial, strenuous jobs. In that context, it is significant that in a small survey of industrial enterprises in Kingston carried out at about the same time in 1974 as the survey used in this paper, and focussed on recruitment, induction, training and related personnel policies, several employers of unskilled and semi-skilled process labour reported a preference for migrants.[2] Similar tendencies were also reported in a much earlier study of employment practices in industrial enterprises in Kingston.[3]

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[1] Standing, 1978(b), op. cit. The differences were observed among both men and women.

[2] G. Standing: "Labour commitment, sexual dualism and industrialisation in Jamaica", *Population and Employment Working Paper No. 64* (Geneva, ILO, May 1978).

[3] E. Campbell: "Industrial training methods and techniques", *Social and Economic Studies*, Vol. 2, No.1, September 1953, p. 30.

Such essentially anecdotal reports may be mere straws in the wind, but they are consistent with the results presented here and in the earlier paper, showing migrants relatively prepared to take unskilled, low-income jobs and concentrated in them.

Alternatively - or additionally - the lower earnings of migrants and their relative job position might reflect discrimination against migrants once they have entered the labour market, blocking them from higher-income, relatively skilled jobs. This was the suggestion in the study of labour market absorption of migrants in San Salvador.[1] In that case the discrimination seemed to be related to race, with the Indians from rural areas being restricted to low-income jobs. As such, a more accurate interpretation might be that this was merely evidence of another type of social division of labour implied by some segmentation theories of the labour market.[2] The argument would be that certain disadvantaged racial groups are concentrated in menial low-income jobs, because such a social division of labour facilitates the hierarchical control of the labour process, since in part the various groups of workers would be less likely to combine to raise wages or improve working conditions. In Jamaica this form of racial segregation of occupations has traditionally been a feature of the social structure.[3] But the racial mix of the rural and urban populations has been similar, while there is no evidence of any discrimination against rural-urban migrants *per se*; the survey of industrial enterprises certainly did not reveal any and suggested the contrary. What is much more likely is that the emergence of an industrial urban labour force coincided with a steady process of stratification, with various categories of workers having little or no opportunity for mobility between strata. So once migrants entered the milieu of low-income menial jobs they were effectively trapped there. And migrants - particularly migrant women no doubt - were preferred for such jobs because they were more prepared or resigned to work in such unrewarding, static forms of employment.

Conclusions

The evidence which has been tentatively analysed in the preceding sections is exploratory in the sense that the issues considered here are related to three premises or assumptions which should be emphasised in future empirical and theoretical studies of migration and urban labour market "dynamics". First, rural-urban migration cannot be analysed effectively unless the more general phenomenon of

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[1] Peek and Antolinez, 1977, op. cit.

[2] D.M. Gordon: *Theories of Poverty and Underemployment* (Lexington, Lexington Books, D.C. Heath & Co., 1972).

[3] G.C. Cumper: "Labour and development in the West Indies: Part I", *Social and Economic Studies*, Vol. 10, No.3, September 1961, pp. 278-305; C.G. Clarke: *Kingston, Jamaica: Urban Development and Social Change, 1692-1962* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1975).

occupational-income mobility in urban areas is integrated with that of the migration process. Second, the implications of migration for levels of urban unemployment depends on the process of absorption of migrants and their income-job mobility within the urban labour market. And third, the implications of migration for urban income distribution also depends in part on the degree of segmentation of the urban labour market.

In Jamaica, women have continued to move into Kingston despite chronically high levels of urban unemployment. And it is apparent that compared with urban women these migrants have had a relatively high tendency to be in the labour force, if unemployed have been more likely to be actively searching for employment, and at the very least have been no less likely to be employed than non-migrant women. Thus the absorption of migrant women in the urban labour market has been a feature of the emerging labour force. Moreover, the inflow of migrant women would have increased labour supply both directly and indirectly, and thereby probably raised the level of urban unemployment by more than implied by the actual flow of migrants. This is because a flow of low-wage workers who could be hired as domestics would have encouraged women from middle-income households to delegate childcare and other domestic duties while moving into the labour force themselves.

However, the evidence is contrary to several other studies which have concluded that migrants have labour market experiences in the urban areas that are not distinguishable from that of non-migrants there. According to one such analysis:

> "Even though migrants improve their income by moving, there is some concern that migrants may be limited to marginal employment. The evidence, while scattered and not very detailed, does not support this contention. Average income and unemployment rates for migrants and urban natives of comparable age, education, and sex are very similar."[1]

In a Korean study, a similar conclusion was reached and the authors made a more general claim:

> "There is no indication that rural migrants in developing societies are more handicapped in the city. By the same token, there is no evidence that overurbanised societies in the Third World tend to discriminate against rural migrants. In both developed and developing countries, socioeconomic status achievements depend largely on the educational qualification a person brings to the urban labour market. Once this factor is accounted for, whether a person was reared in urban or rural areas does not create any significant additional differences."[2]

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[1] Yap, 1977, op. cit., pp. 253-54.

[2] H. Koo and H.R. Barringer: "Cityward migration and socioeconomic achievement in two Korean cities", *Rural Sociology*, Vol. 42, No.1, Spring 1977, p. 56.

In a similar study in Brazil it was concluded:

> "Within four years after (sic) moving, rural-urban migrants are earning as much as - in some cases, more than - their urban born, non-migrant counterparts with similar personal characteristics."[1]

Yet in Kingston it seems that, even taking account of differences in education, migrant women tended to earn less than urban women and that the difference persisted.[2] Migrants have thus appeared to be a source of low-paid workers, and as such the influx of migrant women resigned and forced to earn persistently low-incomes has considerable implications for the structure of the urban labour market and the extent of rural-urban migration.

First, the persistently low incomes of migrants are closely related to the more general lack of job-income mobility in the urban labour market, given the limited on-the-job training opportunities and the essentially "static" nature of most unskilled and semi-skilled jobs in Jamaica.[3] This is likely to be the principal direct reason for migrants continuing to have a relatively low probability of being in the more skilled and higher-income jobs, for by entering the labour market in low-income, unskilled jobs, most migrants would have been restricted to them. This particular pattern of migrant absorption would have encouraged two tendencies. By swelling the ranks of the low-income, unskilled workers, the migrants would have tended to reduce the opportunity incomes of that stratum of the urban working class, and thus directly increased the degree of income inequality within the working population. By the same token however, the pattern of migration, by providing a source of cheap labour, would in itself have encouraged a greater division of labour, and thereby encouraged enterprises to rely on unskilled low-paid labour.

The expected adverse effect of migration on urban income inequality does not mean, of course, that it tended to worsen the over-all income inequality in Jamaica, for rural-urban migration has for the most part been a means of escaping

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[1] L.Y.L. Yap: "Rural-urban migration and urban underemployment in Brazil", *Journal of Development Economics*, Vol. 3, 1976, p. 236. The 'personal characteristics' were sex, age, race and schooling. In a related Mexican study, there was a similar finding but there was no control for education in the tabulations used to demonstrate the lack of any relationship between migrant status and occupation. J. Balan, H.L. Browning and E. Jelin: *Men in a Developing Society: Geographic and Social Mobility in Monterrey, Mexico* (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1973), p.139f.

[2] Interestingly, in a Brazilian study, it was found that migrants in São Paulo were more likely than non-migrants to be earning less than the minimum wage in any particular sector. K. Schaefer: *São Paulo: Urban Development and Employment* (Geneva, ILO, 1976).

[3] These issues are explored in several working papers related to the present analysis. See, in particular, Standing, 1977, op. cit.

from the worse poverty experienced in rural areas and may have resulted in some modification of rural-urban inequality. But in that latter sense it is arguable that migration is only a means of shuffling poverty around, relocating it but scarcely reducing or worsening it.[1] Except trivially, it is scarcely credible to depict migration as a cause of either unemployment or inequality, though without doubt it is a symptom of both.

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[1] K. Griffin: "On the emigration of the peasantry", *World Development*, Vol. 4, No.5, pp. 353-361. On this, see also: G.B. Rodgers, M.J.D. Hopkins and R. Wéry: *Population, Employment and Inequality: BACHUE-Philippines* (Farnborough, Saxon House, 1978).

Appendix I

The Qualifications Index

As noted in the text, years of schooling is a poor measure of qualifications despite the fact that it is the most commonly used measure of "human capital". It is particularly suspect where schooling is characterised by irregular attendance and where duration of enrolment has only a limited bearing on educational attainment.[1] Accordingly an attempt was made to develop a composite qualifications index which would take account of various aspects of "education", notably quality of education, post-school training, capacity for work, and experience. As such it was based on six elements - years of schooling (EDUC), literacy (LIT), exam success (EXAM), training and type of training (TRAINED), health (HEALTH), and age (AGE). As a first approximation the qualifications index (PERSCAP) might be expressed as some linear combination of the first four elements:

$$PERSCAP = EDUC + LIT + EXAM + TRAINED$$

However, this is clearly impracticable. Since each of the elements has to be expressed in different units, there is a weighting problem. And there is no reason to assume a linear, additive function. With these considerations in mind the method adopted for computing a qualifications index was as follows.

The survey collected information on all the elements listed above, though somewhat crudely. The number of years of schooling was recorded, and the respondents were coded as literate or illiterate. Then if someone was illiterate the number of years of schooling were disregarded as having had little usefulness. Then EDUC was expressed as a ratio, the number of years of schooling divided by the mean number of years of school (8), and that ratio treated as zero if the woman was functionally illiterate. Treating EDUC as a ratio in this way was desirable because otherwise the weight given to years of schooling in the qualifications index compared with other elements, such as exam success and training, would have been excessive.

Another consideration was what could be described as the "vintage effect" of schooling. A given number of years of schooling could be expected to have a much greater impact on potential earnings, and therefore probability of labour force participation and job mobility, for an older generation than for a younger age cohort. This is simply because the secularly upward trend in average educational levels tends to mean that a specific level of education that had once been

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[1] Indeed, a brighter pupil may leave school earlier, simply because he or she could get through the work and exams more quickly.

sufficient to secure employment or a certain "level" of job would no longer be so. Therefore a vintage effect was introduced, as measured by the ratio of the respondent's age to the mean age of the whole sample ($\bar{AGE}$).

Beyond literacy, the quality of education was expressed in terms of the highest level of examination passed. Most respondents had not passed any exam, but among those who had, the exams passed had been of widely varying standards. In Jamaica in 1974 it seemed there were two "threshold" exam levels - school-leaving exam or some low-level equivalent, and "O" levels.[1] On the rule-of-thumb distinction, EXAM was coded as follows:

0 = no exams passed
1 = Jamaica School Certificate, Jamaica Local, Commercial Exams
2 = 'O' or 'A' Levels, Diploma, Degree.

Classified in this way the resultant qualifications index gives a relatively high weighting to formal training and exam success, as seems appropriate:

$$PERSCAP = \left(\frac{EDUC}{\bar{EDUC}} \cdot \frac{AGE}{\bar{AGE}} \cdot LIT\right) + EXAM + TRAINED$$

The physical capacity for labour force activity should also be considered, either separately or as an element of the qualifications index. From the survey only a very crude measure of this capacity could be computed:

HEALTH = dummy variable, 1 if respondent reported suffering from some long-term disability or illness, zero otherwise.

Arguably the age-interaction factor could be applied to this variable, on the assumption that a disability would have a greater negative effect on a younger person's opportunity income, even though capacity for labour tends to be a declining function of age regardless of specific disability. Thus a fourth element, AGHLTH, can be introduced into the qualifications index, where

$$AGHLTH = HEALTH \cdot \left(\frac{AGE}{\bar{AGE}}\right)$$

If so, the resultant index is PERSHLTH, and is defined as PERSCAP - AGHLTH.

This is evidently only a crude qualifications index, involving a series of assumptions. But some such measure does seem greatly superior to the conventional "years of schooling" variables.

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[1] Standing, 1978, op. cit., pp. 31-38.

Appendix II

On Labour Market Segmentation and Neo-classical Criticisms: A Polemical Note

The terms "labour market segmentation" and "labour force stratification" are merely designed to characterise the labour process in which there are various clusters of jobs from which the probability of mobility into other jobs is minimal, and in which various groups of workers are systematically placed at a disadvantage compared with other groups, often as a result of participating in certain jobs. Thus jobs have various distinguishable characteristics which in turn require or induce certain behavioural characteristics on the part of workers. It is the recognition of the significance of such differences - and the desire to identify and clarify them - which has underlaid recent attempts to develop a framework of analysis loosely, but in some ways misleadingly, described as labour market segmentation analysis. Essentially, the concerns of this approach are the nature of the labour market, the role and extent of the detailed and social division of labour, and changes in the nature of jobs and the behaviour of workers.

In general, the labour economists who have tried to analyse these issues have been met by hostility and little less than contempt from the majority of labour economists who have stuck unflinchingly to the neo-classical or "human capital" framework. There has been some debate between the neo-classicists and the "segmentalists", but that debate has been shaped by the traditional neo-classical perspective and questions. This has contributed to the almost contemptuous dismissal of segmentation analysis, a dismissal made somewhat easier by a tendency for many analysts of labour market segmentation to conduct empirical studies according to the criteria of the neo-classical framework. Thus an inordinate amount of attention has been devoted to the relative validity of various specifications of individualistic earnings functions, with some segmentalists dividing workers into two categories in an attempt to show, typically, that education (human capital) did not influence the relative incomes of those in "secondary" jobs while it did so in "primary" jobs. To this neo-classicists have retorted by mentioning "truncation bias" or the exclusion of some education-related variable which could explain findings seemingly contrary to "human capital" expectations. However, there seems nothing inconsistent with labour market segmentation that more schooling results in higher earnings; this is consistent with any realistic analysis, and if that "finding" is a pinnacle of neo-classical labour economics it highlights the superficiality of that approach. It does not indicate the causality underlying the observed relationship. Schooling in certain jobs affects the efficiency with which the tasks can be done; in others it is doubtful whether there is any such relationship. In many jobs schooling is used as a screening device to select workers because relatively schooled workers are more likely to make committed, reliable workers. The essential point is that 'screening' is a means of

stratifying the labour force. The more schooled worker may not be better prepared technically to do a certain job, but a hierarchical labour force tends to prevent general resentment or opposition. Schooling is a control mechanism, and in that sense Cain is quite mistaken in asserting that if the screening does not 'reveal true productivity differences ... then the employer who pays more for the more educated is not maximising profits, and he must be exercising his tastes for discrimination."[1] Cain fails to realise that employers are concerned with maximising their exploitation of the whole labour force, for which internal differences may well play a function of raising total output and efficiency.

In any case, it is merely silly to claim that schooling has no effect on productivity or that it is not used as a screening device; relative schooling is clearly correlated with relative earnings. But would the neo-classicists state - as surely they should to be consistent with their pure human capital model - that an equalisation of schooling would make all workers equally efficient and equalise earnings? And if not, why not?

Similarly it is inane to extol the virtue of the orthodox (neo-classical) model by identifying its basic premise as the "maximising behaviour of individual agents".[2] That workers (or in obfuscating language, "agents") act as rationally as they are allowed is taken for granted by all social scientists. Labour economists should be concerned with the changing aspects of the labour process into which rational individuals have to fit. Someone once claimed that economics was all about people making choices, whereas sociology was about people having no choices to make. This evident stricture on economics was earned by the neo-classical terms of reference.

Segmentation does not imply any particular dualism, and it is this latter focus which has received most attention and which has been most prone to criticism.[3] For certain analytical purposes there may be an advantage in conceiving of primary and secondary sectors or jobs, and it is amusing that the neo-classical critics of the segmentation approach make liberal use of those dubious dualistic concepts of informal and formal sectors.[4] Thus an intriguing feature of Cain's wide-ranging attack on dual labour market theories is that after attacking

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[1] G.C. Cain: *The Challenge of Dual and Radical Theories of the Labour Market to Orthodox Theory* (University of Wisconsin, Institute for Research on Poverty Discussion Paper, 1975), pp. 70-76.

[2] G.S. Fields: "Labour market segmentation", in IUSSP. *Economic and Demographic Change* (Helsinki, IUSSP, 1978), pp. 3.3.4-5.

[3] P.B. Doeringer and M.J. Piore: *Internal Labour Markets and Manpower Analysis* (Lexington, Mass., Heath Lexington Books, 1971); M.J. Piore: "The dual labour market", in D.M. Gordon (ed.): *Problems in Political Economy* (Lexington, Mass., D.C. Heath, 1971); *inter alia*.

[4] Cain, 1975, op. cit., pp. 70-76.

them for dividing up the labour force and jobs into strata and segments, he then sees no inconsistency in claiming "neo-classical models of developing economies often specify a dual labour market in which a non-competing, protected sector occupies the urban, manufacturing-and-government sector of the economy".[1] The difficulty with dualism based on formal-informal, protected-unprotected, etc. sectors is that they should be subject to the same stricture regardless of whether they claim to be extensions or contraventions of the neo-classical framework. The distinction between one sector and another is essentially arbitrary and artificially displaces a continuum with an essentially static, rigid barrier. In the process it diverts attention away from changing relationships of production, the division of labour, etc. and towards supposedly equilibrating behaviour in a contrived context. In effect, neo-classical analysis merely introduces an exogenously-determined phenomenon which cannot be justified in neo-classical terms.

An essential postulate of the neo-classical model is its assumption of homogeneity, so to simply tag on some dualistic notion such as "protected versus unprotected markets" is tantamount to refuting a basic premise of that model. The essence of segmentation is that the upward job-income mobility of most workers is restricted by the "static" nature of the jobs. Any form of dualism imposed on the labour market must be an arbitrary and contrived distinction which is not rooted in any analytical distinction. One can distinguish capitalists from wage labourers or the latter from peasants or some other clearly different group of workers. But a dualism such as required to specify a formal and an informal sector is arbitrary in the sense that it merely divides a continuum in a way that cannot be generally justified. The same stricture could be levelled at the cruder versions of "dual labour market" analyses. But much of the empirical work and the criticisms levelled against the thesis of labour market segmentation are shown to be irrelevant or misleading once attention is shifted to the analysis of the general segmentation process. How has the detailed division of labour progressed? What are the implications for mobility between jobs or clusters of jobs? Is there a general change in the behavioural traits of workers caused by the changing division of labour and, say, the increasingly static nature of jobs? Thus a sympathetic reading of the segmentalist literature should direct attention to the analysis of the labour market, the changing division of labour and the causes of these changes, and the behavioural adaptation of workers. For these fundamental issues, human capital theory offers little guidance.

Segmentation analysis should be explicitly historical analysis, showing why certain types of segmentation occur and why certain groups are compressed into a certain range of jobs. This includes analysis of both class struggle (between employers and workers) and struggles between various groups of workers; "supplies"

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[1] Cain, 1975, op. cit., pp. 70-76.

of workers of different skills or behavioural traits and any structure of derived demand for workers should not be treated as autonomous phenomena - and it is invalid to defend neo-classical "textbook" presentations on the grounds that the supply-demand framework has to be simplified to facilitate learning.[1] The basic criticism is that it is a questionable point at which to start labour economics, primarily because it directs attention away from the labour process in its historical setting to the banal territory of marginal utilities and disutilities, speculating on metaphysical properties for static analysis, with given institutions, given tastes, given income distribution, given division of labour, etc., etc. The fundamental criticism of the neo-classical approach is that it abstracts from reality in a most unrealistic way, and then generously reintroduces elements of reality as exogenous shocks, as aberrations, as unfortunate interferences with the purity of metaphysical notions.

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[1] Fields, 1978, op. cit.

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