This research project is part of a larger study that will culminate in a book entitled "Culture and Education: The Social Consequences of Westernization in Contemporary Swaziland." While the major focus of that book is concerned with present day Swaziland, this historical research was needed in order to place the present day study of children, schools, and their families in a historical context. Today's society in Swaziland is a complex blend of traditional Swazi culture and Western (primarily British) tradition. The educational system in Swaziland has played a large role in the creation and continuance of this unique blend of cultures. Research was conducted at the Public Record Office in Kew, England, to discover documents, not available in the National Archives of Swaziland, pertaining to the development of Western education in Swaziland. The research concentrates on the years from World War II to independence in 1968, although it touches on the entire colonial period. Findings reveal that in many ways the unique historical beginnings of Western education in Swaziland are more complex and complicated than simply a racial analysis of the white colonizer conquering and socializing the African through education. Conflicts arose among competing forces to gain power in the territory, and in many cases, the rationale behind a person's enmity may have had little to do with race, but rather more to do with power and control over land and people. Three themes have emerged related to these conflicts: a struggle for religious power; a struggle for political power; and a gender-defined dominance. (Contains 41 notes.) (BT)
Historical Development of Western Education in Swaziland.

Booth, Margaret Zoller
FOCUS OF THE RESEARCH

This research project is part of a larger study which will culminate in a book entitled, *Culture and Education: The Social Consequences of Westernization in Contemporary Swaziland*. While the major focus of that book is concerned with present day Swaziland, this historical research was needed in order to place the present day study of children, schools, and their families in an historical context. Present day society in Swaziland is a complex blend of traditional Swazi culture and Western (primarily British) tradition. The educational system in Swaziland has played a large role in the creation and continuance of this unique blend of cultures. The development of that system of education during its early years when Swaziland was a British territory was necessary as vital background to contemporary educational research. See Appendix A for the table of contents for the book which will include this research as chapter two.

The focus of this research was to travel to the Public Record Office (PRO) in Kew England in order to discover documents pertaining to the development of Western education in Swaziland which were not available in the National Archives of Swaziland. While I was interested in the entire colonial period, I did concentrate on the years from World War II to independence in 1968. A list of the documents photocopied at the Public Record Office in Kew is included in Appendix B. These documents had generally been “classified” for thirty to fifty years since their authorship.

FINDINGS

**Pre-World War I and the Development of Western Education**

Since the end of the colonial period, African historians have argued over the true nature of British imperial design regarding African education in all of its territories, but none have ever contended that the two systems were equal. This report will focus on discovering what the goals and objectives were for education in Swaziland, who established educational policy, and for what purpose. The development of Western education involved complex relationships and competing forces among the colonial government in Swaziland, the Colonial Office in London, multiple missionary institutions, Afrikaaner settlers from South Africa, and competing factions amongst the Swazi people. Furthermore, the formal education varied not only when comparing European and African education, but also in relation to various groups within the European community, within the Swazi population, and in respect to gender for all constituencies. Furthermore, we shall see how these goals and objectives, in addition to the players in this power struggle, changed historically throughout the twentieth century.

**The Government Administration vs. Missionary Control**

The role that Western education was to play in the life of the Swazi had been uncertain from the time of the initial introduction of schooling in Swaziland which was designed largely
after that developed in the Transvaal of South Africa. Without the adequate resources needed to
develop a proper system of education for all children in the territory, the government was willing
to leave the majority of African schooling up to the various missionary societies. This created a
stressful relationship between the administration and missionaries from the beginning, as
disagreements ensued over the purpose and goals of educating the Swazi in addition to attitudes
regarding the Africans. By 1908 there were a total of 16 mission schools in Swaziland which
were not controlled or financed by the government.1

The acting Government Secretary, F.H. Dulton, included in his 1909 Report on Education
his concern from missionaries who felt the need to educate the “Native” according to Christian
missionary supervision. Tensions developed as competing missionaries vied for Swazi pupils, in
addition to the desire on the part of independent Swazi organizations to open their own schools.2
One of the best examples of the debate surrounding missionary control of the formal schooling of
Swazi children involved the education of the royal children. At the turn of the century, the queen
Regent, Lobotsibeni, mistrusted missionaries and insisted in 1908 that a school be established
near her own royal kraal and administered as the only government run school for Swazi children
in the country.3 Queen Lobotsibeni’s strong resistance to missionary control of all education
added to the tensions within the territory amongst several factions of the European (missionary
and non-missionary) and Swazi communities (Christian, non-Christian, and intellectual elite).

Education and Ethnicity

While conflict between missionary and sectarian populations grew within the territory,
the battle to create an educational system in the country was even more complicated in regard to
ethnic and class divisions. In the early 1920s, F.H. Dulton felt that Swaziland was too small and
too isolated to warrant its own education department, and therefore suggested that the Transvaal
Education Department inspect the schools.4 These types of statements were indicative of that
time period when the future of Swaziland was still uncertain. While the territory remained under
British control, the future of the three High Commission Territories (Bechuanaland, Basotoland,
and Swaziland) was still uncertain. These three territories were strongly linked economically and
socially to the Union and therefore their possible future incorporation into the Union created
additional problems for the establishment of a system of education.

The Swazi Population: The power that missionary societies had on educational
development for Africans was very far reaching. The Phelps-Stokes Report, produced in the
1920s by American missionaries, became a guiding document for colonial administrations
throughout the colonies. The Report concluded that the aims of African education should
include: character, health, agricultural/industrial training, family life, and healthful recreation.5
Those aims, the Report argued, were designed to meet the needs of both labor development and
the Christian “civilizing” mission. In 1920, education for Europeans in Swaziland was made
compulsory, yet it was not so for African children, and the disparity in the education provided for
them was tremendous.6 By 1924, of about 22,000 Swazi school-aged children in the country, not
more than 3,000 (13.6 percent) were attending missionary and government controlled schools. In
1922, the colonial government felt that the variation in the quality of education given by the
missionaries led Dulton, to request that the colonial government oversee all education in the
territory.7 Even though some missionaries recognized the need for some practical learning, by
the mid-1920s, the colonial government still worried that the spread of Christianity was their
primary objectives." Consequently, in 1925, the colonial government wished to define the purpose of education as being less religious and followed the new guidelines in the Memorandum on Educational Policy in British Tropical Africa. This document proposed that education for the "Native" should "be to render the individual more efficient in his or her condition of life.... and to promote the advancement of the community."9

Educational development for the Swazi population took a higher priority with the colonial administration during the period of the 1930s.10 The government’s greatest educational interest at this time concerned the education of the future leaders of the country which was characteristic of "indirect rule" policy, exhibited in other British African colonies. Consequently, the administration increased their financial support to the royal Swazi National schools in order to influence the future chiefs.11

The "Coloured" Population: Because of the uncertain future of the Territory and its possible incorporation into South Africa, pressure to sustain a "colour bar" was even stronger than in other larger British colonies.12 The discussion of how to educate "Coloured" children (offspring of Africans and Europeans) illustrates the ever unclear racial, ethnic and class divisions within the territory. By 1936, the "Coloured" population totaled 705 people, of which 226 were children between the ages of 5 and 14.13 Desiring to keep to racial separation, at this time, the colonial administration established institutions whose primary purpose was the education of the Coloured population. While there were two missionary primary schools, there were no institutions for secondary education at the time. Consequently, although the "Coloured" population was often treated more similarly to the White population than the Swazi, there was little chance for their learning beyond primary school.

The "Poor White" Problem: While the segregation of "Coloured" children revealed an ethnocentric perspective on the part of the colonizer, that same attitude was also applied to other Europeans who were not British. While the colonial administration was concerned about the "backwardness" of the Swazi and an education which would "civilize" them, colonial documents made it clear that they were comparably concerned about the European population in the south of Swaziland who were primarily of Afrikaaner descent from South Africa. By 1929, there were 13 schools for European children in the territory (11 government primary; 1 government aided primary; and 1 government aided secondary).14 In that same year, the European population had grown to 3,000 which included approximately 1,800 living south of the Usutu River who were mostly Afrikaaner in origin.15 The government’s concern for what they considered to be an uneducated, backward, population, constituted what the administration referred to as the "poor White problem."16 The Carnegie Poor White Commission was established to investigate the situation and concluded that in order to alleviate the problem, an education up to standard six was needed.17 A school with an industrial or technical emphasis was seen as particularly important for the "Poor Whites" in the south, who were seen primarily as agriculturalists and not as white collar professionals. Interestingly, this same argument was made quite frequently in regard to the Swazi or the "Coloured" population. Further advice was taken from the book by E.G. Malherbe, Education of the Poor White, which suggested that taking poor white children from their homes at a young age not only taught them academically but also how to behave and live properly.18
Gender Disparity

The paternalistic attitude which the British administration and missionaries felt for other people also extended into gender disparities. While this gender analysis takes place within the analysis of Swazi education, much of it could also be applied to all ethnic groups, including the Europeans within the territory of Swaziland. Gender disparities were ever present in all communities at the time and the attitudes of the colonizers and missionaries toward the education of all females was influenced by their own European societies' opinions of women and gender bias at home. The 1925 Phelps-Stokes Report stressed the socialization of the female "Native." The report dedicated an entire chapter to the education of women and girls and emphasized that four of the five primary aims of education (character, health, family life, and recreation) were dependent on the proper teaching of females. In sum, the Report's chapter on women blames essentially all of the social evils of African society on the "ignorance of the women." It warns that when women are ignorant of the proper methods of domestic care, the development of civilization is stifled. Furthermore, Swaziland copied the curriculum suggested for girls in the Phelps-Stokes Report which especially stressed gardening, sewing and other manual work for the girls. While at one point, the report did recognize the need for some "rudimentary professional training," it limited this training to teaching and nursing.

African girls were also limited to the level of schooling they could acquire, for they did not have any access to secondary education until 1938 when they were finally permitted to enrol at Matsapha High School in small numbers. Ironically, Swaziland (as with Bechuanaland and Basotoland) were rare examples in Africa of a disproportionate number of girls in school as compared with boys. In 1932 for instance, of the total 2,970 Swazi pupils enrolled in school, 63 percent were girls. However, enrollment trends indicate that this imbalance leveled off by the end of primary. Thus, while girls enrolled at higher rates, they also dropped out of school at higher rates than boys.

The War Years and their Aftermath

By the time World War II began, the British had recognized the importance of educating the territory's population more highly than had previously been accomplished, however, with resources draining because of the war, this chore was difficult to accomplish. The continued political occupation of the three HCTs became more important to London during the war because of their close proximity to and influence by the Union. Consequently, the colonial administration in the three territories worked hard to try and secure funds from London for increased educational progress for all their residents. Unfortunately, in 1945, the High Commissioner for the territories, Sir Evelyn Baring, analyzed Swaziland's conditions to be "the most backward of the three Territories" and yet the resources available to help it develop were quite limited. Baring, recognized the importance of Swaziland in Britain's ability to keep its power and presence in southern Africa but was discouraged at the state of its development which he believed to present "the most difficult of the problems to be found in the three High Commission Territories." Ironically, the segregated Union often contributed more financially to their African schools (including higher teacher salaries) than Swaziland. Thus, School Superintendent E.M.D. Glynn, supported by the High Commissioner spent a great deal of time during this decade arguing to the Dominion's Office for an increase in funding in Swaziland in
order to keep pace with the Union.28

Policy Debates: Colonial Administration and Development Policy

The Colonial Development & Welfare Fund: One method that the administrators in Swaziland utilized for the implementation of educational development during the war years was the use of Colonial Development and Welfare Funds. The Colonial Development and Welfare Act (CD&W) was passed by parliament in July, 1940 in order to “make schemes for any purpose likely to promote the development of the resources of any Colony or the welfare of its people.”29 Superintendent Glynn saw the CD&W as a means for making the improvements needed in the system and therefore submitted substantial proposals for development grants throughout the decade of the 1940s. Discussions between the Dominions’ Office (later Colonial Office), the Treasury, and the Swaziland administration revealed conflicting attitudes regarding the importance of education and the development of Swaziland in general. The Swaziland administration seemed to be doing everything in its power at this time to develop the social services in the territory, including education, however, it often found itself up against a brick wall in London. Baring argued that: “the people of all three Territories suffered in the past not from the effects of too direct rule by Europeans but from that of too little rule, whether direct or indirect.” In essence, he was saying that the British occupied the HCTs but ignored them. He therefore put forward a proposal for: (a) an increase in the percentage of children of school going age enrolled in school from 30 percent to 50 percent; (b) a Native Trades School, agricultural training for teachers and some secondary education, and (c) assistance to alleviate the growth of a ‘poor white’ problem in southern Swaziland.”30 In total, Swaziland submitted proposals for £913,000 for the period between 1940 and 1946. Of that amount, £224,492 was dedicated to education (£154,416 for African education, £63,516 for European, and £6,560 for “Coloured”).31 No other development category (i.e. land settlement, agriculture) received as much.

The Fight for Control over Education

With an increasing number of Swazi now Western educated (including the Paramount Chief) the Swazi themselves were cognizant of the various educational issues involved in the British educational system and desired greater control of them. However, there was not complete harmony within the Swazi community regarding the direction that formal education should take. The educational debate within the Swazi community included a division between the educated (who generally valued schooling) and the illiterate elders (who generally feared the loss of Swazi tradition). However, there were also splits within the formally educated population as to the form and direction that Swazi education should take. This debate was often spearheaded by the Swaziland Progressive Association (SPA), an advocacy organization founded in 1929, comprised of educated and progressive Swazi. However, the Paramount Chief, while remaining a strong advocate of western education, looked on the SPA with growing suspicion. He feared that the organization’s claim to exclusive control of the “progressive” agenda meant that the developing educated middle class would eventually elude his royal authority. He therefore went to great lengths to cut its independent links to the colonial government.

The colonial government attempted to take greater control of all “Native” education in the territory with the Swaziland Native Schools Proclamation of 1940. This proclamation brought all Swazi schools under government control, as the administration continued to be suspicious of the various mission schools and the growing number of “Native” independent
schools. Both types of institutions were viewed as a threat to the spread of British tradition and culture. While the Resident Commissioner, E.K. Featherstone viewed the “calibre of many Missions in Swaziland [as] not high,” he felt forced again to continue to utilize them for the schooling of “Natives.”

By 1949, educational development had progressed substantially in the territory, however, great disparities remained among the different populations. The total expenditure on education had increased from £13,882 to £69,653 during the decade of the 1940s, nonetheless, its distribution remained unequal. While £25.7 was spent on the education of every European child, the amount per “Coloured” pupil was only £7.1 and £2.8 for every African child. Furthermore, while the percentage of Swazi children enrolled in school improved over the decade, it remained at only 40 percent of the school age Swazi population. By 1949, there were 83 unaided schools for Swazi children, 96 government aided, 3 Swazi National Schools, and 8 government maintained schools. For European pupils, there existed five government maintained schools and two private schools. Consequently the decade of the 1940s exhibited many paradoxes. The administration worked hard to improve education for all of the Territory’s children, yet continued on an unequal basis. Furthermore, while the government pushed for centralized control of all education, it simultaneously continued to strengthen the segregated nature of the system.

Preparing for Independence

The 1950s and 1960s were a time of substantial change for education in Swaziland. This measured change was influenced again by political realities of the time, including continued friction between Swaziland and South Africa, in addition to the increasing awareness of the reality of eventual independence for the three territories. Consequently, we shall see how political change influenced future educational policy, administrative control, and the quantity, quality and goals of education.

Educational Control and Political Change

The political climate in southern Africa changed drastically after the Nationalist party won the 1948 elections in the Union, based on a campaign which emphasized official apartheid, or the complete separation of the races in all aspects of life. While the rest of the continent was moving more toward integration and the political and economic empowerment of Africans, South Africa moved in the opposite direction. While the decade of the 1950s revealed a government in Swaziland which criticized the new direction of educational policy in South Africa that did not include Africans in educational decision making, the British government’s own record of educational development in Swaziland until that time period had not embraced the Swazi in the majority of educational decision making.

Changes in Content and Quality of Education

The debates regarding educational multi-racialism finally culminated with the implementation of a racially integrated school system in 1963. By that time it had become clear that independence for Swaziland was soon at hand and its future as a pluralist nation depended on its ability to successfully eschew the "apartheid" model of its South African neighbor in favor of becoming an independent, multi-racial society. As independence grew nearer, the content and structure of the educational system became more closely aligned with the British model and less so with the South African system. As compared to previous national syllabi, the 1965 syllabi
for both primary and secondary schools did show a decrease in the amount of time spent on "industrial arts" or manual labor, and an increase in academic emphasis. The new curriculum was thought to aid in the new goals of education in this period of pre-independence. While the desire to create universal primary education had been a recent target, the Territory's development needs dictated an increase in the quantity and quality of secondary education and higher education.

In order to reach the goals laid out in the development plans, major deficiencies in the educational system were going to have to be overcome. The condition of education in all three territories was reported to the Colonial Office as being depressing and included inadequate facilities, untrained teachers, over-aged students, high drop-out rates and a high teacher-pupil ratio. However, Swaziland was reported to generally be in better shape than the other two territories. Ironically, the territory which was derided as being the most backward before and during World War II, now was educationally in better shape. This was attributed partly to the ability of the territory to increase its economic development in recent years. Nonetheless, the territories' "poor and inadequate secondary school systems" presented perhaps "the greatest threat to national well-being." Reports on the HCTs suggested that it was difficult to see how the educational systems could "be expected to provide in the future for any but a fraction of the higher posts of responsibility in Government and in national life."

At the time of Swaziland's independence on September 6, 1968, the educational system as described in reports was completely integrated, with a singular administrative structure and common syllabus. At the time of independence, there were 31,816 males and 30,266 females (totaling 62,082) enrolled in primary school. At the secondary level, there was a total of 6,246 pupils comprised of 3,515 males and 2,731 females. Consequently, while the educational system still contained major flaws (such as high drop-out and repetition rates) the administration had managed to increase enrollments between 1962 and 1968 by 34 percent for the primary grades and 60 percent at the secondary level.

**General Conclusions and Significance to the Field**

This research has revealed that in many ways the unique historical beginnings of Western education in Swaziland is more complex and complicated than simply a racial analysis of the White colonizer conquering and socializing the African through education. Conflicts arose among competing forces in order to gain power in the Territory and in many cases, the rationale behind one's enmity may have had little to do with race, but rather more to do with power and control over land and people. Three themes have emerged related to these conflicts. They include a struggle for religious power, political power, and a gender defined dominance. As for religious struggle, all three historical periods discussed revealed tension between the missionary societies and the colonial administration. While the government was willing to leave the education of the Swazi in the hands of the missionaries (for financial reasons), as the twentieth century progress, they realized that this was a mistake. Missionary societies were often viewed with disdain and not trusted to carry on the true academic nature of schooling. While missionaries were often viewed as a necessary evil, they were used as needed but discarded at will. This conflict between the religious and secularly academic nature of schooling was continuous throughout the colonial period. Ultimately, this was a struggle for power, but conflict
arose as the objective of that power varied. As the missionaries wished to gain religious power over the Swazi, the British administration was concerned with political control. The struggle for political power was much more complicated as it involved many competing factions, both European and African. Primarily, the British desired political power over the Swazi in the Territory, but the nature of that power changed as the political and economic dominance of the United Kingdom changed throughout the century. Decisions regarding educational policy, curriculum, and financing in Swaziland during and after the war years revealed a schizophrenic attitude on the part of the British in regard to the Union. The London office felt the need to “save” the Swaziland territory from what they viewed to be the increasingly racist attitude of the Union. Yet ironically, the Union was actually more supportive financially of their African education. Consequently, in order to “save” the Swazi from the Union, they needed to keep up with the Union so the Swazi would not lean towards incorporation. This thinking was very different from the pre-World War II attitude which desired to keep the Swaziland educational system similar to the Union’s system. Furthermore, the goals, objectives and financial support of the educational system were often in a state of debate between the administration in Swaziland and the Dominions/Colonial Office in London. While the officers and settlers in Swaziland often wanted greater development and understood the need for a high quality of education for all children, they did not receive this same support from London and thus development stagnated.

Finally, in regard to gender, females of all races were treated on a completely different level from males in regard to educational matters and thus, regardless of one’s ethnic background, all girls were limited to the quantity and quality of education they would receive. For Swaziland, this was particularly paradoxical as the enrollment rates for African females consistently surpassed those for males. Consequently the post-war years exhibited many paradoxes, while the administration worked hard to improve education for all of the Territory’s children, yet continued on an unequal basis. It is more clearly evident now that the educational system inherited at independence was one rife with inequalities for all children enrolled in school. This set the stage for a system which continued to be influenced by one’s ethnicity, class, gender, and connection to royalty.

CHANGES IN PLANS

Few changes in plans occurred during the 2000-2001 research. While I was able to successful conduct my research at the Public Record Office during the summer of 2000, it was more difficult to adequately investigate the documents in detail during the 2000-2001 academic year. The success of finding such a great number of documents contributed to this time problem. Therefore, the actual time needed for document analysis took longer than expected. Consequently, I received approval to submit this report two months later than the expected date. Two major budgetary items also required approved modifications. The budget line for photocopying at the Public Record Office had to be increased because of the success of my research in London. Furthermore, with the breakdown of my own laptop computer, I received approval to purchase one with extra monies before leaving for London. A financial report will be arriving from the Budget Grants office of Bowling Green State University.41


4. Ibid.


9. Ibid.


14. PRO. Document DO35/364/2: European Education Within the Swaziland Protectorate, 1929.


16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid. and PRO: 35/364/2 (10455/20): Report to the Advisory Council of Swaziland Upon European Education as Called for at the Session Held in December, 1933.


21. Phelps-Stokes Fund, Education in East Africa. (New York:1925), p. 347. Also see, L. J. Lewis, Phelps-Stokes Reports on Education in Africa (Abridged, with an Introduction by L.J. Lewis) (London.1962). ( The Phelps-Stokes Reports were utilized by the British as one of the major guiding documents for much of the 20th century colonial education policy guidelines.).

22. Ibid.,

23. SNA: File 137. Letter from C.C. Watts to government Secretary, attached to Native Schools Report, 1924.

24. Ibid.


26. PRO: DO35/1188: Record of Discussions with Sir Evelyn Baring and Mr. Beetham, R.C. Memo from Tait, October 16th, 1946. P. 7


30. Ibid. Also see: DO35/1186: Y1122/2/12: Trade School (1944) for a more detailed application for a trades school for the Swazi population. The memo approving the £56,755 for the trades school in Swaziland is the third largest amount granted for CD&W funds in 1944. This proposal was to be for a five year period to get the school started.


32. PRO: DO35/1186: Y11122/2/17. Swaziland: Application for Free Grant under the CD&W Act. Comments by the R.C., 1943

34. Ibid

35. PRO. DO 35/3142. *South Africa*, May 5, 1951. School Feeding and Native Education


37. Government of Swaziland. *Swaziland Education Department Reports* - 1964; 1965

38. PRO. CO 1048/633 *Swaziland 1964* (Educational Policy in Swaziland, 1964)

39. Ibid


41. The seventy page chapter on which this report is based includes 190 footnotes, primarily from the Public Record Office.
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