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Issue in Focus

Changing Circumstances in an 'Independent' Homeland

Four studies of living conditions, income distribution and rural migration in Transkei and adjacent areas

The recent Carnegie Conference on Poverty and Development in South Africa placed considerable emphasis on conditions, income levels and development prospects in South Africa's controversial homeland states. The heated debate on the subject of homeland income levels (see *Economic Monitor*) is indicative of both the government's sensitivity on the issue, and the paucity of readily usable data as to the real economic effects of the government's homelands policy.

This issue of the *Rural Monitor* groups together four research studies which detail changing social and economic circumstances in Transkei and adjacent areas.

Rural household surveys by Peter Robinson and a team of town and regional planners, and by Transkei University's IMDS (Institute for Management and Development Studies) clearly expose as fallacious one of the key assumptions on which the homelands policy was initially based — that viable agriculturally based subsistence was possible in the homelands. The greater part of Transkeian household income (68%), is derived from remittances from migrant workers active in the central South African economy, while home-based agricultural production never exceeds four percent of total household income. In addition, the distribution of available income in Transkei is extremely skewed. According to IMDS research, the top 20 percent of the sampled population earn over 60 percent of available income, while the lowest 20 percent earn less than four percent.

The emerging picture is one of severe levels of poverty in all sectors of the Transkeian rural economy, contrasted with pockets of relative wealth in the larger administrative and commercial centres. The skewed distribution of available wealth, which strongly favours urban dwellers and those employed in Transkei government service, has disturbing implications for future policy after eight years of development financing from the South African government. It is to the towns that people will continue to move in search of better prospects, yet these centres are already extremely overstretched in terms of available jobs, facilities, infrastructure, housing and services.

Terence Moll's study of Qumbu, one Transkei town, describes these circumstances in microcosm. Andrew Spiegel's work in the Matatiele and Qacha's Nek areas adjacent to Transkei details the dynamics of rural urbanisation — as people relocate themselves in an attempt to find their own solutions to decreasing opportunities and disintegrating 'traditional solutions' in outlying rural areas.

The circumstances described in these studies, which form part of a growing body of social and economic research into conditions in South Africa's homelands, have major implications for South Africa as a whole. The studies indicate that the colossal expenditure unleashed to create autonomous, 'independent' homeland states in South Africa has been of minimal observable benefit to the impoverished rural majority, whose debilitated condition precludes their making any positive contribution to the economy. The funnelling of money through Transkei's independent government has allowed the bulk of capital to be diverted into prestige spending on public works and the emolument of Transkei's governing and bureaucratic elite, serving to widen, rather than alleviate, the imbalance between urban and rural incomes.

Rural living conditions in Northeastern Transkei

A research study undertaken by Peter Robinson,
then of the Department of Town and Regional Planning
at Natal University

Peter Robinson is now a Director of Vandeverre, Aspey, Robinson and Associates;
Architects, Town and Regional Planners, Durban

TRANSKEI

The north-eastern region of Transkei is a familiar landscape to the large number of urban South Africans who travel, for business or pleasure, the route from Natal to the eastern Cape which bisects Transkei. To the uninformed traveller, the bureaucracy of border posts may reinforce the idea of travelling through a 'foreign' land, while the somewhat eroded but nevertheless green hills and many rivers may appear to confirm the notion that the inhabitants of the area enjoy a peaceful and settled subsistence economy.

The reality which emerges from an extensive study of the area is at odds with such perceptions. From an economic point of view, the region is part of the South African economy, and almost entirely dependent on money earned by migrant workers in South Africa's urban centres. Only 3.5 percent of the surveyed population have locally based wage jobs, and subsistence agriculture is negligible. The surveyed households spend 43 percent of their money on grain products, vegetables and meat. The villages lack the most basic infrastructural requirements, and are largely isolated from the basic services and facilities provided by the area's few small towns.

Poverty and unemployment are the norm in north-eastern Transkei, and Robinson concludes that, unless substantial aid is forthcoming from the central government, the weak Transkeian economy can expect no positive contribution from these debilitated rural communities.

The Pattern of Settlement

Transkei's north-eastern region is characterised by a predominantly rural settlement pattern with 98 percent of the population living in some 800 small, dispersed villages. About 48 percent of the region's people live in traditional villages with no domestic infrastructure. A further 50 percent have been re-settled into consolidated villages, many of which lack the intended minimum level of infrastructure and services.

In 1980 the region had an average population density of 58 persons per square kilometre with individual administrative areas rising to over 100 square kilometres. Two patterns emerge from the population density map. In the first place higher densities tend to coincide with areas of better agricultural potential, reflecting the historical settlement process. Superimposed on this pattern is a more recent concentration of high densities around the towns, which appears to be indicative of people moving to areas with greater opportunity, services and facilities.

Although the region's nine towns contain less than two percent of the population, they are the focal points for most economic activity and are the places upon which the entire region depends for all but the most elementary services. Yet these towns are in reality no more than low order service centres

and not particularly effective ones at that. Most people in the region look to the major towns in the Republic of South Africa for higher order goods and services such as vehicle repairs.

The villages are generally small in size, with many having less than about 100 households. No more than 30 percent of these villages are located on the classified road network.

The towns stand out very markedly as the only place where a number of goods and services are available in one place. As has been noted previously these towns are themselves only minor centres in the wider Southern African space economy; yet within the region they offer substantially more in the way of goods and services than other places. Beyond the towns the services available (both commercial and social) are of low order and tend to be widely dispersed. This means that people depend on the towns for all but the most elementary services.

Because of the dispersed settlement patterns and accentuated by the broken, hilly topography, many of the region's people live at some distance from these towns. Working on the assumption that 15 kilometres is the maximum distance an adult would be able to walk for a one way trip, if he intended to return to his homestead during the same day, as many as 71 percent of the region's population live beyond daily access to the

Although the region's towns are focal points for most economic activity, people look to the major South African towns for higher order goods and services



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TRANSKEI

nearest towns. The cost, effort and time spent on travelling by rural people is therefore considerable, particularly so where most journeys are on foot or by bus.

To sum up, rural villagers in the north-eastern Transkei have to overcome fairly severe access difficulties to reach even low order towns which themselves offer no more than a limited range of basic goods and services.

The Lack of Infrastructure

A typical village in north-east Transkei can boast of very little in the way of infrastructure, buildings or other facilities.

Roads

There is a fairly widespread network of classified roads linking the area to the towns and outside world, but these are almost exclusively poorly maintained gravel surfaced roads. The feeder roads, linking villages to the main network fall under the responsibility of tribal authorities who lack the funds, staff and equipment to maintain them. The result is that these roads are for the most part potholed, eroded unsurfaced tracks often impassable after rain.

Many of the bus companies refuse to use these roads because of increased operating costs due to their condition. This means that many villagers have to carry their produce and purchases several kilometres to and from the nearest bus stop, which is usually where the tribal road meets the government road.

Within a typical village itself (be it a traditional or consolidated layout) the homesteads are linked by tracks or footpaths rather than roads; where roads do exist, they are usually very poorly maintained.

Water

The north-east region of Transkei has

abundant water resources in its rivers, but these have yet to be harnessed for domestic use. There are (with very few exceptions) no reticulated water supply systems and standpipes are rare. On average there is one operational borehole for every four villages. However, boreholes are not evenly distributed throughout the region and some 60 percent of rural administrative areas do not have one. Sewerage and sanitation systems to rural homesteads are virtually non-existent. Seventy percent of households have no toilets.

Health Services

Health services are available at different times at some 200 places in the region, comprising 14 hospitals, 50 residential clinics and about 140 stopping points for mobile clinics.

Other Services

There is a school and a shop in or near to most villages. In many cases the general dealer stores operate a postal agency service for posting and receiving letters. Only a few offer more specialised postal facilities such as telegrams and money orders.

Maingrid electricity has not yet reached the north-east towns, far less the rural hinterland. Telephone lines are overloaded and there are insufficient lines with the result that it is extremely difficult to make calls to, from or within the region. There are no railways and the dozen or so airstrips are used infrequently.

The picture which emerges is of a meagre infrastructure within the villages, while communications and movement within the region can best be described as difficult. Problems caused by the lack of infrastructure and services are made worse by the extreme poverty of the vast majority of the region's population.

Transkeian women engaged in whitewashing the homestead walls. Households are headed by males, though many women act as household heads while men are away working in the South African cities.

Sewerage and sanitation systems to rural households are virtually non-existent, and an average of one operational borehole serves four villages

The extreme levels of poverty prevent the population from making positive contributions to the development of the region

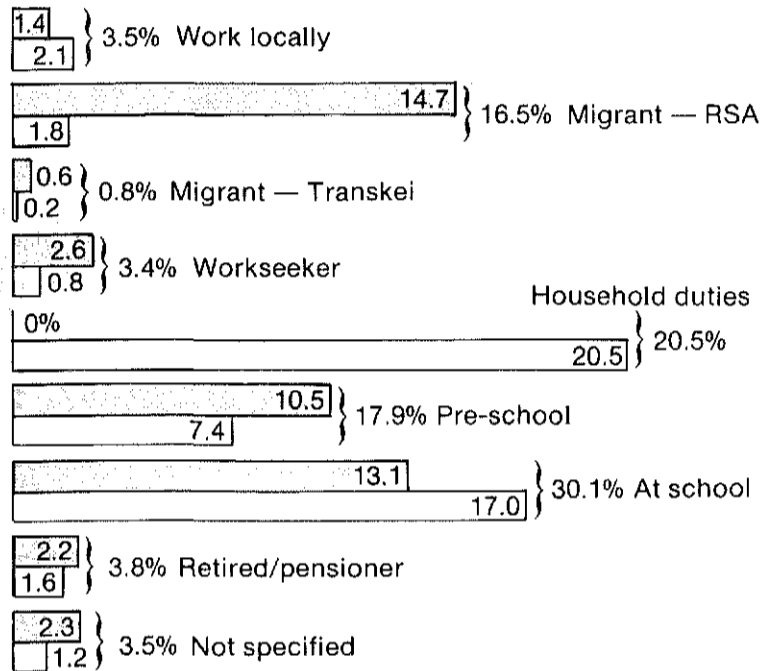
Data Base

Table 1

HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITY PATTERN

in percentages

Men n = 206 (47.4%) **Women** n = 254 (52.6%)



The Rural Households

Household surveys were undertaken in six rural villages in the region between July 1980 and July 1981. For reasons of confidentiality the actual villages are not identified and data has been meshed to give an overall profile. The research method combined household interviews with an observer check list. Interviews were conducted by trained university students (Transkei and Natal) working in cooperation with local chiefs, headmen and villagers. In each village initial contact was established with local leadership through administrative channels. Next a meeting was arranged to explain the survey to the community, before interviews were undertaken.

The sampling technique involved mapping the spatial distribution of homesteads (air photographs were not available) and numbering them. Random samples were drawn to select between twenty and forty households to be interviewed in each village. Altogether the survey covered 182 households.

An average household consists of six or seven persons including those temporarily absent as migrant workers. Households are headed by males, although in reality many women act as household heads for long periods of the year while men are away working in the South African cities. The age-sex distribution reveals that 41 percent are below the age of 15 years. The unbalanced men : women ratio, notably in the 15-40 age group (206 men : 254 women) coupled with the periodic absence of 15.3 percent of the men as migrant workers, retards the capacity of rural households to farm their agricultural land effectively.

What are the usual occupations of rural households? Analysis of the household residents (see Table 1) shows that 18 percent have yet to enter school; 30 percent attend school; 20 percent are engaged in household duties (such as collecting water and wood, cleaning, cooking and tending to the household's crops); and a further 21 percent are in wage employment (mainly as migrants).

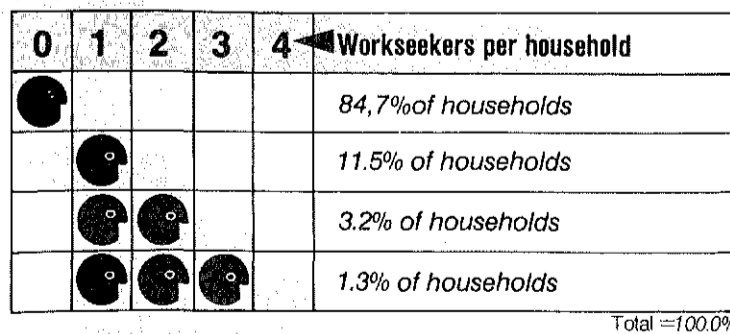
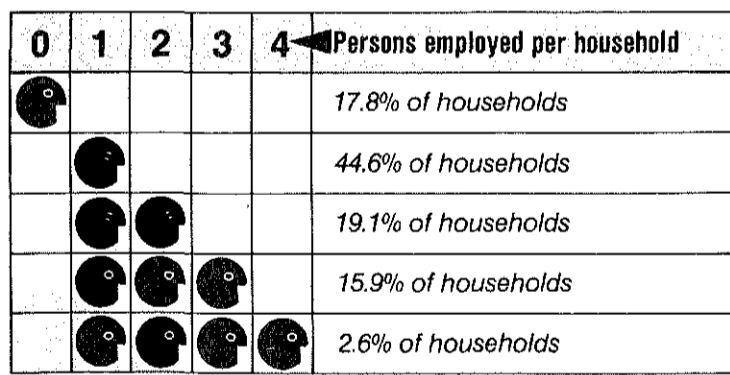
There has been almost no change in the farming approach of people in these "betterment" villages.

Assuming that the labour force of a region normally comprises between 33 percent and 40 percent of the population, the survey results indicate a high unemployment level of 12-19 percent. Turning to employment per household, Table 2 shows that 17.8 percent (almost one out of five households) have no one in wage employment while 15.9 percent of households have at least one workseeker.

On average there are 1.3 wage earners per household, most of whom are in unskilled migrant work in the Republic of South Africa. Table 3 shows employment by sector. The limited opportunities of the rural areas are underlined by the fact that only 3.5 percent of the population have locally based wage jobs.

Table 2

EMPLOYMENT PER HOUSEHOLD





Transkei's small urban centres are the only places where rural people gain access to low order goods and services. Prices are high - at this marketplace a cabbage is sold for 50c and a tin of beans for R9. Over 40 percent of consumer expenditure in rural areas is on food.

TRANSKEI

Household Incomes

Each household in the survey was asked to state the income received by all working members from all sources — formal employment, informal activities, rents, pensions, contributions in kind and so on. On average each household had an annual income of R902 in 1980-81, with only 28.5 percent of households earning more than R1 000 that year (Table 4). Average per capita income was R131 per annum, with 71.6 percent of individuals having an income of less than R150.

The consequences of low incomes and the absence of many able bodied men and women for long periods are seen in expenditure patterns:

- 43.3 percent of consumer expenditure in the rural areas is on food
- rural households spend the most on grain products (13.0 percent of total expenditure), followed by vegetables (8.2 percent) and meat (7.5 percent)

Conclusion

To sum up, a large number of households live in conditions of severe poverty as indicated by the high proportion of aggregate household expenditure on food (43 percent) and that 71 percent of the sample households earned less than R1 000 per annum. People living under these circumstances will not be able to accumulate the resources or energy to improve their lot or make a positive contribution to Transkei's economy without assistance from government. The type of inputs needed are the provision of basic infrastructure such as water, woodlots, access roads and telephones; primary health services; adult training and community directed programmes. It is imperative that the government's services and development efforts reach the outlying rural villages, where most of the region's people live. UDA

Table 3

• EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR •

SECTOR		PLACE OF WORK (migrant)	
Mining	34.4%	PWV complex	63.3%
Agric. — commercial	—	Durban/Natal	30.5%
Agric. — small holder	4.5%	Cape Town	1.5%
Industry	13.5%	O.F.S.	3.9%
Commerce	23.5%	Transkei	0.8%
Government	7.4%	TOTAL	100.0%
Domestic	16.7%		
TOTAL	100.0%		

Table 4

• INCOME •

ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME		ANNUAL PER CAPITA INCOME	
R 0- 500	38.9%	R 0-100	46.3%
R 501-1000	32.6%	R101-150	25.3%
R1001-1500	13.7%	R151-200	11.6%
R1501-2000	9.5%	R201-250	9.5%
R2001+	5.3%	R251+	7.3%
TOTAL	100.0%	TOTAL	100.0%
Mean household income: R902 pa		Mean per capita income: R131 pa	

Table 5

Basic needs indicators in the NE region of Transkei

● ITEM ●	● INDICATORS ●
EMPLOYMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> 18% of households have no one in wage jobs
UNEMPLOYMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> up to 19%
INCOME	<input type="checkbox"/> 71% of households had annual incomes less than R1 100 (1980) <input type="checkbox"/> Per capita income (mean of R131 pa in 1980)
HOUSING	<input type="checkbox"/> 65% live in traditional round homesteads with thatch roofs
HOUSEHOLD SIZE	<input type="checkbox"/> 6,6 persons
OCCUPANCY	<input type="checkbox"/> Average occupancy per structure = 1,9 persons
FOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> No households fully self-sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> 63% of households produce some maize and 33% some vegetables <input type="checkbox"/> of these few are self-sufficient in either maize or vegetables for more than 6 months of the year <input type="checkbox"/> 42% of households have no cattle
SHOPPING	<input type="checkbox"/> 41% of households shop daily, 44% weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Average number of items purchased per trip is two <input type="checkbox"/> Median trip expenditure = R1,20 (1980)
WATER	<input type="checkbox"/> Over 50% of households depend on a river or spring <input type="checkbox"/> Per capita consumption: 10,8 litres/day <input type="checkbox"/> On average one and three-quarter hours a day devoted to water collection and associated activities
SANITATION	<input type="checkbox"/> 70% of households have no facilities; the remainder have pit latrines
FUEL	<input type="checkbox"/> Wood for cooking; paraffin and candles for lighting
HEALTH	<input type="checkbox"/> 3,9 residential clinics per 100 000 people
EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> 45% of adults have no more than std 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 65% of adults probably not effectively literate
AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION OFFICERS	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 per 18 700 people in NE region

Source: Osmond Lange Inc. *Statistical Base for Planning Service Centres*, Chapter 5, 1982. Surveys were undertaken at six rural villages in the NE region (sample size 200 households) during 1980/81.

Rich and Poor in Transkei A Growing Divide

A Study of Income Distribution in Transkei,
by the Institute for Management and Development
Studies of the University of Transkei

Reviewed by Indicator SA Researcher Jeff Zingel

While the South African government continues to pour hundreds of millions of rands into the homeland territories, little is known of the long term effect of such expenditure.

Research undertaken in 1982/83 by Transkei University's Institute for Management and Development Studies among a large sample of urban and rural households indicates that very little of this capital injection travels down the rutted veins of Transkei's rural roads to reach an impoverished majority. The trend is such that a small elite, largely in the towns get the largest slice of available wealth. The most wealthy five percent of surveyed households earn more than 25 percent of all income while 75 percent of rural households live in extreme poverty.

Reviewing the survey data Jeff Zingel concludes that the rural majority perceive little benefit from the capital allocated by Pretoria, and that a considerable initiative is required to provide services and facilities that meet the needs of rural households and the overburdened towns if the rural-urban imbalance is to be redressed.

The controversial homelands policy has generated development and aid expenditure by the South African government on an unprecedented scale. In a recent keynote address to parliament, the leader of the official opposition Dr F van Zyl Slabbert silenced the house with a speech criticising government for 'spending money like it was going out of fashion — creating a four lane highway to disaster' (DN 27/6/84). He noted that 'the South African parliament and the taxpayer paid R2,246 billion this year for a policy which has succeeded in improving the per capita Gross Domestic Product of the people of the self-governing states from R40 to R46 between 1970 and 1980.'

It is widely recognised that political independence or quasi-independence can never mean economic independence for these newly established polities. However, the expenditure unleashed in order to establish new institutions, organisations, facilities, programmes and policies has undoubtedly had some effect on the sub-economics of the different territories.

To what degree have the programmes and policies been effective to date? How is this measured? And what are the right criteria for successful development? These issues concern the burgeoning field of 'development studies'.

At the University of Transkei at Umtata the IMDS (Institute for Management and Development Studies) is engaged in wide-ranging empirically oriented research on

development issues, programmes and problems in Transkei. Recent work by the Institute has drawn attention to an important indicator of development and growth, namely the nature of the distribution of income between urban areas and rural areas, and the skewed distribution between the wealthy and the poor.

In 1982/3 IMDS conducted a survey of 4 500 randomly selected households in all of Transkei's 28 magisterial districts. The survey was conducted by trained interviewers and included samples of households in urban and rural areas.

Rural Incomes — Sources and Distribution

Table 1 details the sources, value and distribution of income for households living in rural areas of Transkei. A degree of caution is necessary in interpreting information about incomes. People in rural areas, like people anywhere else, are generally wary of disclosing detailed information about their income, and are often unable to quantify it directly. Nevertheless the tables disclose important information.

The poorest section of the population forms a large majority, with 63 percent of households having incomes of less than R1 500 per annum. This needs to be viewed against the rural HSL (household subsistence level) calculated for the TBVC states (by the

The survey covered 4 500 randomly selected urban and rural households in all the 28 magisterial districts

Sixty three percent of surveyed rural households had annual incomes below a standard HSL (R1 553) and 75 percent below an adjusted HSL (R2 946)

The marginalised rural population sees little benefit from the prestige spending that goes with an independence geared to providing political solutions to problems of serious regional inequality and historical neglect. (Wild Coast Casino)



The income from home production is negligible, dispelling the assumption that agriculture plays a significant role in rural areas

Only 11 percent of rural households earn between R5 000 and R10 000 per annum, the top income category

Of surveyed urban households, only 18 percent have annual incomes below R1 500, and 33 percent are below the adjusted HSL (R2 946)

Institute for Planning Research at the University of Port Elizabeth) of R1 553 pa (Cragg 1984, p6). Recent work by the IMDS (Cragg, p6) has found it necessary to adjust this HSL on the basis of a number of important considerations (Cragg, p9-45) and their estimate (1983/84) of a more realistic rural HSL is R2 946. At this level 75 percent of the surveyed population (1982/83) do not qualify.

The table reveals that remittances constitute about 68 percent of income to households earning less than R1 500. Across the surveyed population the contribution that home production makes is negligible, never exceeding four percent of total household income. This further dispels the commonly held assumption that agriculture plays a

significant role in rural areas, despite the fact that Transkei is relatively well endowed in terms of climate and rainfall.

The sample reveals that only 11 percent of households are in the top income category, earning between R5 000 and R10 000 per annum. They are largely reliant on wages or salaries, being considerably less dependent on money remitted.

Urban Incomes

In Transkei's urban centres, which include Umtata, Butterworth and 18 small administrative and commercial towns in rural districts, only 18 percent of the surveyed population had incomes below the University of Port Elizabeth's HSL of R1 500 (rural:

Data Base

Table 1

● SOURCES OF INCOME ●

Rural Households

Income Group P.A.	% Households	Wages	Pensions	Remittance	Home Production	Total
0 - 500	23.90	10.65	19.40	67.05	2.90	100
501 - 1000	26.42	12.10	14.30	71.10	2.50	100
1001 - 1500	13.21	15.36	17.11	65.75	1.78	100
1501 - 2000	6.69	26.52	21.40	48.08	4.0	100
2001 - 3000	6.96	37.67	13.89	46.17	2.27	100
3001 - 4000	6.47	74.40	4.24	19.86	1.50	100
4001 - 5000	5.36	80.61	4.22	13.22	1.95	100
5001 - 10000	7.31	69.90	4.43	22.95	2.72	100
10000+	3.68	83.05	8.16	6.08	2.71	100

63%). Thirty-three percent of households had incomes less than the HSL proposed by the IMDS (rural: 75%).

Table 2 provides a detailed comparative breakdown of the distribution of incomes. Significantly, 35 percent of urban households (rural: 11%) had incomes higher than R5 000.

Closer examination of the table reveals the extent to which people in or near towns have command of, or access to sources of income and wealth relative to rural households. (The accompanying articles in this issue provide a comprehensive picture of the role of the towns in rural Transkei, and detail social and material conditions in two rural towns.)

The IMDS survey tabulated the distribution of income across the whole sample population, providing startling results about the extent and nature of wealth in Transkei (table 3). Firstly, income distribution is highly skewed, with the most wealthy five percent of households earning over 25 percent of all income. The top 20 percent of households earn or make 60 percent of income, while the bottom 20 percent earn less than four percent of income.

Conclusion

Such a skewed distribution of wealth in favour of a small elite and the small towns has disturbing implications in the long term. The needs and aspirations of by far the largest majority, the rurally based households, are a long way from being met, with levels of poverty extreme to say the least. Viewed against the fact that the capacity of households to produce sufficient to meet their needs is largely non-existent, the likely long term consequences, already apparent, are the movement of people to areas of access to opportunity, facilities and services. However, these centres offer limited scope and are already overburdened in terms of water supplies, housing, jobs, infrastructure and so on.

The longer term consequences are increased migration to South Africa's larger urban centres, where government attempts at influx control try to halt an inevitable process. Thus the allocation of funding by government towards the development of such impoverished rural regions needs to be directed at the twin demands of the towns and rural areas. A far stronger emphasis needs to be directed at the provision of appropriate infrastructure, services and facilities to meet the more immediate needs of a marginalised population, who at present see little benefit from the prestige spending that has gone with an 'independence' geared to providing political solutions to problems of serious regional inequality and historical neglect.

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Data Base

Table 2

● INCOME DISTRIBUTION ● *Urban, Rural, Total*

RANDS P.A. PER HOUSEHOLD	URBAN		RURAL		TOTAL	
	%	Cum %	%	Cum %	%	Cum %
1 - 200	2.69	2.69	6.75	6.75	5.68	5.68
201 - 400	1.95	4.64	10.11	16.86	7.95	13.63
401 - 600	1.47	6.11	10.15	27.01	7.85	21.48
601 - 800	3.67	9.78	14.53	41.54	11.64	33.12
801 - 1 000	2.69	12.47	8.57	50.11	7.01	40.13
1 001 - 1 500	5.50	17.97	13.16	63.27	11.13	51.26
1 501 - 2 000	2.93	20.90	6.67	69.94	5.68	56.94
2 001 - 3 000	12.47	33.37	6.93	76.87	8.40	65.34
3 001 - 4 000	19.09	52.46	6.45	83.32	9.79	75.13
4 001 - 5 000	12.10	64.56	5.69	89.01	7.40	82.53
5 001 - 7 500	14.79	79.35	5.30	94.31	7.82	90.35
7 501 - 10 000	8.68	88.03	2.69	97.00	4.28	94.63
10 001 - 15 000	6.11	94.14	2.12	99.12	3.18	97.81
15 001 - 20 000	2.44	96.58	0.44	99.56	0.97	98.78
20 001+	3.42	100.00	0.44	100.00	1.22	100.00

Table 3

● INCOME DISTRIBUTION ● *Total Rural and Urban*

		INCOME
TOP	1%	— 9.5%
TOP	5%	— 25.4%
TOP	10%	— 43.8%
TOP	20%	— 59.8%
BOTTOM	50%	— 34.0%
BOTTOM	30%	— 8.2%
BOTTOM	20%	— 3.36%
BOTTOM	10%	— 0.6%
BOTTOM	5%	— 0.2%

Case Study

PORTRAIT OF A



TRANSKEI TOWN

A research study of Qumbu-Lower Roza
by Terence Moll of the Development Studies Unit at Natal University

Reviewed by Indicator Researcher Jeff Zingel

Qumbu, once a colonial village, now an African town, exhibits many features common to Transkei's smaller urban centres - forming a metropolitan centre for the surrounding rural communities, and linking them to the wider South African economy.

In a paper presented at the Carnegie Conference on Poverty, Terence Moll presented a detailed research study of the Qumbu-Lower Roza area. He found that, as elsewhere throughout Transkei, money sent home by migrant workers constitutes the single most important source of income, and that local employment opportunities, both in the formal and informal sectors are very limited. A vicious circle of migrancy, a weak local infrastructure and the predominant purchasing of South African products inhibits the development of the local economy.

Jeff Zingel visited the area, and combines his impressions with a review of Moll's research.

Qumbu serves the growing demands and needs of a community located in Johannesburg, Durban, Umtata and the outlying hinterland

Sixty kilometres north of Transkei's capital Umtata, on the tarred N2 route is the town of Qumbu and the adjacent settlements of the Lower Roza Administrative Area. Approaches to Qumbu are impressive — large gum plantations blanket the tops of rolling hills and, tucked in the gullies and valleys, are pockets of magnificent indigenous forest. On the village commonage agricultural equipment is stored in rows, waiting for use for seasonal work at a large agricultural project.

Prior to independence in 1976, Qumbu was a popular centre for weekend polo — enjoyed by farmers and traders from as far afield as Umzimkulu and Komga. Then a small administrative and commercial centre in South Africa's Transkei Territory, Qumbu was the seat of the area's white magistrate and district commissioner. Quaint but orderly houses set back from the commercial development along the central national road were the homes of traders,

officials, retired stock-inspectors, and farmers. If you blinked while driving through Qumbu, you might hardly notice it — a 'peaceful' small town in South Africa's colonial days.

An African Town

Qumbu is now and will remain an African town — a centre attempting to serve the increasing needs and demands of a vibrant but complex community located in Johannesburg, Durban, Umtata and the outlying rural areas. There are no foreign-run take-aways here — young blades hang around in the shops, chatting up girls buying one or two tiny items to 'fill' their plastic supermarket baskets. At any lunchhour, the Qumbu hotel bar is a lively centre of debate — crowded by work seekers, local workers and men returned from periods of work away. Whites are noticeable by their complete absence.

Qumbu serves as the local metropolis of the area, providing jobs and trade, and it is to smaller settlements like Lower Roza on the outskirts, that people from further outlying areas move for cheaper housing and easy access. Here most households have gardens nearby, and agricultural and grazing lands are situated in valleys between the villages. Work done is primarily non-agricultural; the old distinction between town and country is now very blurred.

Moll describes peoples' circumstances as a 'mixed and threadbare bag'; mixed because a wide variety of income generating activities are undertaken, ranging from highly productive jobs in the South African economy to resigned attempts by old men, wives and widows to eke out a precarious subsistence from denuded soil; threadbare because the absolute income levels of the majority of the people are extremely low. Most working people migrate weekly or monthly to other Transkei towns and to South Africa. Money sent home is the single most important source of household income.

Employment Opportunities

Qumbu district provides formal jobs for only 14 percent of working people surveyed. The limited opportunity is available in three distinct 'earning groups':

- Lesser jobs are found in commerce (supermarket packers, garage attendants), in domestic service in Qumbu town, and in agriculture-related services (tractor drivers, dipping tank assistants etc) which pay as little as R40 monthly.
- The next grouping includes builders, lower level clerks and poorly qualified teachers and nurses — earning around R225 per month.
- Top jobs (highly desirable because of the advantages of living with families and being able to commute) are in highly paid government service and teaching posts for the well qualified, which net over R350 per month.

Builders make a reasonable living building houses and huts in the district (making an average of R220 monthly). Although earnings are curtailed in the wet summer months, most builders interviewed preferred this work to wage-employment, and had previously worked in construction firms in South Africa, saving to buy tools and equipment in order to 'retire' to Lower Roza.

For the rest, 18 percent (of the surveyed sample) found jobs elsewhere in Transkei — being the best paid on the whole with average monthly incomes of R284. The Republic draws 68 percent who earn an average of R229 per month. People stay in the same jobs for an average of six years, while those with more education (std 8 and above) keep jobs significantly longer than others.

Non-formal Employment

Survival for those without formal jobs depends on getting casual work and on self employment. Moll interviewed 400 underemployed and 'non-economically' active adults. Of these, 304 people indicated they had managed to do some work in the preceding year. Some were involved in

Table 1

MARKET-ORIENTED CASUAL WORK

● COMMODITY PRODUCTION FOR SALE ●			
Brickmaking	2	1	1
Foodstuffs	17	5	12
Grasswork	14	0	14
Clothes, sewing	13	0	13
Firewood collection and sale	7	1	6
Shoe repair	2	2	0
Candle makers	3	0	3
Herbalists	4	3	1
Other	7	7	0
Total	69	19	50
	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE

● TEMPORARY WAGE-LABOUR ●			
Working in other people's fields	15	8	7
Building, plastering	20	12	8
Looking after children	3	0	3
Washing	6	1	5
Other	5	1	4
Total	49	22	27
	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE

Source: T Moll, 1984, p17

Qumbu district provides jobs for 14 percent of working people surveyed, 18 percent have jobs elsewhere in Transkei and 68 percent work in the Republic

For those without formal jobs, necessity imposes a strong reliance on the limited natural resources of the local environment

It is not surprising that many wish to leave for the larger urban centres such as Soweto and Pinetown, where informal incomes are almost double what opportunities in Qumbu allow for

Because remittances are largely spent on South African goods, local productive activity and job creation are constrained, leaving little room for informal work to expand

producing goods for sale, others had had temporary work. Necessity imposes a strong reliance on the limited natural resources of the local environment. A third of those producing goods for sale were busy transforming locally available products such as grass, reeds and wood into items for sale. And, as in the rest of Africa, here a quarter were engaged in preparing food and home-brewed beer in exchange for a portion of incomes earned largely elsewhere. Some drive private taxis, are healers and herbalists, make candles, shoes and whips for sale, or cart water from streams for sale in the unserved villages (See table 1). Temporary jobs include looking after children, doing washing, plastering and working in the fields of others.

Such informal work is temporary, seasonal and often short-lived. It realises extremely low incomes, often involves being harassed by police, and usually requires the payment of a small tribute to local political authorities. On average, women earn about R37 monthly, while men realise about R59.

Living at this level, it is not surprising that many wish to leave for South Africa's urban centres. In 1980 Soweto hawkers earned an average R70 per week (Rogerson et al, 1982). In a peri-urban area near Pinetown average monthly informal incomes have been noted as being R118 for men and R65 for women — twice what opportunities in Qumbu allow for (Cross et al, 1983).

Agriculture — A Fruitless Pursuit

Agricultural production is a minor activity with low rewards. Output has been further limited by the effects of the long drought. Of the surveyed sample, only one 'farmer' claimed to market maize, while a few sell milk, meat or wool regularly. Maize production amounts to virtually nothing — 155 surveyed households reaped less than half a 70kg bag, another 45 households averaged about 5 bags each and only 8 households were self-sufficient in maize in 1983. Many women felt cultivation to be a waste of time, but grew a few mealies as they said their husbands and families expected it.

Unemployed and Unemployable

Qumbu's streets have their share of jostling, anxious men and women out of work, looking for jobs or simply unemployable. Moll notes that 'most were fairly sanguine about job prospects. Although 88 percent felt they would accept a job in Qumbu paying only R50 a month, they would hope to find a better one later. Fifty-three percent had worked before, over half of whom claimed to have ceased work after their firms closed, or after they had been laid off. Another 26 percent had left school within the past two years. Most respondents who showed enthusiasm about a possible job weren't looking for work because they felt none was available. Probably best described as 'discouraged unemployed' they would like formal jobs of almost any kind, but have been unemployed so long they have given up looking and may in fact be unemployable.'

Reality and Implications

This small section of Transkei's economy and society highlights the circumstances and predicament of many such places across Southern Africa. Massive internal income differences exist — a few people earn high wages in a rapidly expanding, well entrenched and well paid state bureaucracy, while the bulk of people have no access to local sources of income. Local political power centres around access to the civil service and the administration, supported by Umtata, while 'traditional' chiefly structures slowly disintegrate. While more people than the land can support hold onto their traditionally allotted land rights, subsistence production has ceased to be viable. Yet land provides people with some nominal rural income, and is used to encourage political quiescence.

Moll links this scenario to Transkei's position in the South African economy. Capital intensive industrialisation since World War II led to the emergence of an overall 'labour surplus' situation emerging in the Transkei and other homelands in the 1970s. More recently, South Africa's demand for migrant workers from foreign countries, and perhaps even from 'independent' homelands has decreased. Transkei's many unemployed and those entering the labour market each year face massive difficulties, since the demand for Transkei labour remains constant at best, and may be falling.

Influx control and pass laws have confined Transkei's people to overpopulated rural homesteads on which agricultural productivity is minimal. Internal capital accumulation and infrastructural development are very limited. Those looking for work are confronted by rudimentary local labour markets, rigidly structured by education and sex criteria. Government policy is directed at educating the labour force for better jobs, but in the absence of more positions as well as 'better' positions, this is likely to create a larger pool of people with high job expectations and no jobs. To some extent this process is already visible, especially among women.

Casual, informal sector work provides no panacea to unemployment problems in areas such as Qumbu and is simply a form of welfare to the very poor and unemployed. Moll concludes that a vicious circle is apparent: remittances, the bulk of income, are largely spent on South African goods, constraining the development of local economic activity and a local economic infrastructure. This in turn results in a virtual absence of local job opportunities. The local informal sector, being survival oriented, is diversified to the extent that consolidation and development of this sector is unlikely. *Umtata*

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Case Study

Rural Urbanisation



Population Movement in the Periphery

An inflow of people from remote settlements are relocating themselves alongside roads and on the outskirts of centres such as Matatiele and Qacha's Nek.

A research study of the Matatiele-Qacha's Nek area
of Natal, Transkei and Lesotho
by Andrew Spiegel of the Department of Anthropology
at the University of Cape Town

Reviewed by Indicator SA Researcher Jeff Zingel

The process of urbanisation in South Africa is beleaguered with misconceptions, some of which were exposed in Vol 2 No 2 of the Urban Monitor. Urbanisation is mostly seen from the perspective of the white urban centres, as a process from which they need to be protected by influx control legislation. In addition, it is widely believed that the process is rapid and direct; as though impoverished rural people pack up and move directly to the outskirts of the city.

Recent research by Andrew Spiegel, presented in a Carnegie Conference paper, illustrates that from a rural perspective the process is far more complex and incremental than is often assumed. Spiegel's study of an area where Transkei and Natal interface with Lesotho illustrates a process of internal, or rural-rural migration, as people abandon 'traditional' areas in the rural hinterland for the marginally better prospects of 'roadside settlements' and freehold farms near rural towns.

The conditions which give rise to this process have become increasingly familiar: tribal allotments, betterment schemes and rural villages lack the economic infrastructure to support a growing population; the large part of money in circulation has been earned by migrant labourers in South Africa, or by government employees in the homelands; agricultural subsistence is no longer possible.

Jeff Zingel outlines Spiegel's research, and adds some local colour gleaned from a recent visit to the area. He concludes that a new set of circumstances is emerging in marginal rural areas in South Africa – posing problems for which existing structures and policies have no answer.



The older dwellings in Qacha's Nek village are characterised by immaculately cut local stone. A process of internal, or rural-rural migration is changing the face of the village.

Serving a varied South African, Transkeian and Lesotho population, Matatiele turns over about R120 million per annum

At month end, buses and bakkies transport commuters, migrants and supplies from Matatiele to three different countries

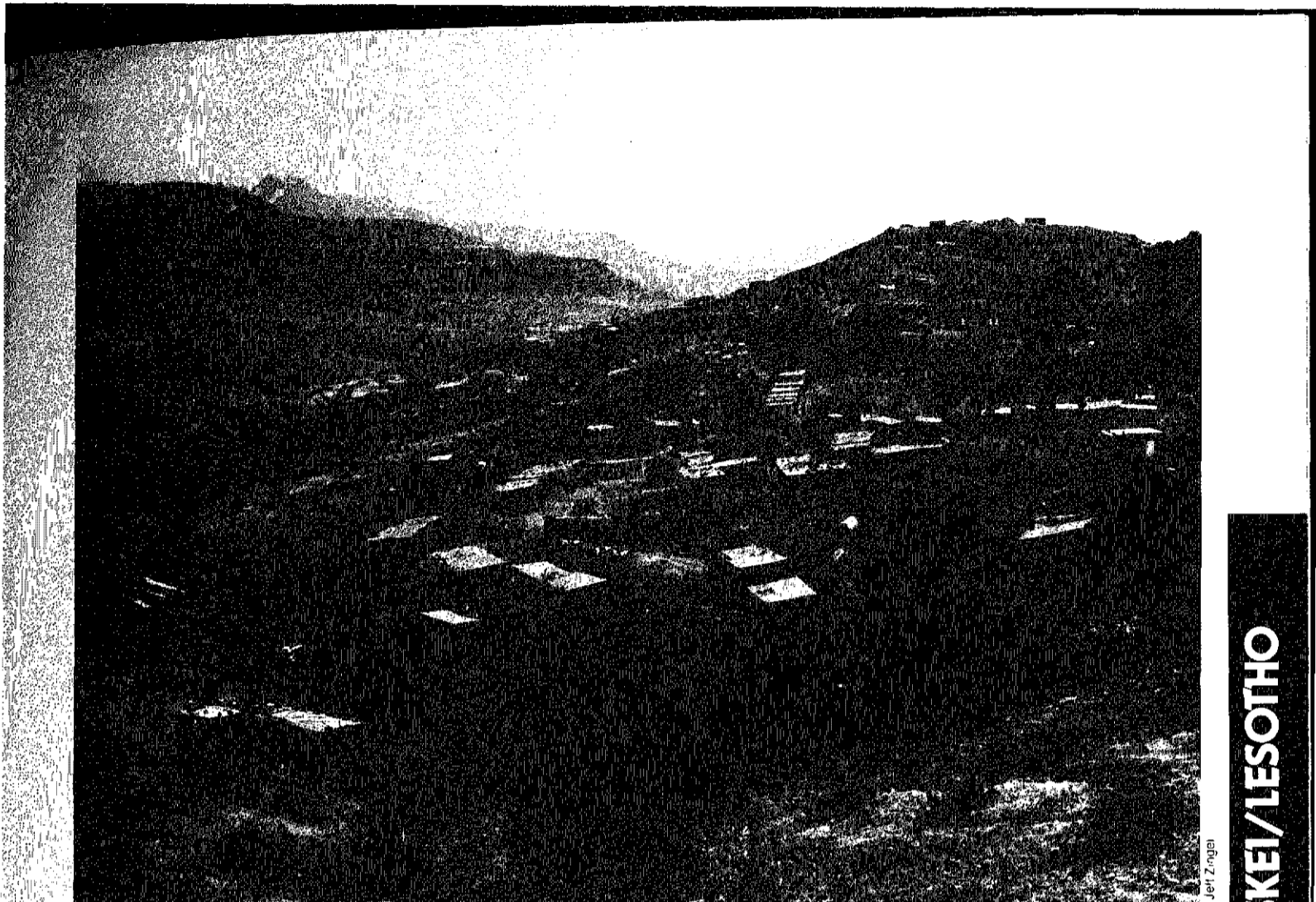
A Matatiele lawyer boasts that his practice deals with cases in three countries during a single day's business. He also tells the story of a middle-aged African woman walking into a car dealer and paying for a Toyota 4x4 from a plastic bag full of banknotes — and adds that on completion of the transaction the bag was not empty.

Such stories abound in Matatiele, once in the Cape Province, now in Natal, an hour's rocky drive from Lesotho and bordering on Transkei. Here the dynamics of a truly Southern African configuration are played out — within South Africa. Serving a varied South African, Transkeian and Lesotho population, the town turns over about R120 million every year. About R10 million comes from the South African sector, R65 million from people in Transkei, and about R45 million from Lesotho, especially from the nearby Lesotho town of Qacha's Nek. As Lesotho and Transkei have no real productive base, apart from some dagga, old licensed diamond diggings and a little agriculture, most of the money spent in Matatiele is earned in the cities, mines and farms of South Africa, or in government service in Transkei and Lesotho.

At the interface of the white part of the town (where houses with the colonial verandahs are sold for R100 000 and more) are the

plethora of wholesale and retail outlets cashing in on the black trade. Names like Maluti Wholesalers, Gain Supermarket, Sondela Store, Ellerines, Edworks, BB Wholesalers and Frasers Supermarket are displayed against the drab IBR sheeting facades of numerous stores. Adjacent are the taxi-ranks — all four-wheel drive vehicles or sturdy bakkies here — and the bus rank. Thirty to forty buses are in operation, loaded to capacity at month-end, as migrants and commuters cart supplies back to the impoverished hinterland.

Literally on the wrong side of the railway track is the coloured settlement — homes of the descendants of the original Griqua settlers. Houses are rectangular, the unpaved streets in the familiar grid pattern. The African township, for those with legal rights to stay there, is just along from here but separated from the coloured area by a large rehabilitation centre/hospital run by the South African National Tuberculosis Association. (Cynics call it the dumping ground for miners drawn from the area.) The brick houses are smaller, squarer, with numbers painted on the doors. Families are larger, and clusters of children and mothers are outside playing and cooking. Men walking home from work in the town gather in the beerhall, located at the entrance to the



Areas such as Matatiele and Qacha's Nek have a limited capacity to absorb the continual influx caused by the breakdown of 'traditional solutions' in outlying areas.

Jer Zingel

complex. From here black firebreaks bisect the winter eragrostis pastures of the municipality farm — with the snow covered Drakensberg mountains forming an imposing backdrop.

Rural-Rural Migration

At nearby Qacha's Nek village in Lesotho the ribbon type development along the main street is marked by the use of locally made concrete blocks and imported orange bricks. Older parts of the village have been built of immaculately cut local stone. Few whites live here, and those who do are from Europe or the United States on contract with voluntary or aid organisations. Lesotho citizens stand and wait for stores to open, or for buses and four-wheel drive vehicles to take them to outlying districts. Large flocks of long-wooled Angora goats are driven across the village.

A relatively new phenomenon is occurring in Qacha's Nek district — internal, or rural-rural migration. An inflow of people from remote settlements are moving to live on the steep slopes at the edge of the town, and on the outskirts of small centres on the district's roads. In South Africa the phenomenon is common but is called urbanisation and centres on the outskirts of the major cities. (Graham Howe detailed the scale and scope of this urbanisation and squatting in Durban, Johannesburg and Capetown in Indicator SA Vol 2 No 2.)

Here it is a different matter. People who

cannot make a living, or who have lost the security of 'traditional rights' are moving, not to the cities from which they are barred but to rural centres, which offer some, albeit extremely limited, opportunity.

It is now increasingly 'commonplace that the most important source of the means of subsistence for rural households in Southern Africa is the wages earned by absent household members working as migrant labourers and which are either remitted or brought home' (Spiegel 1984, p1). And it is only at these rural towns that rural people are able to obtain a range of goods and services to meet their needs. However, many families have neither wage earners or pensioners, and these people are required instead to use various means to *gain access to the remitted wealth of others*. A continuous process of migration towards roadside and 'urban outskirts' settlements and to freehold farms is occurring, particularly among families who cannot hope to obtain access to arable agricultural resources. It is access to modern amenities, to potential employment and to opportunities for informal income-generating activities that prompt this relocation.

Typically the people moving to villages alongside district roads are likely to be junior children of families in distant settlements. These people are unlikely to gain access to the limited arable land or other rural agricultural resources but have the ability to become, or already are, wage earners. Circumstances are such that they choose not

The most important source of the means of subsistence for these rural households are wages remitted by migrant workers.

Families without wage earners are required to use various means to gain access to the remitted wealth of others

Such people are unlikely to gain access to rural agricultural resources, and have become a wage-earning or wage-seeking class

Limited place in Transkei's betterment areas and the reluctance of headmen to allocate the diminishing sites in traditional areas lead to demand for sites on freehold land

The new generation has no choice but to attempt to procure permanent and independent accommodation close to centres of opportunity and access

Policy options for local growth are limited to involving local people and entrepreneurs in the development of essential infrastructure and tertiary services

to remain in their natal villages, and move to more accessible places to establish independent homes. Significantly a large proportion of households at roadside villages are headed by single women — young widows of men killed in industrial accidents, unmarried mothers and women deserted by husbands — who build, independently, homes in order to take advantage of passing trade by selling beer, vending food and conducting other related informal commercial activities.

Spiegel (1984) has documented one village in Lesotho, isolated and accessible only by horseback, a day's journey in a four-wheel drive vehicle, or by an aircraft operating from Matatiele, which is an exception to the general rule. Here there is relatively very little landlessness (only 7.4 percent of households are without land) and agricultural potential is sufficient to support larger herds. This provides many households with sufficient resources to withstand fairly long periods where no members of the family are away earning a wage. This village is perhaps one of the last remaining places in Southern Africa where this situation survives. Spiegel however notes that this is only possible due to the outflow of younger people which allows 'those left behind not to feel the pinch of the near universal process of dispossession and marginalisation so markedly' (pg 17).

'The relatively large scale and rapid immigration of residential tenants from a number of different areas and circumstances onto (African-owned) freehold farms located on the roadside and within easy access of Matatiele and the railhead provides yet another indication of the process of internal rural-rural migration constantly occurring in the rural periphery of Southern Africa' (p32).

One such freehold farm researched by Spiegel in 1983 had 252 households and more were being demarcated by the owners and built on by new tenants almost every day. Sixty-five percent of these dwellings had been built since 1971. Of these, 50 percent were occupied by households originally from other 'locations', often after a long period of service on white farms, and 10 percent were homes of ex-farm workers or residents of prescribed urban areas who had been relocated to Transkei.

Two major factors which lead to the demand for sites on freehold land are the limited places available in the 'betterment areas' of Transkei, and the increasing reluctance of headmen to allocate the diminishing number of sites in traditional areas to those who need them.

Spiegel's findings indicate a breakdown in the capacity of the two major settlement or housing options available to people in rural areas: tribally allotted land and 'betterment schemes'. Betterment schemes were so designed that space for housing for subsequent generations is now not available. Twenty-five years after the conception of the strategy the results are now apparent. The allocation of land in tribally administered

areas is increasingly becoming open to severe abuse, given the situation of limited available space, peoples' continual expectations of rights to that space and increasing demand.

Implications

The scenarios outlined here of conditions around Qacha's Nek and Matatiele have important implications for people in rural areas, rural towns and South Africa's cities and farms.

Rural areas in South Africa's homelands and in Lesotho are now experiencing a new phenomenon. This is manifested as a new generation of people, whose rights and opportunities in the 'traditional solutions' no longer exist, and who have a completely new set of needs and demands. These people have no choice but to attempt to procure permanent and independent accommodation close to centres of opportunity and access. They may be regarded in a sense as an international wage-earning or wage-seeking class. Alternatively, they become marginalised to the extent of virtually total dependence on income gained from providing limited and low order services locally to those people in wage employment either in the area or in South Africa. In a very real sense then, this marginalised informal sector is dependent on remittances from active members of the South African economy.

Areas such as Matatiele and Qacha's Nek have a limited capacity to continue to absorb the continual influx created by these factors. A result is increased movement of people to Umtata in the case of Transkei and Maseru in the case of Lesotho, which in turn places an increased burden on the limited organised capacity of these larger centres to provide solutions for the people moving in. As a result, people live in squalor, at the mercy of chieftains and land-owning entrepreneurs. At the end of this chain of population migration are South Africa's white cities, with their strict influx control requirements. It is not surprising, given these factors, that people are prepared to risk arrest in order to gain access to the central economy.

The range of policy options for such areas are limited. Decentralisation as we know it is far from providing the necessary solution. There are, however, two areas of development that may provide limited solutions. The first lies in the need for the provision of essential and appropriate services — electricity, sewerage, schooling, health, water supplies — which involve local people in the process. Secondly, the incorporation of local entrepreneurs in the development of other tertiary services — taxi services, bus services, retailing, filling stations, workshops etc — may go some way towards strengthening the economic base of South Africa's peripheral areas. *IPWA*

SOURCE

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