

A MIXED AND THREADBARE BAG.  
EMPLOYMENT, INCOMES AND POVERTY  
IN LOWER ROZA, QUMBU, TRANSKEI

by

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Working Paper No. 8

Development Studies Unit  
University of Natal  
Durban 1984

#### DEVELOPMENT STUDIES UNIT

The Development Studies Unit is a multi-disciplinary unit within the Centre for Applied Social Sciences at the University of Natal in Durban. The Development Studies Unit was established at the beginning of 1982 with the purpose of providing a focus for research into the problems of of developing areas, with a view to assisting the University to play a meaningful role in the upgrading of the quality of life in the poorer areas surrounding it.

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ISBN 0 - 86980 - 380 - 8

Published simultaneously by the Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa as Carnegie Conference Paper No 47, April, 1984, ISBN 0 7992 0753 5.

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**A MIXED AND THREADBARE BAG: POVERTY, EMPLOYMENT AND INCOMES  
IN LOWER ROZA, TRANSKEI**

THE SURVEY

The Lower Roza Administrative Area is in the Qumbu District of Transkei, extending from 5km southeast of Qumbu to the Tsitsa River. It is administered by a Headman. The people live in six dispersed settlements<sup>1</sup>, the total population of which (including migrant workers) is probably in the vicinity of 7 950.

Many households have gardens nearby, while agricultural lands and grazing areas are situated in valleys between the villages. Local employment opportunities are limited largely to teaching in schools and state agricultural activities (Transkei Agricultural Corporation, dipping tank work and so on), and in Qumbu there is a small government bureaucracy, a few jobs in commerce and some domestic work. Most workers migrate to other Transkei towns or South Africa; remittances are the single most important source of household incomes.

Households formed the basis of the survey, run in November and December 1983. 200 were surveyed, and the 4-part questionnaire ranged from demographic factors to migrant labour, remittances, household assets and

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1. Areas like Lower Roza are normally termed 'rural', with the corresponding implication of very low urbanisation levels in Transkei (Van den Berg, 1983: 38; Hawkins Associates, 1980: 80). While they lack infrastructure and official authorities, they are often closely integrated into the economies of nearby towns, and may function as mere 'suburbs' thereof. Inside Lower Roza, non-agricultural productive activities are more important than agricultural ones and the traditional town-country distinction is blurring (see Hansen & Radwan, 1982: 103).

casual work activities. Data was collected on all household members, including migrants who had visited or sent money in the past two years (see Table 1).

#### THE POPULATION

The 200 households had a total of 1390 members, an average of 6,95 per household. Of these, 262 were members normally absent from the household (250 with jobs, 8 unemployed and seeking work, and 4 not working and not seeking work), but 42 were present in Lower Roza at the time of survey, mostly on holiday or between migrant contracts.

The age distribution of the population is given in Table 1. Males dominate the pre-working-age groups<sup>1</sup>, but females preponderate in older age-groups, especially aged 65 and above. Overall, females made up 51,5% of the population; the masculinity rate was 0,94. In the 15-64 age-group, it fell to 0,88.

The permanently resident population is mostly female; the overall masculinity rate for people of working age was 0,58, varying between 0,91 (15-19) and 0,37 (45-54). The figures are deceptive, of course; many absentees are home over the November-January period and away during the year. As of 10 December, the de facto adult masculinity rate was about 0,64.

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1. This is surprising and almost certainly incorrect. During the survey a tendency was noted for interviewers to undercount small girls and female babies - they aren't really regarded as household members, unlike small boys. Many children are also sent from South Africa to attend school in Lower Roza, mostly boys.

Table 1. Age Distribution of the Total Sample Population

Age Group	Percentage in each category:								
	Permanent			Absentees			Total		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
0-14	57,3	38,8	47,0	0	0	0	42,3	34,2	38,0
15-19	12,9	11,1	11,9	2,8	3,5	3,1	10,2	10,2	10,2
20-24	8,5	10,3	9,5	19,2	18,8	19,1	11,3	11,3	11,3
25-34	6,4	9,5	8,2	36,7	42,4	38,5	14,4	13,4	13,9
35-44	4,8	8,4	6,8	18,6	21,2	19,5	8,5	9,9	9,2
45-54	3,6	7,8	5,9	18,1	10,6	15,6	7,4	8,1	7,8
55-64	3,4	6,5	5,1	4,0	2,4	3,4	3,6	6,0	4,8
65+	3,0	7,6	5,6	0,6	1,2	0,8	2,4	6,8	4,7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N =	497	631	1128	177	85	262	674	716	1390

Note: Columns may not add to exactly 100 percent due to rounding.

Two thirds of the absentees are male, and 93% come from the four age-groups in the 20-54 range. Age-specific absentee rates for men are consistently over 40% in this range, reaching 67% for the 25-34 age-group.

#### THE WORK-SITUATION IN LOWER ROZA

Respondents above the age of 14 and not at school in 1983 were divided into two categories, and separate questionnaires filled out for each: i) formal sector workers (including both migrants and those with jobs in the district), and ii) the underemployed and non-labour-force partici-

pants. 'Formal sector' work was defined flexibly, on the basis of regular income and (some) job security<sup>1</sup>.

#### 1. FORMAL SECTOR WORKERS.

Altogether data was collected on 291 formal sector workers, 192 (68,7%) men and 91 (31,3%) women. Jobs in which workers live at home in Lower Roza and work in the Qumbu District are 14% of all jobs, and migrants inside Transkei (internal migrants) make up another 18%. 68% of all workers work in South Africa (external migrants). Internal migrants are the best paid on the whole, earning an average monthly income of R284, followed by external migrants on R229 and local workers on R204.

The industrial distribution is given in Table 2, accompanied by such income figures as could be collected. Almost 66% of the men are in productive work (mining, manufacturing and construction), while for women this figure is only 7%. Women dominate domestic service, and are well represented in government (Transkei and South Africa); 81% of women workers are found in these two categories<sup>1</sup>. Where parastatals are

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1. This led to several anomalies - how to classify a local builder (earning R300 per month from March to September each year, but very little otherwise) or herbalist (with a substantial but erratic income), for example. In practice, the former was assigned to i) above on the basis of marketable skills in the formal sector of the economy, and the latter to ii). Alternatively, where were migrants on holiday to go? If they had been unemployed for less than three months and were confident of getting their jobs back, they were classified in i); otherwise in ii).

1. African women in the reserves have never been directly essential to capitalist production in South Africa; due to their late proletarianisation, they have been assigned menial places in services and 'extra-capitalist' domestic labour (Bozzoli, 1983: 163-4; Yawitch, 1983: 82-85), or bureaucratic jobs in homeland governments for a fortunate few.



there and in South African government employment. The only area where women are paid more than men is in the Transkei Government Service, which makes up 21% of all jobs.

Five of the above workers are apparently in the urban 'informal sector', mainly petty trade, of which four are women. Lower Roza informants seemed to regard such jobs as acceptably lucrative; all five remitted regularly.

It is interesting that nobody was employed in South African agriculture. This may reflect the fact that the demand for agricultural labour appears to decline towards the end of the year (Wakelin, 1983a: 3); on the other hand, agricultural jobs are in strong disfavour among men in the area and they may prefer to search for better jobs instead - with some chance of finding them, due to good access to Qumbu and the Labour Bureau.

The occupational distribution and corresponding earnings of the labour force is given in Table 3. Men earn more than women in all occupations. 'White-collar' jobs are the most lucrative on the whole, with professional and clerical jobs averaging well over R300 per month for both men and women (23% of the total), matched only by a handful of supervisory and skilled jobs (5%). Most such professional jobs are in the Transkei government.

For men, 'farm and forestry' and sales occupations are the worst paid at R181 per month, and are largely jobs in commerce and agriculture in the district. Women are paid the least in sales and services.

Table 3. Occupational Distribution of the Labour Force

	Male		Female		Monthly Earnings (R)	
	No.	%	No.	%	Male	Female
Professional	12	6.5	32	35.2	370	306
Administrative	6	3.3	0	0	325	
Clerical	14	7.6	5	5.5	339	268
Sales	6	3.3	7	7.7	173	136
Service	25	13.6	41	45.1	226	93
Farm & Forestry	6	3.3	1	1.1	181	
Skilled	8	4.3	1	1.1	333	
Semi-skilled	31	16.8	0	0	266	
Unskilled	76	41.3	4	4.4	213	164
Total	184	100.0	91	100.0		

Notes:

1. The category 'Professional' includes lower-level professional occupations - teaching, nursing etc, while that of 'Administrative' is largely lower-level management and supervisory work.
2. Earnings figures are omitted where there were less than three cases.
3. Columns may not add to exactly 100 percent due to rounding.

Workers appear to enjoy a high degree of job stability. The average worker had had his/her job for six years, and 26% for over eight years. 23% of workers had begun their current jobs within the past year. Those with more education (Standard 8 and above) kept jobs significantly longer than the rest of the workforce.

Worker educational levels are summarised in Table 4. Working men have

Table 4. Educational Distribution of the Labour Force

	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
None	25	12.6	3	3.3	28	9.7
0 - Std 3	36	18.2	9	9.9	45	15.6
Stds 4 - 5	47	23.7	13	14.3	60	20.8
Stds 6 - 7	48	24.2	24	26.4	72	24.9
Std 8	13	6.6	13	14.3	26	9.0
Std 9	6	3.0	7	7.7	13	4.5
Std 10	11	5.6	5	5.5	16	5.5
Post-Std 10	12	6.1	17	18.7	29	10.0
Total	198	100.0	91	100.0	289	100.0

Notes:

1. Some workers had post-school academic qualifications without having a Std 10 (eg nursing and teaching diplomas); they are all included in the Post-Std 10 category. Most have at least Std 8.
2. No data was collected on vocational education.
3. Totals may not add to exactly 100 percent due to rounding.

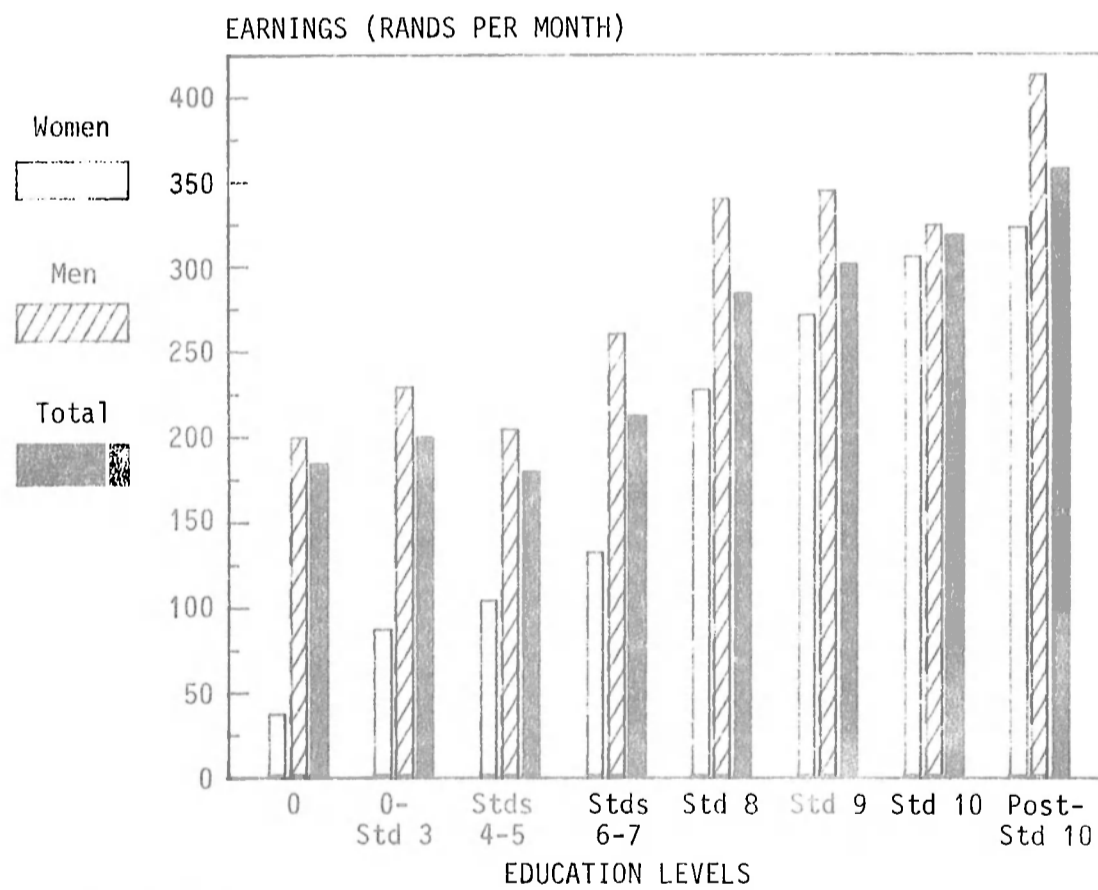
less education on the average than women - for example, 54,5% of men have not gotten beyond Standard 3, as compared to 27,5% of women. Women have more post-Std 10 qualifications (largely teaching and nursing diplomas). A Spearman rank-correlation test revealed that in terms of education the average male worker could be a random selection from all men aged 15-65, but the average women worker is substantially better educated than the average woman (significant at 0,5%), providing a strong indication that some form of job-selection process based on educational qualifications is at work.

process based on educational qualifications is at work.

Most women are in occupations closely associated with their educational levels. Referring to Tables 2 and 3, it can be seen that 83% of women are employed in three such occupational categories - low-level professional and clerical work in government and domestic service.

The relation between sex, education and income is depicted in Figure 1. Men earn consistently more than women at all educational levels, but the benefit of education is greater for women, and once they have passed a crucial level of about Standard 8, their earnings rise appreciably.

Figure 1. Labour Force Earnings, by Education and Sex



The effects of industrial distribution and occupation were as important in determining income as education for men, and seemingly independent of education. There appears to be a degree of 'randomness' in the way men are 'assigned' into industries and even occupations. This could well occur through the operations of labour bureaux - if otherwise similar workers are assigned to manufacturing, mining and commerce, say, on this basis alone, manufacturing workers are likely to earn more than mining workers, who will be better paid than commerce workers (see Lacey, 1982: 50-1).

The importance of education appears to be related to the following:

- i) Government salary structures are based largely on qualifications, and this directly affects 27% of the labour force, including proportionally more women. The education-salary relation is far stronger inside Transkei where government employment forms over half of all jobs, than for external migrants. Education seems to determine area of employment: more educated workers seek (and often get) work inside Transkei, less educated workers outside it (significant correlation at 0,5%).
- ii) It appears workers' chances of acquiring and keeping good jobs outside government may be coming to depend in part on education - firms are demanding higher worker educational standards, even in the mining industry.

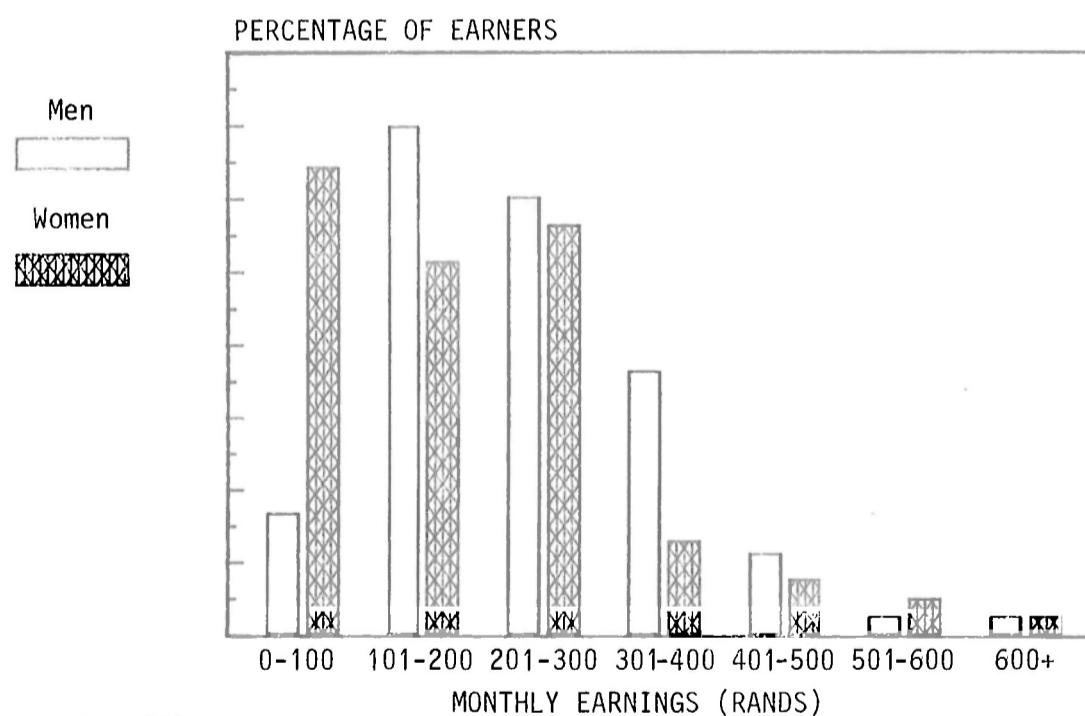
Education per se is not necessarily the answer, though; as with studies elsewhere (Mazumdar, 1981: 84), the human capital model of the direct relation between education, productivity and wages fits far better at the upper end of the income distribution (significant at 2% for the better-paid 50%) than at the lower end (not significant). Strictly

speaking, however, such statistics are subject to truncation bias (Fields, 1980: 82f) and hence invalid.

Nevertheless, regression of education on income indicates that a year of school is worth about R34 per month to women and R23 per month to men - in the long run, schooling appears to be an exceptionally rational form of investment of household income. Educational qualifications may also simply increase the probability of job-seekers finding work.

The distribution of worker incomes is shown in Figure 2. The mean monthly earnings figure is R236, R199 for women and R258 for men. About 32% of women earn less than R100 per month, compared to 8% of men. Higher incomes are also a male prerogative, though more ambiguously; 27% of men earn more than R300 per month, compared to 14% of women.

Figure 2. Income Distribution of the Labour Force, by Sex



Regression of incomes with factors like education, experience, sex, age, industry and occupation for the workforce as a whole indicate that all are significant at a 1% level, with the exception of age. Education was by far the most important overall determinant of income.

Based on all the above indicators, it seems Lower Roza workers certainly do not face a competitive labour market; they encounter a variety of rather rudimentary segmented<sup>1</sup> markets (Ryan, 1981), with differential effects on worker incomes. The major determinants of access to market structures seem to be sex and education, while within markets, experience<sup>2</sup>, occupation and industry are important.

#### REMITTANCES

250 of the 291 workers were migrants. Of these, 171 (68%) gave data on both wages and remittances. Most workers (90%) remitted, and did so on average every second month. (Many households indicated at the time of the survey that they had had 5 remittances this year, and were expecting another before Christmas.) About 75% of households received remittances. Once an allowance for December remittances has been made (see Appendix), the proportion of worker wages remitted in 1983 could be

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1. Thorough analysis of labour market segmentation would require rigorous regression and analysis of variance tests. The kind of data collected and sample size in this survey, do not allow such analysis.

2. Work experience is becoming increasingly important (Swidinsky, 1982: 53), especially in the mining industry. Mines are giving preference to experienced workers and fewer new workers are being recruited (Lacey, 1982: 52). For example, between 1977 and June 1980, juvenile mine recruits (men aged 15-19) from the Qumbu District dropped from 21% to 6% of total TEBA recruitment there (figures obtained from Dr J Crush, Development Studies Unit, Durban). This is also true of the rest of Transkei (Thomas, 1982: 35).

estimated.

Overall, migrants appear to send home about 20% of incomes, varying slightly according to sex and region from 18,6% (external male migrants) to 24% (external female migrants). The average male migrant sent R504 back to Transkei in 1983, while the average woman sent R446. These figures are much lower percentage-wise than the estimates of Abedian (1983a)<sup>1</sup>, but this may be due to the fact that in the survey, worker income spent on personal luxuries, on friends, or saved and brought home at the end of contracts was excluded. About 75% of households benefited from migrant remittances.

#### LOCAL EMPLOYMENT

Amongst those 41 workers employed in the Qumbu District, three distinct earnings groups can be derived. Poor jobs are in commerce (eg packing in supermarkets, working in garages), domestic service in Qumbu and rural agriculture (driving tractors, dipping assistants) and pay as little as R40 per month; 36% of local jobs pay below R100 per month. The next level up includes builders, lower-level clerks and poorly qualified women teachers and nurses. These earn around R225 per month.

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1. Abedian (1983a: 268) estimates comparable 1980 figures for external migrants as earnings of R175 per month over an average contract of 9,5 months, and R665 remittances per annum, with remittances as 40% of earnings. His first figure is similar to mine (based on increases in money wages at 9% per annum), but his remittances figure seems remarkably high, even though it includes remittances in kind. The same can be said of Wakelin's (1983) study; he derives a cash remittance ratio of 35% for 1982 (11f). His survey has severe methodological faults, however, and Abedian's Transkei sources may have been lavish in their estimates. Swidinsky (1981: 63) estimates a cash remittance figure of 25,9% for Transkei workers in 1979.



Next, there are highly paid government officials and teachers who earn over R350 per month (23%).

In general, better-paying local jobs are regarded as highly desirable, as they allow workers to live with their families and commute to work, and families also benefit far more from the income (J Nattrass, 1976: 164). Lower Roza is ideally situated to provide Qumbu with workers as it is plied by buses operating on three regular routes.

Local self-employed builders were a particularly interesting case. The 9 men (22% of local employment) covered in the sample all seemed to be making a reasonable living building huts and houses in the district, earning an average of R220 a month at the time of survey. (Their earnings are seasonal, though, dropping to half of that during the wet summer months from December to March.) Most had had formal or on-the-job training in South African construction firms, had saved to buy tools and equipment, and had 'retired' back home to work in Lower Roza (average age - 45)<sup>1</sup>. All far preferred their current work to wage-employment for others, and felt their net take-home earnings were higher than in previous jobs.

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1. Mr Johannes Kleinbooi, for example, is a 72-year old brickmaker. He did a building course at the Teko vocational school near Butterworth in 1932, and worked as a semi-skilled builder in the Eastern Cape for many years. In his early fifties he retired to Qumbu with his life savings of R2 000 and started a small brickmaking enterprise which has prospered ever since, and now produces about 50 000 bricks and several thousand cement blocks every month. He claims to earn about R230 per month, and more if he also does building.

## 2. CASUAL WORK AND SELF-EMPLOYMENT

This section focuses on forms of 'casual work' in Lower Roza, defined by Bromley and Gerry to include "any way of making a living which lacks a moderate degree of security of income and employment" (1979: 5).

The survey began with the assumption that everybody in rural areas who is physically capable tends to 'work' to a greater or lesser extent - in the sense of either directly productive or remunerated work, or activities which lower household subsistence costs. It included questions about time in the past year spent on: 1) small-scale production of commodities for sale, 2) temporary wage work, and 3) other productive non-market activities, particularly tending vegetable gardens, livestock and maize fields. All these were classified as 'work'. Data on 'domestic' activities (cooking, collecting water and firewood, plastering huts, when not paid or for sale) was not collected, though their importance in lowering household expenses (especially cash inputs) is considerable<sup>1</sup>.

400 underemployed or non-economically active adults were questioned, 110

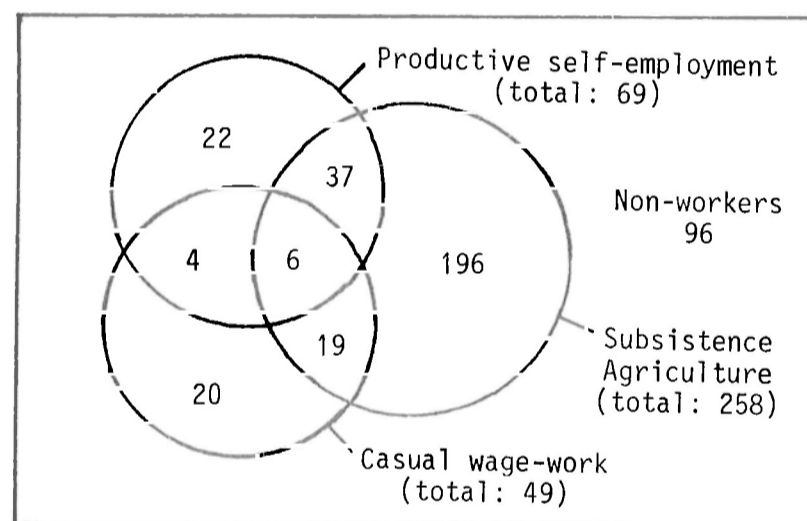
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1. Beneria (1981) notes: "Household production ... reduces labour costs in commodity production and, in this sense, can be regarded as having, if not a direct link with it, an indirect effect on the accumulation process" (8). Anker (1983) derives four labour force measures for analysing part-subsistence economies; his broadest measure is the 'extended' labour force, including people who work on all activities designed to meet family basic needs such as preparation of food for the household, mending clothes, etc. In the sample, most adult women claimed to spend 4 - 5 hours per day cooking, half an hour collecting wood (one morning a week), and at least 1 - 2 hours carrying water, in addition to other work activities. To comply with international standards, time collecting wood and carrying water should have been included as 'work' above (ibid, 712f).

men and 290 women<sup>1</sup>. 304 (76%) indicated that they had done some work in 1983. They came from 181 households - only 19 (10%) had no casual workers.

Two distinct forms of casual work can be isolated: i) Market-oriented labour, including commodity production for sale and short-term wage-labour, and ii) Non-market oriented agriculture (for subsistence only<sup>2</sup>). The distribution of people between these categories is illustrated below:

Figure 3. Forms of Casual Work



N = 400

70 people from the sample had engaged in commodity production for sale in 1983, 52 in casual wage-work and 258 in subsistence agriculture. In

1. Four men with local jobs also had part-time involvement in casual work over weekends, for example a cementing expert and a home mechanic, earning an average of R40 per month from such activities. They have not been included as casual workers below.

2. Only one farmer claimed to market maize; a handful more sold milk, meat or wool regularly.

total, 108 people had worked in market-oriented activities. There was some overlap between categories, with 66 people working in two or more areas.

#### A. MARKET-ORIENTED CASUAL WORK<sup>1</sup>

The two groups here can be subdivided by activity, as in Table 5.

Table 5. Market-oriented Casual Work

<u>Commodity Production for Sale</u>				<u>Temporary Wage-labour</u>			
	Total	M	F		Total	M	F
Brickmaking	2	1	1	Working in other people's fields	15	8	7
Foodstuffs	17	5	12	Building, plastering	20	12	8
Grasswork	14	0	14	Looking after children	3	0	3
Clothes, sewing	13	0	13	Washing	6	1	5
Firewood collection and sale	7	1	6	Other	5	1	4
Shoe repair	2	2	0	Total	49	22	27
Candle makers	3	0	3				
Herbalists	4	3	1				
Other	7	7	0				
Total	69	19	50				

Note: there is an overlap of 10 people in the above tables.

Of the 69 people producing commodities, 22 (32%) were transforming local

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 1. This term is used below as synonymous with the infamous 'informal sector', an ideologically suspect term, perhaps, but without a suitable alternative.

means of production (grass, reeds, wood collected from the local forest) for sale, almost all of whom were women. Another quarter was engaged in the preparation of foodstuffs (including drink), mostly home-brewed beer, or selling cooked food to people in the area. The 14 women working on clothes all sewed or knitted items which were then sold, either at the Qumbu market, or occasionally hawked in Lower Roza. Others drove pirate taxis, were healers and herbalists, made candles, made shoes and whips from leather, carried water from river to villages during the drought for sale at R3 per barrel, and so on.

Temporary wage-labour activities, by contrast, were mostly those services which count as 'work' in the formal sense (contribute to Gross National Product) only if paid for, for example looking after children and washing, or which are 'normally' performed entirely within the household (plastering, working on fields<sup>1</sup>).

Informal sector work is characterised by the following:

1. Work is temporary, seasonal and often short-lived. 43% of participants in commodity production had worked in fewer than half the weeks in the past year, while for casual wage-labour the figure rises to 82% - the average total time worked here was 16 weeks. Including all work activities, the average person who had worked in the past week (there

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1. There is some underestimation in this latter respect; it appears periodic work in teams on other people's lands for a day or two is common in the area (and a necessary source of income for some very poor households), but since such workers tend not to be hired on a one-to-one basis, was usually not mentioned. The local headman estimated that a quarter of all 'fit women' did work of this kind during the year; those mentioned above seem to have worked for periods of a week or more.

were 252 - 63% of the adult non-formal sector population) had worked on 4,8 days for an average of 5,4 hours per day, totalling about 26 hours<sup>1</sup>.

Some informal sector activities are seasonal by definition, eg grass-workers can only work when grass is available, which tends to be in summer and autumn. Building and plastering take place during winter, while working in fields is common in summer and autumn. And foodstuff production flourishes when migrants are home, while the sale of clothes reaches a height after pensions are paid (towards the beginning of every second month<sup>2</sup>).

2. It is poorly paid. Income figures are weak (see Appendix), but illustrate the prevailing disparities and low average incomes. A composite monthly cash income figure for casual monetised workers was estimated, and its distribution is given in Figure 4.

The median income figure was R34 per month, an average of R1,20 per day. The mean was somewhat higher at R44,30 due to the inclusion of a few much wealthier operators. Only one individual (at R229 per month) claimed to earn close to the mean for all formal sector workers, while no less than 98% of the latter earned more than the average informal sector person. The biggest earners in the sample were three male her-

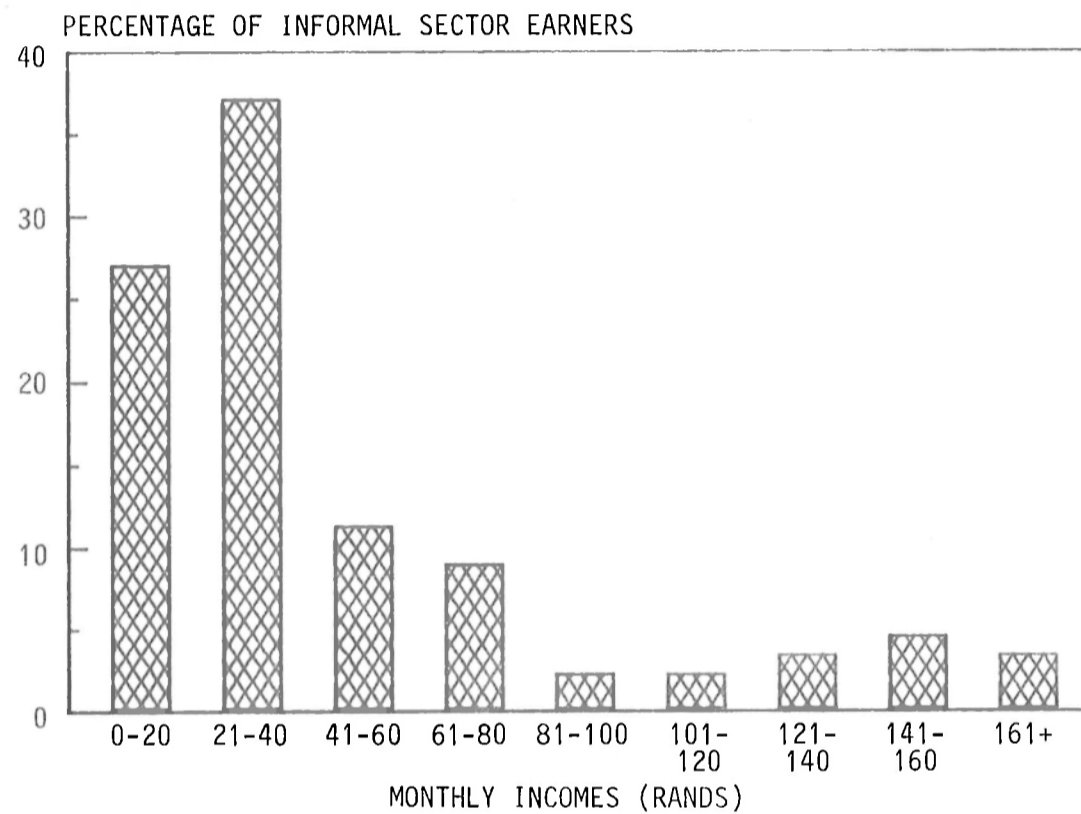
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1. These figures seem comparable to others from Africa. In general, Henn suggests that women's food farming usually requires "five hours of hand-hoeing a day to feed five people and to provide a 20% surplus for sale in local markets" (1983: 1044).

2. I was told, for example, that the number of hawkers in Qumbu triples in the 2 - 3 days after pension day. Several women interviewed said they tended to build up their stocks of clothes and jerseys for sale in that period.

balists on R184 per month.

Figure 4. Monthly Informal Sector Incomes



N = 89

These incomes are not only very low in absolute terms, but also lower than comparative figures for the rest of South Africa. For example, Rogerson & Beavon calculated that Soweto hawkers earned an average of R70 per week in 1980 (1982: 26), while for the same year, Ligthelm & Van der Berg estimated annual earnings of R1 408 and R964 for entrepreneurs and employees respectively per annum in the Kwa Ndebele informal sector (1982: 371), ie R117 and R80 per month. And in a 1981 survey in a peri-urban area near Pinetown, Cross and Preston-Whyte found average monthly informal incomes of R118 and R65 for men and women respectively (1983: 9).

An exception is another Transkei study, that of N Nattrass. She does not calculate incomes, but her 1982 study of urban Transkei street traders implies very low income figures on the whole (1983, chapter 3), estimated at below R50 per month (1984: 20).

The average wage worker, at R233 per month, earned over five times as much as the income for casual workers. This is in marked contrast to studies which show much smaller differentials between wage-work and informal earnings. For example, Cross and Preston-Whyte calculate comparable figures of 150-200% (1983: 10).

3. Productivity is low. Little technology is used; only 19% of commodity producers claimed to use 'machinery' (sewing machines and elementary brickmaking equipment). Most workers simply rely on the tedious expenditure of long hours of unproductive labour time<sup>1</sup>.

This cannot simply be ascribed simply to lack of education. While 53% of informal sector workers had not progressed beyond Standard Three (compared to 31,3% of the working age population and 25,9% of the formal sector labour force), there were nine who had passed Standard Eight, all of whom were women.

4. It seems that poorer households spend proportionally more of their

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1. A typical example is a group of three women who make candles. They buy a few bricks of wax for R5 each, boil them in a pot, then lower both ends of a folded piece of string into the wax. Each time this is done, the ends pick up a layer of wax, and after about 20 dippings, 2 candles result. These are sold at 12c each; in a good day, they can make 500, which involves dipping 4 strings at a time into the pot about 1250 times - once every 12 seconds.



income on informal sector products - commodities are produced by low-income households for low-income households. Wilkinson and Webster give a table of informal sector activities in South Africa (1982: 2); most high-income activities they mention like transporting, hair-dressing, photography, usury and smuggling are unknown in Lower Roza - there simply isn't a market for them.

5. Informal sector workers are mostly women, and they tend to do poorer work within the informal sector. Women earn an average of R37,05 per month, while for men the figure is R59,41. Most women's jobs are linked to domestic activities, sometimes simply an extension of them (cooking, sewing, collecting firewood for sale, washing), while men's work is largely non-domestic, using 'traditional' or formal sector skills (driving taxi's, herbalism, small-scale building).

This is not coincidental. The external labour market and discriminatory forces acting within it (in particular, the way in which influx control laws are administered) confine less educated Transkei women to the countryside and subsistence production, while within these areas kinship forces and male domination relegate women to domestic work and agriculture, or work which is a limited extension of the domestic arena and does not threaten or undermine male control over women's labour<sup>1</sup>.

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1. This, in turn, is closely related to the division of labour in pre-capitalist Transkei and the forms in which it has been transformed but integrally preserved over the years (Moll, 1983: 25-27). Men appear to have realised early the importance of migrancy, and tried to keep it (ie economic power within the household) under their exclusive control, relegating women to domestic activities. As Bozzoli puts it, "the giving up of migrant labour by these (African) societies partly rested upon their capacity to subordinate women's labour ..." (1983: 151). Even today, women are usually permitted to take up only local jobs after marriage, while unmarried women are freer to migrate, as are older women

Lack of economic security, pressures to accept household obligations (eg cash needed for taxes, costs of education and other family expenses), and the lack of alternatives force women to accept poor informal sector work<sup>1</sup>. There was a significant (2%) negative correlation in the sample between informal sector operation and households receiving pensions, remittances and disability grants - people who regularly receive some cash incomes seem not to enter the informal sector.

#### THE DYNAMICS OF THE INFORMAL SECTOR

A sample of 21 relatively successful informal sector producers was questioned more closely about activities, time spent working and incomes. Their relevant time-use data is given below, including also comparative figures for a small brickmaking firm and a group of builders.

On the basis of this data, it would appear that the only area in which

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 (often heading their own households) who are unlikely ever to get married. Furthermore, 73 women in the sample (16% of all adult women) claimed they were not working in the formal sector because their husbands would not permit it, quite apart from many more who claimed they had families to look after.

1. A typical case here is that of an illiterate 54-year old widow, Mrs Mbambo. She has 3 sons working in South Africa, one of which sends her R50 every two months, and has three younger children to support, of whom two are at school. To earn income, Mrs Mbambo makes brooms from grass (using green string made from cabbage bags) which are used to sweep out huts. In a good day, she can make 12 brooms, sold at 40c each. They each take about 20-30 minutes to make. The problem is that grass needs to be cut in Bencuti Plantation, an hour's walk away, and being old, she can only carry back a day's grass, some of which is claimed by local authorities.

At any rate, Mrs Mbambo is among the luckier ones. Her children sell the brooms so she can specialise in producing them, and input costs are low. Her weekly income is about R14, or R2,30 per working day.

Table 6. Incomes and Productivities of Some Informal Sector Operators

Activity	Employees:		Ave hours worked per week	Ave weekly per capita earnings	Ave hourly per capita earnings
	Male	Female			
Candle making		3	24	R 7,90	33c
Grasswork		6	20	5,49	27c
Clothes, sewing		4	40	15,20	38c
Firewood collection and sale		3	12	1,80	15c
Foodstuffs	1	3	36	20,20	56c
Beadwork		1	25	8,60	34c
Average			26	10,08	39c
Brickmaking	2	2	40	36,00	80c
Building	3		50	60,00	R1,20

Note: in the general questionnaire, these operators estimated average incomes of just over R51 per month, and are thus more successful than most. On closer questioning, an average income figure of R44 per month was calculated, as certain costs incurred by producers hadn't been taken into account (bus fares, fees paid to local authorities etc) - an over-estimation of 16%.

local production could be substantially developed is building. Smaller activities are poorly paid and show little sign or capability of expansion. Whereas employees in the brickmaking firm earned an average of 80c per hour for their work and builders about R1,20, the informal sector workers sampled earned only 39c, and when all the time selling products is included, the figure would be even lower (see also Appendix).

This can be compared to the the average daily cash wage of R1 in the area for unskilled "working in other people's fields". Work hours range

from 6-8 per day. The lower reaches of the informal sector, then, are not much more remunerative than agricultural labour, though the work is regarded as more desirable.

The most lucrative productive activities are herbalism, clothes and sewing, and production of foodstuffs. The least lucrative are grasswork and the collection and sale of firewood. Small-scale building and plastering work is by far the most profitable service carried out.

There is little suppression of informal sector activities in Lower Roza, again unlike other studies in urban Transkei (N Nattrass, 1983: 60) and South Africa (eg Beavon and Rogerson, 1982: 112-115). Traders in Qumbu town did complain about some police harassment, but the rural areas appear to be virtually untouched. Some people remarked that they paid a small tribute to local political authorities. It appears that the hawking of bought produce in Lower Roza is frowned upon, largely because it undercuts the business of local licensed shops, and beer selling is sometimes prevented.

The rural informal sector in Lower Roza is certainly no panacea to the unemployment problems of the area. Selling prices and incomes are reduced to the level at which competition with producers from outside becomes possible, when the productivity of outside capital is enormously high. In effect, hours worked, use of simple machines and very limited local monopolies are crucial for incomes, with the value of unskilled labour being reduced to some 'common denominator' by internal competitive forces - for Lower Roza, in the vicinity of 30c per hour. Continual pressures on selling prices are experienced as prices of inputs rise

(especially fees payable for natural resources - reeds, grass) and competing products or services enter the area, for example local shops or bus routes.

In a sense, there should be 'space' for the expansion of casual work activities. Regarding Lower Roza as a tiny open economy, sample earnings in the informal sector and building trade came to about R75 000 in 1983, while outside cash incomes came to R260 000. In other words, at most 29% of incoming cash was spent in the informal sector.

In practice, there is a large income 'leakage' from Lower Roza in the form of food<sup>1</sup> and other items bought in Qumbu or Umtata. If a portion of the latter could be diverted to the informal sector, this could have a 'multiplier' effect on incomes, but for status and political reasons, the consumption of wealthy local households has a dramatic conspicuous element, and this would probably be impossible. And the existing market for beer, brooms and medicines is probably saturated.

#### B. NON-MONETISED SUBSISTENCE PRODUCTION

258 individuals had worked in this sector in 1983, 56 men and 202 women. Only 70 (22 men and 48 women) had worked in fields, 186 women and 37 men worked in vegetable gardens, while 12 men and 8 women claimed to have been seriously engaged in livestock production. About 50-60 people worked in at least two of these areas.

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1. According to a 1979 Transkei study, 37% of income in the Lower Roza household income range would be spent on food (estimated from Steenekamp and Loubser, 1980, Table 24.3).

It is impossible to estimate accurately the value of subsistence production without detailed research over a non-drought period. Estimated maize production for the sample came to a mere 141 bags, which, if one allows for non-response and a green mealies reaped ratio of one-third, comes to 230 70kg bags with a market value of under R5 000 - R25 per household, or R21 per worker.

Such figures are deceptive. 155 households claimed to have reaped nothing (less than half a bag) in 1983 due to the drought, and while many may have underestimated their production, the labour effort of around 190 people during the year appears to have been rendered null and void. The other 45 households averaged about five bags each (worth R100), with the labour of their 50-odd workers paying a return of R8 per month - less ploughing and other expenses, where applicable<sup>1</sup>. Only about eight households (4% of the sample) were self-sufficient in maize in 1983. Indeed, mealies are often cultivated from habit or convention alone. A number of women felt that cultivation was entirely a waste of time, but grew a few mealies because their husbands and families expected it.

Over the past five or six years, Transkei has been experiencing a kind of 'dry cycle', culminating in the 1982-83 drought, and time spent on agriculture in the latter year was near worthless. It may be useful as a last-ditch source of household food, but the tendency for the poor to minimise inputs (especially cash ones - fertilisers, good seed etc) and

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1. Government tractors plough most of the fields in Lower Roza; this cost about R18 per hectare in 1982, and was carried out by about 30 households. Many households did not pay at the time, and ploughing debts owing to the government were written off due to the drought.

increase labour effort lowers productivity and due to the denuded state of the soil, is rarely worthwhile.

### 3. THE UNEMPLOYED

Unemployment as such is not the focus of this paper, and will not be discussed in detail. A summary of findings is useful, though, to complement analyses and conclusions about labour markets made elsewhere.

A fairly strict definition of unemployment was used, including all those who want work and i) are aged 15-59 (women) or 15-64 (men), ii) who have searched for a job in the past month, and iii) who could accept a position within a week<sup>1</sup>. It was found that 34 people qualified as unemployed by this definition, 21 men and 13 women. Most were fairly sanguine about job prospects; although 88% felt they would accept a job in Qumbu paying only R50/month, they would hope to find a better one later. 53% had worked before, over half of whom claimed to have ceased work after their firms had closed, or had been laid off. Another 26% had left school within the past two years. The average unemployed

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1. This definition is close to that of the Current Population Survey, excluding only the qualification about hours worked (in the CPS, the unemployed person must have worked less for fewer than five hours in the past week). It may be too constrictive as, given limited local means of job search and the lack of work opportunities open to women, criteria ii) and iii) may be inapplicable. As a recent ILO study argued, "in situations where the conventional means of seeking work are of limited relevance, where the labour market is largely unorganised or of limited scope, where labour absorption is, at the time, inadequate, or where the labour force is largely self-employed, the standard definition of unemployment ... may be applied by relaxing the criterion of seeking work" (ILO, 1983: xii). It recommends instead tests "based upon notions such as present desire for work and previous work experience, willingness to take up work for wage or salary on locally prevailing terms, or readiness to undertake self-employment activity given the necessary resources and facilities" (ibid).

person was 27 years old, younger than the average worker at 35.

Of the unemployed men, 81% had no higher than a Standard Five education, and one third had none at all, as against 54,5% and 12,6% respectively of male workers. All unemployed women had at least a Standard Three and 77% had high school certificates; they were thus better educated than the female work-force, for which comparative figures were 74,9% and 54,3% respectively.

It appears that men and women suffer unemployment for slightly different reasons. Men tend to be unemployed either because they fall beneath minimum secondary schooling requirements of the labour market (especially the case for novices), or because they are too young - men in their mid-twenties are preferred by the mines and manufacturing firms. Women face a situation in which they are either channeled into very poor jobs, which even then are limited in number (eg domestic labour), or are competing hotly for good jobs inside Transkei, in which case those with Std 10 and post-matric qualifications are given preference.

The unemployed had done relatively little casual work in the past year. Most had done a little agricultural work (62%), but only 18% were currently involved in the informal sector (all women), and were earning an average of R10 per month. Informal sector work involves a certain investment in time and effort which the unemployed (especially men) seemed unprepared to make; they either did nothing or actively looked for formal sector work. They appear to see themselves as firmly aligned towards the capitalist labour market in South Africa and - to a lesser extent - Transkei.



These figures do not expose the full magnitude of the unemployment problem in Lower Roza. Many more respondents (68) felt they would work if offered a R50/month job in Qumbu; some had made rather half-hearted efforts to find work in 1983. Another 63 women said they would like such work, but would be unable to accept it as their husbands would not permit it.

Most respondents who showed enthusiasm about a possible job weren't looking for work because they felt none was available. They would probably fall into the category of 'discouraged unemployed', people who would like formal sector work of almost any kind, but have been unemployed for so long that they have given up looking for work - and may, in fact, be 'unemployable' (Standing, 1978: 120-1). About 50 people fell into this category; over half engaged in casual work to earn income.

#### HOUSEHOLDS AND POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

Thus far we have been dealing exclusively with individual income sources, centering around whether people can find work or use their labour to earn income. The poverty problem is far broader, though, and some measure of income received by households and per capita income levels should be derived.

The household can be regarded as a social structure, largely organised around kinship, by which some household members (workers) channel money into the household, which then gets distributed to all members in some

fashion. This process is often conveniently visualised as a kind of "pooling" (see Harris, 1981: 56) or maximising of per capita income (Mouly, 1972: 158-60), but productive resources and incomes are often controlled by specific members of the household in specific ways, and hence may not all be pooled.

The 'traditional' Transkei household (or homestead) has often been viewed (rather simplistically) as a strict kinship structure controlled by the household head which redistributes income to household members as he (usually) decides. In actual fact, there always appear to have been power struggles between members (see eg Bozzoli, 1983: 151-2; Moll, 1983: 25f), whether between men (or patriarchal chiefs) and women, or old and young. These days, 'traditional' sources of power and authority like age and sex are still important, but crucial power is economic<sup>1</sup>, and often in the hands of the young and educated. Formal sector earnings may be kept for self-consumption, and only a small portion passed on to the household, if at all. The distribution of 'household' income to members can be highly uneven, and will depend on factors like power relations within the household, age and economic position, and future expected economic benefits.

#### HOUSEHOLD INCOMES

Bearing these qualifications in mind, we move to considering household incomes. The methods by which these are derived are discussed in the

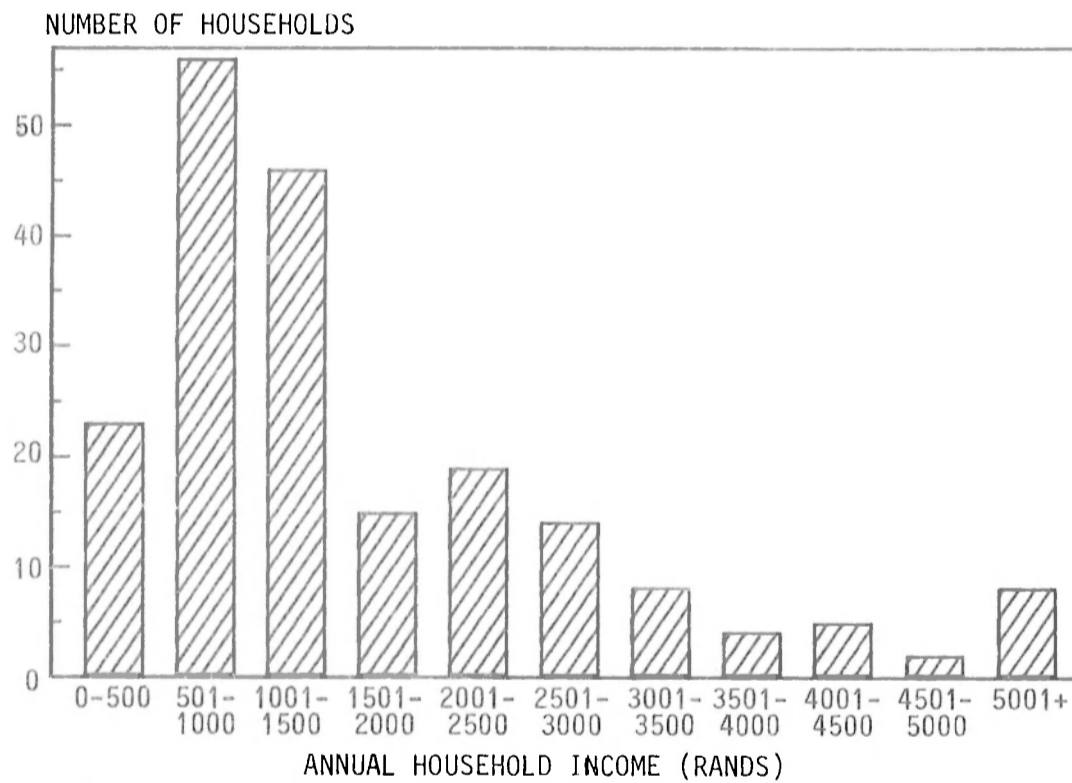
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1. For example, migrancy itself, as Rey has noted, can be a form of resistance against household oppression (see Moll, 1983: 27-29) - a Lower Roza teacher remarked that "girls remain at school while the bold young men run away".

Appendix. They are approximate, but provide an interesting - if blurred - picture of income differentiation and poverty in Lower Roza.

Overall, the average income of the 200 households was R1 825 per annum, or R152 per month. Figure 5 illustrates the distribution of household incomes. The graph is skewed quite strongly to the left (the median income is only R1 212 per annum), but with a long tail to the right - a few wealthy households earn far more than the rest.

Figure 5. The Distribution of Household Income



The inequalities between households illustrated above are considerable, and tend to refute some popular theories of homeland egalitarianism and bliss. The top 5% of households earn 21,7% of total income, and the top 10%, 32,9% (averaging out at R5 820 each, R410 per month). The poorest 10% earn only 1,87% of total income, with average annual incomes of R324 - R27 per month.

A recent study derived monthly Household Subsistence Levels for rural Transkei at around R144 in June 1982 (Potgieter, 1982: 39-41). When inflation and family sizes are allowed for, this comes to about R187 per month (or R2 240 per annum) for Lower Roza households in late 1983. About 76% of households surveyed fell below this minimum level. Such an estimate is of course deceptive, as it takes for granted rational income distribution within the household; the study points out that when household incomes are cash only, about one third will be devoted to items other than HSL ones; their Household Effective Level is thus 150% higher (Potgieter, 1982: 5-6). Only 12% of Lower Roza households exceeded this limit.

Households were stratified equally into high-, medium- and low-income groups, to compare demographic characteristics. Household size, number of permanent household members and number of workers in the household all rise as income rises. Households in the top third, for example, averaged 8,4 members, including 6,8 permanent members (of which 0,3 were local workers) and 1,6 migrants. For the poorest third, comparative figures were 4,8 permanent members (0,24 local workers) and 0,9 migrants.

95 nuclear households (parents + children) averaged R1 584pa, compared to 49 'legitimate' 3-generational families (parents, married children, grandchildren) on R2 291, and 24 'illegitimate' 3-generational families (parents, unmarried children, grandchildren) on R1 861<sup>1</sup>. Male-headed

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1. Married male migrants tend to send money to their wives; unmarried ones with children often send only to their parents. Until marriage (if ever), most women seem to rely on their own families for support. (See Massey, 1981: 217.)

households (61%) earned 11% more than female-headed (39%) ones. In short, then, it appears that household incomes tend to rise as households grow, falling off slightly as children start their own households elsewhere, an effect compensated for in part by pensions, which go mostly to female-headed households.

The crucial variables are the number of workers households are supplying to labour markets, and whether workers are living at home or not. Migrant remittances are important: 47 households with no migrant income average R1 423 per annum, compared to R1 679 for 87 households with one migrant, R1 979 for 41 households with two migrants, and R2 774 for 25 households with three or more migrants. Households with local workers are affected even more dramatically - 167 households with no local workers earn R1 317, followed by 26 households with one local worker on R3 642, and seven households with two or more local workers on R7 196.

The most important source of household income was migrant remittances (33%), followed by income from local jobs (26%), pensions and disability grants (17%<sup>1</sup>), local casual work incomes (16%), and subsistence incomes (8%). These figures are illustrated in Figure 5.

Points of interest here are:

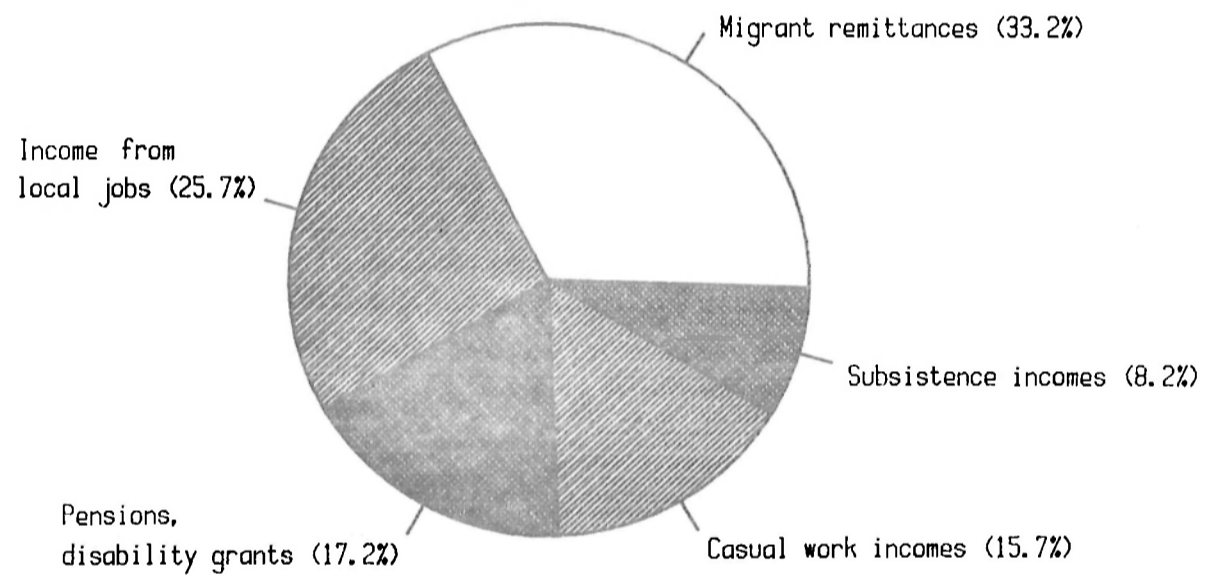
1. According to the figures discussed above, migrants only remit about 20% of salaries - and yet these remittances come to 34% of total household incomes. It appears that migrant workers live in affluence com-

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1. This includes old age pensions (11,9%), work pensions (2,6%), and disability grants (2,8%).

pared to their families (J Nattrass, 1976: 157-167), as they keep (ie don't remit) an average of R196 per month, a figure which is substantially higher than the average monthly income for all rural families of R152, which is divided out between an average of 5,7 people<sup>1</sup>. Some income of course is saved (for bridewealth, to purchase stock, to build), and may eventually benefit the areas from whence migrants came (J Nattrass, 1976: 152-3).

Figure 6. Sources of Household Income



2. Pensions and disability grants came to no less than 18% of total household incomes<sup>2</sup>. This is high but not unusual; a study in Ciskei's Amatola Basin revealed that pensions formed 26% of household incomes, which were about 62% of those recorded here (allowing for inflation) (Bekker et al, 1981: 32-33).

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 1. The urban cost of living is likely to be substantially higher than that in Lower Roza, but in many cases (eg mine labour, 27% of all migrant jobs) accommodation, food and other expenses may be paid for, in whole or in part.

2. This has interesting implications for the 'development cycles' of rural households. Reinvestment of earnings in the rural economy appears

While pensions may appear to be a relatively equitable form of transfer payments, not everybody of age receives them. 87 Lower Roza residents claimed to qualify on the grounds of age; 70 received pensions, including 4 who claimed to be under-age. Some of the remaining 21 people failed the means test (based on 10 large stock units or the equivalent), some claimed their applications had been refused as their husbands received pensions and others hadn't bothered to apply. Kinship links and bribery may play a role in allocating pensions (Spiegel, 1982: 32).

3. Casual work was twice as lucrative as subsistence agriculture, which is often regarded as the lifeblood of the homelands (see eg B Kantor, quoted in Simkins, 1981: 38). 41% of households participate. The figure of 15,7% here is slightly higher than that of Ligthelm and Van der Berg, who found that the informal sector generated 12,6% of total household income in Kwa Ndebele, but with much higher annual incomes than these (1982: 374f).

4. Income from local jobs is becoming increasingly important. Households with local workers receive an average of R237 per month from them alone (well above the Household Subsistence Level), although these incomes are very unevenly distributed. A small rural elite occupying better-paying local jobs is emerging: for example, 8 households receive over R4 000 per annum from local work alone, and the richest four households are all dependent on local workers. Internal migrants tend

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to be less important these days than formerly (see Moll, 1983: 46-48); the accumulation of land or stock by migrant workers "to build their homesteads into resource bases which can support them in their retirement years" (Spiegel, 1982: 39) is disregarded as unprofitable, and many households appear simply to be waiting for more senior members to qualify for pensions.

also to fall into this elite; many live fairly near Qumbu, visit Lower Roza regularly over weekends and holidays, and contribute substantially to household incomes (and local politics!).

5. There tends to be considerable diversification of income sources in Lower Roza. Remittances, especially, are often regarded as a nice but insecure form of income; almost all households with at least one member remitting had alternative sources of income, ranging from pensions to casual work. Such diversification tends to be positively correlated with income levels<sup>1</sup>, and provides some 'insurance' against crop failures, illness of household members, desertion of husbands, etc. The worst-off households in the sample were those without pensions and with small and erratic remittances, if at all. Some of these were involved in the informal sector, and were marginally better off than the very poorest group - the handful surviving only on agriculture.

#### PER CAPITA INCOMES<sup>1</sup>

The mean annual per capita income of the Lower Roza permanent population (1 137 people) was R321 (R27 per month), the median R209. The top 5% of the population received 19,8% of total income, the top 10%, 31,7%, and the bottom 10%, 1,72%. The poorest quartile had a mean income of R93

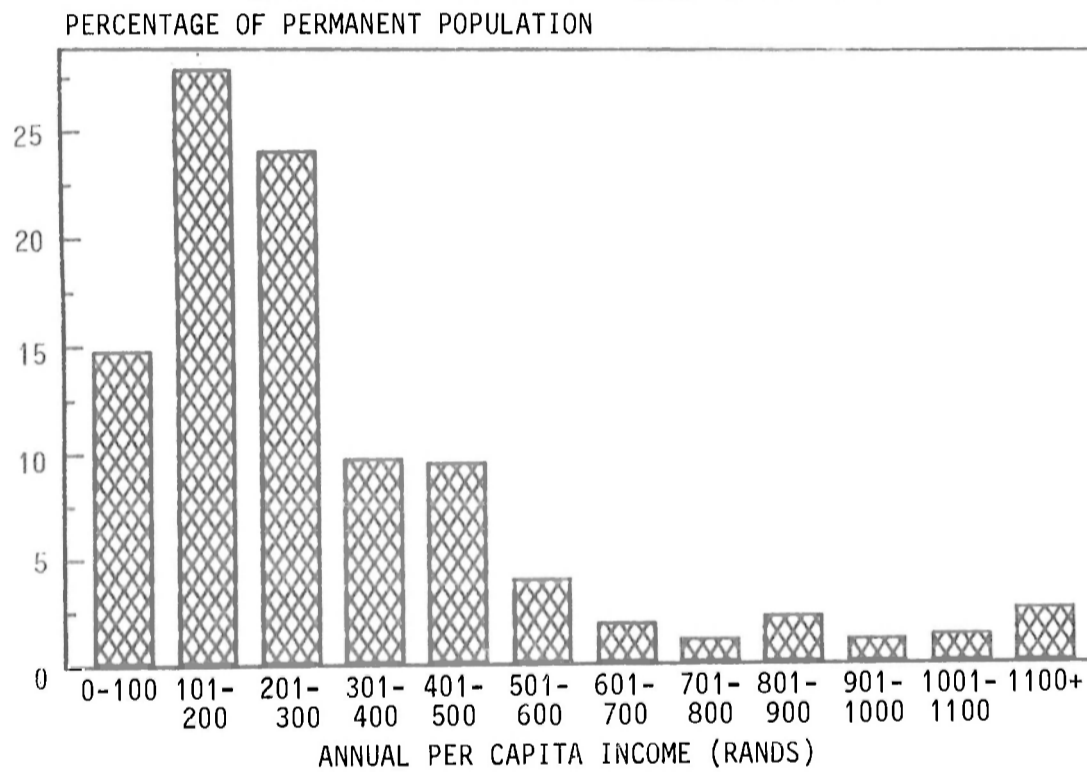
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1. The phenomenon has been noted elsewhere; an ILO study found that the poorest rural households in Egypt were those "with no, or little, diversity of income" (Hansen & Radwan, 1982: 124).

2. Per capita income figures are problematic, as they can't take into account the needs (physical and social, however defined) of household members. These vary so much (eg cash costs of infants, schooling, taxes, medical care for the old) that no attempt to bring them to some 'adult equivalent' will be made.



per annum, ranging from R7 to R147. At these income levels it becomes difficult to afford food apart from simple mealie-meal, samp and porridge, clothing is a luxury, and schooling costs impossible<sup>1</sup> - thus ensuring that the legacy of abject poverty will be passed to the next generation.

Figure 7. Per Capita Income Distribution



Again, the permanent population was stratified into high, medium and low per capita income groups. Demographic characteristics were important but not crucial in determining per capita income; for the poorest third of the population, the average household size was 7,3 compared to 6,8 for the richest third - but the number of permanent local members fell from 6,2 to 4,9. The problem appears not simply to be that poor house-

1. 30 children aged 6 - 14 were not at school in 1983 (about 9% of the total in that age-group); the families of 15 claimed they couldn't afford school costs, while the others were almost all working regularly in Lower Roza.

holds are large, but that they lack workers, that their workers are badly paid (differentials of 3 : 1 between mean worker earnings in rich and poor households), and that workers often don't remit any earnings to their households.

Nuclear households are evenly distributed between the above groups, but 3-generational legitimate households are found at high-income levels, while illegitimate 3-generational families are somewhat poorer. Female-headed households had a slightly higher average per-capita income than male-headed ones (R332, compared to R316): they earn less in total, but are smaller than male-headed ones, and are thus slightly better off on the whole. This is due, in part, to a considerable number of small households being headed by old women receiving pensions.

#### LOWER ROZA AND THE TRANSKEI ECONOMY

The irony of the survey is that Lower Roza should be - and probably is - one of the more prosperous peri-urban areas in Transkei. A 1979 Unisa study found that the Qumbu district had the third highest annual average household income in Transkei (Steenekamp and Loubser, 1980: 10). Furthermore, Lower Roza is a prosperous, monetised area in the district, with two good primary schools and access to the secondary school in Qumbu.

In a way, Lower Roza as a minute sub-section of the Transkei economy exhibits the classic signs of underdevelopment. Massive internal income differences are present (especially if migrants are allowed for), with a

few people earning high wages while the bulk of the population has no access to lucrative income sources. Forms of uneven development can be discerned: Qumbu is the local metropolis, in terms of job location and trade, but Lower Roza itself is a tiny centre - a number of people from outlying villages have moved there to work in Qumbu, as it's on a main road and housing is cheaper than in town. Local political power centres around access to the civil service and the administration, supported by Umtata, while 'traditional' chiefly structures are slowly disintegrating. And, finally, land rights for too many are being conserved, while the reality of subsistence production has long been dissolving - but its form must remain, both to provide people with some nominal rural income and to encourage political quiescence (see Moll, 1983: 147-153).

CONCLUSION: A MIXED AND THREADBARE BAG?

Lower Roza is indeed a mixed and threadbare bag. Mixed, because a wide variety of income-generating activities was covered in the survey, ranging from highly productive jobs in the South African economy to weak old women eking out a hungry subsistence on denuded soil. Threadbare, because the absolute income levels of the majority of the population are very low.

All this can be closely linked to Transkei's position within the South African economy. The path of capital-intensive industrialisation followed by South Africa since the Second World War seems to have led to an overall 'labour surplus' situation emerging in the Transkei and other homelands by the 1970s (see Swidinsky, 1981; Thomas, 1982). Further-

more, in recent years South Africa has been reducing the number of migrant workers from foreign countries (Lemon, 1982: 71-3) and perhaps even from the 'independent' homelands. In short, there are many unemployed Transkeians and more entering the labour market every year, while the demand for Transkei labour is constant at best, and may be falling in the long run.

Influx control and pass laws have confined the Transkei people to overpopulated rural homesteads on which agricultural productivity is minimal. Internal capital accumulation and infrastructural development are very limited. Although employment issues have been prominent in the stated economic planning efforts of the Transkei government, little has materialised other than a rapidly expanding, well-entrenched and well-paid state bureaucracy (Southall, 1982: 176-185).

Transkeians looking for work are confronted by rudimentary local labour markets, rigidly structured by education and sex criteria. The educated can usually find jobs, given time; indeed, an aim of the Transkei government appears to be to try and improve the education of the labour force so that workers can get better jobs (see eg Swidinsky, 1981: 27). This of course can only work if the absolute number of jobs in South Africa and Transkei is rising, or if Transkeians fill more of them, and if such jobs are also 'improving' and being paid more (see eg Knight and McGrath, 1977: 27). As these developments are unlikely to be forthcoming, this approach may simply create an 'educated unemployment' problem - a pool of people with high job expectations but without jobs (see Thorbecke, 1973: 399-400). This is probably happening already, especially among women.

In response to the deteriorating economic situation, people in Transkei have adopted mixed and varying strategies for survival. Those excluded from the labour market and effectively rendered unemployed - less educated women, 'redundant', disabled or old men, recent school-leavers - resort to domestic labour, poorly paid jobs inside Transkei and various forms of casual work in which access to means of production and productivity are minimal.

Sometimes informal sector production can be 'functional to capital' by lowering wages and increasing profits capital can realise overall (Leys, 1977: 267-8; for an Umtata case, see N Nattrass, 1983: 66-7), but in Lower Roza, where the population as a whole is 'surplus' to capital accumulation in South Africa and formal sector wages are exogenously determined, this does not apply; the informal sector is simply a form of welfare to the very poor and unemployed (Wilkinson & Webster, 1982: 8) - though even this can be of political (and economic<sup>1</sup>) value to the South African bourgeoisie.

The structural constraint facing casual workers is a function of the migrant labour system. In settled urban areas, a high proportion of total incomes earned appears to benefit the urban informal sector; it can flourish (with a fair internal multiplier) due to high market demand. For Lower Roza households, a combination of 'affluent migrants' consuming 'affluent products' (capital-intensive luxuries) in urban areas and poor families consuming very little in the countryside, means

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1. In the sense that it lowers the welfare spending of the Transkei Government, 63% (R343,3 million) of whose 1982/83 budget was provided by South Africa or the South Africa-dominated Southern African customs union, much of which is taxation revenues (SAIRR, 1983: 390).

there is no real space for the rural informal sector to grow. Moreover, the handful of local high-income earners seem to indulge in 'conspicuous consumption' - expensive Ellerines lounge suites, glazed ornaments, garish Eastern kitsch and Lactogen, bought in Qumbu or Umtata.

A vicious circle is thus apparent. Because the bag is so threadbare, its mixed nature (casual work etc) is stimulated. However, the income received to support such casual work is not forthcoming because remittances are low and because incomes - which are distributed very unevenly - are being spent on South African-manufactured prestigious goods. For the less fortunate majority of the population, the bag is likely to get thinner and more diversified as time passes - until the bottom drops out of its threadbare existence.

#### APPENDIX - ON METHOD

The basis of this paper is a household-employment survey run in the Lower Roza Area, Qumbu district, in Nov-Dec 1983.

Reliable aerial photographs could not be obtained beforehand. For practical purposes, three localities from the six in Lower Roza were chosen, and a representative sample (30 - 40%) of households from each selected. All available household members were questioned collectively.

Data on migrants is suspect, as it was mostly acquired from families. They were asked for reliable estimates where possible (eg ages, migrant incomes), and this can be clearly seen in the way results are 'bunched' in multiples of 5, 10 or 50. In the case of incomes, results are probably biased downwards. On the whole, wealthier households tended to be covered more thoroughly - more accessible, literate, better response rates, etc. (This is clear from stock figures, as the proportion of stock held in each locality is slightly too high compared to dipping figures.)

A 'mini-survey' was done of 21 informal sector producers, a brickmaking firm, and a group of builders. This focussed on productive activities, concentrating on time spent in production and sales, costs of production and inputs, tools and markets, and provided a valuable corrective to informal sector data in the general questionnaire, in which casual work incomes figures are probably too high (see the Note to Table 6).

#### The Surveyors

A retired local teacher served as the overall supervisor of the survey, organising and publicising it in the communities beforehand, and gaining the assistance of local political authorities, including the headman. Four more surveyors (2 male, 2 female, all at least with a Matric) were chosen from Lower Roza and trained shortly before the survey began. They varied greatly in quality, but poorer ones could not be disposed of for political reason. Working with interviewers from the area appears to have minimised suspicions and improved the quality of the replies.

After the first day or so in each locality, no refusals were encountered, and the quality and responsiveness of answers improved steadily (particularly income-type questions) - an underground 'grapevine' seemed to function, spreading the news that the survey was harmless, and people actually seem to have come to enjoy the attention.

#### The Results

These varied greatly in quality. Based on observation, discussion with interviewers and inspection of computer results, they can be divided into several groups:



a) Reasonably accurate: population and demographic data (age, sex, marital status, school attendance), household stock figures, job-search activities, work intentions, previous work experience.

b) Where education/ignorance was a problem: education levels, migrant occupations and industries, etc.

c) Suspicion, but results absent rather than inaccurate: pensions, wages, incomes and (to a lesser extent) remittances; prostitution and illegal informal sector activities.

d) Areas where data is intrinsically inaccurate:: casual work incomes, land held and output, seasonal work etc.

e) Problems of definition - accurate but incomplete data. In many cases, difficulties arose where definitions used (eg 'work', informal sector activities) differed from those used by the people of the area. To allow for this, most activity questions were asked along broad 'time use' lines, to get a picture of work-patterns over the last year or so (Bruton, 1980: 113, 117-120), for example - 'Did you help to make and sell and clothes or goods to other people in your area this year?' and then follow-up questions isolated more recent such activities, rather than the usual "Do you work?"-type questions<sup>1</sup>. Nominal definitions of activities were decided on beforehand (Hendrie, 1977: 187), and doubtful cases brought to me for checking.

Even so, many people did not think of informal sector activities or work in vegetable gardens as at all interesting to us. Women's work, particularly, was underestimated or disregarded, both as it tends to be ideologically devalued (regarded as less important than men's), and because it is often unpaid (Beneria, 1981: 10). Research findings here can perhaps be taken as a 'lower limit' on what actually is happening.

f) Bad questions: These were either badly explained to interviewers, or never quite understood by the people interviewed. Results were disregarded.

It appears, overall, that the incidence of non-response was inversely related to the accuracy of the final answers!

#### Definitions:

1. For non-permanent wage earners (ie casual work):

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 1. The Current Population Survey, for example, tends implicitly to specify categories in commodity terms, leading to non-commodity elements in the homeland economic systems being misrecognised or ignored (see Hindess, 1973: 37). The kingpin of the survey is the question "Did you do any work or earn any money in the past seven days?", which is likely to lead to serious underestimation of non-market work, and very high 'non-economically active' estimates.



Monthly Income = 1,09 ((2 x income last week) + (estimate of income in a good week) + (estimate of income in a bad week))

2. Migrant remittances were effectively measured over about 11 months of the year, from January to the time of survey, though in some cases people included remittances from the preceding December. To correct for the remaining period, they were multiplied by a factor of 1,14 (12,5/11), since it is probably that remittances are higher in December, and less than 20% of migrants had begun December holidays.

3. Data were collected on stock, lands etc. In converting these according to their contributions to household income, the following assumptions were made:

Table 7. Values used in imputing household subsistence incomes

Item	Imputed subsistence income
Maize production	R20 per 50kg bag reaped
Vegetable gardens	1 bag maize each or equivalent vegetables, at R20
Milk from cattle	R30 for milk per calf born during the year (30c/litre x 100 litres)
Cattle	R5 per adult male (ploughing)
Cattle deaths	R60
Cattle slaughter	R100
Cattle sold	R150
Sheep and goat deaths and slaughter	R10
Sheep and goat sold	R15
Chickens	R1,50 each (eggs plus turnover)
Pigs	R8 each (progeny)
Wool	R2 per sheep per annum - 5 sheep per bag, sold at R10

Notes: 1. Stock have been valued lower than prevailing prices in Qumbu because of the drought - stock disposed of or which died tended to be thin or poor. For the district as a whole, 21,3% of the herd of 62 326 in April 1983 had died by 1 December. Milk production and the ability of animals to plough would be correspondingly reduced. 2. Abedian (1983b) assumes that each of 3 224 homestead gardens in Qumbu, as elsewhere in Transkei, produces two bags of mealies, half a bag of sorghum

and 485kg vegetables (33, Table 13). This seems a severe overestimation - many gardens were untouched, some had produced nothing and those which produced had usually only grown mealies only in 1982 and 1983. The estimate of R20 net profit per garden is probably too high.

4. For household income purposes, the following adjustments were made:

i) Government pensions and disability grants equal R98 every two months, with a year-end bonus of R12, so they were averaged at R50 per month. Other pensions were simply taken at face value.

ii) Casual work: where only figures on earnings in the past week were given (four people from three households), monthly income was calculated at  $4,35 \times$  income in past week. Where all income figures were missing (15 people, 8 households), they were imputed average earnings for the informal sector, by sex. Annual earnings = monthly earnings  $\times$  12.

iii) Local employment where wages were unknown (2 cases): imputed earnings as per occupation, sex and education.

iv) Remittances: where data could not be obtained whether migrants remitted or not (7 cases), they were imputed an average remittance for their level of income, while where migrants remitted but amounts unknown (4 cases), they were imputed an average remittance for all those who did remit from their income level.

v) Local income earners - a portion of household income spent on items not benefiting the household was omitted. It was estimated as follows, based on a study of semi-urban Transkei households carried out in September 1979 (Steenekamp and Loubser, 1980, estimated from Table 24.3), updated as per the Consumer Price Index:

Table 8. Local Incomes - proportions included in household incomes

Income Level	Monthly Income (Rands)	% included in Household Income
Low	0 - 200	96%
Medium	200 - 500	89%
High	500 +	87%

Non-beneficial household expenditure rises as income rises, eg taxes, support of relatives.

vi) 'Traditional' exchanges, many of which still take place (eg bride-wealth transfers), were not investigated at all in the survey.

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