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MAFETENG TOWN : ITS ECONOMIC STRUCTURE AND REGIONAL FUNCTIONS

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LESOTHO AFRICA

(RESEARCH REPORT), ³ III)

Preface

For the research programme undertaken in the context of the Urban and Regional Planning Programme, established at the National University of Lesotho in 1978, emphasis has been put on the spatial organization of development efforts and activities in the rural areas of Lesotho. This focus on the rural parts of the country also includes an assessment of the rôle of urban centres in providing both agricultural and non-agricultural services to the rural population.

The present report focusses on the only urban centre in the Mafeteng District, viz. Mafeteng town. Services provided from the centre to the district's population are analysed in relation to the town's internal production structure. The information for this report was collected in 1981 by means of a sample survey of households and a number of special studies in which attention was paid to specific aspects of the urban economy and the town's population which were considered crucial for the analysis of structure and function of the town.

The report should be seen as the urban counterpart to the URPP research report on households, production and resources in Mafeteng District, which was published in 1982. These reports will be followed by a planning survey of Mafeteng District, which contains an analysis of the district economy.

Roma, Winter 1983

H. Huisman

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1. Background Information

Planning for development at all levels of geographical scale is a spatial activity. The "where" of development, however, has received a cinderella treatment in Lesotho, which is one of the reasons that many planning exercises have failed. As in many other African countries, plans have been drawn up without concern for their spatial implications. Lesotho's development policy documents indicate that rural development issues have received ample attention from policy makers and advisors. The urban aspects of development planning, including the urban aspects of planning for rural development, have been relatively ignored. Consequently, non-rural investments, both from government, parastatals and the private sector, have more or less automatically concentrated on Maseru, the capital. Nowadays, planners and policy makers seem to realize that this overconcentration has all sorts of negative side-effects, not only economically, but also socially, politically and culturally. In the last few years the word "decentralization" has frequently appeared in planning-related documents; also influential politicians seem to consider decentralization as highly desirable. (cf. Workshop on Decentralization, 1980) Obviously, decentralized development planning requires an adequate data base. To date this data base in Lesotho is totally inadequate.

This paper aims at contributing to the building of such a data base by a description and analysis of the economic structure and regional functions of one of Lesotho's smaller centres: Mafeteng. The present-day functioning of this - and other - centres should be known before roles in regional development are allocated thereto.

The role of smaller centres in regional development processes in Sub Saharan Africa was almost ignored in the literature until the late sixties. Remarkably, publications mostly concentrated on urban development and on urban problems, or on rural development and rural problems; studies dealing with the role of smaller centres in the process of regional development were rather exceptional.

However, during the 1970s this situation has gradually changed. A substantial number of studies has been published in which smaller centres and their role in processes of regional and rural development is paid attention to. Unfortunately, commentators vary greatly in their opinion and interpretation of what exactly this role entails or could entail. In general, the publications can be classified under three headings, i.e. the functional approach, the politico-economic approach and the agropolitan or territorial approach (see also Hinderink, 1983).

The approach labelled as "functional" is characterized by the emphasis authors put on the importance of regional development in processes of national - overall - development (Berry, 1969; Friedmann, 1966; Johnson, 1970; Rondinelli and Ruddle, 1976). Regions are considered to be open systems within the national economic space. It is stressed that the development of these entities ultimately will result in a fully integrated economy, functionally as well as spatially. The main urban centre is seen as the heart of the regional economic landscape. With regard to the role of the centre, two partly distinct strategies have developed: The growth centre strategy and the central place strategy. The latter one nowadays is often referred to as the service centre strategy as well, although emphasis on a number of aspects relating to the role is put rather differently.

The growth centre idea focusses on geographic agglomerations of activities in which one or more propulsive industries act as the so-called engines of growth*).

*) The "growth pole" concept has deliberately not been used here to avoid possible confusion. It is argued that the growth pole concept should only be used as an economic concept referring to a centre in a totally abstract economic space to which centripetal forces are attracted and from which centrifugal forces emanate because of the presence of an important economic activity: Francois Perroux' "unité motrice". (For a discussion on growth poles and growth centres in the Nigerian context, cf. Mabogunje, 1978).

According to this viewpoint, territorial change and development is stimulated through the various linkages that exist, i.e. forward, backward and lateral linkages. Consequently, the attraction of one or more propulsive industries is considered to be the pre-condition for development and change in a region.

On the other hand, in the central place or service centre strategy, centres are considered first and foremost to be the central points for the distribution of services and goods. The centres or places always occupy a certain position in a complex hierarchy and service areas of corresponding magnitude. This function of delivering a multiplicity of goods and services to the area surrounding the centre gives them an important role in processes of regional, rural development. The more effective and efficient the delivery of goods and services, the higher the developmental potential of these centres. Obviously, both the growth centre and central place/service centre strategies have quite a number of aspects in common. Both draw from the theories of Christaller on central places, from diffusion of innovation theories, and, among others, from theories on income-, technical-, and psychological polarization, which have their spatial expression in geographical polarization.

Secondly, the politico-economic approach to the regional development issue can be identified. This approach has developed relatively recently, mainly on the basis of the growing dissatisfaction among authors with the severe urban and industrial bias on which the growth centre "doctrine" is based (e.g. Schatzberg, 1979; Kabwegyere, 1979; and to some extent Lipton, 1977).

Authors point at the generally disappointing results of numerous development projects implemented at regional levels and emphasize that centres in developing countries have become spatial instruments in the process of opening-up the local economy for accelerated penetration by world-capitalist interests. Often transnational capital is seen as the principal engine of this process. It is stressed that the present day endogenous politico-economic structures do not allow for developmental processes to occur and that

third world regional centres increasingly function in the capitalist exploitation system at the lowest level of geographical scale. The growth centre strategy is thus criticized as being attuned to the ideology and planning approaches of transnational capital.

Potentially developmental roles of urban centres are seen as only possible if the politico-economic situation in which the developing countries are placed, undergoes a radical change towards truly independent, self-reliant societies in which the needs of the masses are taken as the primary guidelines for the formulation and implementation of development strategies, including spatial development strategies.

Thirdly, the agropolitan or territorial approach to regional development can be identified. This viewpoint has developed from a rather different opinion as to how development should be brought about in sub national areas in the developing world (cf. Friedmann and Douglass, 1975; Friedmann and Weaver, 1979; Stöhr and Fraser Taylor, 1981).

As in the politico-economic approach, the necessity of self-reliance of areas is emphasized. Introduced here is an - only partially worked out - model of regional development, which is mainly based upon the basic needs concept. The need for participation and active involvement of the local population in plan formulation and plan implementation is stressed as a basic pre-condition for successful regionally-based exercises. Here, regional development is not seen as a process taking place in open systems which ultimately results in overall nationwide development, but as a basic needs oriented, regionally fully autonomous process from "below". Obviously, this has strong implications for decentralisation and for the role of small centres in the process of development. However, these aspects have not (yet) been explicitly formulated by authors of this agropolitan or territorial approach to regional development. It is argued that development-stimulating processes, which have started somewhere at the rural-local level, are to some

extent channelled by the centres towards the higher levels of geographical scale only if and after at least the basic needs of the area itself have been satisfied. In this context, it is emphasized that the actual functioning of these centres is not only determined by prevailing politico-economic structures, but also by the existing structures of administration and decision making in the country.

From this overview of the various mainstreams to be identified in literature on the (potential) role of small centres in regional development, it becomes clear that a conclusion is not readily formulated, or that the recentness of the field of concern and the consequent absence of sufficient empirical evidence, do not allow for the formulation of a comprehensive theory. It is against this background that the objective of this study has been formulated.

1.2. Objective of the Report

The present study focusses on one of the smaller centres in Lesotho, Mafeteng. Through description and analysis of the town's economic structure and regional functions, an attempt will be made to throw some light on the actual functioning of the town in the process of regional development, against the background of Lesotho's urban pattern. The objective has thus been formulated as follows:

To analyse the economic structure and regional functions of Mafeteng town, against the background of the pattern of urban primacy in Lesotho, in order to determine the present-day role of the centre in the process of regional development.

1.3. Methodological Aspects

To collect the necessary data on Mafeteng's economic structure and regional functions two methods were used:

1. A sample survey, and
2. A series of special studies to obtain additional information.

The Sample Survey

For Mafeteng urban area a register containing the names and addresses of heads of households did not exist. Therefore, it was decided to use the 1 : 5000 maps of the area, issued in 1979, as the sampling frame. On the basis of the information provided by the Senior Cartographer of the Department of Lands, Surveys and Physical Planning of the Ministry of Interior in Maseru, the Mafeteng urban area boundary was drawn on the maps.

These maps had two shortcomings:

- a. Field checking had not yet taken place, and
- b. Recent buildings were missing.

Field checks had to be made in order to mark the buildings which were residential and to add the missing houses.

Furthermore, as observations during preliminary research revealed, houses often contained more than one household. Due to time and manpower constraints it was impossible to check all units in the whole urban area of approximately 17 km². Therefore, a grid system was superimposed on the maps in such a way that one grid represented approximately 10 hectares. Thus the area was covered by some 170 grids. Those grids which did not contain any buildings were, after thorough field checking, eliminated. From the grids thus remaining one in every three was sampled. The grids were visited by "map updating teams" which checked:

1. Completeness of structures on the maps;
2. Use of structures as residential vis-a-vis non-residential;
3. The number of households in each residential structure, or the number of structures per household.

After this exercise had been completed, all residential units were numbered in accordance with their number of households. From the list thus obtained a random sample, using a random table, was taken of 300 households, representing one-third of the households in the grids sampled. In order to facilitate the identification of households, the following definition was strictly applied:

"A household consists of one or more persons who live together in the same house or homestead, share the same housekeeping arrangements and are catered for as one unit".

Thus, for instance, two persons living in one room, who did not share the housekeeping arrangements, were considered to be two separate households; while persons who did not sleep under one roof, a situation often present in homesteads consisting of a number of rondavels, but who shared the same housekeeping arrangements, were considered as one household.

The 300 households thus sampled, were visited by four teams of two research students each, using a partly precoded recording schedule. Schedules were carefully checked and any incompleteness or inconsistency

was solved after one or more re-visits. Non-co-operation was exceptional and although sometimes problems with interviewees arose, in the end only two households' data could not be recorded.

The Special Studies

Special studies were carried out with regard to specific aspects of the urban economy and the town's population in order to collect additional information on the following topics:

- Commerce, both formal and informal;
- Manufacturing, crafts and construction;
- Services, including education, health and administration;
- Migration and characteristics of migrants; and
- Land-use and housing conditions.

The special studies were undertaken under close supervision and provided a wealth of information, which has been laid down in a number of B.A. theses and one M.A. thesis. Part of these unpublished papers, (together with the sample survey data of Mafeteng urban area), provided information which constitutes the basis of this report.

1.4. Structure of the Report

This report on the economic structure of Mafeteng urban area/town and the importance of the town for the district starts with a discussion of the context in Chapter 2. Lesotho's urban pattern, the policy of government towards urban centres in Lesotho and some main characteristics of Mafeteng district, the regional context of the town, will be discussed. In chapter 3 the origins and characteristics of Mafeteng town will be briefly focussed upon. Aspects such as origin and growth, location and the characteristics of the town's population, including potential labour force, unemployment and main household data, will be highlighted. Chapter 4 deals with the urban economy and starts with a discussion of the concept of production structure. The employment per type of industry in Mafeteng town itself, i.e. excluding the labour migrants as a group of workers, forms the starting point for further analysis of each sector and subsector of the production structure. The chapter also includes a brief description of the urban area's spatial pattern of activities and the land use. The last chapter attempts to assess the regional significance of the various functions of the town for its surrounding district. Again discussion takes place according to magnitude of type of industry measured on basis of employment, i.e. number of people engaged in the economic activity. Basic versus non-basic aspects of the sectors and subsectors are used as the yardstick to assess the importance of each activity for the region. In the conclusion some comments as to the growth potential of the town will be given against the background of the information provided at the beginning of chapter 1.

Chapter 2 The Context

In this chapter Lesotho's urban pattern, the government policy towards urban centres and the characteristics of the Mafeteng District will be discussed, in order to provide some necessary information with regard to the context in which Mafeteng urban area is placed.

2.1. Lesotho's Urban Pattern

Presently, Lesotho has sixteen nucleated settlements which have been designated as "urban" in the Land Act of 1979, which was gazetted in August 1980 (Land Act 1979, Legal Notice No. 14). The urban areas comprise the nine former "colonial reserves", which were established under British rule of Basotholand as administrative headquarters of the districts, one newly created district headquarters and six other nucleated centres whose size and/or functions necessitate such official status for the implementation of a future urban planning policy.

Eleven of the sixteen urban areas are situated close to the border with the Republic of South Africa; twelve of them are located in Lesotho's most accessible zone: the Lowlands. From these centres in the Lowlands, which have long had good connections with the South African road network, the infrastructure has gradually developed into the other main ecological zones: the Foothills, the Mountains and the Orange (Senqu) River Valley. A comparison of map 1 and table 1 shows that the nodes with the best connections have experienced the highest rates of population growth. This phenomenon is related to the functions of these centres as the main nodes for import and export and the collection and distribution of consumer goods and agricultural produce. Usually, the recruitment centres for labour migrants for the South African mining industry are situated in these centres as well. Therefore, Lesotho's urban network is an intricate part of the Southern African space economy and a spatial expression of Lesotho's extremely dependent position.

Table 1 Population Growth of 12 urban areas 1966-1976
(in'000)

urban area	1966	1976	% growth	Position
Maseru	26.7	53.1	99	High above av. growth
Teyateyaneng	6.7	8.6	28	Relative Stagnation
Mafeteng	5.7	8.3	45	Above av. growth*
Butha Buthe	5.0	6.3	27	Relative Stagnation
Maputsoe ^{+))}	4.3	6.1	40	Above av. growth*
Leribe (Hlotse)	3.4	5.5	61	High above av. growth*
Mohale's Hoek	3.7	4.8	30	Relative stagnation
Peka	3.7	4.6	24	Relative stagnation
Moriija	2.9	4.1	42	Above av. growth*
Qacha's Nek	2.1	3.5	63	High above av. growth*
Quthing	3.2	3.4	8	Relative decline
Thaba Tseka	1.7	2.2	28	Relative stagnation
Mokhotlong	1.1	1.5	41	Above av. growth*
Total	70.2	112.0	60	

(Growth	%Excl. Maseru		35)	* = Excl. Maseru
(National Population Growth %			26)	

+) Based on own estimates using Population Census data
1966 & 1976

Source data on all other urban areas : Unpubl. data
Dept. Lands & Surveys, Maseru

Analysis of absolute and relative population growth figures for twelve of the urban areas reveals the extremely dominant position of Maseru, Lesotho's capital. In the period 1966 - 1976 the town's population doubled. Only about one quarter of the population growth originated from natural growth; migration is thus a major contributor to Maseru's population explosion. In terms of functions, the pattern of primacy in Lesotho is equally obvious. Maseru is not only the political and administrative capital of a highly centralized state, it contains not less than 2/3 of the nation's manufacturing industry and 2/3 of all wholesale firms as well.

2.2. A Government Policy Towards Urban Centres?

Planning at the national level in many Sub Saharan countries did not have the results which were expected at the time their political independence was realized. Consequently, development planning specialists started looking for explanations of planning failures. One of the outcomes thereof was increased interest in the spatial aspects of planning. From the late 1960s various authors on planning issues in Africa pointed at the need to formulate comprehensive spatial policies (cf. Seidman, 1974).

In Lesotho, the desirability of developing strategies for planning at lower levels of scale than the national level was expressed for the first time in 1969 in a paper by the then Department of the Interior. In a savingram/memorandum "Outline of Planning Strategy: Selection of Growth Centres" (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1969), government departments were asked to give attention to the design of a spatial policy which should be included in the First Five Year Development Plan of Lesotho (FFYDP). The plan, which was published in December 1970, however, did not contain anything pertaining to spatial strategies; not even the word "growth centre" was mentioned anywhere.

In 1971 the Department of Community Development, which was shifted from the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of Agriculture, Co-operatives and Marketing in 1970, published a document titled "Growth Centres Plan". The paper contained a proposal to establish three kinds of growth centres in Lesotho, i.e. Primary Centres (5), Secondary Centres (11) and Tertiary Centres (36), but was rather vague when it came to the formulation of advantages of the establishment of such centres:

"....since funds are inevitably limited, Government needs to concentrate its resources in those areas which are best suited for development, and to co-ordinate the proposals of various ministries, departments and donor agencies so that for instance a water supply project would be sited in the same

place as say a clinic, a school; a commercial store etc. could be sited with a view to planning "growth centres" in the rural areas that would in time become planned urban or semi-urban centres. It is envisaged that the ward would be the unit of rural administration, and therefore there should be at least one such growth centres in each ward". (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1971, p.1, underlining as in original)

This plan was, most probably, circulated not only because the Department was convinced of the desirability of the establishment of growth centres, but also in view of its position in the governmental structure:

"It is therefore the request of the Department of Community Development that the department be upgraded by the infusion of more staff, staff housing, offices so that it is in a position to administer and organize the projects in the selected growth centres." (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1971, p.16)

Although some discussions within government were held on this issue (Moody, 1975 p.9), the plan was never formally approved by Cabinet.

The next Five Year Development Plan (SFYDP), covering the period 1975-1980, was very vague on what should be understood as regards "growth centres" in the Lesotho context. The plan pointed out that there was a need for the rational use of resources to benefit the greatest number of people through concentration of investments in growth centres, but did not contain any definition of the concept or any recommendations as to how it should be operationalized. However, it is very interesting to note the rising concern of the authors over the dominant role of Maseru as commercial and industrial centre, especially with regard to the consequent explosive growth of the capital's population. Remarkably, only some intentions to tackle the rising problems were put on paper:

"Industry and commerce have been concentrated in Maseru because services and facilities were not

available elsewhere in the country. Government now intends to encourage economic activity in other centres, particularly in the district head-quarter towns, and to exploit every opportunity for employment of the rural population".

(SFYDP, n.d. p.133)

In 1979, the Ministry of Rural Development, meticulously copying the recommendations of a consultant in the Central Planning and Development Office, circulated a discussion paper in which the issue of the need for a spatial policy in Lesotho was stressed. The paper contained some discussion as to the interpretation of the various concepts. It distinguished between growth and service centres and argued:

"Growth centres: a few (possibly only Maseru) centres where industrial and commercial development can be concentrated; centres which are attractive to the investor and are capable of self-sustained economic growth;

Service Centres: a number of locations (between say, 30 and 100) around the country where provision of services and facilities will be concentrated; there should be a hierarchy of such centres, ranging from existing District Centres to principal villages, with a range of services applicable to each tier; centres should be chosen primarily from the point of view of accessibility. It may be that the centres selected in the Community Development Department's "Growth Centres Plan" would be the most appropriate".

(Kingdom of Lesotho, 1979, Annex 1)

The Plan which covers the present period 1980-1985, the Third Five Year Development Plan (TFYDP), refers to the growth centre idea, but again vagueness predominates when it comes to the provision of steps to build-up a co-ordinated policy. Even with regard to government's own investment plans, no commitment to decentralize to any extent is put to paper. Possibly following up on discussion generated by the 1979 paper, the growth centre idea itself is questioned as being a good starting point for a spatial

policy aiming at more equitable distribution of investments:

"The development of growth or service centres has been proposed as a means to concentrate resources and services in certain geographic locations for reasons of economy and greater benefits of an integrated programme. Such development has been constrained by the lack of data on the geographical distribution of resources and needs. Also the objective of equitable distribution of benefits conflicts to a certain degree with considerations favouring the establishment of growth centres. However, a hierarchy of service centres throughout the country is being developed that will guide our geographic planning in the Third Plan."(TFYDP, p. 129) (Underlining added)

At the request of the Ministry of Interior, following discussions between officials of the West German Ministry of Economic Co-operation and officials of the Lesotho Government, a feasibility study was undertaken in 1981 to assess the possible establishment of two rural service centres: in the Semonkong area (Mountain Zone) and the Mapoteng area (Lowlands Zone). The results of this study ought to shape the framework for the development of planning proposals regarding the creation of rural service centres. Presently, the report on these "pilot centres" is being studied by relevant government departments (Interior, Rural Development, Education, Health and Agriculture).

The above information shows that:

1. There has been a lot of muddled thinking about "growth centres", "planned centres" and "service centres"
2. A spatial policy has never been worked out in detail, although the issue of the desirability of spreading a number of investments spatially according to a coordinated strategy has been raised a number of times since independence.

Consequently, government itself has not taken any systematic and co-ordinated action to decentralize investments in order to create a geographically more equitable distribution of functions over the country. The absence of a policy framework, however, has not meant that the need to pursue decentralized investments did not receive some degree of attention by other institutions. Both the Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) and the Basotho Enterprise Development Corporation (BEDCO), which are parastatels, have been active in centres other than Maseru. The LNDC has been engaged from the start in the building of the industrial area of Maputsoe, which is presently the second largest industrial site in Lesotho. Also with LNDC intervention, it was decided to select Mafeteng as the site of Lesotho's pharmaceutical industry (LDA) and for its National Drugs Wholesale Centre (NDSO). The BEDCO has built up various sites with basic facilities for small local entrepreneurs in a number of settlements, while plans are presently reaching the stage of implementation for the establishment of so-called "artisan industry centres" in remoter district headquarters such as Mokhotlong, Thaba Tseka, Qacha's Nek and Quthing. However, the private sector has not followed suit and investments have, as a consequence, concentrated on Maseru. More than two thirds of the country's industry, two thirds of the country's wholesale establishments and 80% of its tourism facilities, among others, have accumulated here. Together with the highly centralized nature of administration in Lesotho - some 90% of the country's civil servants are working in and living in or near Maseru - this has resulted in the fact that the capital is growing faster than ever. More than three quarters of its growth originates from rural-urban and urban-urban migration. As a consequence, the country's urban pattern shows highly prominent characteristics of primacy. Maseru, with some 90,000 inhabitants, forms the top of an urban hierarchy in which none of the other 15 "urban areas" contain a population of over 20,000 inhabitants.

To conclude, the formulation of a detailed government policy toward urban centres and the consequent implementation of such policy should get top priority in Lesotho's development policy. Fortunately, a number of encouraging signs can be noted. Firstly, several government representatives have already stressed the desirability of decentralization of government, e.g. during a National University of Lesotho Workshop on Decentralization held in 1980. Secondly, an important step in the direction of building a legal framework for decentralization of decisionmaking has been made by the creation of sixteen "urban areas" (Land Act, 1979 - "declaration of urban areas"-) and the gazetting of the "Town and Country Planning Act" in 1980. Thirdly, the building up of a data base for decentralized planning has been started by the Institute of Southern African Studies of the National University of Lesotho and also donor agencies are active in the field of pilot research towards the creation of rural service centres (Apfel, 1981). On the other side of the coin, however, are the political problems which have presently reached such levels in the country that short term implementation of policies may be frustrated to a great extent.

2.3. The Mafeteng District

Mafeteng District is one of the smallest districts in Lesotho. It comprises 2090 km² out of the country's 30,350 km² (or 6.9%) and 12.9% of Lesotho's population or some 171,000 inhabitants (1981). According to analysis of 1976 Population Census data, labour migration is slightly more important in the regional economy than in most other districts of Lesotho: 11.4% of the total population is permanently absent due to participation in circular migration, viz. 10.6% for the country as a whole. World Bank data show that in 1976 for the whole of Lesotho remittances of migrant labourers provided not less than 71% of average rural household income. The remaining income sources were agriculture (17%) and domestic off-farm sources (12%), (World Bank, 1982 p. i). No district-specific data on income structure exist, but with a slightly higher incidence of labour migration, it is assumed that the contribution of migrant labour remittances to the regional economy of Mafeteng District is at least as important as elsewhere in Lesotho.

Agriculture is the next important economic activity for the population. The district comprises two agro-ecological zones, the Lowlands and the Foothills, and three landuse types, i.e. land suitable for cultivation (semi-intensive); land suitable for cultivation (extensive) and land suitable for cultivation and grazing (good access). The average size of the farms, 2.5 hectares, is substantially higher than the national average which is less than 1.8 hectares. However, on the basis of earlier field research undertaken in the context of the URPP it is estimated that at least 95% of farming activities are carried out for subsistence reasons, i.e. only some 5% of the District's farms are involved in market production. Table 2 and table 3 present information on the importance of agriculture in Mafeteng District in comparison with the country as a whole.

Table 2

Agriculture: Area Harvested and Total Production of Major Crops; Mafeteng District and Lesotho 1980/81*

crop	Mafeteng District		Lesotho		Mafeteng District as % of national total	
	area harvested	prod.in tonnes	area harvested	prod.in tonnes	area harvested	prod. in tonnes
maize	18191	9947	124812	105674	15%	9%
sorghum	15244	11296	60016	47729	25%	24%
wheat	830	356	19932	3346	4%	11%
beans/peas	2510	770	12057	6715	21%	11%
total	36775	22369	216817	163464	17%	14%

*(Mafeteng District comprises 6.9% of Lesotho's land and an estimated 18% of the country's arable land.)

(Source: Bureau of Statistics, 1982)

Table 3

Livestock: Mafeteng District and Lesotho 1980/81

	Mafeteng District	Lesotho	Mafeteng District as % of national total
cattle	69481	590021	12%
sheep/goats	236029	1934939	12%

(Source: Bureau of Statistics, 1982)

These data show that production in Mafeteng District is comparatively low for both maize and beans/peas while the crops sorghum and wheat are produced at national or above national average productivity rates.

Table 3 shows that with 12% of the national stock for both cattle and goats/sheep, Mafeteng District has a relatively high population if compared with the total area of the district (see also: Huisman and Sterkenburg, 1982).

The observation that commercial agriculture is rather unimportant in the Mafeteng District obviously has

consequences for the understanding of the regional functions of the district's headquarters: Mafeteng town.

In the next chapter some basic information on the origins and characteristics of the town will be given in order to facilitate an understanding of the functioning of the urban economy, which will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Chapter 3 Mafeteng Town: Origins and Characteristics

3.1. Introduction

King Moshoeshoe I requested British protection against the Boers in the 1860s. The request was granted and Lesotho was annexed by the British in 1868; in 1871 it was attached to the Cape Colony. This colony was granted internal self-government in 1872 and to assume control over Lesotho a number of magistrates were established. One of the magistrates set up his headquarters in 1874 in the Western Lowlands and was locally nicknamed Lefeta (he who passes by). From this name the camp was named Mafeteng (the place of Lefeta's people). The settlement thus started as administrative centre; soon, however, traders established themselves in the vicinity of the headquarters. Among them were Fraser, Collier and Scott. To date, these firms still take a prominent position in Mafeteng's economic life. The arrival of traders attracted religious institutions, and, of course, a growing number of Basotho. Presently, the urban area has about 10,900 inhabitants, which makes the town the third largest in Lesotho after Maseru and Teyateyaneng. Mafeteng as a regional centre has a regional administrative set of functions. Good connections with South Africa's road network - the Wepener railway station is less than 15 kilometers away - and good tar road links with the north, west and south, make the town an attractive location for manufacturing industry and wholesale establishments. Mafeteng is the largest wholesale centre of the country after Maseru and the third largest with regard to industrial production. Mafeteng is also an important recruitment centre for migrant labourers; together with Mohale's Hoek it serves virtually the whole of the western and southern Lowlands.

3.2. The Population of Mafeteng

Estimations, based upon the URPP survey results, point at a de jure population of approximately 10,900 for the whole Mafeteng urban area, including the so-called "urban villages". The population of the same area was estimated as being 8,300 in 1976, which means that in 5 years the population has grown at the relatively fast average rate of 5.9% per annum. The national population growth rate amounted in that period to an estimated 2.3% per annum, which indicates that migration to Mafeteng urban area has contributed significantly to the urban area's population increase. If the natural growth rate of Mafeteng is assumed to have been equal to the national average, it appears that more than 60% of the town's population in 1976-1981 can be explained from migration.

This figure roughly tallies with the URPP survey results on migration, which indicate that only 32.7% of the urban area's population of 15 years and over was born there; of the group of migrants over 15 years of age, almost 80% were stated to have arrived in the town after 1966.

With regard to the sex ratio, a figure of 79 for Mafeteng shows the high excess of females over males. For Lesotho the figure amounts to 93 (refers to 1976 de jure population). Both figures are an indication of the vast consequences of the labour migration phenomenon for the demographic structure of town and country, while the ratio for Mafeteng urban area indicates that the relatively high population growth is to an important extent caused by the migration of females.

Obviously, a sex ratio for the urban population of 79 hides differences per age category. Table 4 shows the sex ratio per age category for the urban area's population in 1981.

Table 4 Sex Ratio per Age Category
Mafeteng Urban Area 1981

Age Category	Sex ratio
0-10 years	87
11-20 years	68
21-30 years	70
31-40 years	116
41-50 years	83
51-60 years	68
61-70 years	84
70 years	56
Total Population	79

(Source URPP Survey, 1981)

Above information shows that in all age categories an excess of females over males exists, except for the group 31-40 years. This predominance of females over males can probably be explained to a considerable extent by two factors:

1. Mafeteng is an important educational centre. In Lesotho primary and secondary schools are attended by a larger proportion of females, due to tasks performed by young males on the farm (herding of livestock) and the high participation of males of 17 and over in labour migration.
2. Young, often unmarried females between 21 and 30 migrate to Mafeteng, attracted by job opportunities, or stay in Mafeteng after their educational career to look for employment.

The sex ratio for the group 31-40 (116) reflects a predominance of males. It shows the important function of Mafeteng as labour recruitment centre for the South African mines: Many young males temporarily stay in Mafeteng to be near the recruitment centres. Furthermore, at the time of the survey, a substantial number of male workers in road, and other construction activities were

temporarily present in Mafeteng ((see also section 4.6.)). It should be noted here that in the fast growing urban areas in Africa, sex ratios in the age categories 20 - 50 years of age are usually above 1000, due to migration from rural areas.

On the basis of the survey data the potential labour force, here defined as the potentially economically active group between 15 and 60 years of age, can be calculated. In defining those who are potentially economically active, correction factors were applied for the group 15-20 according to the information that 34.2% of this age category are schooling, and 5% of the population is considered to be unsuitable for work in all age brackets. A figure of about 5,100 potentially economically active persons is thus arrived at. Of these, a total of 3750 persons of 15-60 are economically active. This means that the group 'not working' in Mafeteng urban area amounts to 26% of the potential labour force, or to 1350 individuals. Of course, this figure only partly indicates the actual employment problem. Analysis of survey data revealed that 11.6% of the population of 15 years and over was explicitly stated to be unemployed and looking for work, which equals some 275 individuals. The fact that some 80% of the group 'not working' is not actively looking for a job, shows the structural lack of job opportunities in Mafeteng urban area: A very large proportion of the population is apparently demotivated by the prospect that jobs are extremely scarce.

The survey of the Mafeteng urban area comprised a total of 298 households with altogether 1203 members. The average size of 4.04 members per household conceals a relatively large variance; household sizes ranged from 1 to 13 members. While the single member households amount to 14.8% of the total number, 24.8% of the households have 6 members or more. About one third of all households are headed by a female. In many cases the absence of a male head is related to the labour migration phenomenon. In the survey one out of four households

reported that they had at least one labour migrant. A limited number of husbands were found at home after their return from a round of shifts in the Republic of South Africa's mines and most of them were waiting to be registered at one of the recruitment agencies for another contract.

The predominant type of household in the urban area is the nuclear family which usually contains a number of children below 15 years of age.

Chapter 4. The Urban Economy

4.1. The Concept of Production Structure

In this chapter, the urban economy of Mafeteng will be discussed by a description and analysis of the town's production structure. A production structure, or functional structure of a spatial unit, generally refers to the functions performed for other spatial entities, to the functions which satisfy the needs of the area itself, and to the various relationships which may exist between these. This makes the concept highly suitable for the main part of the present report's objective, i.e. the assessment of the potential role of the centre in the process of regional development.

Measurement of the absolute and relative importance of a function, which can be defined as a number of more or less similar economic activities, is generally recognized as being a rather hazardous task, especially in developing countries. This relates mainly to problems of definition and, of course, to the notorious lack of reliable statistical materials. The latter aspect can be overcome by primary data collection only.

There are various methods available to assess the relative and absolute importance of a function for an urban economy. In this chapter, the focus will be on the relative importance of employment. This is due mainly to problems posed by a single visit survey for data collection on incomes and on value added to goods produced in a year. In addition to this analysis, chapter 5 will present a discussion of the basic and non-basic aspects of production.

4.2. Employment per Type of Industry/Sector

In this section the distribution of the labour force over the types of industry or sectors will be looked into. To this end, the group of those employed in Mafeteng urban area is classified into six categories as shown in table 5 below.

Table 5
Employment per Type of Industry/Sector in Mafeteng 1981

Industry	Total	%
Services	1104	38.1
Commerce	1023	35.3
Craft and Manufacturing		
Industry	293	10.1
Farming	187	6.2
Construction	160	5.5
Transport	140	4.8
Total	2900	100.0

(Source: URPP Survey 1981)

Before this is analysed, it should be stressed here that about one-fifth of the employed population in Mafeteng (the de jure employed) is not working in Mafeteng itself because of participating in labour migration to the Republic of South Africa's collieries and mines. If one only considers the de jure employed males, not less than 35% of the economically active males of Mafeteng urban area appear to be involved in migratory wage labour. A substantial part of Mafeteng's economic base, therefore, originates from remittances. Because migrants belong to the de jure population and not to the de facto population, that is the population actually present (in this case working) in the area under study, further description and analysis of this group will not be included here.

The most important type of industry in Mafeteng area consists of the combined services. Not less than 38.1% of the working force is employed in the service sector. This sector includes the workers in educational institutions, government departments, including the hospital, the workers in the domestic service sector, the workers in the administrative field, the professional workers and workers in other services such as business services and religious services. This type of employment is of equal importance to both males and females.

The second most important source of employment in the area consists of the commerce sector. Especially for the female section of the economically active population, selling is a very important economic activity.

The services and commerce sectors combined give employment to not less than 73.4% of the economically active population. This is an indication that the town has a possibly highly inflated tertiary sector, a phenomenon which is frequently observed in African and other developing countries' urban sectors. The workers of the craft and manufacturing industry constitute the third largest group in the sense of number of employees in Mafeteng. The predominance of males in this sector is considerable. In total, however, the sector does not provide employment to a substantial part of the economically active population as only 10.1% of all employees are finding employment in the secondary sector.

The remaining three sectors, farming, construction and transport, are of minor importance. Farming as source of employment is mainly concentrated in the "urban Villages" which are included in the "urban area". Construction includes both building of structures and roads. Transport provides employment to about 9% of all employed males, while no female workers were found in this sector. This limited percentage is remarkable to a certain extent in view of the strategic location of Mafeteng in Lesotho's road network.

The brief discussion of the employment per type of industry has provided some information as to the relative importance of sources of employment, but gives rather insufficient detail on the actual economic activities and the characteristics of the active segment of the town's labour force. To this end, in the following sections salient features of the three main types of industry in the area, i.e. services, the commerce sector and craft and manufacturing industry, will be looked into.

4.3. Services

Mafeteng as a district headquarters has a very important function as a service centre. A distinction should be made with regard to services provided by government and services by the private sector. The importance of the services provided by government departments is illustrated by the number of persons employed as presented in table 6.

Services by government departments include district administration, local services, health and education. These services will be discussed in this order below.

Under the District Co-ordinator representatives of various ministries carry out their district oriented tasks from Mafeteng town. The largest group consists of the civil servants of the Ministry of Agriculture. Their tasks are co-ordinated by the District Agricultural Officer. Various technical officers are subordinate to him such as a District Crops Officer, District Livestock Officer, District Extension Officer, District Soil Conservation Officer, District Range Management Officer and a Poultry Technical Officer. Each of these officers has a field staff in the district. Until early 1981, most activities of the Ministry of Agriculture at the District level were channelled via the Basic Agricultural Services Programme. A package of basic services was offered to farmers, most of which were

Table 6

Employment in Government Services, Mafeteng Urban Area, 1981

District Co-ordinator's Office	4	
Sub accountancy	23	
Works	38	
Subordinate Court/Law Office	19	
Inspection Educational Services	7	
Labour Office	5	
Bureau of Statistics	11	
Commerce/Industry	4	
Food Management Unit	12	
Agricultural Services	44	
Co-operatives & Rural Developmental Services	16	
Local Services (Incl. PTT, sanitation, water, etc.)	25	
Prison	25	
Police	30	(estimate)
<hr/> Total	<hr/> 373	

(Source: Special Studies on Services)

provided from Mafeteng. After financial and organizational problems made it impossible for BASP to continue operations, some of the services are now offered by other institutions such as the Co-op Lesotho (inputs and marketing) and the Livestock Improvement Centre which are both operating from Mafeteng.

Another Ministry active in the field of services for rural areas is the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development. Its 16 representatives in Mafeteng co-ordinate all activities in the district which comprise, among others, the food for work programme. This is a scheme to build or improve roads, to build conservation works and to build and maintain village water supply systems on a labour intensive basis using locally recruited manpower. In practice mostly women are working in this context, due to the absence of many able-bodied males who are participating in wage labour migration. At the time of the survey the programme was involved in 13 road construction projects, 5 water projects and 15 erosion-control projects. More than 800 individuals were participating for a remuneration consisting of a small amount of money and some food, sufficient to feed a small family for a few days. The scheme thus contributes significantly to the alleviation of malnutrition in the district.

Other government services employing important numbers of personnel are Public Works, which is responsible for maintenance and building of government buildings and for maintenance of the district's road network; the Sub-accountancy (tax collection); the Subordinate Court and Law Office; the Prison and the Bureau of Statistics.

With regard to services directed to Mafeteng urban area itself, the most prominent place is taken by the police force. At the time of the survey national political problems were playing their role in the town. Bomb blasts, shooting incidents and a political murder did not create the right atmosphere to interview police personnel on the

size of their force, their functions and equipment, etc. However, on the basis of the general questionnaire survey an estimation of 80 police men and women can be made, which most probably reflects the actual employment situation.

Other local services include the Local Administration Office, responsible for land registration, the abattoir and the market place; the sanitation department, the water department and other services such as the Post Office. Regarding the effectiveness of services, especially the local services, substantial criticism was aired by various informants. Mafeteng town has a reputation as the dirtiest town in Lesotho. This is mainly due to the fact that garbage and night soil collection is limited to only those households which are regularly paying the fees. Consequently, whole quarters of the town are virtually unserved and the consequences are appalling.

If one applies the definition that pipeborn water is available to a household if the standpipe is on the household's plot, only 6% of the population of Mafeteng is served by water. That is, if water is available. In dry periods and when the system breaks down water is rationed or simply not available.

Health and Educational Services play an important role in Mafeteng's functional structure as they employ substantial numbers of persons. Therefore, these two subsectors are discussed below in some detail.

Health Facilities

Mafeteng district's only hospital is situated in Mafeteng. The officially stated capacity is 112 beds, but in practice capacity can be enlarged by adding mattresses to the wards. The hospital is relatively well-equipped: it has a modern operation theatre with x-ray equipment, a laboratory, dispensary, and a number of clinics for, among others, family planning, tuberculosis patients, mentally disturbed patients, postnatal care and toddlers. In 1981 the hospital employed 74 persons: three medical doctors, sixteen nurses and 55 service personnel. The occupancy rate of the hospital is about 90%.

Table 7

Mafeteng Hospital - Basic Data 1980

Medical doctors	3
Nurses	16
no. of patients admitted (in-patients)	4248
no. of in-patient/days	39005
no. of days per in-patient	9
Medical doctor: in-patients/in-patient ds.	1:1416/1:13002
Nurse: in-patients/in-patient days	1: 266/1: 2438
no. of visits out-patients	36401
Medical doctor: out-patient visits	1:12133

(Source: Mafeteng Health Dept.)

This information shows the serious shortage of medical doctors. The huge numbers of outpatient visits in particular, pose a constant overload of work to the staff during the peak periods in spring and early summer, when the number of births reaches the highest levels due to the oscillating pattern of conception related to labour migration. During these periods, unacceptably high demand for medical assistance has to be coped with by the staff. The medical doctors are also responsible for the proper functioning of three district health clinics, which have to be visited on a regular basis.

The Public Health Department in Mafeteng town consists of one Public Nurse and three Health Assistants. This Department is supposed to promote preventive health care through information campaigns, the inspection of water supply systems, food storage and the maintenance of certain hygienic standards in public places in the whole district. However, the functioning of this Department leaves much to be desired. Lack of qualifications of staff, poor attitudes and - at least - partly incompetence are reported to have reached such levels that a thorough re-assessment of the set-up seems imperative (Olthof, 1982, p. 58).

Educational Services

Traditionally, education in Lesotho has been organized and provided by religious institutions. Virtually all schools in the country have been established by the Lesotho Evangelical Church, the Anglican Church of Lesotho, the Roman Catholic Mission and a number of smaller religious organizations. At present, most of the schools are still managed by these missionary organizations, with the exception of a few schools which are privately owned. The government, however, pays salaries of staff to those schools which have been formally recognized by the Ministry of Education. Therefore, educational services are included under government services.

Mafeteng is a very important educational centre. Four primary schools and six secondary schools, of which one also offers technical training, are located in the urban area. Table 8 summarizes a number of quantitative aspects on enrolment, employment situation and the number of pupils/students per teacher. These data show that the sex ratio is 85 at primary school level, and at secondary school level 80. This indicates that also in Mafeteng the schools are attended by larger proportions of females, a phenomenon closely related to labour migration for males of 17 years and over, and to the farming tasks assigned to

Table 3

Schools in Mafeteng Urban Area - Basic Data 1980

Type : primary schools - formally recognized

number	students	M / F	Total	Staff	Q / UQ*	Total	Ratio	S/Ss
3	1090	1296	2386	41	6	47	1 : 51	

Type: primary school - not recognized

1	40	38	78	8		8	1 : 10	
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Type: secondary schools - formally recognized

4	579	793	1372	63	10	73	1 : 19	
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Type: secondary schools - not recognized

2	19	55	74	9	5	14	1 : 5	
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10 (total)	1728	2182	3910	121	21	142		
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* = Qualified/Unqualified

(Source: Special Study on Education)

boys in the rural areas from which Mafeteng draws its school pupils. Another aspect which needs to be paid some attention to is the sizeable difference in the staff/student ratio between primary and secondary schools. Whereas secondary schools in Mafeteng have about half the number of students compared to primary schools, they employ 50% more staff. However, there is a difference as regards the proportion of unqualified staff: At primary schools some 11% of teaching staff is unqualified, while at the secondary schools this amounts to 17%. Furthermore, about one third of teaching staff at the secondary schools consists of expatriates. This is an indication of the lack of qualified teachers in Mafeteng, a problem which also exists at the national level.

School fees for primary schools amount to 20-40 Maloti per annum, with the exception of the school which has not yet been granted formal recognition. Here school fees amount to not less than 240 Maloti per annum, too high for most Basotho families. This school is largely attended by children of expatriates and is of a rather elitist nature.

At secondary schools the fees vary from 10 to 150 Maloti per annum. Here again there is the exception of one unrecognized school where the fees are close to 500 Maloti per annum. The other non-recognized secondary school is managed by a religious sect, is very small (only 47 students in total) and has relatively low fees, obviously made possible by substantial financial support from outside Lesotho.

Services Provided by the Private Sector

The most important group of service workers in the private sector are the domestic workers: the servants and the gardeners. Among the servants females predominate, while gardeners are usually (elderly) men. It proved hard to trace this group of workers. Sometimes the heads of household or other respondents simply overlooked those living in a small room or in the "servants' quarters". Many domestic workers are related to the family which 'employs' them, although the latter aspect is difficult to define here. Often the domestic workers are paid very little and can only survive by living in the household for which they work for seven days per week. The total number, corrected for under enumeration, is estimated to be around 400.

The second most important category under this heading consists of those involved in personal services. This group consists of clerical workers, traditional doctors, neighbourhood hairdressers, and other piece-job oriented service workers. Again, estimations were necessary in view of the irregularity of most of the activities included here. The estimated number of workers amounts to about 50.

Mafeteng has three labour migrant recruitment agencies in which a total of 33 employees are working. The largest agency is TEBA (The Employment Bureau of Africa) which recruits on behalf of the South African Chamber of Mines

in Johannesburg. Another organization is ACROL (Anglo Collieries Recruiting Organization of Lesotho) which recruits for the Anglo American Corporation. This agency gives work to 5 permanent staff. The smallest recruitment office is owned and operated by an independently working Mosotho. The agencies together recruit annually some 12000 migrant workers, mostly for the gold mines and collieries.

Another group of workers in private services are to be found in the business services like banks and insurance. Mafeteng has local branches of the three banks operative in Lesotho, namely Barclays, Standard and Lesotho Bank, which employ 13 workers in total. Furthermore, there is an insurance agency with 7 employees. It is a branch of a South African insurance company, which has its Lesotho headquarters in Maseru.

The remaining service workers are to be found in the private health sector. Three doctors, who all stated to officially live in Maseru and to commute daily to Mafeteng, employ 5 assistants in total.

Table 9 summarizes aspects of employment in the private service sector.

Table 9

Employment in the Private Service Sector - 1981

Type of Workers	Number	% of total
Domestic workers	400	78.3
Personal service workers	50	9.8
Recruitment personnel	33	6.5
Business service workers	20	3.9
Private doctors incl. staff	8	1.5
Total	511	100.00

(Source: Special Studies on Services, URP Sample Survey 1981)

The information provided in this paragraph shows that, if one excludes the group of 400 paid domestic workers, the administrative function of Mafeteng, with 373 workers, is the predominant activity in the field of services. The importance of government services is obviously closely related to the administrative function of Mafeteng as district headquarters. Other important services are education with 142 employees; personal and business services with 111 workers and the health sector with 78 staff. Also the latter three groups of services have to a considerable extent a function for at least a part of the Mafeteng District. Further discussion on the regional significance of the service sector of Mafeteng urban area will be presented in chapter 5.

4.4. Commerce

Mafeteng's commercial sector comprises both formal and informal activities. Here, formal is defined as encompassing those activities for which a license is required from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Such license is given only to those firms which have sufficient capital resources and are operating from a suitable site and building with the formal approval of the Department of Health. Informal thus refers to commercial activities for which no license is required or given.

The formal commercial sector can be subdivided into wholesale activities and retail activities. In contrast to reports from other urban centres in Africa (Hinderink & Sterkenburg, 1975), the distinction between those activities can be made without great difficulty, as the number of "borderline" cases is very limited. As shown in table 10 Mafeteng has four wholesale trade establishments, which together employ some 85 people. Two of these establishments deal in goods which range from foodstuffs to consumer durables and building materials. Approximately 95% of the goods are purchased from South Africa, the remaining

turnover is in goods which are produced by Lesotho's import substitution industries and by its agricultural sector. It is estimated that about two-thirds of the goods are sold to customers outside the urban area.

Both firms are foreign owned. One is in the hands of a multinational trading firm, while the smaller of the two is owned by an Indian family which established itself in Mafeteng in the early seventies. The third main employer in the wholesale sector is the establishment of the National Drug Stockpile Organization (NDSO) which is responsible for the purchase, storing and distribution of medicine for the whole country. As only a very limited proportion of the goods is consumed locally, this activity can be classified as basic as well.

The smallest wholesale establishment is the Egg Circle, a commercial outlet for eggs and poultry for the 148 members of the Mafeteng Cooperative Society. Although part of the customers are private individuals, the main turnover originates from the sale to retailers, predominantly in Mafeteng urban area.

Retail trade in Mafeteng urban area provides a livelihood for over four hundred persons. Apart from six supermarkets most establishments are small and fall in the category of neighbourhood shops ("cafe's"). Products are locally bought with the exception of vegetables and fruit, which are often obtained directly from the Republic of South Africa. Only the supermarkets sell in substantial quantity to non-Mafeteng residents.

Formal retail trade in Mafeteng is characterized by a high degree of competition. Entry is not easy, especially since a substantial amount of capital is required. Most establishments are run by the owner with assistance of his household members. The larger shops, such as the supermarkets, employ personnel. On average some six persons are engaged per retail establishment, which is rather high and an indication of incidence of hidden unemployment. From

interviews with "café" owners, it appeared that many small retail establishments were started on the basis of capital accumulated through labour migrancy. Interviews with key informants revealed that the failure rate of small businesses is rather low. Apart from the license requirement, this aspect can be explained by the fact that supply of goods from South Africa is very regular, that credit is rarely given to customers, and that stocks are extremely limited.

The products sold are mainly provisions, textiles and a variety of household utensils. Table 10 below summarizes a number of the aforementioned aspects.

Table 10 Commerce Sector - Formal Activities
Number of Establishments and Persons Engaged - 1981

Type	no. establishments	no. people	percentage
Wholesale Trade	4	96	18%
Retail Trade	73	428	82%
Total	77	524	100%

(Source: Special Studies on Commerce, 1981)

The informal commercial sector in Mafeteng can be subdivided into market trade and streetside selling and hawking. The number of market sellers in Mafeteng amounts to about one hundred. The market is walled and is partly provided with stalls and sheltered areas. A fee as rent for stalls and for the maintenance and upkeep of the area is payable to an overseer and amounts to M0.60 - 1.50 per month. The location of the market is very central, next to the main junction in Mafeteng town and adjoining the bus station where public transport to and from all four directions is available during the day. The commodities most frequently offered are various foodstuffs, some of which are prepared and/or cooked at home, second hand textiles and both 'modern' and 'traditional' Sesotho medicines. The selling is usually undertaken by women; only some 10% of the places were occupied by men. Prices for goods are not

negotiable and the customer has the choice between 'take it or leave it', an aspect which is rather unusual in the African context.

Whereas the number of market sellers is rather constant throughout the year, the trading activities performed by streetside sellers and hawkers depend heavily on weather conditions, on the day of the week and on the hour of the day. Streetside selling and hawking usually takes place at a rather limited number of locations and/or streets. The hospital area, the post office area and the area near the labour migrants' recruitment office are important sites for the streetside sellers, while hawking is mainly confined to the bus station area. Various counts showed that the total number of participating sellers varies from 150 to 200 women, children and sometimes men, which bring the total of informal "petty traders" to 250-300 persons, an indication of an important share in the distribution system. On the other hand, it is a sheer necessity to participate, for most women interviewed stated that they were widowed, married to unemployed husbands or that they had been left alone by migrant labourers. Thus, as is frequently reported from other urban areas in developing countries, a substantial part of the working population has taken refuge in this type of retail activity because of the absence of alternative sources of income. For most participants the income received is limited to M10.00 to M50.00 per month, a humble amount barely sufficient to feed a small family. It is an indication of very high rates of participation and competitiveness in this sector. As Moody has also observed (Moody, 1975), the function of petty trading in Mafeteng has hardly developed beyond local exchange between the lower income groups of the urban population.

Another informal commercial activity is the brewing and selling of local beer, "joale", which takes place at the "shebeens". These drinking places are usually illegal, but

are generally tolerated by the authorities, some of which frequent the places themselves. The shebeens are entirely an (elderly) women's affair and numerous shebeen "queens" are celebrities among the population of the low income districts. Most shebeen queens produce a brew with "secret" additives which make their product more potent, and, according to some, tasty. The fact that some concoctions contain shoe- and/or copper polish obviously does not deter customers. The beer-selling establishments, of which the location is often indicated by an improvised flag, are very important social meeting places, especially for men. Beer is sold in old, usually stained, cans and is mostly consumed in the open air where some limited seating is available on benches. Interviews in-depth with a number of "queens" revealed that incomes derived from the selling of the beer vary substantially. Sometimes other services to customers are provided as well, although information on that aspect of the shebeen phenomenon proved extremely difficult to obtain. On the basis of extrapolation from the data collected in the general survey, the number of shebeen "queens" in Mafeteng urban area was estimated to be close to 200.

Table 11 summarizes a number of aspects relating to the informal commercial activities in the town.

Table 11 Commerce Sector - Informal Activities
Number of Persons Engaged - 1981

Type	No. of people	percentage
Market selling	100	20
Streetside selling & hawking	150-200	40
Shebeen Queens	200	40

(Source: Special Studies on Commerce, 1981)

The above shows the extremely important position of the commerce sector in the urban economy. In terms of the number of persons employed it is the second most important sector with 35.3% of the total economically active

4.5. Crafts and Manufacturing Industry

Secondary production activities in the Mafeteng urban area can be subdivided into two groups. In the first place there are a few industries which, according to criteria like capital input in relation to labour, energy sources, scale of operation, production methods, organization and marketing can be classified as "modern" manufacturing industry. In the second place there are the activities which are largely artisanal in character, and which are consequently labelled as craft activities here.

Mafeteng has two establishments which have all the features of modern manufacturing industry. One firm is specialized in the production of medicines. It is a joint-venture of the Lesotho government and a European development organization which operates on a non-profit basis. At the time of the survey 76 wage workers were employed, predominantly from Mafeteng urban area. This industry, the Lesotho Dispensary Association, produces for both the Lesotho and international markets: At least 25% of production output is exported, while only a very limited part of total production is consumed locally. Therefore, the LDA is an important contributor to Mafeteng's economic base. Unfortunately, the industry works far below capacity. Only some 50% of production capacity is actually used, which is mainly due to international marketing problems. If full use of capacity could be made, another 60-70 workers could be employed here.

The other industry classified as "modern" is a bakery. This establishment employs 62 wage labourers from the Mafeteng area. Some 15,000 loaves of bread are produced daily, of which about 10% are consumed locally. The firm therefore contributes significantly to the urban economy. An expatriate owner manages the firm and stated that he chose Mafeteng because of its good location with regard to transportation of both raw materials and output.

Craft activities are classified according to number of people engaged. Counts, on various occasions during the months of May, June and July 1981, revealed that the brick and concrete block making activities are the predominant craft activity. Some 46 production sites were counted, but during the time of the survey not less than 28 of these units had closed shop. Some of these activities probably had stopped because of the low winter temperatures which make this type of open air production a very harsh task. In total 32 persons were actively engaged at the time of the survey. Production is sold in Mafeteng town mostly ; less than ten percent of the output is sold to customers outside Mafeteng urban area.

Brickmaking activities are located around an artificial lake in view of the availability of both water and clay in sufficient quantities. Small houses are situated around the lake, which are constructed of rejected bricks. Most people engaged in this type of production are former mine workers, some of whom are in very poor physical condition. This is reflected in the production per day; some reported production of 1500 per day but most could not produce more than a few hundred. Most brickmakers are self employed, although a few were employed on a piece-basis by others. Good bricks fetch a price of M48.00 per 1000. But for most people engaged here, brickmaking is not a financially rewarding activity. Most households visited lived in appalling conditions and reported to sometimes suffer from starvation. Information provided by hospital staff indicated that tuberculosis is far from exceptional among these households.

The second most important craft industry is tailoring. The total number of businesses recorded was 13 in which 26 persons are engaged. This number is, compared to most other African towns, relatively low. Cheap imports from South Africa, including second hand clothing, and the preference for European style designs instead of traditional

dresses, make the hand-made textiles less attractive to many Basotho. According to interviewees most tailors and seamstresses are doing repair-work, re-modelling or make dresses for specific occasions. Textiles repaired and produced were rarely sold to non-Mafeteng residents.

Other craft activities include blacksmithing, carpentry, shoe making and general repair businesses. Regarding the destination of produce, the non basic character is also predominant for these activities. In total 25 units were counted in which 47 persons are engaged. Furthermore there are some 50 piece job workers who do not have a fixed working place but only operate in Mafeteng. The majority of operations in Mafeteng's craft sector have a rather irregular nature. This irregularity means that the economic base provided by this function is not stable and constitutes an important indication of the weakness of the urban economy. Most businesses work with very little investment, in the open air or in improvised sheds. Credit through formal channels is usually not provided and capital shortages often result in the buying of supplies only after the orders have been placed. The supply situation normally does not pose any problem, as the wholesale establishments are well stocked with goods which usually originate from The Republic of South Africa. As a rule craft production in Mafeteng is an individual affair and partnership arrangements are rather rare. To conclude this section, summarized data on craft and manufacturing industry are presented in Table 12.

Table 12 Manufacturing and Craft: Number of Units and Persons Engaged - Mafeteng Urban Area 1981

Type of Activity			
Pharmaceutical Industry	1	76	25.9
Bakery	1	62	21.2
<hr/>			
Total Man. Industry	2	133	47.1
Brick/Concr. Block Making	18	32	10.9
Tailoring	13	26	8.9
Other Craft	25	47	16.1
Piece Job Workers	-	50	17.0
<hr/>			
Total Craft Activities	56	155	52.9
Total Secondary Sector	58	293	100.0

(Source: Special Studies on Craft and Manufacturing Industry, URP Sample Survey, 1981)

4.6. Other Sectors

Farming, construction and transport, provide work to some 430 individuals and are therefore the smallest sectors in the economy of Mafeteng. The farmers and agricultural labourers, a group of 190 workers, are concentrated in the urban villages situated near the boundaries of the urban area. Functionally there is very little relationship with the other sectors in the economic structure, also because the farming activities are of a largely subsistence nature.

Construction gives employment to 160 persons in total. About 50 Mafeteng residents were at the time of the survey temporarily employed by a road construction firm which is rebuilding the road to Mchale's ~~Ubat~~, a task which is to be accomplished by late 1983. The majority of these workers consists of general labourers. The skilled workers, whose contract is of a more permanent nature, originate mostly from the Republic of South Africa.

At the time of the survey two house construction companies were working in the Mafeteng urban area and had locally recruited some 83 workers. Both companies, one owned by an expatriate, the other one by Basotho in the northern part of the country, largely employed personnel on a day to day basis. The firms obtain all their supplies, except sand, from the Republic of South Africa, mainly because locally produced building material is considered to be of poor quality while available supplies vary to unacceptable extents.

The remaining activities in the construction sector are of an informal nature. About 7 businesses are active in which a total of 27 persons are engaged. The informal builders usually work in groups of threes and fours in the whole of Mafeteng urban area. Most of them have no formal vocational training and work on a rather irregular basis due to modest demand. Construction activities are usually undertaken for private persons. The firms are all one-job-at-a-time units and because of very simple tools they have no overheads to speak of, which means that the groups are predominantly selling their labour.

About 140 persons are actively engaged in transport activities. The largest group is to be found in the private mini-bus firms, of which Mafeteng has 18. Most businesses have one or two mini-buses only. The driver often is the owner, or is related to the owner. Depending on the size of the mini-bus one or two helpers assist the driver with the collection of the fares and the stowing or packing of goods on the roof racks. One wholesale store owner is also involved in the transport business and operates two big passenger buses with three personnel on each bus.

Transport in the Mafeteng district is largely a private sector affair, especially since the Lesotho National Bus Corporation has a structural bus-shortage. In 1981 it was estimated that more than 50% of the corporation's buses were out of order due to poor maintenance, accidents

and bad-driving. Public transport in Lesotho has government controlled fares per kilometre, the level of which depends on the quality of the road. Minibus owners are reportedly able to make substantial profits, especially since police checks on the number of passengers carried are rare. The maximum number of passengers counted in a (VW) minibus amounted to not less than 27 adults and three children, apart from the driver and his helper!

A rather Mafeteng-specific phenomenon are the horse-carts. At the time of the survey some 12 drivers of horsecarts were transporting goods in the Mafeteng urban area, often delivering various shopping items to homes of the customers.

4.7. The Spatial Pattern of Activities and Urban Landuse

Mafeteng gradually grew from a small administrative settlement established in 1874, to a town which obtained the official status "urban area" in 1980. This "urban area" comprises a territory close to 17 km², or 1700 hectares. Within this area a number of subdivisions can be distinguished, i.e. Mafeteng centre, the residential areas, the urban villages and the agricultural areas and waste lands.

Mafeteng centre comprises the area situated around the two main junctions of the thoroughfares north/east - south and north/west - east. It is an elongated zone of some 100 hectares where the wholesale establishments, the supermarkets, the market and bus station, the hotel, District Administrative Offices, Police Station, Post Office and a number of more or less specialized shops are located. The area also includes the site of the pharmaceutical industry. Land use is of a mixed nature as most business sites include housing of the owner and/or staff. There are only a few two storeyed buildings and the landuse generally is rather extensive.

It would be erroneous to use the concept Central Business District (CBD) here, as this concept is generally referred to in discussions of specialized, high density, highly diversified commercial zones in centres of cities. In this context, considering aspects like scale, the modest degree of specialization and the extensive type of land use, it is more appropriate to use the word "town centre".

The residential areas cover about 500 hectares and a number of clearly distinct quarters can be identified.

North and north west of the town centres is the high income quarter. The administrative function of Mafeteng led to the construction of a number of sandstone houses for civil servants. Higher ranked officers were provided with spacious quarters, which sometimes have mansion-like characteristics. Furthermore, in this zone a number of primary and secondary schools and the hospital are situated, mostly with staff houses or bungalows on their premises. The area has attracted some traders, shop-owners and other businessmen who have built their often spacious bungalow-type units here.

South and west of the town centre are the high density low income areas of Ramokhele and Liteneng. The housing conditions in this part of Mafeteng are very bad, although occasionally a surprisingly well constructed house may be found. The area is predominantly occupied by hovel-type units, mostly constructed from natural sandstone and mud and mostly not suitable for human habitation. Hygienic conditions are generally poor, and appalling in those parts which lack latrine facilities. It is, however, a lively area, especially since most shebeens are situated here.

The other residential areas, Ha Motlere in the western part and Phahameng in the south western part of the urban area, comprise of a mixture of medium-sized units, small concrete block single roomed houses and long blocks of rental units. Mostly density is rather low, especially since

many houses have large gardens which are used to cultivate vegetables and to keep some small stock. Some clusters of units are situated in grazing and rocky waste land. Most of these buildings are very recent and an indication of the relatively fast growth rate of the area's population.

The so-called "urban villages", Ramatleng and Seitlheko, situated in the southernmost part of the urban area; and Matholeng, Lifelekoaneng and Khubetsoana, situated in the northernmost part of the area under study, have a predominantly rural nature. In total the urban villages occupy an area of some 300 hectares. Homesteads often still consist of a number of rondavels, situated on large plots together with vegetable gardens and, usually a kraal. However, new units here are built of bricks and/or concrete blocks, have corrugated iron roofing and are usually occupied by households with at least one wage earner in Mafeteng's centre.

The rest of the urban area, some 800 hectares or close to 50% of the total hectareage, consists of rugged waste land in the south up to Matheneng Hill and an extensive agricultural zone with predominantly grazing land situated north of the high income quarter and north of He Motlere. In this zone, the airstrip, a government farm, one big man-made lake (Raleting Dam) and a few smaller reservoirs, and the sports grounds are situated. Here houses are virtually absent. Map 3 summarizes a number of the aspects described.

The above descriptive generalization indicates that the pattern of land use in Mafeteng urban area does not have the characteristics of the well known models which have been developed by urban geographers such as Hoyt, Burgess and Harris & Ullman. These models generally are based upon processes that were and are operating within the -larger - Western city. The models of urban landuse in smaller centres in developing countries that are currently being developed or elaborated, may in future play some part in the urban planning process, but are presently considered to be still too superficial and simplified to justify discussion here.

Chapter 5 The Regional Functions of Mafeteng Urban Area

5.1. Introduction

This chapter deals with the regional significance of functions performed by Mafeteng urban area. The assessment of the extent to which various sectors in the urban economy have a regional importance is not an easy task, especially since reliable figures are lacking and exact data are difficult to obtain by means of a survey, even if this exercise is supplemented by a number of specialized studies. Investigation into the basic - non-basic (or "service") character of a function concentrated on the total percentage of turnover originating from sales outside Mafeteng area, or in the case of services, the regional share in activities performed, patients treated or students taught. Although, where possible, cross checks were made, most of the information on the turnover of businesses was recorded by interviewing managers/owners and/or sales staff. Therefore, the figures should be treated with caution and considerable margins of error should be included. Obviously, the latter does not apply to services in the area. Where possible, such as in the case of educational institutions, the hospital and some other services, archives were consulted to determine the importance of catchment or service areas outside Mafeteng urban area for the activity. In case of services provided by government departments assessment was extremely difficult. In most cases estimations made by civil servants were used as basis for analysis.

Discussion will take place in order of importance as measured according to employment per type of industry (see previous chapter).

5.2. Basic and Non-basic Aspects of the Sectors

Services of government departments are carried out both for Mafeteng and the district. The local services departments and the police clearly restrict their attention to the urban area itself. For other departments the assessment of the regional share in the activities performed is sometimes easy, as in the case of the civil servants of the Ministry of Agriculture, or those of the Ministry of Co-operatives and Rural Development who work almost completely for the population of the district. In the case of departments like the prison, Law Office, Public Works and, among others, the Labour Office, it is less clear. The fact, however, that Mafeteng urban areas has only about 6.5% of the district's population definitely supports the argument of some interviewees in these departments that services are carried out mainly for the district's population. Therefore, all services provided by government departments, except police and the typically local services such as water and sanitation, are considered to be basic in character. This amounts to 208 employees or 56% of workers in government departments.

Analysis of samples taken from school-records, indicate that there is a considerable difference with regard to the size of the catchment area of primary and secondary schools. Primary schools in Mafeteng urban area draw about 20% of their pupils from outside the urban area's boundary. However, virtually all of these children are living within a 5 to 10 kilometer radius and come to the schools on foot. For the secondary schools the regional function is much more prominent as not less than 40% of all students are from outside the urban area. A substantial number of these students come from areas between 10 to 40 kilometers from Mafeteng, some of them even from outside the district. Most of these students are boarding at school, live with relatives or friends, or have rented their own accommodation in Mafeteng town.

In total, this means that the educational function of Mafeteng town is about 2/3 non-basic and about 1/3 basic if measured in terms of employment based on numbers of students taught from outside the area under study.

As regards the hospital, the regional function is assessed on the basis of data on the place of residence of the patients treated. Analysis showed that some 60% of the patients originate from outside Mafeteng. Like most other government departments, the 4 staff of the Public Health Department are considered to be working mainly for the district population. To summarize, one arrives thus at a figure of about two-third basic versus one-third non-basic employment in the government health sector in Mafeteng.

Domestic and personal services, large sectors if measured in terms of employment, are considered to be almost completely catering for the local population. Other personal or business services, however, are directed to a considerable extent to non-Mafeteng residents. The recruitment offices, for instance, recruit 93% of the migrant labourers from the district (31 staff), while banks and the insurance company reported that they employ some 8 workers due to services to the district population. The private health sector respondents estimated that about a quarter of the patients treated came from outside the town. The table below (13) summarizes a number of aspects with regard to the regional importance of services.

The commerce sector of Mafeteng has earlier been subdivided into the wholesale subsector, the retail subsector and the informal subsector. This distinction is also relevant in the discussion on the question of the proportion of activities performed for non-Mafeteng residents. From data provided by interviews with various respondents in the subsectors in the context of the special studies, it appears that the commerce sector in Mafeteng has a largely local service character, with the exception of the

Table 13 Service Sector Activities in Mafeteng Urban Area: Employment Total as Compared to Employment Fully or Mainly Based upon Activities for the District Population 1981

Type of Services	Total Empl.	Empl. District	% District
Government	373	208	56
Education	142	46	33
Health	78	48	62

Domestic	400	(nil)	(nil)
Personal	50	(nil)	(nil)
Business	53	39	74
Private Health	8	2	25
Total	1104	343	31
Total <u>excl. Domestic</u> <u>and Personal S.</u>	654	343	52

(Source: Special Studies on Services, URP Sample Survey 1981)

wholesale establishments. The two general wholesale establishment managers estimated that about two-thirds of the turnover originates from sales to customers in the district. Although exact data were not available, this means that of the 68 people engaged in these establishments, some 45 are working on basis of district oriented activities. The NDSO's turnover percentage originating from sales to the Mafeteng hospital is rather negligible and therefore it can be seen as a purely basic activity with some 24 employees. The smallest wholesale establishment, the Egg Circle, reported that it sells about half of all products to non-Mafeteng residents and traders.

The above evidence shows that about three quarters of the wholesale activities in Mafeteng town are geared towards customers outside the urban area and, therefore, this subsector has a largely regional function.

At retail level customers from outside town, among whom are a substantial number of migrant labourers, mainly shop in the bigger supermarkets. Most "café" owners reported to sell virtually all products to Mafeteng residents. On the basis of some information on the turnovers of both supermarkets and general cafés obtained from managers and owners, it is estimated that roughly 15% of the formal retail activities cater for non-Mafeteng residents. The informal subsector, which mainly consists of petty traders and shebeen queens, operates largely at the local exchange level, which is a reflection of a poverty economy. An exception are the hawkers in the bus station area who sell most of their products to bus-passengers "in transit" by approaching every bus which stops to offer their goods, like home-prepared foodstuffs, through the windows of the vehicle. Some market sellers, mostly those involved in the second-hand clothes trade, said they sell in some quantity to non-Mafeteng residents as well. Therefore, it is estimated that about 10% of total turnover in the informal commerce subsector originates from sales to non-Mafeteng residents. Table 14 summarizes some aspects with regard to the regional importance of commerce in Mafeteng.

Table 14 Commerce Activities in Mafeteng Urban Area: Employment Total as Compared to Employment Fully or Mainly Based upon Activities for the District Population 1981

Type of Activity	Total Empl.	Empl.District	%District
Wholesale	96	71	74
Retail Formal	428	64	15
Retail Informal	499	50	10
Total	1023	185	18
Total <u>excl. Retail Informal*</u>	523	135	26

(Source: Special Studies on Commerce, URP Sample Survey, 1981)

*It should be noted that, most probably, these figures better reflect the actual situation as the retail-informal sector is to be considered as a type of activity of which the size is mainly related to the degree of absence of alternative income sources instead of the importance of the function for town and environs.

In the context of discussion on regional significance, the secondary sector activities in Mafeteng should be subdivided into the manufacturing establishments and the craft-like businesses. The accounts of the two manufacturing industries make clear that they sell largely outside the urban area. For the bakery the percentage of total turnover sold to non-Mafeteng shops amounts to 90%, which equals some 56 employees. The pharmaceutical industry is wholly basic in character as virtually all of its products have a non-Mafeteng destination.

The situation in the craft subsector is clearly the reverse, in that most businesses reported that they sell only very limited quantities of produce to non-Mafeteng residents, as, for instance, in the case of brick and concrete block makers and the general repair businesses, or not at all, as in the case of the tailoring establishments. Of course, craft like firms do not keep anything like detailed accounts, and data should therefore be treated with caution. The general pattern, however, of craft activities having a predominantly service or non-basic function has also been observed in other African towns (see e.g. Hinderink & Sterkenburg, 1975, p. 162). Table 15 summarizes a number of aspects on the basic- non-basic character of the secondary sector in Mafeteng.

Table 15 Secondary Sector Activities in Mafeteng Urban Area: Employment Total as Compared to Employment Fully or Mainly Based upon Activities for the District Population 1981

Type of Activity	Total Empl.	Empl. District	% District
Manufacturing	138	132*	96*
Crafts	155	8	5
Total	293	140	48*

*Both the Bakery and the Pharmaceutical Industry sell mainly outside Mafeteng District.

(Source: Special Study on Manufacturing and Craft, URP Sample Survey 1981)

The remaining sectors of Mafeteng's urban economy, farming, construction and transport are predominantly non-basic. The farming activities have no regional significance whatsoever as the products are mainly meant for home consumption. During "good" years, only a very limited part of the harvest of a minority of farming households is reportedly sold at Mafeteng market-place. In construction, only the road construction firm, which employs about 50 Mafeteng residents on a temporary basis, is working for the district. Therefore, the employees can be considered, albeit for a relatively short period of time, to be involved in a regional/economic activity. The other firms in the construction sector have no significance for areas outside the town at all. Transport caters for the transportation needs of both Mafeteng and district residents. It is estimated that at least 50% of the passengers of buses and minibuses live outside Mafeteng. Therefore, this sector has a regional significance: About half of its workers are involved in servicing the district population. An exception should be made here with regard to the horse-cart drivers which have a local service function only.

Table 16 presents above mentioned aspects on regional significance of the "other" sectors in Mafeteng urban area.

Table 16 Farming, Construction and Transport in Mafeteng Urban Area: Employment Total as Compared to Employment Fully or Mainly Based Upon Activities for the District Population 1981

Type of Activity	Total Empl.	Empl. District	% District
Farming	180	nil	nil
Construction	160	50	31
Transport	140	64	46
Total	480	114	24
Total <u>excl. farming</u>	300	114	38

(Source: Special Studies, URP Sample Survey 1981)

This chapter has provided some essential information for assessment of the regional importance of functions performed by Mafeteng. It has shown that the *raison d'être* of Mafeteng is still largely the same as in the year of its establishment, 1874, namely that of an administrative centre to service an important part of the westernmost area of Lesotho's Lowlands and Foothills. The socio-economic structure of the area was not important for the choice of the site at all - nowadays it is still true that Mafeteng's base is hardly to be found in the rural areas' economy which is largely self-subsistent. Mafeteng is a service centre for the regional population, not as such for the regional economy. Therefore, the town is not expected to be able to generate growth in the rural areas. It is probably more accurate to suggest the opposite, i.e. developments in the rural areas will be more important for the economy of Mafeteng than will the developments taking place in Mafeteng for the development of the urban area's wider environs.

To conclude this chapter, table 17 summarizes a number of aspects related to the urban functions of Mafeteng based upon district oriented activities.

Table 17 Regional Functions of the Urban Economy in Terms of Proportion of Persons Engaged in Basic Activities, 1981

Sector	Persons Engaged	Persons Engaged in Basic Act	% of Total in Basic Act
Services	1104	343	31
Commerce	1023	185	18
Secondary Act.	293	140	58
Farming	180	nil	nil
Construction	160	50	31
Transport	140	64	46
Total	2900	782	27.0

(Source: Special Studies on Functional Structure, URP Sample Survey, 1981)

Concluding Remarks

Research into the functional structure of small centres in Lesotho is relevant to planning, especially because small centres in general quickly show the effects of development policies of a government or the absence thereof. The potential role of small centres in processes of planning at the meso-level, i.e. the regional level, need to be looked into as well, in order to provide essential information on how development problems at lower levels of geographical scale should be tackled. Unfortunately, as literature analysis has shown, there is a great deal of consensus about the existence of rural development problems, but that consensus is matched by conflicting opinions on the present day functioning of small centres in rural/regional development.

In chapter 1 of this paper a brief overview of these conflicting opinions has been included in order to provide an insight into the relative anarchy which presently prevails among regional planners. After a discussion on methodological aspects, chapter 2 outlined the context of the centre under study by discussing aspects such as the urban pattern in the country, Lesotho's urban policy, or better the absence thereof, and some characteristics of the district and the district economy. Obviously, these are a few aspects of the planning environment only. The non-inclusion of other, and more specifically the international context-related aspects, does not mean that these planning environment components are not considered to be of crucial importance. Of course, each and every development-related problem in Lesotho should always be studied bearing in mind the dependent, landlocked position the country is facing in the apartheid dominated macro-region. However, these aspects have been described and analysed exhaustively elsewhere, which justifies the present scope of the study.

After discussion of history, location and the main characteristics of Mafeteng's population in chapter 3,

analysis in chapter 4 made it clear that Mafeteng cannot be qualified as a growth centre, i.e. a geographic agglomeration of activities in which one or more propulsive industries act as engines of growth. It is outlined that the economic base of Mafeteng urban area is partly to be found in the South African mining-industry, as not less than some 850 able-bodied males, or some 23% of those economically active (de jure), find a source of income there for themselves and their families. Without any doubt, this makes the town's economic position highly dependent on developments in the mining industry and, since alternative employment opportunities are virtually absent, highly vulnerable to any change in the employment policy of the mining companies. Furthermore, the study reveals that, if the locally economically active population (de facto) is considered, the two most important types of industry in Mafeteng urban area are the service and commerce sectors: not less than 74.4% of the economically active (de facto) are engaged in these activities. The town has a fairly wide range of services, which supplement the administrative function, which serves a relatively large area. The size of these sectors is therefore closely related to the town's functions as district headquarters and only urban centre of the district of Mafeteng. Of all those locally economically active, 18.2% are engaged in what can be labelled basic (in this context non-local or - to a large extent - district oriented) activities in services and commerce.

Mafeteng is an important regional distribution centre of consumer goods, both via the wholesale establishments, but also to some extent via retail outlets where the migrant labourers purchase goods while en route to their home areas. This justifies the conclusion that Mafeteng is a service centre, however, one with a rather one-sided structure.

The main collective function of Mafeteng is related to migration, both of labour migrants and individuals/households. The labour migrants see Mafeteng as a gate to the mines, while the others see Mafeteng as a place which can possibly

provide them with some source of income or educational facilities. The town is not an assembly point for trade in crops or for crops processing and therefore cannot be considered to be a regional market town. The absence of collection functions is closely related to the hinterland's agricultural structure. Earlier analysis revealed that agricultural activities in Mafeteng district are largely subsistence oriented and that commercialization of agriculture is negligible (cf. Husiman and Sterkenburg, 1982).

Other sectors in the urban economy mostly cater for the needs of the population, with the exception of "modern" manufacturing industry, and, albeit to a lesser extent, the transport sector. The modern industries, however, have extremely limited connections with the Mafeteng urban economy. Both activities, the pharmaceutical industry and the bakery, are relatively footloose and have no important backward or forward linkages with other economic activities in the town. The pharmaceutical industry is a typical "island" in the town's economy, but also the bakery, which does not obtain any inputs locally, is a rather economically isolated establishment.

The analysis has shown that exogeneous relations are of such importance that the future of the town will to a large extent depend on extra-territorial developments, i.e. developments outside Lesotho. The expected decrease in the flow of labour migrants to the Republic of South Africa will have dramatic consequences for Mafeteng. This is because of the important role of remittances in the town's economy, but also because Mafeteng is the only urban centre in the district. The non-continuation of migrancy will result in a rural exodus because of absence of income opportunities in the rural areas. Probably part of this exodus will be directed towards Mafeteng town. A possible commercialization of agriculture, one of the aims of the Lesotho government's agricultural policy, may also result in increasing migration to the town as less labour could be needed in the rural areas. Furthermore, this commercialization will have substantial effects on the town's

relations with the hinterland. Agricultural development may filter upward to the centre and may create need for some marketing facilities, input-supply and other agro-support related activities. In this sense Mafeteng is more dependent on developments in the rural areas than the rural areas on developments in Mafeteng!

From this analysis only one conclusion is possible: The government of Lesotho should not only concentrate on decentralization of government, but should also speed up the process of designing a spatial development policy directed towards enlargement and diversification of the economic base of smaller centres in the country. The growth centre doctrine may prove to be a rather useless tool in this process: Mafeteng's position shows that hinterlands may presently be more important for the towns, than the towns are for the hinterlands' economies. In the Lesotho context the territorial model, which is not worked out sufficiently, is a useless basis as Lesotho's extra-territorial relations are such that, for instance, selective territorial closure may at short and medium terms result in starvation and, ultimately, chaos.

The above aspects show the obvious need for a carefully prepared spatial policy in Lesotho directed towards the countries' smaller urban centres. This policy should encompass a decentralized investment policy drafted on the basis of regional employment needs with an open eye for future developments in the macro-region.

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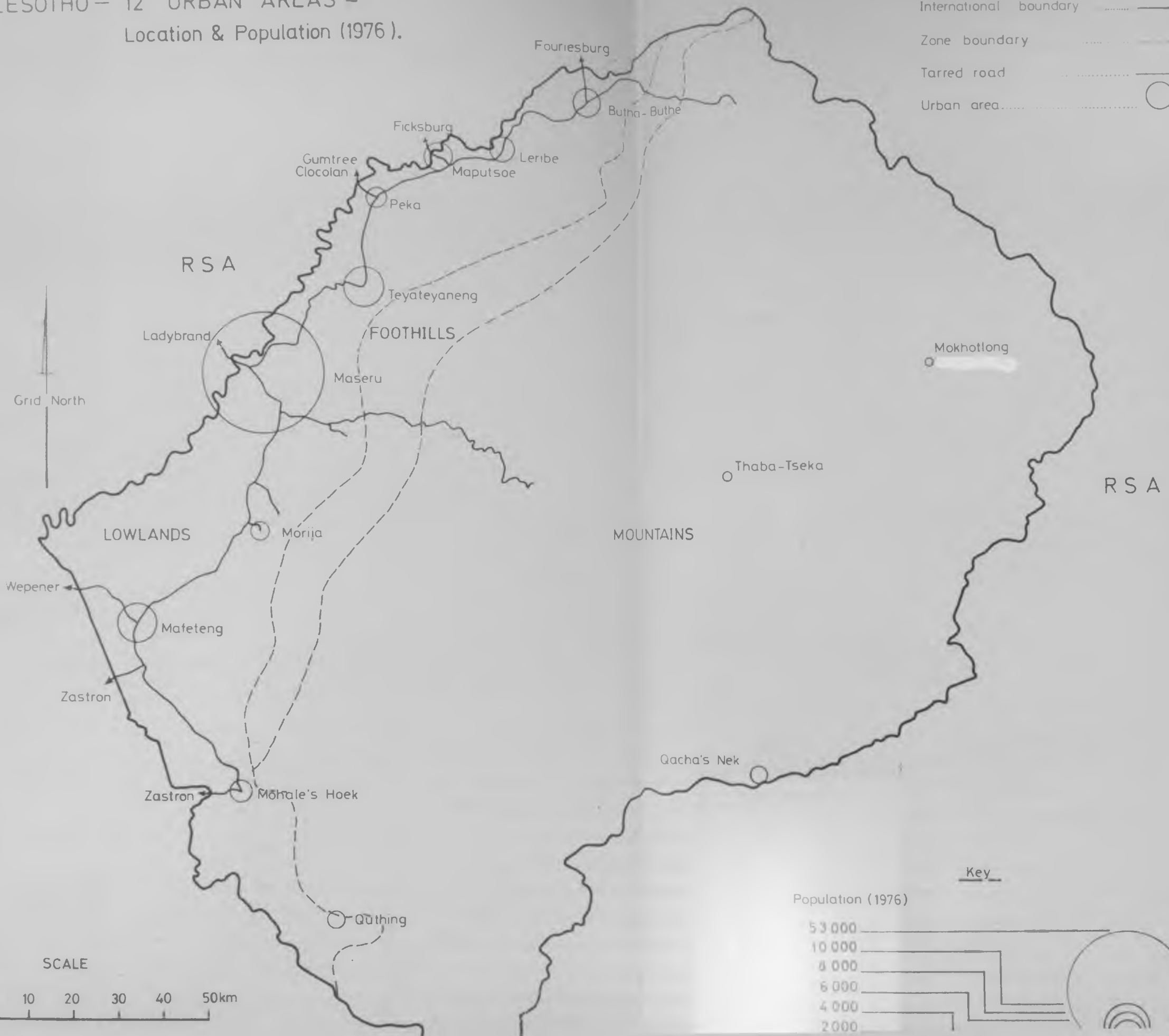
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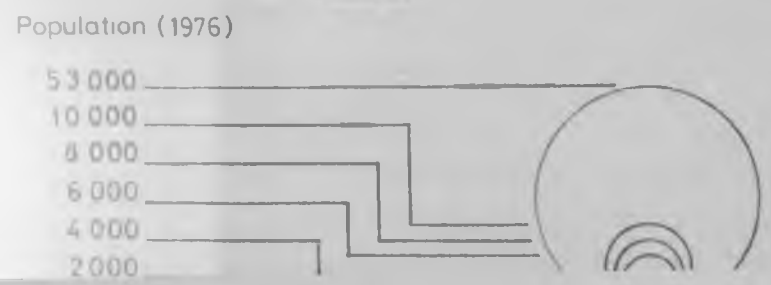
LESOTHO - 12 URBAN AREAS - Location & Population (1976).

Legend

- International boundary 
- Zone boundary 
- Tarred road 
- Urban area 



Key



SCALE



MAP 2



Legend

International Boundary	—+—+—+—+—
District	—
Other	—
Tarred Roads	- - - - -

MAFETENG DISTRICT — Land Potential and Major Road Network.

LAND SUITABILITY KEY

Cultivation : Semi Intensive	1
* Extensive	2
Grazing.....	3 & 4
Cultivation and Grazing	6
Unsuitable for Cultivation	7







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