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BLACK URBANISATION:
SOME PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS
FOR POLICY

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1. BLACK URBANISATION: A NEW DEBATE.

The issue of urbanisation among the black people of South Africa has for long been very salient in the minds of planners, politicians and administrators, for obvious reasons. South Africa is among the very few countries in the world which has very rigorous statutory controls on urbanisation of certain categories of people from rural to urban areas. In view of this salience, it is surprising that so little is known about the process of urbanisation and about the kind of decisions that black people make in the process.

Perhaps this is because urbanisation was supposed to have tailed off after 1968, when it became law that all blacks from rural areas would work in the cities on annually-renewable contracts. This annual interruption of the occupation would prevent the employees gaining the Section 10 1(B) Right (in terms of the Bantu Urban Areas Act) to become a permanent urban dweller outside of the homeland, by having worked continuously for one employer for ten years or more than one employer for fifteen uninterrupted years. The official view in the past has been that new urbanisation has largely ceased and that the issue was therefore not worth investigating. Everyone knew that certain illegal channels for urbanisation existed but emphasis tended to be placed on closing the loopholes rather than establishing the empirical details of continuing urbanisation.

Academic researchers have been discouraged from investigating the process of *new* urbanisation because it is so terribly difficult to obtain honest replies from people who have obtained urban rights by manipulating the system or simply by managing to live undetected in the urban areas.

Partly as a consequence of these factors, the public debate on urbanisation has been muted over the decade, up to the very late seventies. In the past few years, however, the issue has once again emerged in the form of a vigorous debate.

In part this has been due to the rapid increase in populations in informal dwelling or so-called "squatter" areas close to

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some of our larger cities like Durban, Pretoria, Cape Town, East London and others. Health problems in these informal shanty areas (Typhoid in Inanda, Cholera widespread in Natal in early 1982, a limited outbreak of Bubonic plague in the Eastern Cape, etc.) have served to emphasise the lack of facilities and services in these areas. The formal illegality in terms of Influx Control laws of squatters in some areas has resulted in official raids, deportations back to rural areas, public protests and even active resistance on the part of some squatter communities ("Crossroads" in the Western Cape being a salient example), which have underlined the political implications of these developments. The first results of the 1980 population census, which enumerated the growing concentration of population in the major industrial areas, also gave some impetus to the debate, as did a recent very thorough analysis by Smit and Booyesen.¹⁾

The government has responded to the impact of growing numbers of urban black people in various ways. The Minister of Cooperation and Development has appointed Dr. P. Smit (senior author of the work referred to in footnote 1) as special advisor on urbanisation. There have been initiatives in planning in the peri-urban "squatter" areas; the KwaZulu Government, with the support and approval of Pretoria, has initiated a new policy of facilitating self-help housing in a serviced and supervised settlement at Mfolweni in Natal. The central government department of Cooperation and Development has embarked on a residential planning and home-ownership scheme in cooperation with the Urban Foundation in Inanda, near Durban, and it has also given approval to "squatter" upgrading schemes generally, provided they are not in the areas designated as white, Asian or Coloured. This new approach is a vindication of the conclusions and suggestions of a number of academic researchers and observers over the past six to seven years.

1) P. Smit and J.J. Booyesen, *Swart Verstedeliking: Proses, patroon en Strategie*, Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1981.

3.

These developments have established a high-level debate on the issue of policy options for black urbanisation in the 1980's. At the time of writing the Urban Foundation, the South African Institute of Race Relations and the Unit for Futures Research at the University of Stellenbosch are engaged on large-scale investigations of the process and implications of urbanisation.

At this point the overall direction of government policy in regard to black movement between rural, peri-urban and urban areas is not known. On the one hand there are claims that there is a tightening of the Influx Control regulations in some areas at least¹⁾ and a new wave of action against squatters in the Western Cape and in Inanda in Natal (the latter on central government controlled black land - a South African Development Trust Area). On the other hand, the government appointed committee on Influx Control laws under Justice Groskopf is due to have its report made known soon, and the expectation is that regulations may be made more flexible in some respects. The recently finalised regional development policy of the Prime Minister's office is in large measure intended to attract development away from the major industrial complexes towards as well as over the borders of, less-developed "homelands", and the initial formulation suggests a reliance only on positive incentives rather than on the earlier approach of limiting employment in major complexes in terms of the Physical Planning Act (now phased out).

The contradictions make it clear that some time will elapse before a consistent and clearly-formulated government policy in regard to black urbanisation will emerge, if, indeed, it ever emerges in a clearly defined form at all. There is, however, perhaps marginally greater scope at this point for systematic investigations and arguments by the private sector to influence the course of events.

The following brief and preliminary paper is a broad

1) Evidence in regard to Durban given to the Buthe/Lezi Commission. See report of the *Buthe/Lezi Commission* (and Commission Archive), Durban, Inkatha Institute, 1982.

examination of some of the evidence relating to the process of black urbanisation and what this evidence might imply as regards policy.

2. RATES OF URBANISATION: THE UNCERTAIN PARAMETERS.

As Smit and Booyesen present it, on the basis of census results, the broad picture of black urbanisation is as follows.¹⁾

Numbers of blacks in urban areas.

	Blacks in "white" urban regions (1000's)	Homeland urban areas (1000's)	Total (1000's)
1951	2 298	2	2 300
1960	3 244	11	3 255
1970	4 027	591	4 618
1980 (provisional)	4 941	1 097	6 038

These figures suggest for the period 1970-1980 a growth rate in the "white" areas of just over 2 percent per annum and in the "homeland" urban areas of nearly 5 percent per annum. These growth rates are very approximate since redefinition of boundaries has taken place and there are areas in the "homelands" in 1980 which were recorded in "white" areas in 1970.

Broadly speaking, however, the census figures suggest that growth of black populations in the "white" areas has been within the limits of natural increase, while it has been the "homeland" urban areas which have absorbed most of the migration from country to town.

Has black urbanisation to the larger metropolitan complexes in "white" areas ceased therefore? This would be a remarkable achievement on the part of legislative controls. Our own research suggests, however, that informal or illegal urbanisation to these

1) Smit and Booyesen, *op.cit.* p. 38, Table 3 and footnote pp. 39 and 1.

areas is continuing, albeit at a low rate.

In a cross-sectional quota sample of men aged 16 years and older with Std. 8 qualifications and above in Soweto, 1978, the proportion which, in terms of age, correlated with years spent in "white" urban areas, must have urbanised after 1968 was 4 percent. In a similar sample of Xhosa-speaking township dwellers on the Witwatersrand and Cape Town the proportion which urbanised after 1968 was 9 percent. In a sample of 507 adults drawn from all groups on the Witwatersrand but excluding people who were migrant contract workers, in 1981, the proportion equivalent to those above was 15 percent. It would seem, therefore, that in urban township housing in so-called white areas, there is a small but significant proportion of people who have entered the system either from black rural areas or from white farming areas. These proportions given above are underestimates. Firstly, some of the people interviewed would have been canny enough to make a habit of claiming to have been in the urban areas since before 1968. The sampling methods employed were to select householders or members of their formal households, and this would tend to under-enumerate people living informally as illegal lodgers. I would suggest that substantially more than 15 percent of existing black urban populations have urbanised informally since 1968, in the sense of having become part of the urban communities at least for their working lifetimes.

It must be noted immediately that these people are precisely the individuals who would avoid completing census returns.

In major urban areas which are inside homelands or which are closer to homeland areas the proportions of people in similar samples who appear to have entered the urban residential system after 1968 are significantly higher than is the case on the Witwatersrand. In the KwaZulu/Natal metropolitan townships, the proportion we found was 35 percent (sample 357 (1981)). In small urban townships in Natal/KwaZulu the proportion was 31 percent (sample 173 (1981)) and in the townships of the Eastern Cape and Port Elizabeth the proportion having entered the residential urban environment after 1968

appears to be 29 percent (sample 417 (1979)). It is well-known that the controls in the areas close to homelands are not able to be rigorously applied, and the formal system is much more flexible within the homeland towns themselves. Even these proportions may be underestimates, however, because there are some penalties for living in homeland townships illegally (these township administrations tend in general to use the possession of urban rights as a criterion for the allocation of housing and rights of lodging, although exceptions appear to be made).

The position is that a small but nevertheless substantial proportion of people living in urban black townships are strictly speaking illegal - refugees from the Influx Control system. Some of these people have entered the system by using judicious bribery, largely before computer-based administration tightened-up on mal-practices. A variety of different avenues for the employment of bribes existed in the past.

Hence, in varying proportions in different parts of the country, we have in the black urban townships:

- legal holders of Section 10 Rights;
- "legal illegals" - people who have formalised their status by informal means;
- "illegal illegals" - people who have to live cautiously, depending on short spells of work for transport contractors, informal building contractors, etc.; and
- "legal migrants" with permission to reside outside of hostels.

wish to remain permanently in urban areas, those who are there semi-permanently only for cash earnings in the urban sector and those who are temporary "target" workers. In our research among migrant workers, for example, we have encountered a small proportion of people who regard themselves as temporary migrants but who have acquired Section 10 rights.

Hence, in our urban black townships there is quite a

complex interplay between legal status and "sociological" status on the rural-urban continuum.

It is clear from these observations, however, that urbanisation of an informal nature is steadily contributing to the rate of population growth in urban areas. The categories of people involved are elusive, however, and insufficient precise information is available on the characteristics of the newly-urbanising populations. In order to throw light on the factors involved in urbanisation, we have to consider data on intentions and aspirations among migrant contract workers.

3. RURAL OR URBAN CHOICE AMONG MIGRANT WORKERS.

In a fairly intensive, focussed interview based investigation among a sample of 626 migrant contract workers in the Durban area, Valerie Møller and I found that the aspiration to urbanise permanently was relatively limited.¹⁾ Forty-seven percent of the Durban migrants saw themselves as working in Durban permanently or for the rest of their working lives. As many as 45 percent did not wish even to qualify for urban rights, despite the fact that these rights facilitate job-seeking and job-mobility. Among the remaining 55 percent who did wish to qualify, a slight majority wanted urban rights only for job-related and instrumental reasons. This left approximately 25 percent with a desire to live as urban men for the rest of their working lives. Of these, less than 10 percent wished to remain in the urban area after retirement. Only approximately one percent of the sample expressed what one may term an intrinsic commitment to urban life; a taste for the city.

Consistent with this rural outlook, less than 14 percent of the Zulus in the sample and less than one-quarter of the non-Zulus (mainly Pondos) wished their wives and families to live permanently in the

1) Valerie Møller and Lawrence Schlemmer, *Alternatives to Urbanisation: The Preferences and Orientation of Migrant Workers in a South African City*. Durban: Centre for Applied Social Sciences, 1979.

in the city with them. To some extent this orientation is a passive adaptation to the legal impediments, since a significant proportion mentioned Influx Control laws as a reason. However, the perception of legal impediments is powerfully reinforced by a host of what are usually called "urban push" factors. Generally, the migrants experienced a poor social adaptation to city life. Naturally they disliked the crowded hostel accommodation, and even if they had small apartments available to them for family accommodation, for people with a typically rural sense of privacy and space, the city life would have great frustrations. More generally, the migrants did not feel at home in the city environment; they deplored its morals, found it difficult to make friends, were made to feel insecure by the high crime rates, disliked the noise and the hurried pace, were frightened by the fact that one could not subsist if temporarily unemployed and felt deprived of the status and recognition which they enjoyed in their rural home communities.

Generally, the picture which emerges for the typical migrant contract worker in hostel accommodation (excluding the mines where different factors exist) is that one has a group of fairly firmly rurally-oriented men who yearn for the lost quality of the comfortable rural subsistence life. They suffer privations in the city, as do their families in the rural areas in their absence, but they recognise the inevitable need to work in the city in order to survive. They are in fact resigned to a permanently blocked and frustrated life-style. We have termed these men "encapsulated" (after Mayer); not in the usual sense of rural/traditional encapsulation, but encapsulated in their pervasive resignation to constraint and artificiality of life-style.

We must remember that these impressions are from a sample of migrant contract workers who live in the prescribed hostel accommodation. The indications are that this group excludes an increasing proportion of younger migrants who wish to escape the encapsulation in a life of constraints. Even the data from the hostel migrants indicate that the younger generation of hostel dwellers are tending to deviate from the essentially adaptive pattern so typical of the mature men. While the mature hostel migrant has a very low standard

of education (Std. 2 average) and hence a very low self-confidence and perception of bargaining power, the younger people are to a very much greater extent able to compete in the urban system. They are also less tied to the rewards of community status and possessions in the rural areas.

Therefore, in order to detect the emergent pattern of aspirations vis-a-vis urbanisation, we have to look beyond the typical hostel-dwelling migrant. It is highly probable that the old encapsulation, the adaptive pattern, is no longer typical and what is replacing it is not socially visible. Hostels are highly visible concentrations and therefore can be misleading. We need to be able to understand the patterns among the people referred to earlier: the people who filter into the urban residential and community environment.

4. THE ESCAPEES FROM ENCAPSULATION.

In research we have conducted among "squatter" populations in the greater Durban area we have noted that a fairly substantial proportion in these communities consists of former hostel migrants living in family circumstances in shanties. Perhaps as many as one-quarter of the "squatters" in some areas are of this type. The families may not be their rural dependents: many of the men take town wives. Another category of squatters is men, women or families that come to the urban areas in order to survive. They may be from resettlement camps, they may be former labour-tenants from white farms, or they may be younger people whose access to the resources of the rural subsistence areas is limited by the increasing pressure on the land in many parts of the homelands.

All told, as many as thirty to forty percent of the approximately 75 000 "squatter" households in the immediate peri-urban areas of Durban are directly or indirectly an influx from rural areas of different types. The peri-urban area offers these people an opportunity to shelter from administrative action. These areas are residual to the racial and geo-political compartments of our society. They exist in Natal, near Pretoria, in the Eastern Cape and in the Western Cape (where they are under heavy pressure from the authorities). They do not exist near the major industrial complex of the country —

the Witwatersrand. The equivalent categories of people in areas where no peri-urban settlements must be under great pressure to accommodate themselves in the broadest sense. And yet it is this crucial category of people that we know almost nothing about.

All that can be said about these people at this stage is that they are essentially a self-defined group. The patterns emerging from the social surveys show a surprisingly slight degree of "crystallisation" of objective circumstances between rural and urbanising and urban people, as regards rural or urban indicators. For example, roughly 50 percent of urban dwellers on the Witwatersrand have close relatives or dependents in rural areas, and the proportion is slightly over 70 percent in the urban townships of KwaZulu/Natal. In Natal, some 47 percent of people in the metropolitan townships and 60 percent of people in small town townships have either land, cattle or a house in rural KwaZulu. As many people in the metropolitan townships have their own land allotments in rural areas as is the case among the samples in rural areas. We refer here to agricultural land; not merely a stand for a dwelling. The men sampled recently in a cross-section of rural areas in KwaZulu claimed to have stayed or worked in town for an average (median) of over 20 years. What we have in South Africa is very much a continuum of rural to urban characteristics, along which there is a very great deal of overlap between people who are formally classified as rural and those whom we regard as urban blacks. The townships of the Witwatersrand perhaps come closest to being urban proletarian in character but even there the linkages to rural areas are quite surprising.

At all sorts of points along this continuum individuals make a choice to start disposing of rural identities and to start taking the city seriously as the main arena for future strivings. What factors influence this choice?

5. FACTORS INFLUENCING RURAL-URBAN CHOICES.

In a recent sample of 300 people in KwaZulu/Natal, we found that as many as one-third of people living as urbanites expected to retire to rural areas when they were too old to work. This expectation relates to education, but not as strongly as one would expect, since as many as 20 percent of people with matriculation or higher also expected

to return to the country. The choice does not relate to income at all. As one would expect the most powerful determinant of the choice is whether or not the individual has land or other resources in the rural area.

We asked questions about what kinds of compensations people with land in rural areas would accept for their land, so that they could urbanise permanently. In general, people with land would not consider parting with it. Ninety percent of people with land or more indicated that even the possibility of a good monthly pension, or an ability to purchase a house in an urban area with secure tenure would not move them to relinquish their land.

People with land in the rural areas, whether they were rurally or urban-based tended to see their land as very much an individual resource. Most wished that they could have freehold title to their land; 60 percent of people in rural areas and more in urban areas.

In response to a hypothetical question about a migrant worker in fairly typical circumstances, over 80 percent of people in the sample were emphatic that such a man would like to obtain work close to his home. The factor which related most significantly to the answers was, once again, whether or not the respondent had land and resources like a house or cattle in the rural areas. When the additional hypothetical question was asked as to what drop in salary such a man would be prepared to accept in order to work close to his home, the pattern of answers suggested hardly any trade-off at all. The average answer was very close to what the initial question indicated as the man's earnings in town.

In their replies to questions on the advantages and disadvantages of families joining migrant workers in the city on a permanent basis, it seemed that the factors in the minds of respondents, apart from the obvious ones of sentiment and comfort, were material: what would it cost?, what would save most money?, etc.

Judging from these answers and the tone and content of many other probes suggests that the most powerful factors impinging on rural

or urban choice, among both rural and urban people, are material factors and the possession of hard resources in either the urban or the rural area. The expectation of earning capacity in the urban area would be a particularly powerful factor, associated with education.

There does not seem to be a factor of values or tradition (or absence of it) bearing upon the issue of rural or urban choice very strongly at all. In the pattern of results we have obtained, there are no consistent differences in the inclinations of people depending on whether they are traditionally-oriented or not; and even where these features do influence preferences, the material factors outweigh them. Broadly, the pressure for urbanisation seems to be a pressure for survival or for material progress. Black people we have interviewed seem to feel that if the material considerations are being met, people must make the best of other aspects of the environment. The "bright lights" theory of urbanisation seems to have little relevance to our data. In fact, if anything, the "bright lights" features of the city are a disincentive to most migrants and rural people, because they are associated with crime, insecurity, expense and moral threats to the family. The latter is perhaps one of the more significant non-material factors.

6. RURAL-URBAN DIFFERENCES IN VALUES.

The arguments thus far have suggested a continuum of characteristics between rural and urban: certainly no clear polarisation in to contrasting social types. People who intend urbanising would not appear to be very different to those who do not in terms of socio-cultural characteristics, since the basic decisions are taken on material grounds and on interests. There may nevertheless be some interesting socio-cultural contrasts between rural and urban, not as prior factors but perhaps as consequences of the materially-based choice.

In response to questions on what people would do with additional income, it is interesting to note in our Natal data that rural urban contrasts are not very great. In both metropolitan areas and among rural people, the first priority tends to be improved housing, followed closely by education (for self or children, depending on age). Hereafter differences creep in. The urban people mention savings, cars, food, clothing, furniture and business, whereas the rural people mention food, clothing, cattle, savings, cars, businesses and furniture, all given above in order of choice.

The differences above are not unexpected and could in large measure be due to varying levels of income as much as to rural-urban differences. The main contrast lies in the rural choice of cattle, but, then again, cattle are a way of saving and investing money in rural areas.

When asked carefully about what levels of family incomes would be necessary in order to live comfortably, rural people in the sample gave figures resulting in a median of R325 p.m. compared with a median of R550 in the metropolitan areas. To some extent the difference is due to higher existing incomes in the urban areas, but some difference probably remains as a function of the rural-urban factor. More importantly, however, the rural figure certainly does not represent aspirations of rural simplicity compared with urban areas. This result as well as others suggest that rural material expectations are not very substantially different to urban norms.

In regard to the value placed on customs and traditions differences do emerge, but here the differences between the Witwatersrand and Cape Town and other urban areas indicates the existence of what one could loosely term a kind of "super" urban environment in and around these two major cities. In a study in 1979 of Xhosa-speaking people (sample 700, all areas) the following results emerged as regards value placed on customs and traditions. Percentage responses will not be given: instead the results will be indicated thus:

very highly valued	(70%+ see as essential)	= VHV
highly valued	(55% ")	= HV
valued	(40%+ ")	= V
not valued	(40% and less ")	= NOT

	Wits/C.T.	E.Cape Urban	Rural Giskei
Chieftainship	NOT	HV	VHV
Lobola	VHV	VHV	VHV
Male Initiation	VHV	VHV	VHV
Diviners	NOT	NOT	NOT
Herbalists	V	NOT	NOT
Ancestor Worship	VHV	VHV	VHV
Ancestor Feasts (Idini)	VHV	VHV	VHV
Women avoiding eggs	NOT	NOT	NOT
Polygamy	NOT	NOT	NOT
Land in country	V	HV	VHV
Owning car	HV	HV	HV
Cattle	V	HV	not asked
Marriage within tribe	NOT	V	HV
Preference own lang. group	NOT	V	V

These summarised results suggest that apart from what appears to be a strong ideology of inter-ethnic solidarity and a resistance to the government-sponsored chieftainship system in the Witwatersrand/Cape Town townships, there is a remarkable congruence in perceptions of traditions and culture between rural and urban areas. I do *not* suggest that very subtle differences in degrees of modernisation in implicit values do not exist, but that is really a different topic. In terms of expressed and openly perceived and recognised values (overt attitudes) there are no very great contrasts between rank-and-file urban and rural people.

7. AN OVERALL VIEW.

The foregoing discussions tend to suggest that black people live in a "culture" of perceived and felt need deprivation. The most powerful and salient concern at the rank-and-file level is material survival and material progress. Next to this come concern with security, the integrity of the family and the avoidance of stress. These, broadly, are my assessments of the factors bearing upon urbanisation. People in deciding on a strategy in regard to urbanisation are making *investments* in their own futures as regards the concerns outlined above. This is more at issue in urbanisation than symbolic or life-style considerations. People do not go to the city for adventure or return to rural areas to taste rustic bliss. The degree of modernisation, the extent to which people are "tribal", etc., are factors at a different level and quite probably operate fairly independently of rural or urban choices, or perhaps as a consequence of those choices rather than as their causes.

Urbanisation will continue, affected only in relative rate by regulations, determined primarily by the perception of material loss or gain. As rural resources decline in a per capita basis with population increases, so the pressure to urbanise will increase. Access to land is a fundamental factor. When our laws start pinning more and more landless people to rural areas, the present system may indeed be seeking its own destruction.

8. IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY: RURAL DEVELOPMENT AS A DISINCENTIVE TO URBANISE.

One often hears loosely-expressed opinion that the answer to the "squatter" problems and to the pressure on amenities in the urban areas is more effective rural development. This is perhaps one of the most serious misperceptions one can think of. The reasons for making this assertion are the following:

8.1 Effective rural development may require increased, not decreased urbanisation.

The reports of the Tomlinson Commission and the Buthelezi Commission¹⁾ both conclude that the rural areas of the homelands cannot carry and provide employment for the populations they have and accommodate effective rural development. In order to free the land sufficiently to rationalise rural agricultural planning and to raise incomes in rural levels to modest minimum levels it is argued that substantial proportions of the present rural population of KwaZulu, for example, would have to move off the land. If this viewpoint is taken, there is certainly no point at all in looking to rural development as an answer, partial or otherwise, to the urban crisis.

This view is sometimes contested either by people who make very mechanical calculations based on aggregate land areas, climate, soil types, etc., and then compute feasible levels of agricultural output.³⁾ These calculations have very little relevance because they

1) *Report of the Commission for the Socio-Economic Development of the Bantu Areas within the Union of South Africa*, Union Government, 61/1955. Pretoria: Government Printer.

2) *Buthelezi Commission, op.cit.* Vol. II Report of the Economic Development Subcommittee, pp. 59-61.

3) Note for example the following statement (translated from Afrikaans): "According to calculations by Grobler of the University of Potchefstroom, KwaZulu could support a population of 7,5 million if the full dry land cultivation potential of its agriculture were to be exploited", T. Malan, "Lewensvatbaarheid van die Tuislande in die RSA", *Key Issues in Homeland Development*, Pretoria: Africa Institute, Occasional Paper No. 40, 1975.

are frequently unrelated to the human factors - the motivations and incentives of people - and also to the micro-economic factors at the level of the rural homestead.

Other authors¹⁾ take as a model very intensive small-scale peasant agriculture in Southern Europe or Asia, and also argue that the rural homeland areas could accommodate many more people in productive enterprises. The at least partly successful smallholder agriculture in Kenya is frequently taken as an example. Intensive smallholder agriculture does have certain prospects and support for this kind of policy is necessary. However, here, again, there are human constraints which weigh seriously, which are discussed in 8.2 below.

8.2 Black rural culture has been deeply and permanently affected by the norms of the modern urban environment.

Earlier in this paper I pointed to the fact that, even though migrant workers, rural people and many urban blacks value the rural life very highly compared with the city,²⁾ they were not prepared to lower their expectations in a rural setting. The evidence is overwhelming: the rewards of rural development will have to compete or almost compete with the urban wage standards if people are to be attracted back from the cities or if the urban attractions for rural people are to be countered.

In both the research for the Buthelezi Commission and in the study among migrant workers,³⁾ among those black people in or from rural areas *who had land for ploughing or gardening*, the average size of the landholding was between 2 and 2½ hectares. Roughly *one-half*

1) See for example, Merle Lipton, "The South African Census and Bantustan Policy", *The World Today*, London: Chatham House, June, 1972.

2) In the research for the Buthelezi Commission, we found that 3 out of 10 black people in metropolitan townships and 4 out of 10 people in small towns would like to return to rural areas in their retirement. *Buthelezi Commission, Vol. VI, Report on the Attitude Surveys*, Durban: Inkatha Institute, 1982.

3) Møller and Schlemmer, *op.cit.*

of these people shared the land referred to with relatives and kinsmen.

We should remember that almost all of this land is in non-irrigated areas; i.e. available only for dry-land farming. Consider the picture which emerges. Take a relatively fortunate man who has $2\frac{1}{2}$ hectares of his own land. He has no tractor and therefore has to use cattle to plough. With the deterioration in grazing he should devote at least some of his land to growing winter feed for his cattle so that they are not too weak to plough in spring, (a common problem). Can he on $2\frac{1}{2}$ hectares produce enough to support himself, his family, his livestock and still have sufficient by way of cash crops to bring in more than, say, R150 per month on average (a typical urban wage)? If he and members of his family worked in town even part of the time he could do better than this, *without* the risks associated with dry-land farming.

The type of low-level cash-cropping referred to is obviously a serious option when one considers less-developed African countries where many fewer urban alternatives exist. In South Africa, however, the framework within which people view agriculture has been dramatically altered. Among our sample of nearly 700 migrant workers, less than 10 percent could think of someone in their rural areas that they would classify as making a success by farming.

What is concluded here is that while rural development is certainly urgent, the real picture of size and type of landholdings is such as to make it nearly impossible to raise the level of output sufficiently to compete with urban rewards. This could perhaps be done if agricultural land was rationalised to result in bigger and more suitable landholdings, but then that would also mean displacing people from the land, as pointed out in 8.1 above. This certainly is no answer to the pressure on the urban areas.

8.3 Those non-urban black people with their own landholdings are rapidly becoming a minority.

In our studies for the Buthelezi Commission¹⁾ we found that sample data in a cross-section of rural areas in KwaZulu showed that some roughly 35 to 40 percent of *rural men* had firm access to land for ploughing. Half of these men had to share that land with a relative. In our samples of hostel migrants, while 70 percent had firm access to land for retirement, only 50 percent had their own land. We must accept that in a very important area like KwaZulu/Natal, *more than one-half* of the non-urban men have no arable land which they could utilise for agriculture. This proportion is rising all the time, because population is expanding whereas land is not. At best, a slight but growing majority of non-urban heads of families can look forward to no more than a site for a house and a small garden in the rural areas.

Given this growing situation, one is driven to the conclusion that if rural development is difficult for those with land, it is totally impossible for those without land. As a growing class of effectively landless rural people, they would be better off closer to cities and towns where the availability of centralised facilities and lower transport costs would improve the quality of their lives.

9. BROAD CONCLUSIONS FOR POLICY.

In the light of the picture sketched above, increased or decreased urbanisation is inevitable in the future. What should the broad policy-approach to this problem be?

The so-called squatter settlements near Durban, Pietermaritzburg, Pretoria and other places have already pointed the way to a resolution. Given the existing shortage of housing and amenities in the formal

1) *Buthelezi Commission, op.cit. Vol. VI.*

urban townships, it is very unlikely that we will see markedly increased state expenditure on providing accommodation for an augmented flow of people into the metropolitan areas. However, the "squatters" have shown a capacity to house themselves and the informal economy in these areas, which density facilitates, can supplement urban employment in meeting the survival needs of these settlers.

Planners often fear the consequences of very large concentrations of population on the urban fringes. Certainly there is a need for industrial decentralisation to spread employment away from the major complexes. There is also a need for small rural production centres to take employment into the rural areas.¹⁾ My own view, however, is that the impetus for growth and employment creation which the infrastructure, linkages, skills and expertise of the existing industrial complexes offer is too vital a factor not to be taken advantage of to the full. Therefore, an important aspect of policy should be the "deconcentration" of industrial growth to points on the edges of the existing centres.

This type of limited decentralisation would not produce the same difficulties in attracting skilled labour and managerial personnel as more remote growth points. Furthermore, the costs of job-creation are likely to be lower than in decentralised points. More employment would then be available to the growing fringe "squatter" areas, which are by now permanent features of certain cities.

This type of development is infinitely better than attempting to block urbanisation, which if successful, will produce an alienated mass of rural people without rural resources or the benefits of semi-urban density and facilities, despite the best efforts of decentralisation or rural planning. Sensitive planning can take advantage of the existing trends to encourage a new type of fringe-urban development which will take account of our rural and our urban limitations.

1) See *Buthelezi Commission, op.cit. Vol. II. Chapter 5.*

Metropolitan areas without "homelands" nearby also require this kind of development. Informal, peri-urban housing areas near Durban and Pretoria are theoretically part of KwaZulu and Bophuthatswana and therefore do not produce very serious problems with "political" implications. At this stage the political issue in other metropolitan areas is very critical, as the problem of "squatters" in the Western Cape shows. We face an even more critical problem for our future stability, however, if we bottle-up people in such a way that they have neither a rural nor an urban future. Black urbanisation should be seen as a solution in itself, and not as a problem requiring expensive alternative strategies.

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