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An overview of QwaQwa: town and
country in a South African
bantustan

by

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African Bantustan**

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Introduction

The aim of this paper is to provide an overview of contemporary conditions in Gwaqwa, South Africa's smallest 'Bantustan' and one of the most densely-populated of these areas. It provides some of the most recent statistics and general information on demography, employment, health, education, housing, economic development and local political structures. The period on which we focus is 1970 to the present, during which mass population relocation into Gwaqwa has taken place, with very serious effects in each of the areas mentioned above. We also look briefly at some aspects of the processes of relocation people have undergone, in order to place the situation in Gwaqwa in its broader context and to show how the various processes have influenced the ways in which different people experience conditions in Gwaqwa.

It is this differential experience of local conditions which provides the theme around which we present this overview. Despite Gwaqwa's small area and

1. 'Bantustan' is used in this paper because it is well-established in critical discourse. Even in this latter context, however, it does not escape all offensive connotation; but available alternatives are less satisfactory.

large population, its inhabitants have not been uniformly affected by relocation. People have been relocated at different times over this period, from different areas and under varying circumstances. These have been amongst the most important factors influencing their capacity to deal with the problems posed by the situation in Qwaqwa.

There is a major dichotomy within the Bantustan between the resources available to residents of Phuthaditjhaba, the area's only town, and those available to people relegated to the so-called 'countryside'. In this paper we will explore some of the major differences between town and 'country' in Qwaqwa and will show how incoming people are assigned to one or other of these areas.

Situation, size and population

In 1969 the former Witsieshoek Reserve was officially recognised as an 'ethnic homeland' for South African South Sotho-speakers. A Territorial Authority was created for the area, and it was renamed Qwaqwa (Malan and Hattingh, 1976). Qwaqwa is situated in the north-eastern Orange Free State, at the junction of the Natal, Lesotho and OFS borders (see map 1 below). At present it comprises 48 234ha. (480sq. kms) of the Drakensberg foothills (Sharp, 1982:13); this is the area which has been released into the control of the Qwaqwa authorities and made available for settlement and ancillary purposes. Ten adjacent White-owned farms were expropriated by the SA Development Trust in accordance

with government consolidation proposals made in 1975 (Benbo, 1978); although this has increased the area of Gwaqwa to 62 000ha. (SAIRR Survey, 1982:372), this land has not been fully released to the local authorities and is not available for habitation.

Official plans for further expansion have been mooted: there are proposals to extend Gwaqwa towards Harris Smith, Kestell and Golden Gate. If these plans were fully implemented the present area of the Bantustan would be trebled, but there is as yet no indication that these plans will ever come to fruition.

In 1916 the Beaumont Commission reported that the population of Witsieshoek reserve was 5 000 and that the area was already overcrowded.² The reserve had been created in 1867 by the Free State Republic to house the Kwena followers of Paulus Mopedi and a small Tlokwa group under Koos Mota. The initial phase of relocation from White-owned farms in the Free State to Witsieshoek began after implementation of the 1913 Land Act, and the Beaumont Commission reported on its results. Relatively slow in-migration continued until 1970, when the population was given as 23 860 (BENBO, 1978:21). In this period State action to deal with overcrowding took the form of betterment schemes and attempts at cattle culling. These measures led to the Witsieshoek rebellion of 1950 (Moroney, 1970; U.G. 26-1951).

In 1970 the Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act decreed that all Africans in common South Africa who were born or domiciled in Gwaqwa, or were related to any member of Gwaqwa's population, or could be identified with any part of the

2. U.G. 19-1916: Report of the Natives Land Commission, Volume II:54-67.

population by virtue of 'South Sotho cultural or racial origins' were regarded as de_jure citizens of the Qwaqwa Territorial Authority (Niehaus, 1984:10). Although the actual population of the area was 24 000 at this date, 1,3 million South Sotho-speakers were forcibly associated with it. Mass relocation began because the pressures which had been building up against Africans on farms, in towns and other Bantustan areas in the OFS were given a sanctioned focus of release. Official figures put the de_facto population at 215 669 in 1980, although local estimates were that it had reached at least 200 000 by then (Murray, 1980). By 1983 informed local estimates gave the actual population as close to 500 000 (Sharp, 1982:28).

TABLE 1: Geographical distribution of people classified the South Sotho, 1970 and 1980

S. SOTHO IN:	1970		1980	
	Numbers	%	Numbers	%
QWAQWA	23 860	1,8	215 669	11,1
COMMON S.A.	1 218 720	89,9	1 557 750	80,4
Urban	570 620	42,1	-----	
Rural	648 100	47,8	-----	
TRANSKEI	59 860	4,4	97 428	5,0
BOPHUTHATSWANA	24 080	1,8	47 354	2,4
OTHER BANTUSTANS	30 380	2,2	19 268	1,0
TOTAL	1 356 900	100,1	1 937 826	99,9

Source: Sharp, 1982:12. Source for 1970 figures: BENBO, 1978:21; for 1980 figures: BENS0, 1980 (Table 8).

Taking 400 000 as a conservative estimate for Qwaqwa in 1983, it follows that since 1970 the population has grown by nearly 2 000% and that, given the area indicated above, the population density is now close to 1 000 persons per sq.

kilometre (Sharp, 1982:13). Because of the mountainous terrain by no means all of Gwaqwa is habitable; this means that density in the populated areas is very much higher than indicated above.

Relocation

During the 1970s a mass of people moved to Gwaqwa from Free State farms, and this movement still continues. By no means all of these people were directly coerced into this move by State intervention or by individual farmers, but it is misleading to regard their decisions to move as 'voluntary'. From the 1960s onwards many experienced a process of increasing marginalisation while still on the farms: the terms on which farmers were prepared to employ them became steadily less acceptable, since they were increasingly denied access to agricultural land and grazing. As the value of these resources rose, farmers wanted to bring them under their own direct control and increasingly-mechanised production. Many of those who eventually ended up in Gwaqwa had a previous history of increasingly rapid moves between farms, which indicated their struggle to find employers who would maintain their preferred terms of employment. Changing circumstances on Free State farms have been discussed more fully elsewhere (Sharp, 1982:19-25).

In addition a large number of people fled Thaba 'Nchu at various times, particularly in 1974, and arrived in Gwaqwa as refugees. Most of these people had been farmworkers in the central and southern parts of the Free State; on

leaving the farms they had made for the nearest Bantustan area. Severe ethnic conflict was the contrived result of mass in-migration to Thaba 'Nchu in the context of the 'homeland' policy. The area had been designated part of Bophuthatswana and was under the domination of Tswana authorities. The latter followed a policy of systematic victimisation, enhanced by Bophuthatswana 'independence', of Sesotho-speakers whom changes in the Free State countryside had dumped in the area: the latter were seen to have no legitimate claim to the very limited resources of Thaba 'Nchu (Murray, 1981).

No provision had been made in Qwaqwa to receive this incoming flood. Housing and other facilities had been built only in Phuthaditjhaba on a limited scale, with a view to the accommodation of influx-control refugees from White urban areas and of the bureaucrats and teachers needed in the Bantustan. The decision was therefore taken to restrict access to urban facilities in Qwaqwa to those who had formerly possessed Section 10 rights in common South Africa: people who came from the farms or other Bantustans were assigned to the 'countryside'. This led to the formation of 'closer settlement' villages with no facilities, and people were sent to whichever village was being filled at the time they arrived. The refugees were relocated onto the fields and pasturelands of older residents, radically diminishing the meagre amount of such land available.

Housing

The vast majority of the population lives in the closer settlements in the so-called 'countryside'. Official estimates put the population of Phuthaditjhaba at 7 300 in 1979 (BENSQ, 1980: Table 9); this appears to have been a severe underestimate, and Bank has calculated that the actual population was in the region of 28 000 in 1983.³ Squatting is not permitted within the urban area itself (although there are some officially-sanctioned tent-dwellers who are refugees from the Transkei). Different kinds of housing are provided: in 1983, the stock in Phuthaditjhaba was 3 982 units (SAIRR Survey, 1982); comprising municipal housing (built by the Orange-Vaal Administration Board), housing built by the Qwaqwa Development Corporation (QDC) and privately-built homes. The QDC housing was built only for sale; municipal housing has recently been placed on the market and about 150 units have thus far been sold.

There has hitherto been a marked reluctance amongst senior bureaucrats and professional people to purchase the more expensive QDC housing (over R20 000) or to build for themselves. These people, who include many directly responsible for the administration of the Bantustan, have retained their Section 10 rights in common South Africa. They have therefore chosen to build their homes in Free State towns and elsewhere, thereby indicating the limits of their commitment to the Bantustan. Their presence in rented accommodation adds to the shortage of housing for those who qualify to live in Phuthaditjhaba but have lost their former Section 10 rights through

3. This is also likely to be a slight underestimate: it was derived by multiplying the number of housing units in 1983 by mean household size from a small sample.

relocation. People in the lower echelons of the civil service and the teaching profession have been enticed to purchase cheaper housing by new central government subsidies and by the practical difficulties of leaving the area.

People in the closer settlements must provide whatever accommodation they can for themselves. Many refugee families have had the experience of living in temporary transit camps on first arrival, where conditions were very poor (Krause, 1982). Acquiring a permanent dwelling-site has been known to take up to a year, and in this period people are very vulnerable to arbitrary demands from local chiefs, headmen and petty officials. People have frequently had to pay bribes to acquire sites for dwelling purposes. These sites vary slightly in size, but are generally very small (about 20x20 metres).

A small number of taps is scattered throughout the closer settlements, but sewerage and waste-disposal remain the responsibility of site-dwellers. Other necessary resources are in exceedingly short supply: many village chiefs impose severe fines on the collection of wood for fuel and clay for building purposes. All fuel and building materials must be purchased, often from local suppliers at very high prices. Few people own livestock because incoming refugees are prohibited from bringing animals into the Bantustan, and there are no fields available in most villages (particularly in the Kwena Tribal Authority area where most people have been relocated - see below). Many attempt to grow fruit and vegetables on their dwelling sites, but are severely hampered by the lack of water. Most people are therefore forced to purchase all their food and other requirements.

Employment

Given the virtual absence of income-generating agricultural activities in Qwaqwa, most people are totally dependent on access to the returns from wage labour. Opportunities for wage employment within the Bantustan are extremely limited. There is very little 'piece-work' or other forms of informal employment because local people do not have the resources, such as stock or fields, to warrant their hiring casual labour from amongst their neighbours. There are a few informal opportunities to work for construction and other companies on government projects, but this employment holds little security and provides starvation wages (Sharp and Spiegel, 1984).

By 1984 there were sixty-two factories in the industrial areas of Phuthaditjhaba, employing approximately 5 500 people. These posts are more secure than those mentioned above, but the wages offered are extremely low (60% of those employed earn less than R60 per month) and mainly women are employed (an estimated 4 500 of the total) (The Star, 2/3/1984). There has been a significant increase in the number of factories in Qwaqwa since the mid-1970s, but recent evidence suggests that decentralisation subsidies are being radically misused to secure the cheapest possible labour force (The Star, 2/3/1984).

The likelihood of this kind of abuse, which involves the holding down of African wages to ensure that central government rebates cover the total wage

bill, is enhanced by the difficulties people - particularly women - experience in gaining contract employment outside the Bantustan.

There are five labour bureaus in Qwaqwa: one is a regional labour bureau situated in Phuthaditjhaba, the others fall under the control of the two Tribal Authorities (for the Kwena and Tlokwa areas). With the exception of the one at Namahadi (the main Kwena village), the Tribal bureaus are ineffective. Namahadi is sufficiently close to Phuthaditjhaba on the tarred road for employers to go to it. People who live near the other Tribal bureaus are severely disadvantaged by the inaccessibility of these offices and by the fact that contracts can be filled without employers having to venture further than Phuthaditjhaba and Namahadi. The bureau at Tsheseng had, for instance, only five contracts on offer in the first three months of 1983, compared to Namahadi and Phuthaditjhaba which offered about 3 000 contracts between them⁴ in the same period.

Accurate estimates of the total number of people employed as contract migrant labourers from Qwaqwa are hard to obtain. Central government sources⁵ provided a figure of 37 500 Qwaqwa migrants for 1981. This figure included 2 500 commuters (ie. contracted employees working in nearby towns such as Harrismith and Bethlehem and returning to Qwaqwa at least once per week). The 35 000 long-distance migrants comprise not only those contracted through the labour bureaus mentioned above, but also a certain number recruited by the

4. Source: Labour Bureau Statistics, Magistrate's Office, Phuthaditjhaba

5. Source: Hansard, 8, col. 509, 24/9/1981.

6. TEBA: The Employment Bureau of Africa, the recruiting organisation of the

local TEBA office to work on the mines. . TEBA has introduced a country-wide system of recruitment quotas for different areas: in 1983 its quota for Qwaqwa was 5 000. An indication of the demand for contract employment is that TEBA never has any difficulty filling this quota. ⁷ Furthermore an implication of the Chamber of Mines' labour stabilisation policy, which involves the issuing of re-employment guarantees to returning workers, is that progressively fewer contracts are available to new applicants.

Despite their questionable accuracy, the figures given above suggest that employment opportunities are in short supply in relation to the continually growing population of Qwaqwa. Micro-level research indicates high rates of unemployment and underemployment in various parts of the Bantustan (Krause, 1982; Robins, 1982; Bank, 1984; Niehaus, 1984). Although these small-scale studies do not provide statistically-valid results, the suggestion emerges that the impact of restricted employment opportunities is differently experienced in town and 'country'.

This is not to say that all residents of Phuthaditjhaba are equally advantaged with respect to those in the country. Working people in town are physically closer to the recruitment centres, and many have social contact with members of the various bureaucracies and teachers who have access to information about how to work the recruitment system and about jobs on offer. As Robins (1982) has shown there are areas even within Phuthaditjhaba where people are isolated from such contacts, but people in closer settlements are

Chamber of Mines

7. Source: interview with the manager, TEBA Office, Phuthaditjhaba, July 1983.

generally very much more disadvantaged in this way. Work-seeking for these people demands long journeys, often on foot, to recruitment centres where long days are spent on the off-chance of an offer becoming available.

An unknown number of people does not appear in official labour migration figures, because they leave Qwaqwa 'illegally' to look for work on their own. Some find sympathetic employers who undertake to regularise their position after the event; others chance the consequences of remaining 'illegal' for extended periods - arrest on influx control offences and gross exploitation by employers. Most women are forced to take this 'illegal' route to find employment, because few regular contract opportunities are available through the labour bureaux.

Pensions and grants

One of the most reliable sources of cash income to many domestic groups in both town and 'country' is the civil pension paid to the aged. Where members of a given household are employed as migrants, remittances frequently provide a larger cash income, but they are in many ways less reliable than pensions. Resident members of households often have great difficulty securing regular and constant remittances from migrants whose place of employment is far away. Receipt of a regular pension, even though it is small, enables people to plan their housekeeping - to borrow from and lend to neighbours where necessary and possible. Pensions are, in the circumstances, frequently a source of support

to many more people than the aged alone.

Nonetheless, many people experience great difficulty in acquiring pensions, particularly those living in closer settlement villages. The Pensions Office is in Phuthaditjhaba: in the event of bureaucratic problems complaints must be taken there. These problems arise frequently as a result of bureaucratic inefficiency and corruption and because people often do not know how to insist on their rights. The system appears to function through a network of contacts and bribes, and, again, people in the countryside often lack the social resources to make it work.

The importance of transfer payments of this kind to domestic groups is shown by the efforts many people make to secure disability grants through the hospital in Qwaqwa. Each day there are large numbers of hopeful applicants who do not meet the official stipulations necessary for a grant. Doctors are uncomfortably aware, however, that they are turning away people who are experiencing the social disability which results from the limited employment opportunities available.

Health

At present there is one hospital in Qwaqwa, with 345 beds; its staff consists

8. Source: Doctors at the Elizabeth Ross Hospital, Namahadi, June 1983.

of six permanent doctors supplemented by a number of temporary personnel seconded from the SADF (three in 1983). In December 1983 there were 490 nursing staff employed by the Qwaqwa Department of Health, distributed between the hospital and the various clinics.⁹ Facilities at the hospital are stretched to the limit: patients are forced to share beds and sleep on the floor.

A new general hospital is currently being built in Phuthaditjhaba. Construction is, however, two years behind schedule and the local authorities are experiencing severe financial problems in meeting escalating costs. The new hospital will have 350 beds, and the existing hospital will be reserved for TB and psychiatric patients. The siting of this new, lavishly-equipped hospital in the town will provide the bureaucrats and the Bantustan's teachers (most of whom live in town) with an accessible and up-to-date medical service. Certain specialised services, previously undertaken in Bloemfontein, will be closer to the whole Qwaqwa population (provided that the new hospital can be adequately staffed). But outpatients from the closer settlements will not find this hospital any more accessible than was the old one.

Health care services for the closer settlements will continue to be provided by the network of rural clinics. In 1983 there were nine clinics, eight of which were in the 'countryside' to serve a population approaching 400 000. Clinics are open continuously for emergencies, and from 8am to 5pm for ordinary outpatients. Each clinic is visited once per week by a doctor from

9. Source: Interview with the Senior Matron, Elizabeth Ross Hospital, December 1983.

the hospital, and is staffed by a number of nurses and aids.

Not only is the number of clinics inadequate, but there is evidence that people in the closer settlements find the services provided unsatisfactory. Visits to the clinic, for treatment and preventative care, are relatively expensive: in 1983 the fee was raised to R2 per visit. People commonly felt that they did not receive adequate diagnosis of their complaints from the nurses in the understaffed clinics. A further indication of this problem was that clinic staff were, in 1983, informally limiting patient hours drastically: without reference to higher authority they decreed that patients who did not arrive at 8am could not be seen on any given day. This practice was summarily stopped in July 1983 by hospital authorities, but nothing was done to relieve the reasons for it.

A major problem during the first half of 1983 was that medical services were denied to Qwaqwa residents who had not paid the Special Tax. This development tax, primarily intended to provide funds for a university complex in Qwaqwa, was imposed by the local authorities in 1981 on each male citizen over the age of 18. The tax was for a sum of R50 to be paid over a period of five years.¹⁰ The Qwaqwa authorities initially had great difficulty in collecting this tax, principally because the Black States Citizenship Act, 26 of 1970, was used to define the range of eligible tax-payers. This meant that classified South Sotho in common South Africa were also meant to pay the tax; but the Qwaqwa authorities had no practical means to compel those not

10. The Qwaqwa Special Taxation Act, 1981: for details see, Qwaqwa Official Gazette, 8:7.

domiciled in their territory to pay.

Means were sought to extract payment from those over whom control could be exercised. A reliable source stated that towards the end of 1982 a confidential memorandum was sent out from the Qwaqwa Cabinet to a number of local civil servants instructing them to refuse a wide range of services to Qwaqwa residents unable to produce receipt of payment.

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Two of the most serious implications of this decree were the denial of medical services and of contract attestation facilities. Micro-level research in the closer settlements in 1983 provided evidence of domestic groups caught in a vicious circle by these restrictions. There were cases of people who were unable to get employment because they had not paid the tax; because of unemployment, members of the household became seriously ill; and they could not gain medical attention before getting employment to enable them to pay the tax. Given this circle, the tax issue had become crucial to the survival of certain households.

Doctors protested against the restriction on ethical grounds in mid-1983, and patients were again seen at the hospital irrespective of tax payment. But many people were not aware, even by the end of 1983, that the restriction had been informally lifted.

Because of all of the factors mentioned above, people make extensive use of alternative sources of treatment. There is a growing number of private

11. Our source for this information was a senior local official, who asked that he should not be identified; he has since left Qwaqwa.

doctors who have set up practices in Phuthaditjhaba and the closer settlements, and people are prepared to pay the high fees they charge for consultation (up to R12 per visit). In addition there is a proliferation of people who are claiming skills as diviners, prophets and herbalists and charging very high fees for their services. Research in the villages is beginning to show that people who lack access to hospital services are re-interpreting the symptoms of their illnesses to make them appropriate for treatment by these local healers.

Education

In 1982/3 over one-third of the total Qwaqwa 'national' budget (estimated at R39 586 228) was spent on education - far more the amount allocated to health.
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There are 31 secondary schools in Qwaqwa of which 12 are senior secondary schools with classes for matric pupils (Robinson, 1983:2). In addition there are 90 primary schools, three training colleges, a trade school and the university (a branch of the University of the North) (op.cit.:25). In 1982 there was a total of 2 166 teachers and a pupil population of 79 377 (op.cit.:8).

12. The sums initially allocated in 1982/3 were: for health, R2 800 000; and for education R13 600 000: Qwaqwa Government Gazette, 9(11).

One notable feature of the pupil-teacher ratio in Qwaqwa schools is that it is highest in senior standards. Robinson estimated that matric classes in 1983 averaged 100 pupils per class (op.cit.:35). The reason for this lies in the shortage of senior secondary schooling for Africans in the common OFS, so that a large proportion of Standard 9 and 10 pupils in Qwaqwa schools are from outside the area. It appears that externally-domiciled pupils are being channeled towards Qwaqwa by a variety of factors: inadequacy of resources in common South Africa, age restrictions on school attendance, and ethnic limitations.

This process is one of the factors which account for the relatively high expenditure on education compared to health. The education service is particularly vulnerable to 'separate development' manipulation: the Qwaqwa system is being designed to provide certain facilities for the South Sotho 'national unit', irrespective of place of residence (Vermaak, 1979; 1980). For practical reasons the health service is much more directly limited to dealing with people actually in Qwaqwa, although there is some evidence that people are being forced into relocation in order to receive long-term treatment in 'their own country' (Sharp, 1982:26).

Schools have been relatively evenly spread throughout Qwaqwa, so that people living in the closer settlements are not significantly disadvantaged with respect to the provision of educational facilities. But pupils from households without reliable sources of cash income (Sharp and Spiegel, 1984), and with consequent nutrition and health problems, cannot benefit from these facilities. While there are proportionately more of these households in the closer settlements, it should not be forgotten that a significant percentage

of urban residents face the same conditions (Robins, 1982).

Some of the most disadvantaged pupils are those whose parents live outside Qwaqwa: the shortage of hostel facilities forces many to seek private lodgings or to live on their own as best they can. The very poor living conditions they experience often prevent them from taking advantage of the school facilities that do exist (Robinson, 1983:57-8).

In more general terms, the education service in Qwaqwa has functioned as a significant bait; the members of many households in the closer settlements gave the advertised availability of education facilities in their 'homeland' as one major factor underlying their final decision to leave the farms. The stated ideal of many parents was to secure better education for their children than was offered by farm schools; 'better' education was seen as the main stepping-stone to skilled employment for the next generation. It is however difficult to say how far this ideal will be realised: the current school syllabus and available teachers' skills channel pupils into non-vocational directions; there are few opportunities within Qwaqwa for those with vocational skills; and those with these skills who wish to leave are in any event subject to influx regulations. There is, furthermore, no more than a small possibility of school-leavers whose primary training has been in academic subjects ever getting out of Qwaqwa except as unskilled contract workers.

Control of local educational services is being increasingly internalised in pursuit of a separate, 'ethnic' educational system: syllabuses are being set within Qwaqwa, as are senior examinations; marking is being done locally

without reference to external standards; general assessment is done by a local inspectorate.

The more this policy of internalisation is followed, the more scope there is for local political processes to impinge directly on education. The exercise of political patronage in the appointment of education authorities will affect the quality of the service provided not only to pupils from within Qwaqwa but also, given the inflow discussed above, to many other members of the South Sotho 'national unit'.

Local politics and administration

The Black States' Citizenship Act of 1970 forcibly associated all South African South Sotho with their ethnic 'homeland'. A constant theme in official political activity and rhetoric within Qwaqwa since then has been the problem of establishing significant ties between local political authority and its far-flung 'citizens' - in other words, of giving content to the forced association. First, Qwaqwa authorities have sought actively to promote relocation, despite overcrowding in their territory; second, they have tried to find ways to make their authority reach South Sotho who have not been relocated (Financial Mail, 25/6/1982).

Qwaqwa attained self-governing status in 1974; since then it has had a legislative assembly of 60 members (20 elected and 40 appointed by the Tribal

Authorities), and a cabinet with a chief minister serving as chairman (Malan and Hattingh, 1976:194). There are ministries of Agriculture, Education, Finance, Health and Welfare, Interior, Justice, and Works. In 1983 police powers were transferred to the local authorities. Control of these institutions is in the hands of the Dikwankwetla Party, headed by T.K. Mopedi, which came to power in 1975.

The office of the chief minister and its present incumbent constitute the point of intersection of a number of distinct but closely-related political interests: the Cabinet and members of the legislative assembly, the Dikwankwetla party hierarchy, the dominant Mopedi family within the Kwena Tribal Authority. Local political processes must therefore be interpreted by reference not only to policy emanating from Pretoria, but also to the several interests mentioned above, to the strategies they employ in dealing with their fragmented 'constituency', and to the various responses from the latter's different segments.

Existing research on Bantustan politics has not focused to any great extent on these complexities: most researchers have adopted a macro-perspective which has interpreted particular interests and courses of action in straightforward, structural terms.

None of the dominant interests within Qwaqwa has ever spoken out forcefully against the continuing process of mass relocation, even though there is evidence that the initial flood of people from the farms came as a surprise to local authorities (Rand Daily Mail, 1971). Since then, on the contrary, both the Qwaqwa government and the Kwena Tribal Authority have been prominent in

various attempts to entice still more people to leave common South Africa for their 'homeland'. Chiefs, including the Kwena paramount, and other officials have gone out into the Free State on recruitment drives; the SABC's Sesotho radio service, which has studios in Phuthaditjhaba, has broadcast similar appeals, using advertising material of questionable accuracy (Krause, 1982).

A possible reason for these activities lies in the potential benefits which the process of mass relocation holds for local authorities at various levels. In the rhetoric which it directs at Pretoria, the Qwaqwa government has emphasised the issue of land rather than relocation. It has continually (and, within the parameters of developing 'homeland' policy, understandably) made demands for more territory to be added to Qwaqwa. In one notable pronouncement, the chief minister indicated his willingness to take 'independence' for Qwaqwa if half the Orange Free State were 'returned' to his people. Claims of this nature, which rely on an interpretation of past events, are unrealistic in practical terms. But an argument for more land based on the actual presence of half-a-million people in a territory of 480 sq. kms is a more realistic proposition. The problems caused for increasing numbers of incoming refugees are reduced, by this strategy, to a ploy for a hoped-for strengthening of Phuthaditjhaba's hand in its bargaining with Pretoria.

At another level, the ruling political party stands to benefit in several ways by having a greater proportion of its otherwise elusive constituency close at hand. A derisory percentage of Qwaqwa's *de jure*, non-resident citizens took the trouble to vote in the 1980 elections: the small turn-out was a blow to the prestige of the party machine. In more practical terms,

people outside Gwaqwa are much less likely to support Dikwankwetla if and when it tackles the 'independence' question openly. Thus far the chief minister has voiced his opposition to 'independence' for Gwaqwa (SAIRR Survey, 1982:307), but rumours are rife in the area that he will be channeled into this route in order to gain full control over nearby farms which the SA Development Trust has already purchased and plans to acquire in future.

The Kwena Tribal Authority has admitted hundreds of thousands of refugees from Free State farms to its portion of Gwaqwa's 'countryside'. The Kwena area is larger than that of the Tlokwa, but it contains a disproportionately large slice of the rural population. No attempt is made to assign people between the two areas on the basis of existing clan affiliations and past 'tribal' allegiances. Such an exercise would in fact be impossible, and the situation is that people become Kwena, whatever their prior affiliation, by virtue of current residence in the Kwena Tribal Area and enforced submission to its Authority.

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The Kwena Tribal Authority is therefore in the process of creating a new following rather than merely providing a refuge for a 'traditional' one. The larger that following, the more secure the power of the chiefly family - the Mopedis, particularly in relation to the Mota family of the Tlokwa area, from whose ranks the chief minister was drawn until 1975. Virtually all the chiefs and headmen in the Kwena area are Mopedis, and their present position of dominance in Gwaqwa has put four of their number, including the paramount, in

13. A significant proportion of Gwaqwa's population is recognised to be Zulu-speaking

the Cabinet.

Even minor village chiefs and headmen have opportunity to benefit from the incoming refugees. Some, although not all, of these officials have profited from the transformation of their domains into closer settlement villages by the practice of 'selling' residential plots to people made vulnerable by relocation and their total dependence on petty functionaries.

Working people in the closer settlement villages are totally under the dominance of the several levels of authority identified above: they have no legal way open to them to escape this situation and few alternative sources of representation to which they can turn. Their remaining link with the world beyond the Bantustan is the migrant labour contract, and, as was shown above, local authorities can manipulate their access to this link in arbitrary ways. Their value to these authorities lies in their numbers. In the absence of concerted organisation, they must acquiesce, albeit unwillingly, in whatever policies the authorities choose to follow, thereby constituting a source of passive support for the ruling interests.

The bureaucrats, teachers and traders of Phuthaditjhaba are in a rather different situation, and the strategies adopted by the ruling interests towards them have differed accordingly. To secure their own interests, local authorities need the active co-operation of this 'petty bourgeoisie' in a number of fields; but the latter cannot be subjected to the same domination as can people in the closer settlements. It would appear, moreover, that many of the civil servants, teachers and traders in Qwaqwa have no interest at all in the *political* structures of the 'homeland' system. They reject not only

Dikwankwetla but all the political parties; they disparage the notion of an 'independent' Qwaqwa; their general political commitment to making the local system work is very low; their stated interest is in the ideal of a united South Africa.

Their interests in Qwaqwa, on the other hand, are varied, but turn on the question of personal economic advantage. Many acknowledge that jobs have been created for them which were not available in common South Africa; others recognise that their seniority or rapidity of advancement is a function of the Bantustan situation. Entrepreneurs, who may also be bureaucrats or teachers, find business opportunities and sources of capital (from the QDC) which do not exist elsewhere.

But these benefits alone do not secure their allegiance to local political structures. An important consideration here is the fact that many of these people have, as professionals, retained their section 10 rights to reside in prescribed areas in common South Africa. Large numbers see their roles in the Qwaqwa civil service as a temporary stepping-stone to facilitate their eventual return to the common area at higher levels of employment and remuneration. Such people professed delight at official plans to create black municipalities in urban townships and to africanise the associated bureaucracy: with their qualifications and experience gained in Qwaqwa they would, they felt, walk into suitable posts in these areas. In anticipation of this move, many of the senior civil servants in Qwaqwa are engaged in building permanent homes, under the 99-year leasehold system, in their home towns in the Free State and elsewhere.

People with these opportunities have a much broader vision than Qwaqwa alone, and this influences the way in which they respond to the policies and practices of the Qwaqwa authorities. It is, of course, unlikely that all bureaucrats and teachers, especially those in more junior and less skilled positions, will realise this ambition to escape from Qwaqwa in due course: many will remain in the long-run for practical reasons. But the ambition is common, and constitutes a significant factor with which the local dominant interests have to reckon.

The dominant interests within Qwaqwa need continually to nurture their working alliance with the 'petty bourgeoisie'. One way in which this is done is by carefully playing down the issue of possible 'independence' in public utterances. 'Independence' is anathema to most of the local civil servants, because it would mean that the route back to the common area would become very much more difficult to follow. Imposition of the Development Tax in 1981 caused great dissatisfaction amongst the civil servants. Many talked of refusing to pay it, particularly because, in the initial confusion about who was subject to the provisions of the Act, there were rumours that working husbands and wives would be required to pay separately. The chief minister himself met with teachers and other officials to allay their fears on the latter score and to talk them round to paying back taxes.

Issues of local administration in Phuthaditjhaba have generally been handled with great circumspection by the Qwaqwa authorities. During the 1970s this was for the obvious reason that much of local administration was beyond their scope: affairs in the town were run by the Orange-Vaal Administration Board which built and serviced most of the housing. Dikwankwetla and the

other political parties deemed it prudent to stay out of the 1982 community council elections in Phuthaditjhaba; this did little to help however because the urban population refused to participate in any way in what was seen as a dummy institution. Elections were held again in 1983, after the community councils had been invested with slightly greater powers (in the common area and the Bantustans). This time Dikwankwetla put up a party slate, but the poll was again very low (no more than 9%), in part, reportedly, precisely because the party had chosen to participate.

In addition to taking care to hide its stick, the local authority also holds out a number of carrots to the 'petty bourgeoisie' - amongst the most recent was that resulting from the extension of the state housing subsidy scheme to teachers and other civil servants in the Bantustans. As yet, however, there has been no great rush to take advantage of this.

Differential experiences of Qwaqwa

The distinction between town and 'country' in Qwaqwa has been a significant factor in the strategy of the local ruling interests. The Tribal Areas have provided scope for the old elite of chiefs and headmen to wield power away from competition from the urban bureaucracy and entrepreneurs; the latter have been freed from the dominance of an institution whose legitimacy they question and whose existence many despise.

But the mass of working people also find their experiences of Qwaqwa structured, in ways described above, by the town/'country' divide. There are many other factors which also structure their experience of the general process of marginalisation and impoverishment in the Bantustan. Most important, in the context of differentiation amongst the working population in Qwaqwa, is the issue of access to reliable sources of cash income (in the form of migrant remittances or transfer payments such as pensions) (see above, and also Sharp and Spiegel, 1984). A host of structural factors at the micro-level influences the likelihood of access by households to these resources: the size and composition of domestic groups, their proximity to recruiting centres, their members' knowledge of how to work the system, the social resources (the presence of kin in the neighbourhood, the existence of links with influential people) open to them.

Of great importance also is the nature of the relocation process to which different people have been subjected. The question of whether one was relocated from a town in the common area or from a white-owned farm is obviously crucial to where one is likely to end up within Qwaqwa; but also important is the timing of specific cases of relocation and the conditions under which that process occurred.

As was shown in an earlier paper (Sharp, 1982), people who arrived before or in the early years of mass relocation were frequently in a rather better position to cope with the rigours of their new circumstances than those who arrived later have been. This is not simply because a few of the earlier arrivers obtained fields as well as residential sites in some of the villages, but also because they had been able to leave the farms with more resources.

Conditions of employment changed on the farms, making people more dependent on cash wages as their rights to keep cattle and have fields were steadily withdrawn. Those who left farms later in the 1970s found it increasingly difficult to amass resources from the sale of produce and livestock before departure in order to have some reserve on which to live while finding employment. People without such a reserve must take the first employment that becomes available, and often, if they are fortunate enough to find work at all, find themselves trapped in the least desirable employment opportunities, from which they dare not escape. In this regard it is also crucially important whether people were summarily expelled from farms or towns or whether they had time to plan their move to Qwaqwa.

One point that emerges from the discussion in this paper is that to understand the variety of conditions which people experience in Qwaqwa, to discover the degree to which people are further marginalised by the process of relocation and subjected to gross impoverishment within the area, it is necessary to examine the links at all levels between Qwaqwa and common South Africa.

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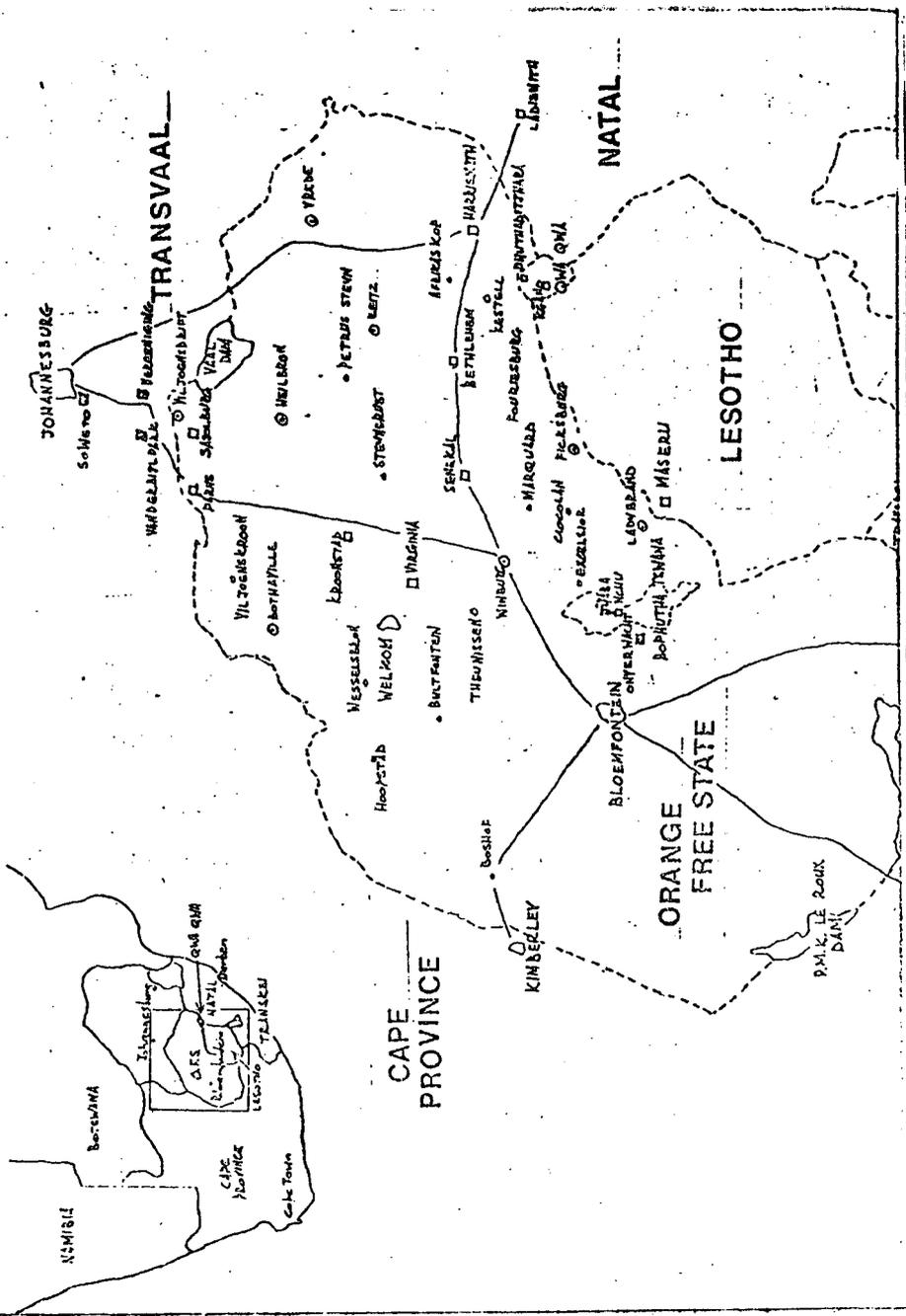
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