SECOND CARNEGIE INQUIRY INTO POVERTY
AND DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Poverty in Mafikeng

by

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Carnegie Conference Paper No. 62

Cape Town

13 - 19 April 1984
Introduction

Over the past decade there has been a growing awareness of the impoverishment of South Africa's black urban areas. The plight of squatters and the conditions within the formal townships of the cities have been highlighted both in the popular press and in academic journals. To a degree the 'commuter townships' located in bantustans but close to large urban centres have also been subjected to scrutiny (cf. Cook and Opland, 1980, on Mdantsane). Less well documented have been the peripheral centres, many of which have arisen directly out of apartheid practice. The emerging urban centres in the bantustans but more remote from the cities have remained unresearched. Notwithstanding the wide rejection of the 'independence' of Bophuthatswana, Venda, Ciskei and Transkei, the very real changes taking which are occurring in these bantustans as a consequence of apartheid policies cannot be ignored. The processes associated even with sham 'independence' pose questions of the extent to which a transition is taking place in urban areas such as Umtata and Mafikeng, which alters the lives of the people of the areas concerned.

The objective of this paper is to investigate the structural changes occurring in Mafikeng since Bophuthatswana 'independence' in 1977. More particularly the changes which have restricted the opportunities of Mafikeng's poorest people are explored. Evaluating this process of transition requires the consideration of both local and national social, economic and political forces which give rise to the present conjuncture under which the poor of Mafikeng survive. The more general conditions which have led to the great influx of people to the Mafikeng area are noted and some tentative observations on this migration presented. The
emphasis in the paper is however largely local. Two specific variables, employment and residential access, form the focus of the discussion.

The paper is structured in three parts. First a brief historical overview of Mafikeng is provided. In the second section some empirical material on the 'post-independence' changes in the area illustrates the shifts in employment and housing opportunities. The final section reflects on the implications for the poor in the urban area of Mafikeng, a bantustan town.

From Mafeking to Mafikeng

Mafikeng has long been something other than an ordinary South African platteland town. Its notoriety derives from two events in its history in the late nineteenth century. The first was the decision in 1895 to the locate the British colonial administrative offices of the Bechuanaland Protectorate outside the colony on crown land in Mafikeng known as the Imperial Reserve (Dale, 1969). This decision ensured that Mafikeng's function as an extra-territorial administrative centre would have only one parallel in the world, namely the French administration of Mauritania from the Senegalese town of St. Louis (Dale, 1969). The second event which assured Mafikeng's unusual status, was the 292 day siege of the town in 1899/1900 and the subsequent birth of the boy scout movement, with which the name of Mafikeng has been inextricably linked.
The history of Mafikeng as an urban centre goes back to the mid nineteenth century when the Molema section of the Baralong people decided to settle on the banks of the Molopo River. The people settled in small clustered villages which together formed an urban area of some extent (Bophuthatswana, 1980). It is this traditional Tswana settlement which is now colloquially known as 'the Stadt'. The first permanent European settlement dates back to 1895 when Warren laid out the town of 'Mafeking', on land leased from the Tswana chief, immediately adjacent to the Stadt (Molema papers). With the introduction of the Native Land Act in 1913, the situation changed radically. Tswanas living on the fringes of the Stadt on the river banks were declared squatters (Molema papers). The process of progressive proletarianization had been unleashed. Although the pastoral base of the people living in the Stadt was not completely destroyed, many were forced into wage labour in the growing economic activity which centred in Mafikeng in the early twentieth century. By the second world war the town boasted the usual array of businesses, a creamery and railway workshop, and the colonial administrative offices.

The question of the relocation of the British Bechuanaland headquarters was mooted even before the second world war. Discussions continued throughout the 1950's, culminating in June 1961 with the decision to transfer the capital to a site within the protectorate (Dale, 1969). The loss of this administrative function in 1965 undoubtedly had multiplier effects on the Mafikeng economy (Star, 25/1/1965). Gross estimates in the early 1960's suggested that the annual loss to the capital would be worth anything from R300 000 to R600 000 (current cost) (Star, 12/12/1963). The move of the capital and the removal of the railway workshop to Vryburg led
to gloomy predictions that Mafikeng would rapidly degenerate into a ghost town (*Mafeking Mail and Protectorate Guardian*, 12/5/1961). The local authority turned to the South African Government for assistance, requesting to host a new airforce pilot training centre and an army camp in an attempt to attract new inhabitants and wealth to the town. These were refused causing temporary, but acute hardship for Mafikeng (Dale, 1969).

The most significant decision for the future development of the town came with the South African Government's decision to purchase the Imperial Reserve for the offices of the Tswana Tribal Authority (*Mafeking Mail and Protectorate Guardian*, 26/4/1963).

As the offices of the Tswana Bantustan were woven into the urban fabric of Mafikeng, the town was moulded in new ways by the impress of apartheid policies. In the early 1960s the decision was made to segregate the mixed racial area of Danville. Danville was to become a coloured group area while an African township was established to the north of the town. Called Montshiwa after the Tswana chief who had first settled the area, the township was geographically separate from the traditional settlement of the Stadt. It was also different from the Stadt as only those with Section 10 rights qualified for the new housing at Montshiwa (Desmond, 1971).

The critical announcement in the early 1970's of forthcoming Bophuthatswana 'independence' lead to speculation in the town over the consequences of the apartheid dispensation (Campion, 1977). Uncertainty over the future of the town resulted in building society suspension of loans, and many were reluctant to either invest or disinvest, depending on their reading of the situation (*Rand Daily Mail*, 1/10/1974). The fact that
Mafeking had hosted the Tswana Tribal Authority but it was not ensured that it would receive the capital. Initial plans had named Heystekrand as the site of the new capital, however, shortcomings in the soil quality of the area meant that it was not a suitable location for extensive construction, and Mmabatho - on Mafeking's doorstep - was named as the capital only months before 'independence' (Bophuthatswana Hansard, 1975, p.499-513).

Once it was clear that Mmabatho was to be the new capital, a second wave of speculation swept the town, this time over its possible incorporation into the 'homeland' (Mafeking Mail, 26/7/1977). Although this debate generated far more local and national interest than the first decision to establish Mmabatho (Transvaler, 14/6/1980; Friend, 19/9/1980), it was essentially a question of only political interest as, since the inception of Mmabatho, it had been both physically, and functionally united to Mafikeng. At the time of 'independence' the Mafikeng environs had been shaped by the segregated ideals of apartheid, being composed of the white area of Mafikeng, the 'coloured' area of Danville and the African areas of Montshiwa and the Stadt (Figure 1). As a result of the acceptance of independence, several transformations were wrought in the urban fabric of Mafikeng. These transformations are most easily identified at a local level, but must be seen in the more general context of the economic milieu which gave rise to the processes delivering the urbanising population to the Mafikeng area.
Figure 1: Post Independence Mafikeng.

(Source: Adapted from Mabin, 1983)
Independence in 1977 brought with it an economic boom for Mafikeng (Star, 8/12/1977). The two most obvious expressions of this were the increase in construction activity with the building of government offices, schools, a telephone exchange, a stadium, the university and housing for the new population (Bophuthatswana Pioneer). The major impact of this new construction was felt in the capital centre of Mmabatho which became the focus of the Bophuthatswana administration. Significant growth in the population and physical size of the Mafikeng urban area has taken place. The precise growth is difficult to determine as the extent of the Stadt was, and still is, unknown. It can be estimated that the population of the area has grown from roughly 34,980 in 1976 (Yearbook, 1976) to over 70,000 in 1982 (Bophuthatswana, 1982), an increase of over 100% since independence. Within this population expansion it is possible to identify three distinct groups of immigrants. First the class of both black and white administrators, civil servants and tertiary educators associated with the state and quasi-state functions. Second, there has been an influx of African families resettled from the Lichtenburg area, into a series of five villages ten to twenty kilometres from Mafikeng, known collectively as Ramatlabama (Surplus Peoples Project, 1982). Finally, there is the disparate stream of African 'voluntary migrants' who have flocked to the area. Although a distinct cluster, residing almost exclusively on tribal land under squatting conditions, little is known of their origins or of why they came to Mafikeng rather than any other urban centre. What little information we have gathered suggests that many of these people have left white-owned farms in the Orange Free State or West-
tern Transvaal for a range of reasons, including the mechanisation of agriculture and other causes of a shrinkage in the labour market. Others have come from areas to which they have been relocated by the actions of the state, in some cases as far away as Onverwacht in the central Free State. The lesser threat of forced removal or harassment under influx control legislation perceived by new arrivals in Mafikeng must also have contributed to the increase in the urban population around Mafikeng. What is clear is that once in Mafikeng the structures of the bantustan town act in specific ways to bind the poor. It is not only the newer arrivals but also the impoverished older residents who are affected by changes occurring in the area because of 'independence'. In this time of transition poverty assumes a new guise. In assessing the new dispensation it is instructive to bear in mind the differentiated employment and housing available to the poor of Mafikeng.

The Economy and Employment

In the 1970's, prior to independence, the economic base of Mafikeng was dominated by two employment sectors: agriculture and transport services. A survey of the industrial and commercial registers and telephone directories indicates the major enterprises operating in the area in 1976 (Table 1). The importance of Mafikeng as an agricultural service centre in the Northern Cape is apparent from the presence of three major creameries and a tannery. The second sector, transport, is one of historical significance as the town was once a key point on the path of colonial expansion to the north. The significance of this sector declined first because of
the removal of the railway workshop to Vryburg in the early sixties, and later because of the opening of the Transvaal-Zimbabwe railway. Apart from agro-industry such as the creameries, manufacturing remains undeveloped in Mafikeng. Government functions and construction form the pivots of the economic base of post-'independence' Mafikeng.
Table 1: Breakdown of the agricultural and transport service enterprises in Mafikeng immediately prior to independence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agricultural Services</th>
<th>Transport Services</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Massey &amp; Ferguson</td>
<td>B.P.(SA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noordfed (Mafikeng Milling)</td>
<td>Caltex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triomf Fertilizers</td>
<td>Esso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creamery</td>
<td>Trek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpmekaar Creamery</td>
<td>14 Service Stations &amp; Motor Spares Stores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mafeking Creamery &amp; Cold Storage</td>
<td>Duffey's Transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moffat's Transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greyhound</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Nicorlette Cartage Service</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Read's Cartage</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Oranje Transport</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Western Transvaal telephone directory, 1976; Commercial and Industrial Register of South Africa, 1976)

In terms of new categories of employment, the major source of expansion has been in relation to the creation of the Bophuthatswana state apparatus. The various arms of the state have generated employment. Apart from the civil service, jobs are available in quasi-state organisations such as Agricor, the Bophuthatswana Provident Fund, the Bophuthatswana Develop-
ment Corporation, the university or technicon, the national police and army, or the state banks and building societies. More recently, state apparatuses have extended to include a national television station and airforce. In terms of the transition in the employment structure of Mafikeng this proliferation of state bodies and institutions has created a class of African state functionaries on a scale unknown elsewhere in South Africa. Government jobs have, however, not only resulted in an influx of African personnel, but precipitated a significant inflow of white South African officials to assist in the transition (Van Wyk, 1984). In addition to this there is a growing community of expatriates, particularly Israelis, employed in development organizations such as Agricor. Although it is difficult to offer precise statistics of the composition and extent of this new white elite, it appears that Bophuthatswana's path of 'independence' is at variance with that of the Transkei and Ciskei. Whereas in the latter two homelands, 'independence' was associated with an extrusion of whites (Southall, 1982), in Bophuthatswana there has been an increase, possibly temporary, of the white population in the urban area of Mafikeng.

In terms of the private sector, two salient points are the growth of the tourist industry and, more importantly the major expansion of construction and building operations. The growth of tourism is only of minor significance. The Mmabatho Sun complex does not parallel the massive investment and job expansion associated with Sun City. In terms of the limited expansion in the number of available jobs there is a clear distinction between the managerial positions held by Southern Sun's national employees and the cleaning and waiting jobs available for local employees.
Of far greater significance is the expansion which has occurred in the construction industry. Since 1977 over R300 million has been spent on new buildings alone (Morengwa, Bophuthatswana Pioneer). That this expansion has outpaced all existing sectors is reflected in the examination of the changes through time of the enterprises listed in the industrial and commercial registries and telephone directories (Table 2).

Table 2: Increase in the number of firms in each sector 1976-1982.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport Co.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garages &amp; Spares</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism/Hotels</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Industry</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material Suppliers</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardwares</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Western Transvaal and Bophuthatswana Telephone Directories)

The expansion of the construction industry has had a wide-ranging impact, experienced beyond the confines of the Mafikeng area. Most of the professional consultants such as architects, quantity surveyors and engineers have been drawn from established Johannesburg firms (Taylor, 1984). The local impact of the construction industry is important in two ways. First it has seen the establishment of 24 known local sub-contractors who
have undertaken the bulk of the site construction (Van Wyk, 1984). Second, more importantly, construction has provided the only, large scale, employment opportunities for unskilled labour. It is interesting that in Mafikeng, women have been employed as manual labourers on construction sites. The nature of construction employment however, is that it is highly irregular. On the construction site of the new technicon, the number of people employed varied from 94 to 299 over a seven month period between March 1983 and September 1983 (Stocks Construction, 1983). The question which arises is how these people 'make out' in the times when their labour is not required, and they receive no wages.

The dynamism of employment growth in state and construction sectors stands in stark contrast to the sluggish growth of the traditional employment foci of Mafikeng. Little, if any, new activity has occurred in agricultural services. In terms of transport some expansion has occurred with the provision of an intra-urban bus service. This is provided by the state company, Bophuthatswana Transport Holdings (Growth (Supplement), 1982). This is supplemented by a taxi service between Mafikeng and Mmabatho which is of both a 'formal' and 'informal' nature (Kruger, 1984). Notwithstanding the town's status as an official growth point, there has been a failure to attract any industry because of its peripheral location with reference to the industrial and commercial centres of South Africa. The retarded nature of industrial employment expansion has had the inevitable consequence that large numbers of African residents continue to be forced into migrant labour. While official figures remain an unreliable
reflection of the true extent of migratory labour, figures from Teba* reflect recruitment of 5000 male migrants annually at Mafikeng in the years since independence. A further manifestation of the limited growth of the formal opportunities in manufacturing is the concomitant expansion of the informal sector. Scant information is available concerning the size of this dimension of the urban economy. Although hawking is rigidly controlled in the Mafikeng commercial area, it is evident at the Mmabatho shopping complex. Petty commodity production appears to be an important component of life in black residential areas of the Stadt, Lonely Park, Dibate, and Ramatlabama. Examples of such activities include brick-making, tin-working and stone-carving.

In summary, there are two dimensions to the post-'independence' employment expansion in the Mafikeng area. The first is the introduction of new sectors of employment which arise out of the introduction of direct and indirect Government activities. Secondly, there is the expansion of pre-independence sectors, of which construction is the most important. It is argued that the differential expansion of existing categories has resulted in a transformation of the overall economic base of Mafikeng from being an agricultural and transport centre in the early 1970's, it is now a centre of state employment. The economic boom associated with 'independence' must however be seen against the vast expansion of the population as a whole. That rates of unemployment and underemployment remain high, or are on the increase, is demonstrated by the findings of a survey of 100 households of the Lonely Park area in September of 1983. The aver-

* The official mine labour recruiting agents
male income was R139.70 while the average female income was R62.60 per month, the average household size being 8.3 people. Forty one households indicated that their father was a migrant. Many were unable to submit details of employment such as place, number of monthly visits home etc., and it may be that these people are unemployed (Lamola, 1983).

In considering the effects of employment expansion and population growth upon the urban fabric of Mafikeng, it is important to recognise the manner in which employment is linked to residential access. On one hand differentiation occurs between those in formal employment and those employed or underemployed, and on the other hand opportunities for shelter differ considerably among those employed, between state employees and private sector employees. These two levels of differentiation, between the employed and unemployed and within those employed, provides the theme of the discussion on changes in housing since independence.

The Housing Question

At the time of 'independence' the residential map of Mafikeng was structured around racial groupings of the apartheid structures. Residential areas were clearly defined, for whites in Mafikeng, for coloureds in Danville and for Africans, dependent upon their urban status, either in Montshiwa for those with section 10 rights or in the Stadt for those without such qualifications. What has occurred since 'independence' has been a de-emphasis on the factor of race as the exclusive determinant of residential access differentiation. Although the congruence of race and
employment status remains, new categories of residential housing have emerged in line with the shifting economic structure of Mafikeng.

Figure 2 provides a graphic perspective of the emergent residential patterns of the concentration of housing stock of different types.

The changing residential structure is made more complex by questions of tenure which have surfaced since 'independence', to affect the provision of housing in important ways.

In terms of white housing in Mafikeng the overriding theme is one of 'continuity in change'. The most immediate changes after 'independence' and incorporation involved the abolition of group area legislation and the introduction of controls on non-Tswana land ownership (Section 12, Act 39 of 1979), whereby the permission of the minister of urban affairs had to be obtained for house purchases. Notwithstanding such legislative provisions, the previously all-white housing market of Mafikeng was relatively unaffected. Despite the need for ministerial consent and the restriction of one property for each owner, the town's middle to upper income property market boomed rather than slumped after 1977. The town extended to include the new elite, racially mixed, freehold suburbs of Riviera Park. The fact that the Mafikeng housing market has moved through the transition to 'independence' without any fundamental changes in composition may be attributed to the high cost of houses in the area. In Mafikeng accommodation is available for upwards of R80 000 and in Riviera Park houses are selling for R120 000.

The most notable feature of the post 1977 Mafikeng residential area is the relative absence of a group of elite blacks. It may be suggested that
Classification of Housing Units

Well constructed, privately built houses distinguished by their neat appearance and fair size.

Less pretentious, privately built houses, or alternatively, typical scheme houses (Category C) that have been improved by the addition of a room or a garage.

Typical scheme houses.

Traditional mud huts or corrugated iron shacks

Source: Compiled from survey by Department of Post and Telecommunications
The African housing situation presents a more complex process of transition than that experienced in the white residential areas. The most obvious cleavage exists between the accommodation available to those Africans in employment on the one hand and to those unemployed or underemployed on the other. Whereas the former group has access to a range of 'formal' housing, the latter are forced to obtain shelter within the context of 'informal housing', usually on tribal land. Within the category of formal housing a second distinction emerges in the post 'independence' period between those who qualify for State housing and those who do not.

a) Informal Housing

Prior to independence, the legislative restrictions of influx control had effectively divided the two African residential areas of Montshiwa and the Stadt. As only those persons with Section 10 rights could officially qualify for employment in Mafikeng, it follows that the township Montshiwa legally offered accommodation only for that 'privileged' group drawing a regular income. All those who did not possess Section 10 urban rights lived in the 'informal' settlement of the Stadt. With 'independence' and withdrawal of South African influx control, the situation changed only superficially. The unemployed and poorest people still could not afford the costs of formal housing. What did change however, was the size of the population forced to live on tribal land. Associated with the economic boom in the Mafikeng area there has been an influx of new migrants looking
for work in the new capital. These people find accommodation on tribal land where, for a fee paid to the local chief, they are able to build their own Makuku (shack). One consequence of this new in-migration has been the extension of the Stadt (Legge, 1984), and the creation of the new residential areas of predominantly 'informal' housing of Lonely Park, Motlabeng and Dibate. An important aspect of this transformation is the emerging conflict between chiefs and Government officials who view these areas of 'informal' housing as an eyesore in the developing capital (Van Wyk, 1984).

A further new dimension of 'informal housing' in the Mafikeng area since independence surrounds the establishment of a series of five resettlement camps ten to twenty kilometres north of the town. Together these five settlements contain approximately 15,000 people (Bophuthatswana, 1982). Differentiation between the villages is evident as a consequence of the betterment policies applied in one of the villages where the residents have some form of access to farming land.

b) Formal Housing

More immediately obvious than the expansion of the Stadt and other tribal areas has been the provision of over 6,000 formal housing units in Mmabatho. The most significant aspect of this housing is the limited access which it affords. Built primarily for state employees these units are not easily obtained on the open market. In Mmabatho access to housing is assured only for Government employees who may choose either to purchase
or rent. The situation which emerges differs substantially from other countries, such as Britain, where the state acts as a major landlord. In Mmabatho access to state housing is not open to a particular social class, but to the civil service, regardless of social strata. The hierarchical organization of the civil service and other state organizations is already clearly apparent within the residential area of Mmabatho. A useful indicator of this is the extent of individual home ownership (Figure 3). Units three and five house largely the hotel, T.V., university and professionals of the new racially diverse elite. At the other end of the scale unit seven and eight correspond in status to 'economic housing' of other South African cities (Van Wyk, 1984). The impact of this state dominance on the urban fabric is reinforced because of the lack of alternative accommodation in the area. Apart from the more expensive Mafikeng houses the only other lower to middle income housing available is that of Montshiwa. In the township of Montshiwa the dominant form of tenure is now home ownership (Figure 3). The records of the property register reflect that the move to purchase these houses occurred after independence, despite the fact that they have always been for sale (Figure 4). Two possible explanations of this transition to home ownership may be offered. First, as only existing township tenants were able to purchase their homes (Van Wyk, 1984), the social and economic status of these residents must have improved after independence. The second interpretation is that tenants bought their homes in order to sell at an inflated price to those unable to find accommodation in Mmabatho, and have moved to the Stadt or some other available accommodation. The exact balance between these two alternative explanations is difficult to ascertain. What emerges unequivocally, however, is that in Montshiwa the tenural
relationships in the township have undergone a substantial transformation since independence.

To summarise, in terms of the transitions occurring in the changing tenural conditions of the Mafikeng area, access to basic employment is critical in two dimensions. First, whether or not an individual has access to employment will ensure the distinction between formal and informal housing. Within the category of formal housing there exists a subdivision based on employment by the state, where civil servants have greater access to housing than private sector employees.

Poverty in Mafikeng

It has been shown that the 'independence' boom experienced in Mafikeng has failed to alleviate poverty. Rather, the post '77 period has been characterized by new forms of poverty generated by the political economy of the country as a whole, and the specific conditions which result from Mafikeng's function as a bantustan capital town. In this regard the significance of the employment and housing structures emerges as major constraints on the lives of the poor. The impact of these structural constraints has not been homogeneous, and there is diversity within the poor of Mafikeng. The significance in identifying these varied experiences is not to emphasise division, but rather to inform constructive response to the problem of the poor.
RELATIVE PROPORTION OF STATE, BUSINESS AND PRIVATE OWNERSHIP IN MMABATHO AND MONTSHIWA

SOURCE: PROPERTY REGISTERS, BOPHUTHATSWANA DEPT. OF URBAN AFFAIRS. 1984
Figure 4: Purchase of houses Mmabatho & Montshiwa 1968–1983.
Within the Mafikeng area three groups of poor may be broadly delineated. The first group consists of the stream of disparate migrants who came to Mafikeng to find refuge and employment. Assertaining whether conditions for these people have improved is difficult, however, as the construction boom draws to an end it is unlikely that things will improve for these immigrants presently living in unserviced tribal land of the Stadt, Lonely Park and Dibate. There are two other groups of people who have been actively impoverished by the granting of independence to the Bophuthatswana bantustan. The relocated communities of Ramatlabama, dumped 15km to the north of the town have lost land, jobs and homes. For these people Mafikeng promises little. Finally, opportunities for the existing residents of the Stadt have been severely undermined by the influx of unskilled people. The population increase has not been matched by the increase in employment, and unemployment and underemployment remain high.

In conclusion three factors of significance emerge in understanding the nature of the urban poor of Mafikeng: the lack of employment opportunities for unskilled labour; the rigid structure of the housing stock which acts to restrict access to shelter; and the increasing dominance of the Bophuthatswana state over both housing and employment. Differences within the poor of Mafikeng relate to these three factors and the differential processes which have cause people to go to Mafikeng.
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