

SECOND CARNEGIE INQUIRY INTO POVERTY
AND DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Finding a job in QwaQwa: A study
of employment opportunity
resources

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INTRODUCTION

It is now widely acknowledged that the refinements to African labour allocation and control which have followed the Riekert Commission's recommendations of 1979 have exacerbated existing divisions between the urban and rural sectors of the African population. Southall 1984, along with others, seeks to capture the overall process under a single rubric when he argues that the recent policy shifts in the sphere of African labour allocation are intent on the continued exclusion of rural blacks from the central economy in South Africa through a process of marginalization. Yet, while conditions of marginality are certainly widely applicable in the bantustans, it should also be realised that these conditions are not as homogeneously effected within these areas as some of the macro analyses imply. For instance, it has become increasingly clear from some of the recent literature on African unemployment that certain groups and areas within the bantustans are more favourably positioned in relation to the available opportunities within the central economy than others.

This paper focusses specifically on the latter suggestion by presenting data drawn from the Qwa Qwa bantustan during 1983. The paper is divided into two sections. The first deals with the distribution of employment opportunity resources such as labour bureaux, transport services, industrial decentralization developments, etc., within Qwa Qwa. In this section we consider how locational variables come to affect employment distributions in the area. The second section deals with the experiences and responses of relocated families in Qwa Qwa in their attempts to gain access to the limited employment opportunities available. The focus here is on a different set of employment related resources which do not derive from opportunities within Qwa Qwa, but are related to people's experiences prior to their arrival in the bantustan.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN QWA QWA

The Qwa Qwa Bantustan, formerly known as the Wilsieshoek reserve, is the official homeland of the 'South Sotho ethnic national unit'. It is the smallest of the South African homelands (approximately 480 sq. km) and houses a population of over 400 000 people. (Sharp 1982:13) However, despite its relatively small overall population, Qwa Qwa is undoubtedly the most densely settled Bantustan in South Africa : Sharp (1982) makes the conservative estimate of 1 000 people per square kilometre. As a result settlement patterns within Qwa Qwa fall into two categories: so called 'closer settlement' villages (distinguished by their poor amenities and urban sized residential plots) and a proclaimed town, Phuthaditjhaba. In comparison to the 'closer settlements' where accomodation is self-built, the town's residents live predominantly in state provided municipal accomodation. In addition, facilities such as on-site water, electricity and flush sanitation are evidence of the town's more amenable living conditions.

The distinction between town and 'closer settlement' is, however, more apparent than the differences in settlement patterns and amenities. The two categories of settlement are also bearers of different populations. On the one hand, the residents of the villages are predominantly rural people who originate from the farming districts of the Northern O.F.S., while on the other , the residents of Phuthaditjhaba are almost exclusively town people from urban areas. The majority of these people have arrived in Qwa Qwa during the last decade as a result of forced removals. Sharp (1982: 13) gives some indication of the extent of both farm and urban relocations when he estimates that between 1970 and 1982 the population of Qwa Qwa increased by 2 000% (ie. from 23 000 in 1970 to over 400 000 in 1982).

The direction of farm families to the 'closer settlement' villages and urban families to Phuthaditjhaba has not been coincidental, but has been strategically pursued by the Qwa

Qwa authorities. For instance, during the early 1970's it became official policy at the Phuthaditjhaba housing office that qualifications for urban residence in Qwa Qwa be limited to Section 10 holders. However, it was soon realized that if the town was only open to legalized urban residents, the available accomodation was unlikely to be filled. In practice, therefore, the qualifications for residence were extended to all urban refugees from 'white' South Africa. On the other hand, those relocated from the farms have had little choice but to accept whatever closer settlement accomodation was made available on their arrival.

It is in this context that we now turn our attention to the distribution of employment opportunities in Qwa Qwa.

Labour recruitment in Qwa Qwa.

Like the other 'homelands', Qwa Qwa can offer few employment opportunities to its population. The result of this is that most of its residents must rely heavily on gaining migrant and commuter jobs in 'white' South Africa. The following table gives the official estimation of these opportunities for the period 1979 to 1981.

TABLE 1.

Year	Qwa Qwa		All the 'Homelands'	
	migrants	commuters	migrants	commuters
1979	35 000	2 500	1 090 000	688 600
1980	43 000	6 800	1 217 000	713 300
1981	51 000	9 500	1 329 000	745 500

Source: National Manpower Commission annual report 1981
pp 252-3 (also in SAIRR 1982: 86)

Although the number of migrants and commuters drawn from Qwa Qwa represents only a small proportion of those drawn from the 'homelands' as a whole, it is clear from the fragmentary evidence available on internal employment opportunities that the vast majority of Qwa Qwa's working population is employed

in 'white' South Africa. The implication of this is that residents of Qwa Qwa are reliant upon the distribution of labour bureaux within the region as a key employment opportunity resource. In this section we wish to consider the distribution of these resources as an important aspect of understanding employment patterns within Qwa Qwa.

Greenberg and Giliomee (1983) in an overview of labour recruitment in areas such as Lebowa, Kwazulu and Gazankulu argue that the process of labour recruitment within the homelands is highly differentiated. They contend that certain areas and groups are being effectively marginalized from the South African labour market simply by virtue of their location in relation to labour bureaux within the homelands (1983: 43). One of their main observations is that tribal labour structures are rapidly becoming obsolete. In the Malumulele district of Gazankulu, for instance, they note that as early as 1979 all fourteen of the tribal labour offices in the area were closed (1983: 39). The corollary of this, they argue, is that the weight of labour recruitment has increasingly become centred around the more dispersed district labour offices. The greater recruiting potential of these offices, they demonstrate, has led to large numbers of workseekers by-passing the tribal offices in order to secure contracts. However, as they also demonstrate, this strategy is not always possible, particularly in areas where district labour bureaux are few and far between; and where the cost and effort of getting to these labour offices is extremely high. As a result they conclude that there are strong tendencies within the sphere of employment opportunities which "helps foster a hierarchy of living standards, market opportunities and rights within the African population" (1983: 43). Greenberg and Giliomee do not consider the Qwa Qwa region but it is possible to substantiate their general argument with some preliminary data on labour recruitment in this area.

In 1977 there were only four labour offices in Qwa Qwa. They included one TEBA recruiting depot in Phuthaditjhaba, a district labour bureau at the magistrate's offices (also in the town) and one tribal labour bureau for each of the two tribal

areas. However, in view of rapid population growth within Qwa Qwa and a general increase in registered work-seekers, two additional tribal labour offices have been created since 1977. Both of these offices were included in the Bakwena tribal area. The distribution of labour recruitment offices is considerably denser in Qwa Qwa than in other 'homelands' (all six recruiting points fall within an area of about 50 km²). Yet, in view of the exceptionally high population densities, the per capita distribution is no doubt a lot more even.

However, despite the relative proximity between recruiting points in Qwa Qwa there does seem to be considerable variance in the actual number of workers recruited at the different labour bureaux. For instance, on the basis of seemingly reliable data for the first three months in 1983, it was recorded that the district offices in Phuthaditjhaba requisitioned some 1 208 workers while the most outlying tribal office at Tsheseng requisitioned only five workers. The discrepancies were not always this great and it was noted in the same period that the Namahadi tribal office which is within 10 km of Phuthaditjhaba requisitioned as many as 638 workers. The figures for the two new tribal offices at Tseki and Mangaung were more difficult to decipher. However, the general impression we got was that they were far closer to the Tsheseng figure than to that of Namahadi.

The position with reference to the TEBA labour office is somewhat different to that at the tribal and district bureaux. Throughout South Africa TEBA works on a quota system which limits recruitment from particular districts to a set number of workers per annum. At present the quota for the Qwa Qwa district is 5 000 workers. However, according to one TEBA official, this has not always been the case and during the late 1970's it was acceptable for the Phuthaditjhaba branch to recruit as many as 10 000 workers within a year. Yet, as the following figures show, the recent introduction of a quota system is no guarantee that quotas are ever met.

TABLE 2

Year	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
Quota	10 000*	10 000*	5 000	5 000	5 000	5 000
No. recruits	5 300	3 936	3 400	3 600	4 600	1 800**

* this was the official limit, but was not rationalized as a quota

** this figure represents only the period January to June 1983

Source: TEBA official, Phuthaditjhaba, July 1983.

In terms of our general discussion on the recruiting potentials of various labour bureaux in Qwa Qwa it is possible to say that in the first half of 1983 TEBA was the second biggest recruiter with figures less than those of the Phuthaditjhaba district offices and slightly higher than the Namahadi figures.

The picture which emerges from the preliminary figures presented above is that during the first half of 1983 over 90% of all labour recruited in Qwa Qwa was requisitioned at three of the six labour offices. Significantly, all three offices are situated either directly in Phuthaditjhaba or a short distance from it. In comparison to Greenberg and Giliomee's findings, it appears that rather than the type of labour office accounting for differences in recruitment in Qwa Qwa, it is their location (ie. where they are situated) that seems to embody the most salient differences. In other words, it is observable that while all the labour offices in Qwa Qwa have the capacity to recruit, some offices appear to be more effective than others as a result of their location.

The district magistrate in Phuthaditjhaba in attempting to explain the inequalities in labour recruitment emphasised the accessibility of certain labour offices to employers. He stated that:

"most of the requisitions we receive are for unskilled manual labour. The contracts are often non-renewable. As a result most of the workers that

leave here are not screened. For these contracts it is unnecessary for employers to go any further than Phuthaditjhaba to find their workers."

For purely logistical reasons, this explanation seems legitimate. Both Phuthaditjhaba and Namahadi are situated on the only tarred road into Qwa Qwa. Beyond these two areas there are only dirt roads which link closer settlement villages together. In addition, the labour offices are not sign-posted, which makes it extremely difficult for an employer who is unfamiliar with the area to find an outlying tribal labour bureau like Tsheseng or Tseki. BENBO (1978) obviously did not share our concern when they wrote for Qwa Qwa that "the labour bureaux are so situated that employers can reach them easily" (1978: 50). The magistrate's second suggestion that the majority of contracts he dealt with were non-renewable is demonstrated by the fact that between January and November 1983 only 8% of those recruited at the Phuthaditjhaba district offices used call in cards. Similarly, it was noted that during that latter period large concerns such as ISCOR and SASOL recruited batches of between 200 and 300 men, all on non-renewable contracts, for construction work on new plants.

Commuter and local work opportunities.

In addition to labour recruitment at strategic points in Qwa Qwa, there are a set of other location related variables which affect the accessibility certain groups within Qwa Qwa have to commuter and local employment opportunities. These include such factors as the location of industrial jobs in and around Qwa Qwa and the distribution of transport services. •

The growth of commuter and local jobs in the Qwa Qwa region has primarily been the result of the South African Government's policy of economic decentralization. During the early 1960's it was decided that in line with the Verwoerdian 'border industry principle' the town of Phuthaditjhaba would be established as a commuter zone for the Harrismith growth point in the O.F.S. some 40 km away. After a long period of planning and surveying, the first houses appeared in Phuthaditjhaba in the early

1970's. From the outset the intention was to encourage urban families from O.F.S. towns to move to Phuthaditjhaba and operate from there as commuter labourers. It was also decided that the old Harrismith location should be replaced by a smaller municipal township and that those unable to gain accommodation in the new location should be moved to Phuthaditjhaba. However, despite these early steps to forge a commuter market, it became increasingly clear that Phuthaditjhaba was becoming the home of the urban unemployed rather than of a lucrative commuter sector. The chief reason for this was that Harrismith had failed to meet expectations as an industrial decentralization point.

After 1976 a number of important steps were taken to improve the situation. Firstly, industrial decentralization incentives for the Harrismith/Phuthaditjhaba area were substantially increased. Secondly, after an investigation by a research team from the University of the O.F.S., the dirt road linking the two towns was replaced by a shorter tarred road. Thirdly, the Sekokane Bus Company was established in Phuthaditjhaba to carry both commuters and migrants. A daily service to Bethlehem was, for instance, introduced in an attempt to bring it within the reach of commuters. Finally, the original strategy of encouraging industrial decentralization to areas on the periphery of the 'homelands' and not actually within them was effectively abandoned and in 1976 the Qwa Qwa Development Corporation (Q.D.C.) was established to augment local development. One of Q.D.C.'s first projects was to demarcate an industrial park on the outskirts of Phuthaditjhaba.

As a result of these developments a certain amount of impetus was given to the process of local job creation and commuting. For instance, it is noted that between 1976 and 1981 the number of commuters from Qwa Qwa rose by 7 700. (cf. SAIRR 1979: 378 and 1982: 86). In addition, it appears that local industrial employment opportunities within Qwa Qwa have risen from about 400 in 1977 (SAIRR 1978: 303) to 4 411 in December 1983 (Q.D.C. 1983). The major thrust of the internal economic development has resulted from tripartite agreements with big

capital in South Africa and, not as Q.D.C. would have one believe, from the expansion of a small business sector in Qwa Qwa.

From the point of view of the above discussion, it is clear that local industrial and commuter employment opportunities in Qwa Qwa by design strongly favour those living in and around Phuthaditjhaba. The locally employed in the town are situated on the doorstep of three small industrial parks and are optimally located with reference to public transport linkages between Phuthaditjhaba and Harrismith. The distributional characteristics of the latter types of employment, therefore, shows considerable overlap with the picture presented for migrant labour opportunities.

Finally, while on the question of local employment, it is important to note that the expansion of the Qwa Qwa civil service since the territory entered the second phase of 'self-government' in 1974 has been considerable. However, these jobs are usually skilled (eg. teachers, clerks etc.) and, therefore, depend much more on qualifications than access to labour bureaux or local industrial parks. It might, nevertheless, be noted that Phuthaditjhaba, because of its more sophisticated resources in the Qwa Qwa context, has come to house a large number of civil servants. Robbins (1982) astutely observes that "Phuthaditjhaba is becoming increasingly a town of teachers and bureaucrats, and the poorer townspeople are being sidelined into the villages." (p 119)

The latter category of employment aside, it is our argument that Qwa Qwa has unusually centralized employment opportunity resources. In addition to endorsing the Greenberg and Giliomee (1983) argument that the practice of labour recruitment in the 'homelands' does tend to create marginal districts and marginal groups, it is also argued that local and commuter work opportunities reinforce the existing labour recruitment hierarchy within Qwa Qwa.

Avoiding marginalization: some strategies and problems.

The structural realities which favour certain sectors of Qwa Qwa's population gaining employment at the expense of others more distant from employment opportunities is, however, no guarantee that the hierarchy of employment opportunities cannot be broken down in certain significant ways by individual work-seekers.

One of the most common ways in which the unemployed in Qwa Qwa strategise against the existing employment opportunity resources is simply to ignore the legal and policy constraints imposed on their mobility. For instance, it has been convincingly established from our fieldwork that work-seekers who theoretically fall under the jurisdiction of the outlying tribal labour bureaux persistently make their way to the district offices at Phuthaditjhaba. The district magistrate noted in 1983 that:

"although labour from areas serviced by the tribal bureaux should technically be recruited from their own offices, most of them come here . . . and in the event that they are requisitioned we simply send their contracts backwards through the bureaucracy to be attested at the appropriate tribal office. There is really no difference because the attestation fee still goes into the tribal coffers."

Niehaus (1984: 56), observing from the other end of the process, has suggested that the tribal labour bureau in his area of research was exceptionally poorly patronised by local work-seekers and that most of them travelled to Phuthaditjhaba.

Yet, on the same note it might also be pointed out that the existence of this kind of labour mobility certainly does not mean that workers from a distant closer settlement village such as Kgano, for instance, can compete as effectively for unskilled jobs as residents in Phuthaditjhaba. With the standard cost of a return bus ticket to Phuthaditjhaba at 60c in 1983, it was clear that for many individuals in the 'closer settlements'

work-seeking was an expensive pastime few could afford on a daily basis. This was particularly true for households who did not have access to regular remittances. The following two case studies drawn from Kgano and Qwa Qwa villages respectively demonstrate two different strategies employed by work-seekers to avoid the expense of taking the bus into town daily.

CASE NO. 1 : WALKING FOR A JOB.

Tlali, at the age of 21, is the oldest son in the Klote household of 7 members. By June 1983 he had been unemployed for four and a half years. After completing form two in Qwa Qwa in 1977, Tlali was forced to leave school due to financial problems within the household. It was in this year that he obtained his only secure wage job as a groundsman at the Kemptonpark golf course in Johannesburg. His remittances of R140 a month were the only regular source of income within the Klote household during 1979. However, for reasons which Tlali was not prepared to tell us, he lost his job at the end of 1979 and returned to Qwa Qwa. More recently and as a result of prolonged unemployment, Tlali has resorted to desperate measures to gain employment. His first plan of action, as Mrs Klote explained, was to inform relatives in the urban areas outside Qwa Qwa to keep an eye open for job vacancies. However, as this strategy met with limited success, Tlali began walking to the Phuthaditjhaba labour offices on a daily basis. Mrs Klote noted that he had "walked since the beginning of the year because he did not have any money to spend on bus fare." She also claimed that this strategy could not be sustained for a long period and that on some days when he was tired he did not go. On these days she continued, Tlali would go to the local Kgano labour office and wait.

When we revisited the Klote household in December 1983, Tlali had gained employment at an engineering firm inside Qwa Qwa for R14 a week. Tlali, however, did not regard the job as permanent and constantly referred to it as 'piece work', saying that it was a temporary source of income and that he would continue to look for migrant work.

CASE NO. 2 : STAYING WITH A RELATIVE.

Pule is about 24 years old and comes from the Monontsha village close to the Lesotho border. In February 1983 Pule completed a non-renewable nine month contract with a brick-making firm in the Rustenberg district. After about a month of 'relaxing at home', he began to realise that to sustain his parents and younger brothers he would have to acquire new employment. However, as Pule explained, "finding employment in Monontsha is impossible, the village has no labour offices and private recruiters are seldom seen". As a result, when he is looking for work he goes to stay with relatives in Qwa Qwa village nearby the Phuthaditjhaba labour office. Between April and July 1983 he spent three days and two nights of every week

with his relatives in Qwa Qwa village. The arrangement is a relatively simple one. Pule walks the 25 km from Monontsha to Qwa Qwa village on Mondays with some of his belongings and a bundle of food (usually some mealie meal and a cabbage). During his stay he accompanies a friend to the Phuthaditjhaba district labour offices where they wait in a queue of about 200 - 300 work-seekers. If no potential employers arrive by three o'clock, Pule goes to assist his relative's wife and children selling apples at the local busstops. On Wednesday afternoons he walks back to Monontsha to assist with chores at home, especially going into the mountains to collect wood. In December 1983 Pule had still not found a job. He claimed to be visiting Qwa Qwa village far more frequently, sometimes staying for two weeks at a time. He said that he was now a regular member of that village's soccer team.

The strategies employed by Tlali and Pule in the above cases clearly demonstrate that the residents of 'closer settlement' villages have a good understanding of where employment might be found in Qwa Qwa. Both informants went to considerable lengths to make themselves available to employers at Phuthaditjhaba. However, these cases also demonstrate some of the difficulties involved in remaining competitive with other work-seekers situated closer to Phuthaditjhaba. For instance, in case 1 it was pointed out that walking about 15 km to Phuthaditjhaba every day was extremely tiring and could not be sustained for long. Similarly, in case 2 (during June 1983) Pule was forced to return to Monontsha on Wednesdays to collect wood and do other chores in the household. Thus, effectively giving him only three days at the district labour office.

In addition to these points, the above cases raise the question of whether entire households may not relocate themselves from one village to another. Although this strategy was recorded in one case, it is extremely uncommon. Families arriving in the 'closer settlement' villages are immediately subject to strict chiefly control and are generally prohibited from moving from one place to another unless they have the consent of the chief or have been evicted from the village. Although we did not record a single case of a village eviction and, therefore, cannot outline the possible consequences, it was evident that the threat of eviction invoked fear among village residents.

Movement between Phuthaditjhaba and the villages is, on the

other hand, more common. The best documented cases here were of urban families who were unable to find accommodation in Phuthaditjhaba on arrival. They would then find temporary accommodation in the villages (in some cases for as long as two or three years) before their application for urban accommodation in Qwa Qwa was accepted. In these cases moving seldom had any negative repercussions for the families involved. Conversely, families already living in Phuthaditjhaba who were unable to keep up their rent payments could easily be evicted from the township and would have to find accommodation in the villages. In general, however, moving from one location to another within Qwa Qwa is exceptional, rather than common, and in the few cases we do have of these moves, jobseeking was not recorded as a major motivation.

If we now turn our attention more specifically to local industrial and commuter employment opportunities it is possible to note some additional problems and strategies. In many respects gaining, and indeed retaining a local industrial or a commuter job is more difficult for people from the villages than is the case for migrant employment, because the wages are so low. Gottschalk (1977) suggests that in 1976 the average weekly wage for industrial employment within Qwa Qwa was as low as R7.80. (Dewar 1982: 113) In our limited encounters with people employed in local industrial work we were unable to find a weekly wage of over R15. The position with reference to commuter employment was more varied as salaries ranged from R30 a month for domestic work to R320 earned by a waiter in Harrismith. The cost of bus fares to and from work, in the context of such low wages, make these jobs extremely unpopular and, as in case 1, they are often regarded only as temporary employment. The following case drawn from Phuthaditjhaba presents an interesting perspective on low paid commuter work.

CASE NO. 3 : COMMUTER WORK IN PERSPECTIVE.

Katleho gave up her work as a domestic servant in 1977 when she and her husband eventually moved to Phuthaditjhaba after years of pass arrests. The move coincided with a 35% rise in her husband's salary which increased to R140 a month. Katleho claimed that the money was initially sufficient for her to

avoid her seeking commuter work as a domestic. Substantiating this she said "there are only three of us. And in those days when the rents were lower we could make out . . . another factor is that my husband spent a lot of time on contracts in the Phuthaditjhaba industrial park and, therefore, did not have to pay bus fare to Bethlehem." During 1980 a chain of events forced Katleho to look for a commuter job. Firstly, her son left school without prospect of employment. Secondly, there was a blanket increase in township rents and finally, her husband had not received a salary increase since their arrival in Phuthaditjhaba. In 1980 Katleho began working as a domestic servant in Harrismith for R30 a month. She claimed that she would leave home at 5 a.m. and return to Qwa Qwa at 5.30 p.m. Katleho retained this job for nearly two years, until, in 1982, her husband gained a long awaited salary increase, as well as being almost permanently in Qwa Qwa working on the new hospital. As a result she resigned from her job. Katleho, after recalling her experience, said "commuter work is very tiring and I will not resort to it unless I have to."

Katleho's perceptions of commuter employment is undoubtedly common among domestic workers who travel to and from Harrismith daily. Yet, as the case demonstrates, the way in which people engage in low wage commuter labour is often dependent on other factors such as household size and the availability of other sources of income within the household. The commuter job in the above case is treated as a resource or an avenue of employment into which one might slip if no other source of income is readily available. This is precisely the strategy Tlali seems to be following in case 1. However, it must also be emphasised that, given the additional costs involved in travelling to and from commuter or local industrial jobs from different areas in Qwa Qwa, the kinds of variables which induce one strategy in one area may not be plausible in another. For instance, accepting a low paid 'piece-job' to support an informal income earning activity in Phuthaditjhaba may not be viable for someone living as far from town as Tsheseng. The different ways in which local and commuter opportunities are used by people in different situations is an interesting area for further research in Qwa Qwa.

In conclusion it is possible to suggest that while a number of strategies might be contrived by individuals and groups to avoid marginalization in the context of the highly centralized employment opportunity resources in Qwa Qwa, the practicalities

of the various strategies available continue to support the hypothesis that certain locationally defined groups can compete more effectively for certain types of employment than other groups.

RELOCATION AND EMPLOYMENT : FINDINGS FROM TWO LOCATIONS

Having devoted the preceding section to the structural realities impinging on the distribution of what we identified as employment opportunity resources in Qwa Qwa, it is important to realise that these are not the only resources available to individuals and households in attempting to gain employment. In this section we wish to concentrate on a different set of variables which seemingly affect the distribution of employment within Qwa Qwa. These factors derive not so much from people's experiences and location within Qwa Qwa, but from conditions unique to them before their arrival in the 'homeland'. More specifically, we wish to consider the origins of those relocated, rather than their destinations (our main concern in the preceding section).

In an earlier section we alluded to the fact that Qwa Qwa's population may broadly be distinguished into two categories. On the one hand, rural people who have predominantly come from farms in the O.F.S. These people, we noted, were confined on arrival in Qwa Qwa to the 'closer settlement' villages. On the other hand, we suggested that there were a number of townspeople in Qwa Qwa who had come from the urban areas. These people, as we have explained, were mainly directed to the town of Phuthaditjhaba as a potential commuter sector. The above division we will argue cannot be ignored in discussing the distribution of employment in Qwa Qwa. In an attempt to demonstrate this we will present data collected both from the town and a 'closer settlement' village called Bochebelo in Qwa Qwa. The data was collected in June/July/December 1983 in a small portion of Phuthaditjhaba and an adjacent section of the Bochebelo village. It is based on a small random sample drawn from the approximately equivalent populations of both areas under consideration (ie. about a quarter of the village's population and about a tenth of the town's). The technique employed to collect the data was that of participant observation and it involved conducting intensive interviews on all twenty residential sites.

Employment distribution in the Phuthaditjhaba and Bochabelo samples.

Table 3 presented below is a summary of our findings of the distribution of types of employment within the two sample populations.

TABLE 3

Types of Employment	Phuthaditjhaba			Bochabelo		
	M	F	T	M	F	T
Migrants	8	1	9	4		4
Commuters	1	2	3	1	1	2
Loc. Employ.	3	7	10	3	2	5
TOTAL	12	10	22	8	3	11
Sample Pop.	17	24	41	18	19	37

- Notes: (1) all figures are de jure
(2) people included in sample population were those not still in school and those over 65 yrs.

Without over-emphasising the reliability of quantification on such a small sample, it is possible to observe three important characteristics within the above distribution. Firstly, that the number of people employed in Phuthaditjhaba is double that recorded for Bochabelo. Secondly, that this is represented specifically in the sphere of migrant and local employment, and finally, that female employment rates seem significantly higher in the Phuthaditjhaba sample.

In addition to the above differences it was also discovered that Phuthaditjhaba workers showed higher skill levels than those in Bochabelo. For instance, in the sphere of migrant employment it was observed that while most of the Phuthaditjhaba migrants had renewable contracts, not a single re-engagement certificate or call-in-card had been guaranteed to any of the Bochabelo migrants. The other area where skills differed was in the sphere of local employment where the Phuthaditjhaba sample produced a total of five teachers. This was, however, partly anticipated since it is well known that the Qwa Qwa

government, in an attempt to encourage the immigration of teachers and bureaucrats, guaranteed these 'professionals' urban accomodation in Qwa Qwa.

Origins and Strategies : resources from town and country.

The differences in employment distributions and skill levels between the above two sample populations at first appears paradoxical in view of our earlier discussion. Location, we argued, is an important indicator against which existing employment distributions in Qwa Qwa might be viewed. Yet, as the above discussion indicates, certain clear differences in the distribution of employment are evident from the data drawn in two areas equidistant from the existing employment opportunities within Qwa Qwa. However, the differences are not as confusing as they might seem, since if the employment distributions are more closely considered it emerges that the number of jobs actually acquired by individuals after their arrival in Qwa Qwa are relatively equal between the samples. This is of particular interest because it implies that there are other employment opportunity resources available to the residents of Phuthaditjhaba and Bochabelo which do not depend on the situation people find themselves in after arrival in Qwa Qwa, but relate to conditions before arrival.

The case studies presented below concentrate specifically on the experiences of towns people in our sample and attempt to isolate an additional set of strategies or employment opportunity resources which are not available to many of the farm folk.

CASE NO. 4 : MOBILISING URBAN CONNECTIONS.

Mr Mofokeng moved to Qwa Qwa from the Ventersburg location in 1974. He was a small businessman who had heard on Sotho Radio that the Qwa Qwa government was offering big subsidies to small concerns which wished to open premises in Qwa Qwa. Mr Mofokeng claimed that he had decided to move "while the going was good." Hoping to open a small general store, Mr Mofokeng decided that he would follow the other immigrants to Kgano village. After being granted a site he built a small tin and wood structure as a temporary business site. Shortly afterwards he sent an application for the premises to be legalized.

The business got off to a good start and by mid-1975 Mr Mofokeng had extended his premises. However, in December 1975 the police visited the shop and said that the operation was illegal because it had not been authorised by the district magistrate in Phuthaditjhaba. In the ensuing events, the shop was forcibly closed and all the stock confiscated. By January 1976 it was realised that the household financial resources were running low. Mr Mofokeng, apparently still unsettled by the preceding events, decided to leave Qwa Qwa illegally and take up residence with friends in Ventersburg while he attempted to find a job. Shortly after his arrival he heard that a local construction company was involved in building a number of dams in the Ventersburg district. Mr Mofokeng, who had been a plasterer during his younger years, applied for a job. This application was accepted and his contract attested at the Phuthaditjhaba labour offices. Realising that there were many jobs available with the construction company Mr Mofokeng took his eldest son with him and returned to Ventersburg. Between early 1976 and mid-1977, Mr Mofokeng and his son worked in a variety of locations around Ventersburg remitting as much as R200 home a month to support the family in Kgano.

Commentary: The above case is a clear example of how a household's place of origin and the skills acquired by its members prior to relocation in Qwa Qwa may emerge as significant employment resources after arrival. Mr Mofokeng's experience in the building trade both before and during the time he was running a small store in Ventersburg was of crucial importance to his decision to leave Kgano in 1976. His knowledge of the urban labour market which encouraged him to by-pass the labour recruitment structure in Qwa Qwa, together with his connections in the building trade and personal skill levels were all highly significant factors in resolving the financial crisis in the Mofokeng household during 1976 and 1977. Finally, it is important not to see the above case in isolation. Between January and December 1983 approximately 10% of the recruits at the Phuthaditjhaba district labour bureau acquired contracts by illegally travelling into 'white' South Africa and having their contracts attested at Phuthaditjhaba.

CASE NO. 5 : CHANGING HOUSE FOR A JOB.

Malefane was born and brought up in the Bethlehem location. In 1970 he started work at the Naude Construction Company where his father had been a life long employee. Malefane lived in the Bethlehem location in a four-roomed municipal house with his parents and a sister. In 1972 he decided to marry a local woman who worked as a 'live-in' domestic servant in the white residential area of Bethlehem. After the marriage the couple decided that they could no longer live with their parents and applied for a separate house in the township. Malefane visited the housing office many times but on each occasion was told that "no more houses will be built in Bethlehem because there is lots of cheap accommodation available in Phuthaditjhaba for Sotho families" (180 km away). Malefane also heard extensive advertising about Qwa Qwa on Sotho Radio and heard that many schools and clinics had been built in the area. In 1973, after considerable contemplation, Malefane and

his wife moved to Qwa Qwa to start a family - they both retained their jobs as commuter labourers. Their first years in Phuthaditjhaba were difficult for them and feeling the strain of a commuter way of life, Malefane's wife was forced to relinquish her job as a domestic in Bethlehem: the wages, she claimed, did not merit the effort. In addition, Malefane was himself finding that transport costs made it difficult for him to keep up payments on accounts he had for household furniture.

In 1975 Malefane's father died and, after his sister had moved to Vereeniging two years earlier, his mother was left on her own in Bethlehem. It was realised that if Malefane's mother now moved to Phuthaditjhaba to look after the children and they in turn occupied her house in Bethlehem, it would be possible for Malefane's wife to resume work and for him to save on bus fare. In 1976 Malefane's mother moved to Phuthaditjhaba and the couple to Bethlehem.

Commentary: The circumstances involved in this case are far more unique than those outlined in case 4. However, the strategy employed here is no less significant. Malefane's decision to return to Bethlehem after his father's death in 1975 enabled both his wife to regain domestic employment, as well as securing his own employment at Naude Construction in the town. How exactly Malefane and his mother have retained their arrangement is, however, more confusing, since neither Malefane nor his wife are technically allowed to return to Bethlehem as Section 10 holders after an effective absence of four years. However, due to the sensitive nature of these questions, clarity on the legality of the arrangement was never investigated (or, indeed, how the couple had for so long avoided eviction). Nevertheless, the case does demonstrate the importance of relatives in urban areas as an employment related resource. Other cases were also recorded where relatives were mobilized in different capacities such as providing a temporary home for a work-seeker while in the urban areas or simply acting as a source of information about job vacancies. A further important point demonstrated by this case is that, despite moving from one location to another, Malefane was able to retain his job. This is by definition impossible if one is relocated from an O.F.S. farm.

CASE NO. 6 : BRINGING A SKILLED JOB TO QWA QWA.

Tshedi and her husband moved to Phuthaditjhaba from Philipolis in 1978. Tshedi's husband was a skilled artisan for a private builder in the town. Through this job he was contracted to work for a large Ficksburg company engaged in a number of projects in the southern O.F.S. Tshedi's husband's skill was soon noticed by a high ranking official in the Ficksburg firm and he was offered a job at more than double his existing salary. With few reservations, he accepted the new offer. For a variety of personal and circumstantial reasons which are not necessary to outline her, Tshedi, her sister-in-law and her husband decided to move to Phuthaditjhaba and start a household of their own.

Commentary: The above case is simply used to reiterate the

suggestion that for those who arrive in Qwa Qwa from the urban areas it is not always necessary to forfeit existing employment as a consequence of relocation. In the above case Tshedi's husband brought a secure, well-paid job with him to Qwa Qwa. In fact, it was largely as a result of his new job that the family decided to move.

CASE NO. 7 : KEEPING A CONTRACT.

Mr Sekonyela and his family left the farms in the Vrede district in 1965 and moved illegally to Vereeniging where Mr Sekonyela gained a job as a cleaner in a local primary school. Despite constant police harassment the Sekonyela family was able to maintain itself in a tin shack on the outskirts of the Everton township. In 1970 Mr Sekonyela gained more stable employment with the Transvaal Provincial Administration. Yet, as time went on, it became increasingly difficult for the family to avoid arrests which resulted in Mr Sekonyela missing work for uncomfortably long periods of time. In 1974 after two almost simultaneous arrests, the T.P.A. threatened to fire him. Mrs Sekonyela (also weary of constant harassment) decided to take herself and her children to Qwa Qwa to stay with relatives from the farms who had been relocated to the Tseseng 'closer settlement' village.

In view of his family's removal, Mr Sekonyela renewed his contract at the Phuthaditjhaba labour offices and was moved into single quarter municipal barracks. In the meantime, Mrs Sekonyela, after two years of waiting, was granted a house in Phuthaditjhaba. In June 1983 when we visited the Sekonyela family, Mr Sekonyela was still employed by T.P.A. and remitted a sum of R120 every month.

Commentary: This case recalls the experience of a farm family who illegally migrate to Vereeniging in an attempt to gain access to a secure wage. After some years in Vereeniging, Mr Sekonyela is able to acquire a stable job with the T.P.A. which he subsequently retains after his wife and children move to Qwa Qwa. On the basis of our discussions with other families evicted from O.F.S. farms, it appears that only a few of these families actually attempted to enter urban areas as an alternative to coming to Qwa Qwa. The most common strategy employed, if they are not forcibly brought to Qwa Qwa by the farmer, was to seek employment on other neighbouring farms. However, in view of the widespread farm relocations in the O.F.S. during the 1970's their attempts seldom met with much success and families were invariably forced to come to Qwa Qwa.

The above case studies provide important examples of how the experience of individuals and households prior to their arrival in Qwa Qwa might be relied upon in devising strategies to either gain or retain employment within 'white' South Africa. The general impression gained is that arriving in Qwa Qwa from an urban area presents greater scope for

illegally acquiring employment or alternatively retaining existing employment within 'white' South Africa, than might be possible for families relocated from 'white' farms. An explanation of this, we would argue, rests on four important differences in the experiences of town people as opposed to farm people. Firstly, those who arrive in Qwa Qwa from urban areas are usually familiar with the structure of the urban labour markets, whereas families arriving from the farms have seldom ever entered urban areas. Secondly, and as a corollary to the latter point, urban families often leave both friends and relatives behind in the urban areas who can be relied upon for information about job vacancies, as well as, for shelter and protection if they migrate to find a job illegally. Thirdly, due to the nature of industrial labour as opposed to farm labour, urban people are, by and large, better equipped to enter urban employment. Finally, and most significantly, white farm removals are explicitly based on losing a job, urban removals do not necessarily imply immediate marginalization.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In our preceding discussion we have attempted to integrate some macro-level data on the availability of employment opportunities to Qwa Qwa residents with more micro-level findings about the options open to individuals and families as they strategise, often with considerable ingenuity, to gain employment. Our findings were basically twofold. Firstly it was discovered that labour recruitment and employment opportunities within Qwa Qwa were structured in a hierarchical fashion which distinctly favoured those relocated to Phuthaditjhaba, as opposed to those situated further away from the town. At a broad conceptual level it was argued that this situation spawns a process of internal marginalization.

The second argument in the paper is that apparent inequalities in employment opportunity resources may be transcended in a number of ways. The first and most obvious **strategy** em-

ployed by residents was simply to ignore the existing legal and policy constraints on mobility within the bantustan. For instance, it was noted that many work-seekers simply ignored the tribal labour structures altogether. Yet, at another level, it was also pointed out that these strategies were not only bound by the experiences and opportunities available to people after their arrival in Qwa Qwa, but could be influenced by their experiences prior to arrival. For instance, it was noted that for a variety of reasons families relocated from urban areas often had access to a set of employment opportunity resources, which were not available to farm families.

The types of variables introduced in the above discussion are certainly of crucial importance to broader discussions about structural unemployment and marginalization in South Africa. Specifically because they are evidence of diverse strategies and options open to the marginalized rural poor in South Africa as they attempt to be incorporated into the central economy. In particular, this study served to emphasise the importance of the kinds of resources individuals might accumulate prior to their arrival in a bantustan, rather than simply concentrating on the structural realities which they face on arrival in these areas.

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