

SECOND CARNEGIE INQUIRY INTO POVERTY  
AND DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Access to land in the Transkei

by

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## ACCESS TO LAND IN THE TRANSKEI

"The land area of Transkei consists of 4 376 000 hectares on which live a growing population with rising expectations."<sup>1)</sup> The Hawkins Report p.88.

The aim of this paper is to examine the effects of growing population on a finite land area. The Hawkins report writes that land pressure in Transkei means over-population of humans and livestock under conditions of subsistence agriculture. The typical symptoms being the replacement of cattle by smaller stock, increasingly severe erosion, critical shortage of manure, decline in yields, poor conditions of cattle in drought years resulting in heavy stock losses, progressive disappearance of such natural resources as game, fish and fruit, increase of malnutrition and the emergence of a growing class of landless people.

Traditionally land has been perceived as a means of economic survival in the rural areas, with land being traditionally vested in the chief with rights being allocated to the individual family heads throughout the tribal hierarchy. Under such a system all married men were entitled to land on the condition they had paid these taxes.

An interview with a 61 year old man living in Etoleni gives us some indication of how land was allocated.

O. How did people acquire land here in Butterworth?

A. If one wants a plot the first thing he should do was to pay his wife's tax. After that he gets the land. He could not get the land if he has not paid the taxes.

Q. I mean the steps which he should undergo step by step. The first step was to be a taxpayer. What did he do after that?

A. After that one must go to the chief and ask for land. If the chief agreed to his request policeman come and measure the plot.

Q. From the olden days until now, has there been any dissatisfaction about the allocation of land?

A. During the olden days things were better. One could get a plot of a satisfying size. This is not the case now at Etoleini. The sizes are so small in so much that it can be very difficult for you to build huts or even have a garden. There is difficulty in as far as land is concerned. Homestead plots are very small. Plans which could eliminate pressure on the land can help because it is going to be difficult for people to survive. Xhosas, in order to earn a living, depend on the land. Our arable plots have been reduced. My arable plot was eight morgens, but now it is two and a half morgens. Just compare two and a half morgens with eight morgens.

However today the system is based on a modified traditional system in which land is vested in the state with rights being allocated under an administrative system which incorporates the tribal authorities approval as a step in the process. Traditionally the prerequisite for land was marriage and the payment of taxes. Today due to population growth, the customary rights of all married men to land can no longer be met even by restricted allocation. Under the quit rent system of the South West, residential and arable land rights are individualised and inheritable, while grazing land is still held in common. The modified-traditional and quit rent system together cover 87% of Transkei as a whole. Rural settlement in Transkei has its basis in Proclamation 116 of 1949 which gave authorities the right to demarcate land into 4 areas - residential, arable, forestry and grazing. In practice little resettlement was undertaken at this time and it was only after the publication of the Tomlinson Commission Report in 1955 supporting the concept that resettlement was seriously implemented.

During the past 20 years, with the co-operation of the Chiefs and Headman, resettlement has continued steadily. In the

year 1978/79 a total of 745 administrative areas had been planned and of these 486 had been completed. Besides the 5 districts in the South Transkei (Gcuwa, Nqamakwe, Tsomo, Cofimvaba, Xalanga) the only other districts which have been completely planned are Libode and Herschel. The Hawkins Report states "Transkei is, and will always be an agricultural country, this is not only the results of the peoples traditions and inclinations, but because Transkei has few resources other than land, climate and people. Not only is 90% of the land devoted to agriculture but agriculture is also the occupation of 90% of the people. "<sup>2)</sup> Hawkins p. 97. The question arises as to whether this claim is in fact true. Using Libode as a case study, the records of the District Commissioner and the Agricultural Extension Office were examined. The number of kraal sites and of arable plots registered were calculated for each of the 29 administrative areas of Libode. 20 322 kraalsites and 15 060 arable plots were found to be registered, giving a difference between kraalsites and arable plots of 5 262 or 25,89% of kraalsites without arable plots.

The results of a socio economic survey into the South Western Region of Transkei revealed that only some 40% of households have both land and vegetable gardens as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Allocations of Cultivable Land and Percentage of Sample Group with Access to Various Land Categories

<u>Land Category</u>	<u>% of Group</u>
Vegetable gardens only	28,5%
Arable land only	18,7%
Both Arable and Vegetable Lands	39,8%
No cultivable Land	<u>13,0%</u>
	100,00%

As kraalsites come with vegetable gardens, except in cases where informal subdivision has occurred we must consider a figure of 28,5% of kraalsites with no arable land. This figure closely corresponds with the figure of 25,89% given for the Libode Magisterial District.

We have ascertained that at a Regional level and at a magisterial level the degree of landlessness is comparable.

If one looks at the village of Ntshiq in the Tsolo district the following situation emerges.

TABLE II

Fields	Number of Households	% Households	% Accumulative Households
0	46	28,57	28,57
1	97	60,25	88,82
2	16	9,94	98,76
3	0	0,00	98,76
4	2	1,24	100,00
Total	161	100,00	

Here again those households without arable land constitute 28,57% of the total households in the village. The village is located in the North West region. The findings of a socio-economic survey of Nkanga a village in Libode which in turn is a magisterial district of the North East region reveals a similar situation.

TABLE III

Fields	Number of Households	% of Households	% Accumulative Households
0	47	23,3	23,3
1	146	72,3	95,6
2	6	3,0	98,6
3	3	1,4	1,4
Total	202		

The above table indicates that 23,3% of households in Nkanga do not have access to arable lands.

We have thus deduced that right across the Transkei in all regions, magisterial districts and villages the degree of landlessness falls within the range of 20 - 30%. If anything this range understates the degree of landlessness, for many households contained more than one family but had to remain as one because the younger married members could not obtain a separate kraalsite let alone arable land.

Having determined the range of landlessness in the Transkei, it becomes necessary to analyse what it means to these people who do not have arable lands. In doing this information and impressions have been gained by interviewing Transkeians living in the rural areas. Such information will be supplemented by Household Income/Expenditure Data compiled by the IMDS.

The following extract is from an interview with an unemployed 33 year old male living at Nkunzimbini location in Lusikisiki.

Q. Have you got an arable land?

A. Yes, I have got a land.

Q. How big is it?

A. It is 1,73 hectares.

Q. And have you got a residential site?

A. Yes it is 46m x 46m

Q. How big is your land and site in relation to other lands and sites?

A. I think they are all equal because our area has just been planned.

- Q. Do all people therefore have access to the land?
- A. No when the lands were allotted to the people, many people who were supposed to get land didn't get it. The lands were less than the number of people.
- Q. Why was that?
- A. The area which was originally used for arable lands was now used for residential sites and grazing camps.
- Q. Do you mean to say, the people who did not get land after the Betterment Scheme were people who previously owned land?
- A. Yes, they had land before.
- Q. If they have no land now, how do they manage to live?
- A. They live by 'beating up their pockets'.
- Q. How?
- A. They live on money.
- Q. Where do they get money from?
- A. They get it from nowhere because jobs are very scarce.
- Q. If some people have no lands and jobs, where do they get money from to support themselves.
- A. Look, here in Pondoland, we share food with those who have no means to produce or buy food.
- Q. Is that done by people who are related to each other by blood or just everybody?
- A. Anyone who comes to you and begs for food, you give him a dish full of, say, mealies.

Clearly people who have no employment or land are at the mercy of the social environment in which they live. But what of those who do have land, how much worse off are they?

Sources of Income % for Households Without Migrants - Rural

TABLE IV  
Rands P.A.  
Per Household

	Household	Wages	Pension	Remittances	Home Production	Total
500	19.91	28.50	63.70	0	7.80	100
501 - 1 000	14.82	49.90	41.75	0	8.35	100
1 001 - 1 500	8.53	59.05	33.48	0	7.47	100
1 501 - 2 000	5.09	66.10	25.50	0	8.40	100
2 001 - 3 000	9.88	89.00	9.92	0	1.08	100
3 001 - 4 000	9.73	94.17	3.77	0	2.06	100
4 001 - 5 000	11.68	94.58	4.61	0	1.01	100
5 001 - 10 000	12.87	91.58	5.10	0	3.32	100
10 001	7.49	79.93	11.10	0	8.97	100
	100.00					

P Wakelin 1982

The above table shows that home production constituted only a small percentage, notably under 10% of the household income. This figure however reflects only the amount that was sold, and not privately consumed. The table shows that households without migrants are dependant on rural wage jobs and pensions constituting over 90% of rural household incomes.

The table below indicates sources of rural income per household with migrants.

TABLE V

INCOME GROUP P.A.	% HOUSEHOLDS	WAGES	PENSIONS	REMITTANCES	HOME PRODUCTION	TOTAL
500	21.95	1.7	5.85	90.98	1.47	100
501 - 1 000	32.57	3.87	8.35	86.54	1.24	100
1 000 - 1 500	16.32	5.74	13.12	80.25	0.81	100
1 501 - 2 000	7.14	13.93	20.78	63.37	1.92	100
2 001 - 3 000	6.82	12.81	15.73	68.69	2.77	100
3 001 - 4 000	4.46	51.55	4.12	43.19	1.14	100
4 001 - 5 000	3.34	55.17	6.15	35.35	3.33	100
5 001 - 10 000	6.23	55.09	2.78	40.81	1.32	100
10 000	1.17	65.58	16.83	12.37	5.22	100

P Wakelin 1982 100.00

Here again there is an almost total reliance on income from rural wage jobs, pensions and remittances from migrants, with income from home production being below 6% in all cases.

The question arises as to what percentage of total consumption is home produced. An income and expenditure survey undertaken in 1982 by the IMDS indicates that the average rural expenditure on grain products was R245 per household per annum. On the assumption that maize costs 50 cents a kg we can deduce that 490 kg of grain products are consumed per annum. We further assume that each household grows an average of 2 bags of maize per annum at 70 kg a bag. An average crop production of 140 kg.

Thus total household consumption of grain crop is around the order of 630 kg p.a. To deduce the proportion of home consumption we merely take the figure of home production as a percentage of total consumption giving us  $140$  as a % of  $630 = 22.22\%$

The Hawkins Report states that few districts even approach self-

sufficiency and those which do (Lusikisiki, Libode, Mqanduli, Ngqeleni, Siphagani and Umzimvubu) and also those with high densities of population. At the other extreme are districts where per capita maize production is less than 35 kg/capita Cacadu, Engcobo, Herschel, Matatiele, Mounh Fletcher, Tsomo, and Xalanga.

Over the past 30 years maize production has been more or less static at 150 000 tonnes per annum, representing about 1/3 of total annual demand. There has however been great fluctuation in good years, when rainfalls have been higher than average, yields have increased, alternatively in years of serious drought maize yields have been extremely low. Of utmost importance is that over the last 20 years maize yields have been decreasing this has been explained by pointing to population growth, increasing soil erosion, declining soil fertility and an increased build up of pests and diseases. See Figure I

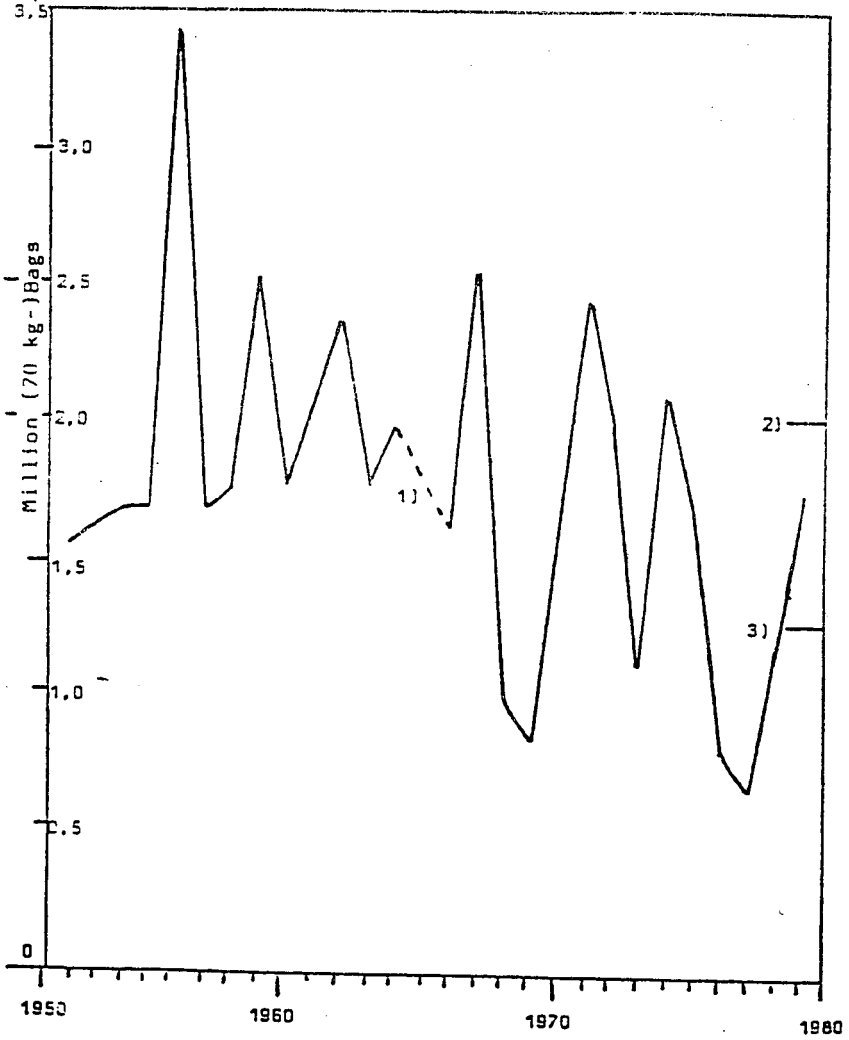
This raises further questions, firstly it means that agricultural output in already established plots is diminishing, and secondly more and more people are required to be fed.

In order to alleviate this problem, various Rural Development strategies have been designed to improve the economic and social life of the rural poor. In the decade preceeding Transkei "independence" agricultural development was aimed at maintaining traditional land use.

"The strategy was at best, one of cautious reformation with emphasis placed in change through extension by the Department of Agriculture"<sup>1)</sup> p.22 TDR vol.2 No.2.

This approach has had no effect at all in improving rural incomes at the same time it was realised that industrialisation policies were also not succeeding. "It is therefore understandable that policy planners were looking upon the transformation approach as a way out of the impasse."  
p.23 TDR. Vol 2 No. 2

FIGURE 1: Transkei Annual Production of Maize 1952-1979



- 1) No data available
- 2) High-estimate average
- 3) Low-estimate average

SOURCE: Van Wyk and  
Department of Agri-  
culture and Forestry

In 1981 the Transkei Agricultural Corporation (TRACOR) was established.

Interviews in the rural areas, revealed a marked degree of suspicion and anger about TRACOR's activities. The following extract is indicative of the general feeling

Q. Why do you worry yourself about sending your son to the labour centres instead of asking him to assist you in cultivating your land?

A. The land is cultivated by TRACOR. We have moved away from tilling the land. All these lands are now ploughed by TRACOR. The lands have been handed over to TRACOR

Q. Does it mean that you are getting more produce now than before?

A. No TRACOR is asking to be paid hundreds of rands for its expenditure. If it does not get cash from us, it takes away half the harvest. Tracor want all its costs to be recovered. In that sense then, we cannot say that TRACOR has come to help us. We don't see this help because TRACOR takes away the mielies. What we get is just the remainder after all the costs have been recovered.

The situation is one whereby even if one has land that is properly ploughed and farmed by TRACOR, the only way of survival is to depend on the two greatest sources of rural income that being Pensions and Remittances. Evenso land is still held in great demand.

Nearly all the interviews revealed that a large degree of corruption existed in the distribution of land; a situation which emerges as a result of land scarcity and the great desire of people for land.

Q. Are the arable plots of this location of the same size?

A. No.

Q. Who possess bigger plots?

A. Those who administer land.

Q. What do you mean by that?

A. I mean the headman, land is for sale.

Q. Where is the level bought.

A. At the headman, you can even pay a beast, so that you can get somebody's land.

Q. Do you mean to say that I can give a headman a beast and then takeover land which belonged to another person.

A. Yes.

Landlessness is a bigger problem for the rural poor than it should be, statistically speaking. The question emerges as to why if land is proved to be of only tertiary importance as a household income earner, is there such a great demand for land, as is so evident in the corruption and bribery taking place to get a plot of arable land.

Answering this question is not easy, and perhaps the words of Amilcar Cabral can bear some light in this direction:

"Always bear in mind that the people are not fighting for ideas, for the things in anyone's head. They are fighting to win material benefits, to live better and in peace, to see their lives go forward to guarantee the future of their children"<sup>1)</sup>

Amilcar Cabral Revolution in Guinea - an African People's Struggle.

It is within the notion of material benefits and the future of the children, that the answer to the question can be partially found. There is a common belief correct or incorrect, that in future years land

will be impossible to get. A situation which is already strongly evident.

Interviews conducted in the Mongendi district of Libode, showed clearly the situation. The following quotes illustrate the point

"The headman promises, but no land"

"The headman said I must wait, but if there is no land, I will not get land".

Whilst productivity levels are low, it is nonetheless still believed that if one acquires land now in later years as scarcity increases, so to will the value of that land increase. This belief is further coupled by the belief that in future years, agricultural productivity will increase as a result of new technologies. But the most vital point is that getting work in the urban areas is becoming increasingly rare and more difficult as the following extract illustrates :

"Our children are staying at home because they are not working, Contracts for labour have been stopped and that is bad. Our children are not working and they have been staying at home for years. When they go to town, they are told that there are no requisitions for labour"

N. Muller writes that the future demand for Transkeian migrants will depend on the aggregate labour demand in the South African economy, its skills spread, and the spatial distribution. Trends that have emerged during the 1970's indicate that the absolute level of migrant labour demand is unlikely to increase much. This is a result of the declining employment creating ability of the South African economy. The changing skills composition of demand and the spatial patterns of recruitment."<sup>(1)</sup> The Political Economy of Labour and Development in Transkei of N. Muller IMDS Discussion paper Nov 1983.

Estimates contained in Table 6 show that employment in the industrial capitalist sector (i.e. excluding that in homelands)

Table 6 : Changes in South African Employment and Capital Intensity 1960 - 1980.

Sector	Employment (000)		%Share Employment		Annual Av. Growth (%)	Real Capital Per Man*		Av. Capital Growth 1960 - 80. (%p.a.)
	1960	1980	1960	1980		1960	1980	
Agriculture	1 221	973	21,3	9,3	- 1,1	2 598	5 311	3,6
Mining	615	725	10,7	6,9	0,8	4 402	8 083	3,1
Manufacture	644	1 238	11,3	11,8	3,3	3 655	8 425	4,3
Electricity, Gas, Water	40	95	0,7	0,9	4,4	50 850	8 231	2,5
Construction	276	593	4,8	5,6	3,9	366	1 265	6,4
Trade, Finance	518	1 102	9,1	10,5	3,8	15 517	19 137	1,1
Transport	208	423	3,6	4,0	3,7	22 985	32 827	1,8
Services	571	1 113	10,0	10,6	3,4	10 074	20 512	3,6
Total Industrial	4 090	6 262	71,5	59,6	2,2	7 059	14 034	3,5
Peripheral	1 631	4 252	28,5	40,4	4,9	n.a	n.a	n.a
Total	5 721	10 514	100,0	100,0	3,1	n.a	n.a	n.a

\* 1975 Prices

Sources : Du Pisanie 1981

Biggs 1982

agriculture and domestic service) grew at an annual rate of only 2,2% compared with an estimated growth in the labour supply of 3,1% between 1960 - 1980. Consequently the proportion employed in the 'peripheral' economy which comprises these sectors and the unemployed increased from 1,6 to 6,3 million person. As a percentage of the labour force this was an increase from 28,5% in 1960 to 40,4% in 1980.

Further Muller argues that the sources of migrants for the South African economy can be divided into an inner urban zone (A) an inner rural periphery (B) the Homelands (C) the BL's countries (D) and the others such as Angola, Malawi and Mozambique (E). As the South African economy moves into a labour surplus situation, the area of recruitment is being tightened.

The changing spatial division of labour contains threats to Transkeians access to the South African job market.

"With regard to labour recruitment, the citizens' of the independent' bantustans are in the same precarious position as the citizens of South African states such as Lesotho, Zimbabwe, and recently Malawi" Mare 1983 :

Thus it can be seen that in a situation of little security, land is held to be the one option that might give security to the family in the future.

It has been argued that the demand for land, is closely linked to a sense of security for the future. Whilst this is undoubtedly true, it is of utmost importance that it is realised that in a situation of abject poverty whilst home production only amount to 22% of food consumption expenditure. (the amount from arable land is less, as this includes production from kraalsites gardens), this percentage can be the critical difference between starvation and

survival. Even so this does not take into account the expenditure that is required to make such arable plots viable, this constitutes an opportunity cost not only in labour but in financial resources. This coupled with the observation that during periods of greatest economic need, it is this 22% that is the first to fail, as witnessed in drought conditions. Thus during the drought years, a time when sources were most badly needed, those without land might even have been in a stronger position, as they were saved the expenditure of trying to grow a crop, that produced "not even one mealie."

These papers constitute the preliminary findings of the Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa, and were prepared for presentation at a Conference at the University of Cape Town from 13-19 April, 1984.

The Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa was launched in April 1982, and is scheduled to run until June 1985.

Quoting (in context) from these preliminary papers with due acknowledgement is of course allowed, but for permission to reprint any material, or for further information about the Inquiry, please write to:

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