

SECOND CARNEGIE INQUIRY INTO POVERTY
AND DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Afrikaans farmers in the
Transvaal: A quality-of-life
profile
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AFRIKAANS FARMERS IN THE TRANSVAAL
A QUALITY-OF-LIFE PROFILE

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This paper is a short, edited extract taken from a longer background study on Rightwing Politics in South Africa by the same author. The full version may be found in a doctoral thesis "Afrikaner Farmers in the Transvaal: A Study of Attitudes to Changing Socio-Economic Conditions." (University of Zimbabwe.)

The purpose of this study is to focus on the quality of life of 345 Afrikaans farmers in two regions of the Transvaal.

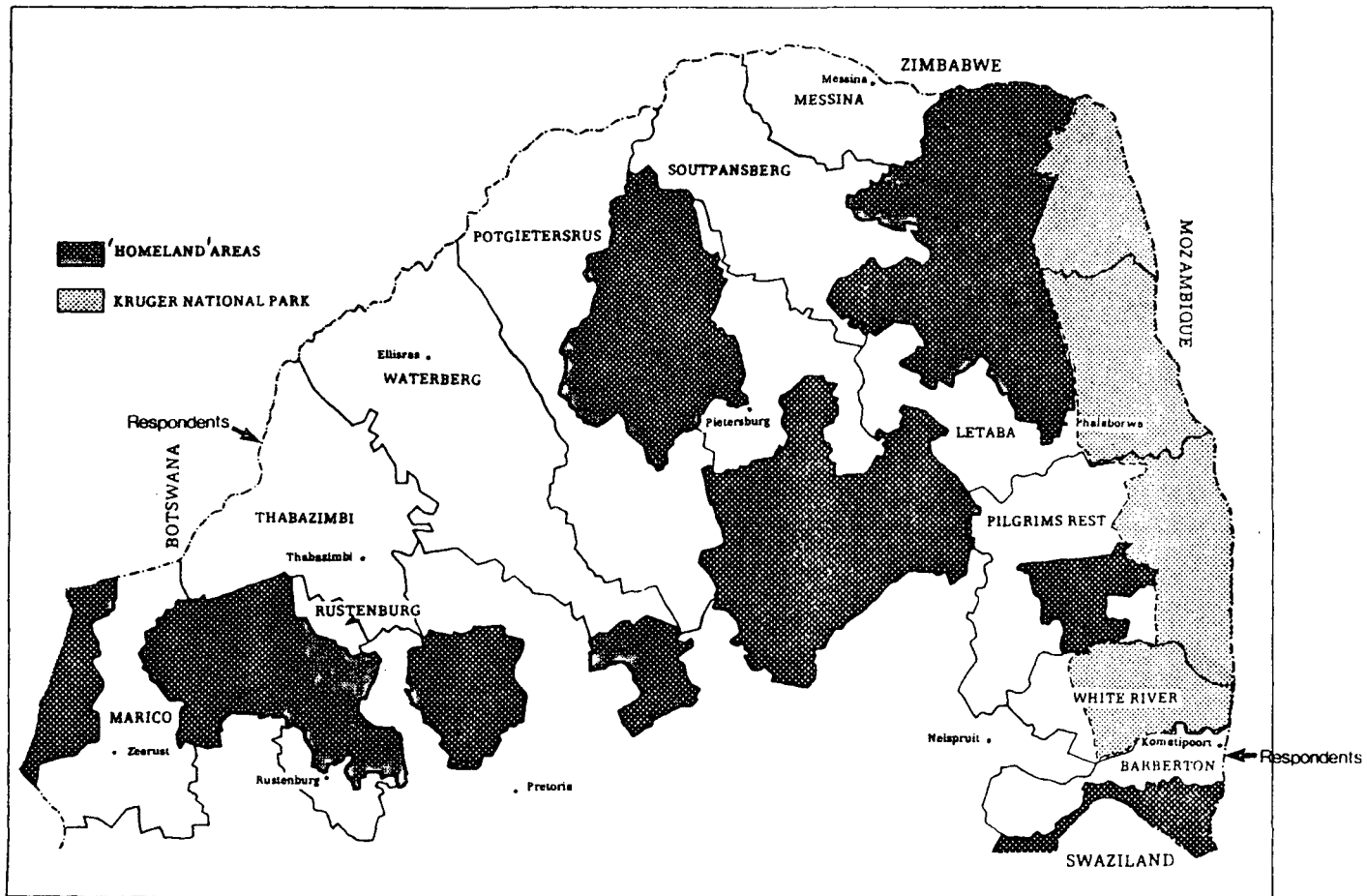
The concept "quality of life" encompasses a broad range of different elements. According to Human and Smedley, it refers to a "person's perception of his well-being" where perception entails "a person's views and feelings at a specific time about himself and his environment, which in turn are a function of the dialectical relationship between his subjective reality and the objective realities." (1)

Well-being refers to "feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, content or discontent, pain or pleasure."

The central "quality-of-life" aspects in this paper are social, economic and security-related issues.

The study focussed on two broad groups of farmers. The first group of 252 respondents was located in the Northwestern Transvaal in the districts of Marico, Rustenburg, Thabazimbi, Waterberg, Potgietersrus, Soutpansberg and Messina. The second

MAP OF TRANSVAAL HOMELAND AREAS AND BORDER
MAGISTERIAL DISTRICTS



group, comprising 93 respondents was concentrated in the Eastern Transvaal in the districts of Barbeton, Pilmrim's Rest and White River. (See Map)

One of the most important aspects to emerge from the study was that a large group of Transvaal farmers (particularly concentrated in the Northwestern Transvaal) consider themselves relatively deprived within their own frame of reference. Indeed, the study found that their perceptions were correct, relative to farmers in most other farming areas in the country and to whites in general.

The study also found that their perception has a bearing on their political views and their expectations of the "quality of life" that should be enjoyed by black South Africans coupled with a predominant and strongly conservative political bias.

As far as the Northwestern Transvaal in particular is concerned, the farmers of the region are beset with difficulties. The economy of their region is at its lowest ebb in many decades. On this material level they are among the foremost of those who face what a professor of agricultural economics has referred to as the need for South African agriculture to ready itself "for a greater catastrophe than at any time in our history." The crisis drought conditions which have beset South Africa in 1983 - 1984 have lent added substance to assessments such as this.

The respondents are, however, not only afflicted with particularly acute economic difficulties. Equally potent in their lives are concerns generated by the uncertain security

climate of their situation on South Africa's borders. Although the major incidences of politically inspired acts of violence in South Africa have occurred in urban areas, the respondents live in the knowledge that these tactics could at any time also, or even predominantly, be aimed at rural areas where outlying and widely scattered farms, particularly in the border areas, would be singularly vulnerable.

Within the research area, a saturation sampling strategy was adopted. To this end an attempt was made to interview every white adult person residing permanently on a farm. With the exception of nine individuals, this was successfully accomplished during a period of extensive fieldwork from June 1979 to June 1980.

Table A indicates the number of generations the respondent's families have farmed in their respective areas while Table B shows the number of years which the respondents have individually spent in these areas.

They reveal, particularly in the Northwestern Transvaal, strong historical family links to the local area and a large percentage of respondents who have spent a number of decades in such an area. SEE TABLES A + B.

POPULATION TRENDS

the phenomenon of white depopulation constitutes a point of pivotal significance in the Northwestern Transvaal border area. As relevant and reliable demographic statistics are unavailable,

TABLE A

GENERATION OF RESPONDENTS IN NORTHWESTERN AND EASTERN TRANSVAAL

GENERATION	N-W. TVL. (N = 252)		E. TVL. (N = 93)	
	COUNT	%	COUNT	%
1	48	19,0	8	8,6
2	84	33,3	48	51,6
3	60	23,8	20	21,5
4-5	60	23,8	17	18,3

TABLE B

YEARS SPENT BY RESPONDENTS IN NORTHWESTERN AND EASTERN TRANSVAAL

YEARS	N-W. TVL. (N = 246)		E. TVL. (N = 92)	
	COUNT	%	COUNT	%
1-10	50	20,3	26	28,3
11-20	31	12,6	23	25,0
21-30	51	20,7	22	23,9
31-40	52	21,1	17	18,5
41-	62	25,2	4	4,3

the writer had to rely on his own estimates.

It has been estimated that during the period 1968 - 78 the number of white farmers in South Africa dropped by 22%, from 93 000 to 72 000. (2)

THE NORTHWESTERN TRANSVAAL

In view of wide and authoritative recognition of the fact that the farmers of the cattle ranching areas of the Northwestern and Northern Transvaal have left the land in appreciably greater numbers than the national average, a drop of at least 40% can be estimated to have occurred between 1970 - 1980 in the numbers of bona fide farmers in the districts of Marico, Rustenburg, Thabazimbi, Waterberg, Potgietersrus, Soutpansberg and Messina. (3)

This percentage can be used as a rough guide in calculating a 1980 total white farming population of about 21 000 in these districts. The proportion of this population located in an area stretching inland for 50 kms from Botswana and Zimbabwe, can be estimated to be in the region of 3000 - 5000. (4)

The thinness of this white population in the border regions (with some 60% of the farm units unoccupied by whites) (5) which encompasses an area of some 30 000 square kms, has been a source of increasing concern to the authorities and to the farmers themselves.

The black population of the seven above mentioned districts (urban and non-urban) increased by 41 253 to 364 940 between 1970

- 1980. It can be estimated that the black population on the white owned farms in the seven districts totalled about 242 000 in 1980 -- of whom a high concentration are women, children and old men. Comparing this estimate with the above mentioned total for the white farming population (21 000) it can be concluded that blacks in the farming areas of the seven districts mentioned outnumber whites by roughly 11 to one.

In comparison the people officially classified as "coloured" constitute a very small proportion of the population on the "white farms". In 1970 the total coloured population in the farming areas of the seven districts was 773. (6) This total probably dwindled slightly by 1980. (7)

THE EASTERN TRANSVAAL:

The white population in the three districts which border most closely on Mozambique increased from 21 176 in 1970 to 24 415 in 1980, while the black population increased from 150 062 to 203 902 and the coloured population from 1 794 to 1 926. (8) In 1970 the populations in the farming areas of Barbeton, Pilgrims Rest and White River were 13 678 whites, 127 029 blacks and 724 "coloureds." There has been no marked exodus from or inflow into these areas in the period 1970 to 1980, and in the absence of official (or other reliable) statistics, the best estimate that can be made is that these farming populations have remained more or less static since 1970. (9) with blacks outnumbering whites by about 9 - 1.

TABLE C

**1980 POPULATION DEMOGRAPHY FOR NORTHWESTERN AND NORTHERN TRANSVAAL DISTRICTS
(MARICO, RUSTENBURG, THABAZIMBI, WATERBERG, POTGIETERSRUS, SOUTPANSBERG, MESSINA) AND
EASTERN TRANSVAAL DISTRICTS (PILGRIMS REST, WHITE RIVER, BARBERTON) : AND OF SOUTH AFRICA**

RACE	N-W AND N-TRANSVAAL DISTRICTS		EASTERN TRANSVAAL DISTRICTS		SOUTH AFRICA ^{a)}
	TOTAL POPULATION ^{a)}	FARMING POPULATION ^{b)}	TOTAL POPULATION ^{a)}	FARMING POPULATION ^{b)}	
White	87 497	21 000	24 415	13 678	4 453 273
Black	364 940	242 000	203 902	127 029	15 970 019 ^{c)}
Coloured	2 347	733	1 962	774	2 554 039
Asian	2 487	-	755	-	794 639 ^{c)}
TOTAL	457 271	263 733	231 034	141 431	23 771 970 ^{c)}

a) R.S.A. Dept. of Statistics : Statistical news release, 16-9-80, pp.5-6

b) Estimates as explained in text.

c) Excluding Republics of Transkei, Bophuthatswana and Venda which had a combined de facto population of 3 387 800 in 1978 (1980 figures unavailable) - S.A.I.R.R. SURVEY OF RACE RELATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA, 1979, p.71.

The population statistics described above are summarized in Table C

ECONOMIC SITUATION.

Economic considerations were reported by the respondents as constituting the central problem of their farming lives. When, for example, they were asked to select four factors which exercise the most unfavourable influence on their farming, the overwhelming majority stressed their high production costs and low market prices for their products. The relative stress on different problems can be seen in Table D.

TABLE D

PROBLEMS	NO	%
Low prices for farming products	308	89.2
Price of farming necessities	304	88.1
High interest on loans	185	53.6
Distances to farming necessities	155	44.9
High labour costs	126	36.5
Availability of labour	133	32.7
Unproductive labour	85	24.6
Security Situation	49	14.2
Non-working blacks on farms	31	8.9

When asked to indicate the reasons for the high rate of white depopulation of farms in their area, a similar stress on economic difficulties emerges. Of the 278 respondents whose personal

friends had abandoned farming in their area, 76,1% indicated that these friends had done so on account of the unprofitability of farming.

Farmers in South Africa have a reputation for their negative presentation of the profitability of their occupation. In the present case, however, their claims are strongly supported by factual evidence. Over the period 1960/1 to 1970/1, prices of farming necessities on a national basis increased by approximately 17%. This climbed steeply to 182% from 1970/1 to 1978/9. (10) Against these figures, national agricultural product-prices increased by 141% between 1970/1 and 1978/9 (11)

The unfavourable profitability situation indicated by these figures helps to explain the fact that the number of white farmers in South Africa dropped from an estimated 106 000 in 1960 to about 72 000 in 1978.(12)

This exodus from the agricultural sector has continued unabated and although more recent official statistics are not available, it is estimated that there was a further drop of 3 563 by the beginning of 1979. (13)

THE NORTHWESTERN TRANSVAAL.

In this cattle farming region a stark picture of economic disintegration became apparent. The average net income per farming unit was R12 058 in 1976/77 -- a 20% increase since 1973/4. In the period 1976/7 to 1977/8 the average income declined sharply to R10 233 -- a drop of 18,4% below the

1973/4 figure.(14)

An analysis of the economic situation on the Northwestern Transvaal farms based on 1978/79 figures concluded that the nett income per R100 capital investment was, on average, R1,45 and that average net income per farming unit was R3 941 -- before payment of annual interest commitments on an average debt of R3 996. (15)

This kind of income structure (which makes no allowance for the impact of inflation) leaves little doubt about the substance underlying the respondents' articulation of their economic difficulties.

THE EASTERN TRANSVAAL

A notably less pronounced regression in economic conditions obtained here. The economic conditions in the Eastern Transvaal have long made it one of the most popular areas of white population growth in South Africa. (16) It is thus clearly distinguishable from the Northwestern Transvaal.

Comparing the total of annual average farming income in three typical Eastern Transvaal districts and three typical Northwestern Transvaal districts, it is found that farming income in 1960 in the Eastern Transvaal was more than double that in the Northwestern Transvaal. (17) It was found that more or less the same difference between these two areas applied in 1970.

This is made clear by comparing the percentage of farming units which were incapable of generating a net income of R2 500 per annum in 1970. This percentage was 44,8 in the case of the three

Northwestern Transvaal districts, and 29,6 for the Eastern Transvaal districts. (18) In 1970, 42% of the net annual farming family incomes in the Northwestern districts and 23% in the Eastern districts were under R2 000. (19) Added perspective on these figures is revealed by the fact that an official committee of Inquiry into agriculture estimated a net income of R3 500 as the minimum whereby these farmers could maintain an acceptable standard of living under conditions prevailing in 1970. (20) It is also worth noting that the average net income of white families in South Africa in 1970 was R3 774, while the income of 25% of these families was under R2 458. (21) Comparing these national income figures with the above-mentioned farming figures, it is apparent that the Eastern Transvaal respondents in this study compared far more favourably with national figures than the Northwestern Transvaal respondents.

At the time of writing this paper (February 1984) the relevant 1980 census material was not yet available, but the writer's observations and interviews indicate that the passage of nine years (before the commencement of this study) had not significantly skewed the contrasts described above. The situation today has not changed significantly.:

The disparity outlined may partially account for answers to the question: "In general how would you describe your life in your area?" When offered a choice of answers, the following discrepancies emerged:

	very good	satisfactory	unsatisfactory	not good at all
NW Tvl	11,1%	64,7%	13,9%	10,3%
East Tvl	50,5%	46,2%	3,1%	0,0%

What is particularly striking is that 64,7% of Northwestern Transvaal farmers indicated satisfaction with their lives, despite objective economic deprivation and other problems. Respondents who painted an extremely bleak picture of the economic quality of their lives and yet marked "satisfactory" were probed for an explanation of this apparent anomaly. The answers tended to take the form of a resigned shrug of the shoulders and statements such as "What does it help to complain?"; or "Ons moet maar vasbyt."

The writer's interviews and observations with a number of agricultural experts indicated that the economic backward slide in the Northwestern Transvaal had probably increased during the 1970's (especially in the period 1978/9) compared to the Eastern Transvaal. During this period, the sudden large increases in the price of fuel hit the bushveld farmers harder than the Eastern Transvaal farmers, since the former do not have access to electricity power lines.

There are a number of reasons for the retrogressive economic performance of the Bushveld Farmers:

CLIMACTIC CONDITIONS:

Very low rainfall and high temperatures impose a severe strain on grazing -- the life blood of the cattle farmer. Expensive feed has to be purchased when the veld cannot sustain cattle, or cattle have to be marketed in large numbers, invariably at a loss.

The climate also adversely affects crop growers, and increases the risk of veld fires that can cause a total loss of income.

HIGH EXPENDITURE:

Marketing costs increase significantly because of the large distances to be travelled -- transport costs rose by 350% between 1970-77 with an added surge in the wake of the escalation of South African fuel-prices during 1979. (22) Nor does the cattle production peak in this area correspond with the period of high red meat demand (October to December.) (23)

Long distances travelled to obtain farming necessities, visit doctors or reach schools increase the fuel consumption of these farmers. Travel over long distances on bad roads shortens the life-span of vehicles and increases maintenance costs.

LABOUR SHORTAGES:

Farmers complain that the wages they can afford to pay cannot compare with those available to unskilled black workers in mining and industry. Cash wages, which are supplemented by mealie meal and meat, at the time of the study generally varied between R20 - R40 per month.

Despite influx control laws designed to ensure an adequate supply of farm labour, farmers complain that they still cannot get the necessary labour. (24)

In the words of one respondent: "They head for the bright lights, coca-cola, white bread and fish and chips of the big cities."; and when they return to visit "they infect the farm

workers with talk about politics and news of black strikes for higher wages."

Overall, distinct respondent preference for local black people and for the local race situation in general over other areas in the country is apparent. These preferences were typically accompanied by such references as one to the "restfulness and peace in our area as opposed to the burning and marching in the rest of the country."

HOMELANDS:

The creation of Black "homeland" states has also provided a refuge for workers who are either unable to find employment in the major urban centres (or are legally prevented from doing so) and who prefer a subsistence type existence in the "homelands" (where they are beyond the reach of white coercion) to working for available agricultural wages. This category of people proved a source of particular interest to respondents and found probable expression in the fact that 91.5% of respondents considered "laziness" to be one of the characteristics most applicable to blacks in South Africa. Discussions of the homeland policy of the government generally elicited some variant of a reference to blacks "sitting under a tree" in areas procured for them at the white taxpayers expense.

UNEMPLOYED FAMILIES LIVING ON FARMS.

Most respondents have large concentrations of unemployed black women and children and old men on their farms for whom they

nevertheless provide in the absence of younger able-bodied men who have departed for greener pastures of the towns. One of the respondents expressed the problem in these terms: "All the young men go away to work for the big mine bosses while we have to look after their families." This sentiment was articulated by a female respondent in the wake of having been called out late at night to assist with the birth of a Black woman's tenth child. Nearly 10% of the respondents referred to the presence of large numbers of "non-working blacks" as one of the four major problems on their farms. (See table D)

HIGH AGE, LOW EDUCATION:

The average of the male farmer in the Northwestern Transvaal Bushveld is 48, while 26,2% have eight years of schooling or less and 50,8% have ten years of schooling or less.

Studies of age and educational breakdowns for the Eastern Transvaal farmers as a whole are unavailable but the figures derived from the respondents in this area are:

average age: 41 years

Eight years of schooling or less: 3,2%

Ten years or less schooling: 26,9%.

These figures indicate a marked contrast between these two areas.

(See table E)

However as education increases, there is a narrowing of the gap between the two regions. At the educational level of a university degree the difference between the two groups is only

TABLE E

RESPONDENTS' EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

EDUCATION	N-W. TVL (N = 252)		E. TVL (N = 93)		N-W. & E. TVL (N=345)				ALL RESPONDENTS (N = 345)	
	COUNT	%	COUNT	%	COUNT	%	COUNT	%	COUNT	%
Sub a - St. 6	66	26,2	3	3,2	38	20,5	30	18,9	68	19,8
St. 7	15	6,0	1	1,1	10	5,4	6	3,8	16	4,7
St. 8	47	18,7	21	22,6	34	18,4	34	21,4	68	19,8
St. 9	7	2,8	4	4,3	6	3,2	5	3,1	11	3,2
St. 10	55	21,8	31	33,3	47	25,4	39	24,5	86	25,0
St. 10 and dip*	37	14,7	21	22,6	24	12,9	35	21,8	59	16,9
Univ. degree	25	9,9	12	12,9	26	14,0	11	6,9	37	10,8

* The majority of these diplomas are of a 1-2 year educational, technical or agricultural nature.

3% (10% and 13% respectively) -- a university degree rate that would compare favourable or perhaps surpass the rate in many other farming areas of SA.

But the common incidence of high age and generally low educational qualifications are counterproductive in the careful management, accounting and scientific techniques necessary for the modern farmer to survive economically.

Respondents, mainly in the Northwestern Transvaal, felt deprived in respect of almost all of the everyday facilities which are at the disposal of other sections of their fellow (white) citizens. Foremost among these are satisfactory schooling facilities for their children. Because of depopulation, many farm schools that cater for primary classes are constantly threatened with closure. Many Bushveld schools survive through the willingness of farmers to provide a home for orphans or welfare department children from urban areas in order to supplement school enrolments. In some of the larger primary schools which have hostel facilities these deprived children sometimes constitute up to 80% of the total number of pupils. Parents who are not prepared to place their very young children in boarding schools and who are too isolated to justify the provision of a school bus service, are then often compelled to travel long distances each day. The smaller outlying farm schools which sometimes have as few as forty pupils, also have difficulty in attracting young unmarried teachers who are put off by the loneliness and absence of amenities. A number of these schools, with which the writer became well acquainted, are dependent upon wives (some well past

retirement age) of local farmers to fill teaching vacancies, while pre-primary education facilities are non-existent. The only high schools are located in the larger rural towns and as a result almost all children of this age are weekly borders. This, in turn, serves as an additional drain on parents' time and money, with some parents having to travel 350 kms every week-end to fetch and return their children to school.

Respondents who are parents of young children perceive the worth of education in a competitive modern environment. In many cases, encountered by the writer, an awareness of this kind is made more acute by what is seen as an escalating and ultimately inevitable full-scale competition between black and white for employment opportunities.

When asked to express a preference between the educational situation in their own area compared to elsewhere, only 21,6% of the respondents in the Northwestern Transvaal favoured their own area. That a higher percentage (43,5%) of respondents in the Eastern Transvaal similarly favoured their own area, is attributable largely to the population stability of the area which has negated problems of this sort occasioned by depopulation in the Northwestern Transvaal. The Eastern Transvaal has many more large towns with commensurately more extensive amenities than the small farming villages of the Northwestern Transvaal Bushveld. In general terms, the economic and demographic situation in the Eastern Transvaal is more conducive to a stable educational structure.

RELIGION

Religion plays a significant and highly visible role in the lives of the respondents. (Nederduits Gereformeerd: 69,5%; Gereformeerd: 9,9%; Hervormd: 14,5% and other: 2,8%)

Only 3,5% of respondents stated no denominational affiliation.

Over 70% attend church services at least once every two weeks while under 5% seldom or never do so. About 50% of each group have to travel between 40 and 50 Kms to attend Sabbath services. Many respondents mentioned that were it not for the additional fuel expenses involved they would attend church more often. Nearly 80% of all respondents still indulge in a daily religious practice that most often involves listening to a short religious service over the radio and in fewer cases holding a family devotion in the form of a Bible reading, a prayer and sometimes the singing of a hymn. In almost every home grace is said before and after every meal.

It could be conjectured that religious influences have affected the relative stability of the respondent's family lives. Of the 345 respondents, 95,7% were married and 65,6% of the couples had three or more children while 33,8% had four or more. Of all the respondents only 1,7% had been divorced. It is therefore not surprising to find that when asked to exercise a preference between the quality of family life in their own rural environment as opposed to elsewhere, 91,8% of the respondents chose their own situation.

COMMUNITY LIFE AND PROBLEMS:

Only 14,9% of respondents in the Northwestern Transvaal are satisfied with health facilities in their area compared with 54,8% of the eastern Transvaal respondents. Deteriorating public services and lack of power-line electricity are seen by Northern Transvaal respondents as further impediments to the quality of life. Many post offices have shut on account of insufficient postal traffic and farmers either have to fetch mail from the nearest town or wait an unsatisfactorily long period on account of curtailed postal deliveries.

In an age of television, these farmers also feel deprived in respect of quality of reception, where reception indeed is possible at all. Respondents who have television sets (51,2% in the Northwestern Transvaal and 70,0% in the Eastern Transvaal) have to spend substantial sums of up to R1 500 on special reception-boosting equipment. The sense of deprivation among those respondents unable to acquire reasonable television reception needs to be seen in the context of the absence of other forms of evening entertainment within a reasonable distance. In one portion of the NW Transvaal, stretching for nearly 130 kms long and 60 kms wide and occupied by about 250 families, there are two tennis courts. These are located on the grounds of one of the large rural schools and are patronized by the more wealthy farmers who can afford the time and money involved. Some travel 50 kms for a game of tennis; for the rest no local alternative sporting amenities exist.

Depopulation in the Northwestern Transvaal has also led to a decrease or breakdown of regular inter-family visiting which had been the outlying farmers' traditional substitute for lack of other recreational facilities.

Most of the vacated land has gone to absentee farmers.

More attractive employment opportunities in non-agricultural sectors and the more intensive nature of modern farming, in conjunction with the unprofitability of farming (particularly in the Northwestern Transvaal), have all contributed to the dissolution of two-family (father and son) farming on one farm. Of the 179 farms visited during the research, only nine hosted father and son combinations. Legislation has also terminated the traditional inheritance practice of a father dividing his farm into a number of uneconomic units. All of these developments have in turn eroded intra-family cohesion and the social supportiveness which characterized the lives of earlier Afrikaner farming communities.

SECURITY SITUATION

All the respondents in this study are located on South Africa's frontiers. The larger group in the Northwestern Transvaal border on Botswana and the smaller group in the Eastern Transvaal border on Mozambique. The respondents are in the front lines of a country surrounded by politically hostile black states, whose public pronouncements make no secret of their determination to witness and assist the demise of white minority rule in South

Africa. (This paper was written before the accord of Nkomati.)

The strategic location of the farmers on South Africa's borders has been widely publicised in the pronouncements of prominent political and military leaders in the country. One South African general is actually on record as stating that the rural population holds the "key to the entire struggle" for "survival" in which the country is engaged. (25)

South African press reports have given regular and detailed coverage to security threats in the rural areas. The following type of front-page headlines are typical: "Police catch 170 terrorists." (26) "Terrorist weapons Seized" (27) "Vendaland is ideal hiding-place for terrorists" (28) "We must protect our border farms" (29) etc.

Press references to SA's border security problems have been given boosted emotive salience by South Africa's participation in the conflict on Namibia's northern borders. Insurgent attacks on white farms in this area receive extensive press publicity with few of the traumatic details spared (30)

Political spokesmen have echoed the military in expressing concern about the impact of white depopulation on the security situation in the border area.(31) Organised agriculture has also added its voice to stressing the "extremely important strategic role" played by border farmers. This theme has featured strongly in the appeals of farmers for official measures to assist the

economy of the border areas and so create conditions for white repopulation. (32)

Farming journals also give prominence to security issues, giving advice on defence and reporting incidents of insurgency. (33)

But how do the respondents who actually live in these areas perceive the situation? When the writer entered the field, informed by the common and broadly expressed concern for the security climate in the research areas, it was anticipated that the same concern would dominate the minds of the vast majority of respondents. In fact, the responses evoked negated this expectation. When asked whether they preferred the security situation in their own areas to that elsewhere in South Africa, 53,4% of the respondents as a whole chose their own areas while only 21,8% found the situation preferable in other areas. (24,8% were uncertain about their preferences.)

The corresponding figures for the Northwestern Transvaal and the Eastern Transvaal respondents were

	NW Tvl	Eastern Tvl
Prefer Own Area	46,2%	72,8%
Prefer other areas	23,9%	16,3%
Not sure	30,0%	10,9%

In another question respondents were given a list of nine factors which were hypothesized as having an unfavourable affect on the quality of their lives. See Table D.

In the case of the Northwestern Transvaal, 19,5% of the respondents selected the security situation from the list, while only 3,3% of those from the Eastern Transvaal did so. When the 14,2% of all respondents who selected the "security situation" is analysed in terms of sex, it is found that 22,3% of the females and 7,6% of the males specified the "security situation."

The main point to emerge from this summary of statistics is that the security issues occupy a relatively low-stated priority in the minds of the respondents. To the extent that security anxieties exist, they appear to be decidedly more pronounced among respondents of the Northwestern Transvaal than those of the Eastern Transvaal, while females are more prone to security concerns than males.

The regional differences were surprising because Eastern Transvaal respondents border directly on Mozambique which has afforded a South African headquarters to the African National Congress which is committed to the revolutionary overthrow of the present power structure in South Africa.

The explanation probably lies in the fact that the white depopulation of the Northwestern Transvaal border area in combination with its extensive cattle ranching economy has left these areas sparsely populated by whites in contrast with an absence of depopulation and the mixed more intensive nature of smaller farming operations in the Eastern Transvaal.

The writer's field experiences and in particular his contacts

with key informants indicate, however, that answers to security related questions on the part of many respondents should not be taken at face value. Discussion of security issues, especially with outsiders, is unpopular among border farmers. In many instances, reference to this topic would be met with the response: "We are much safer than you people in the cities", or "I am not at all scared of the terrorists" or "Terrorism is not a factor here. This is the most peaceful part of the country. Just compare our situation with the bombs and rioting in the rest of the country."

Those who argue in this manner may simply be indulging in a form of anxiety or fear repression. They do not want to abandon their farms. It may also be noted that 94,2% of the respondents replied in the affirmative to the question: "Would you say that whatever the problems you may be experiencing in your area you would still nevertheless prefer your present life to a life in a city?" In prevailing and anticipated circumstances the propensity to rationalize and repress anxieties about security problems may be required for psychological survival.

The border farmers are also conscious of the fact that the association which is popularly made between the term "border area" and insurgency, does not augur well for the economic development and desired white population of these areas. The border farmers, especially in the Northwestern Transvaal, have made concerted attempts to persuade the government to invest large sums of money in the upliftment of their areas and they

realise that this money is unlikely to be forthcoming if it appears that they will vacate their farms as a direct result of security problems. Farmers in both of the research areas of this have already experienced difficulty in their dealings with private financial institutions, who have been hesitant to grant loans against the security of border farmland.

At this stage a "Let's-wait-and-see; What-else-can-we-do?" attitude probably best characterizes general security perceptions.

In the meantime, all respondents have equipped their homes with radio communication and most have large and ferocious dogs.

They use their elected agricultural and political representatives to press for added security measures in their areas. These include stepping up of patrols on international borders, the stationing of soldiers in the border areas during their national service; grants for protective farm house installations such as security fencing; added security for school buses; the tarring of roads as an impediment to land mines and aided-settlement schemes for ex-Rhodesian farmers who are experienced in bush-war conditions.

Concern has also been articulated about the security implications of absentee landlord ownership of vast tracts of land in the Northwestern Transvaal. Such landowners have long been a source

of aggravation to the bona fide resident farmers. The former are usually wealthy professional people who purchase farming land with a view to capital appreciation and as an inflation hedge and /or in order to avoid taxation on their large professional incomes.

Demand for available farming land, swelled by the market interest of professional people, has had the effect of driving land prices up to levels which ordinary farmers can rarely match. (34) As a result of the absentee landlord factor, prospective young farmers find it difficult or impossible to enter farming. (35)

From the security viewpoint, key informant respondents in the Northwestern Transvaal noted that absentee landowners further deprive the community of able-bodied (white) men able to do their share of local commando duties. That farms are left entirely under the supervision of black foremen for lengthy stretches without "any control" was also a source of security concern to respondents.

During the field research for this study the PROMOTION OF THE DENSITY OF POPULATION IN DESIGNATED AREAS ACT (Act 87 of 1979) was promulgated. In a published statement, the Deputy Minister of Agriculture announced that this Act was necessary in order that "Depopulation should be countered in certain strategically situated areas." (36) This Act is, in reality, exclusively concerned with measures to promote the inflow of whites. To this end provision is made in the Act for exceedingly favourable

financial assistance to farmers who are located in, or who move to areas designated by the government. (37) The first such designation took place in February 1983 and referred to an area approximately 50 kms inland from South Africa's borders with Botswana and Zimbabwe and 30 kms inland from the Mozambique border. (38)

LABOUR RELATIONS

The shortage of black labour experienced by farmers in this study is relevant not only to understanding the economic climate in which they live, but also illuminates and carries implications, as typified by the following response: "As a result of the shortage of labourers no employer ('baas') can any longer afford to treat his labourers in any way that is other than decent and conciliatory. We farmers are dependent on them and the blacks know it only too well. It requires a fine sense of diplomacy in order to recruit labourers, to keep them and then to get a day's work out of them."

Harshness and physical assault of black workers by farmers, which may well have been found in earlier periods, was not observed. On the contrary, inter-face relations with workers were generally characterized by behaviour ranging from friendly paternalism to coldness and an authoritarian indifference. In the main, manifestation of such behaviour patterns was usually a function of the general personality of the respondent involved. If a respondent was a friendly, outgoing or jovial person in relationships with whites he would tend to replicate these characteristics in dealings with his black workers. If on the

other hand, a respondent was generally reserved or unfriendly, these traits would also filter into relationships with black employees. Even the latter group of respondents, in the writer's experience, rarely shouted at or verbally abused their workers.

In one such observed case, a black worker evoked a torrent of abuse after smashing his employer's vehicle. On another occasion a black worker suffered a similar fate after using his employer's tractor, without permission, to visit friends (after the tractor had had to be towed in for repairs following a breakdown.) This was, in fact, the second occasion on which the worker had used the tractor without permission. That this worker's services were nevertheless retained is significant testimony to the dependence of respondents on a limited supply of labour. The handful of physical assaults on blacks of which the writer was informed by respondents, were apparently attributable to situations in which the farmer had lost control in the face of what he saw as unbearable provocation. In one case, a respondent in discussing relations with his black workers, mentioned that they in fact constituted his only companions. He collaboratively laboured with them all day long and in his view, life would be miserable were relationships characterized by unremitting tension and enmity. He regretted having to admit, however, that on one occasion he had lost his temper and beaten up one of his worker who had got drunk and neglected to water his cattle for a serious length of time.

Infrequency of gross behaviour towards black workers is probably further related to warnings from the authorities to the farmers that in any deteriorating security-situation, their safety will heavily depend on worker willingness to co-operate in anti-insurgency strategy. When the respondents were asked to describe relations with black workers, 54,5% said they were "very good" while 39,9% said that they were "satisfactory." Only 4,7% characterized relations with black workers as "unsatisfactory" or "very bad."

As far as those percentage breakdowns are concerned, there was hardly any difference between respondents from the two regions.

Those respondents who felt that their relations with their black workers were satisfactory or very good were then asked to indicate to what they ascribed this situation. In a breakdown of reasons advanced, 41,9% of the respondents ascribed the satisfactory relationships to the fact that they treated their workers well and fairly. These respondents usually volunteered how, for example, they tended to the health of their workers, made certain that they had sufficient to eat, listened sympathetically to problems or how they did not expect their workers to work any harder than they themselves were prepared to do.

Another section (36,3%) of the respondents singled out the fact that they understood the black man's language and traditions and that this knowledge of the "Black mentality" enabled them to

apply a psychological strategy whereby they could empathise with (and make allowances for) the problems and failings of their workers.

Interestingly 12,4% of respondents focussed on their recognition of the need to respect the black man's "dignity as a human being".

FOOTNOTES.

1. Human, P and Smedley, L. QUALITY OF LIFE IN SOUTH AFRICA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE URBAN BLACKS, in SOUTH AFRICAN JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY. Vol 20, 1979, p.67.
2. RSA FINALE VERSLAG VAN DIE WERKSKOMITEE INSAKE DIE EKONOMIESE POSISIE VAN DIE BOER EN LANDBOUFINANSIERING IN DIE ALGEMEEN. ISBN 0621053589, 1979 p.4 Hereafter referred to as RSA FINALE VERSLAG.
3. All this is spelt out comprehensively in the doctoral thesis from which this paper is drawn.
4. Author's personal estimate based on observation and interviews with farmers and agricultural officials.
5. Transvaalse Landbou-Unie, LANDBOU — DEEL VAN 'N GROTER GESIN, Kongresverslag, 1978. p13.
6. RSA VERSLAG VAN DIE KOMITEE VAN ONDERSOEK NA LANDELIKE HERVORMING DEEL I ISBN 0621034827, 1979, p138. (Hereafter referred to as RSA VERSLAG LANDELIK)
7. RSA Statistical News Release, 16 Sept, 1980. pp 5 - 7
8. RSA VERSLAG LANDELIK See Footnote 6. p149 and RSA Statistical News Release, Sept 16 1980 pp 5 - 7.
9. Personal estimate based on observation and interviews with farmers and agricultural officials.
10. Louw, A Die Effek van Inflasie op die Landbouonderneming, in DYNAMICA. No 22, 1980 p 20
11. Ibid p 20
12. Ibid p 19 and RSA FINALE VERSLAG p 4
13. RSA FINALE VERSLAG p 4
14. Ibid pp 44 -- 45
15. Van Zyl, B.C 'N EKONOMIESE ONTLEDING VAN BOERDERY IN DIE NOORD-WES TRANSWAALSE BOSVELD Dept Agricultural Economics and Marketing, 1979, pp 21 - 23
16. RSA VERSLAG LANDELIK p 147 and Du Toit, JFP DIE MAKRO EKONOMIESE STRUKTUUR VAN DIE OOS TRANSWAALSE LAEVELD. Unpublished MSc dissertation, University of Pretoria. passim
17. Calculated from VERSLAG LANDELIK pp 124 -- 142
18. Calculated from VERSLAG LANDELIK pp 133 - 147
19. Ibid p 323
20. Ibid p 313

21. RSA POPULATION CENSUS 1970 Report No 02-03-01
22. Lubbe, W F, EKSTENSIWE BEESBOERDERY QUO VADIS? Paper delivered at "Diereproduksievereniging" symposium, Pretoria 16th July, 1980. p 14
23. Ibid P 14
24. Lipton, M White Farming: A Case study of Change in SA. in JOURNAL OF COMMONWEALTH AND COMPARATIVE POLITICS, Vol 12, 1975 p.46
25. The Star. 4 Sept 4 1979.
26. Transvaler, 21st Sept 1979.
27. Rand Daily Mail. February 24, 1979.
28. Vaderland 15Sept 1979.
29. Pretoria News, 28th Feb 1980
30. e.g. Stories in Rapport, May 13 1979 on the death of two babies bayonnetted to death.
31. DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS IN THE TRANSCVAAL PROVISIONAL COUNCIL. VOL 180. Feb 20 — 21, 1979
32. e.g. Landbouweekblad Vol 59, No 47. 24th November, 1978. pp 13 - 14. and Farmers Weekly, 14th November 1979. pp 37 - 43
33. Coetzee, J J DIE LANDBOU POTENSIAAL VAN DIE NOORDWES TRANSCVAAL SOETBOSVELD. p 140.
34. Van Zyl B C 'N EKONOMIESE ONTLEDING VAN BOERDERY IN DIE NOORD-WES TRANSCVAALSE BOSVELD. Dept Agricultural Economics and Marketing, 1979 p 15.
35. RSA Department of Information Press Release. December 6th, 1979.
36. Sect 4 PROMOTION OF THE DENSITY OF POPULATION IN DESIGNATED AREAS ACT (No 87 of 1979)
37. RSA Govt Gazette 11.2.83. Proclamation No R15, 1983

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