

Apartheid urban development and transitional restructuring in Pietersburg and environs

RONNIE DONALDSON AND IZAK VAN DER MERWE•

1. Introduction

The adverse effect of segregation and the later separate development policies of apartheid on Pietersburg and its surrounding towns will be difficult to rectify.¹ Together with the ideology of developing separate living spaces for separate ethnic groups, territorial restructuring occurred through the development of new towns in the proclaimed homeland of Lebowa. These provided the city with both a labour force and consumers. Within a radius of 60 kilometres of Pietersburg four proclaimed towns were developed. The purposes of this socially-engineered dispersed settlement pattern were manifold. Firstly, black and white population groups were separated. Secondly, black tribal groups of the Sotho ethnic group were separated from one another. Thirdly, different skills were kept separate from each other in that a university town (Mankweng) was developed solely for the educationally advanced, and a homeland capital (Lebowakgomo) for the bureaucratic elite and as an industrial growth point. An industrial growth point and township (Seshego), that bordered the city, provided it with a working class labour

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- Dr. S.E. Donaldson is a senior lecturer in human geography at the Mamelodi Campus of Vista University. His most recent publications are based on his doctoral study focussing on urban restructuring in Pietersburg during transition. He is currently researching contemporary urban change in South Africa and is also investigating urban conservation in Pretoria. Prof. I.J. Van der Merwe is Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Stellenbosch. Some of his most recent publications are as co-author investigating urban restructuring in Pietersburg.
 - 1. The authors gratefully acknowledge Vista University and the CSD for financial assistance, and Elsje van Rheede van Oudtshoorn for drawing the map.

force. Lastly, the dormitory town of Sebayeng, that would provide Mankweng and Pietersburg with a labour force, was also developed. The anticipated urban growth and development failed to materialise in these homeland towns. By contrast, the city of Pietersburg has shown considerable progress in all facets of urban growth (for example GGP contribution, population size, number of economic activities, and number of building plans approved).

The aims of this paper are threefold. Firstly, to outline the apartheid legacy of the development of a dispersed settlement system around Pietersburg. Secondly, to briefly describe the post-apartheid local government restructuring of Pietersburg. Thirdly, to debate the above findings in the context of restructuring the Pietersburg boundary after transition.

2. The apartheid legacy: grand apartheid consequences for Pietersburg and environs

2.1 The homeland legacy

The enactment of the Bantu Authorities Act no 68 of 1951 heralded an ideology of separate development, known as grand apartheid.² Settlements in the former homelands were planned according to three categories. The first category comprised agricultural settlements of between twenty and a thousand houses in rural areas. The second category covered denser settlements where blacks were resettled as family units on one-fifth of a hectare. The third category comprised black towns.³

Deliberate attempts to curb black urbanisation, both through legislation such as the influx control measures and through various regional development plans to check black migration to the white urban core, have been debated within the framework of the dependency paradigm.⁴ The rationale of the then government's regional development policies was essentially racist and these policies did not achieve the concomitant economic goals at which they were aimed. After 1956, when the National Party government launched a programme to encourage industrial decentralisation, aimed primarily at homeland border areas, numerous policy documents were formulated. The National Physical Development Plan in the 1970's and the later Good Hope Plan of the 1980's did little, if anything, to achieve

2. A.J. CHRISTOPHER, *The Atlas of Apartheid* (WUP, Johannesburg, 1994), p. 66.

3. T. MALAN and P.S. HATTINGH, *Black Homelands in South Africa* (Africa Institute of SA, Pretoria, 1976).

4. J.D. FAIR, "The national physical development plan (NPDP): a summary and a review" in *South African Geographical Journal* 57(2), 1982, pp. 126-134.

Historia, 45(1), May 2000, pp. 118-34.

concrete economic and political results.⁵ The Good Hope Plan of the 1980's, which was intended to restructure the space economy through regional development, culminated in the creation of development regions – incorporating homelands – which eventually led to the scrapping of influx control measures.

Settlement types that emerged within homeland areas during the apartheid era included self-contained towns for workers in homeland border industries, towns within the frontier territory for migrant workers' families, black spots, and areas of controlled squatting. The outcomes of the political economy, as seen by Soni and Maharaj,⁶ sum up the manifestation of spatial changes in urban form:

The inability to reproduce life in bantustans, for example, is resulting in a series of reconcentrations of people which have important implications for the nature of urbanisation in South Africa. The following trends are evident: (i) rural dumping grounds and slums are being extended (for example Sada and Limehill); (ii) displaced urban settlements continue to grow rapidly (for example Botshabelo); (iii) squatter settlements abutting major urban areas now exhibit some of the fastest rates of urban growth anywhere in the world (for example Durban); and (iv) urban areas such as Hillbrow are 'greying' as the pressure on urban space increases.

The spatial development legacy of the South African city network, regional planning, and the apartheid city form and the repercussions thereof during reconstruction, transformation and restructuring

have led to the emergence of a widely-dispersed polycentric (or multi-centred) city form. This means – in spatial terms – [the emergence of] several employment cores and various peripheral settlements. The new form, in fact, exhibits a general blurring of the long-held distinction between urban core and urban periphery.... [T]he forces causing the demise of the apartheid city have operated alongside – and strengthened – the movement away from the monocentric city. The result is a recast urban form and a new style of urban life, spread across the city and spanning its social and economic dimensions.⁷

As was explained above, neither Seshego, nor Mankweng, nor Lebowakgomo would have developed as proclaimed towns had it not been for the apartheid development policies of the previous government. A displaced settlement pattern is the result of social engineering. This pattern is a mirror image of other black

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5. See the discussions by I.J. VAN DER MERWE, "In search of an urbanisation policy for SA: towards a secondary city strategy" in *Geographical Research Forum*, 10(4),1992, pp. 102-127; D. DEWAR, A. TODES and V. WATSON, "Industrial decentralisation policy" in *SA*, 23, 1986, pp 263-376. D.J. BOS, "Prospects for the development of intermediate size cities as part of the decentralisation programme for South Africa" in *Development Southern Africa*, 6, 1989, pp. 58-81 for a literature review and a summary of important points and criticisms of the space economy.) Why these policies failed is beyond the scope of this paper.
 6. D. SONI and B. MAHARAJ, "Emerging urban forms in rural South Africa" in *Antipode* 23(1), 1991, pp. 47-67.
 7. REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, Urban Development Strategy of the Government of National Unity. *Government Gazette*, 365(16679), Notice 1111 of 1995, p 19).

homeland towns that developed as border-homeland townships.⁸

2.2 Lebowa and its ethnic towns around Pietersburg

It is to the Bantu Authorities Act that Lebowa owes its creation and short-lived political existence as a homeland for the Northern Sotho people. It was declared a self-governing area on 2 October 1972. At the time of declaration, the interim capital was located in Seshego. The first seven towns in Lebowa had already been established in 1962. Within the next thirteen years (1962 – 74) this number increased to seventeen.⁹ The level of infrastructure and services varied. By the mid-1970's, however, three principal, serviced satellite towns of Pietersburg had emerged, even though there were four proclaimed towns. (*See Figure 1.*) It is worth noting that the urban focus of the Lebowa homeland would centre on these three towns: Lebowakgomo (capital and administrative centre), Mankweng (university town) and Seshego (homeland 'border township'). The fourth town was Sebayeng, primarily a dormitory town.

The three towns experienced similar evolutionary phases. The euphoric phase (1960-1980) was characterised by the joy of being awarded some sense of sovereignty. A great deal of capital was spent by the apartheid government on developing the towns through the creation of infrastructure and the provision of housing. The second phase occurred when the apartheid regime withdrew – to some extent – its direct influence (1981-1990). Officials and administrators were corrupt and mismanaged the homelands.¹⁰ Industrial growth points failed to develop and lack of expertise and capacity for enhancing an agglomeration economy contributed to a phase of decay and economic degeneration. Finally, the demise of apartheid created a period of uncertainty and stagnation (1991-1994), during which the homelands became involved in multi-party negotiations. The phase of reconstruction and development started after the 1994 general election. This phase prepared the towns for restructuring, together with their apartheid sister city Pietersburg, during the next phase of transformation and transition.

8. For example, Mdantsane. (T.J. GORDON, *Mdantsane – city, satellite or suburb?*. (MA, Rhodes University, 1978), Umtata (D. DEWAR, *Planning for the rural-Development Bank of Southern Africa*, Policy working paper 9, 1994) and Mmbatho (M.L. MOSADI, "Mmabatho: the changing face of a South African city" in R.J. DAVIES (Ed.), *Contemporary city structuring*. (Federal Business Communications, Cape Town, 1996), pp. 174-188.

9. T. MALAN and P.S. HATTINGH, *Black homelands in South Africa*, p. 182.

10. See M.H. KANYANE, *Corruption in South Africa with specific reference to former Lebowa and Gazankulu governments*. (MA Unin, 1997).

Historia, 45(1), May 2000, pp. 118-34.

Figure 1: Location of the four proclaimed Lebowa homeland towns within a radius of 50km from Pietersburg

The establishment of infrastructure and housing in the towns was originally (successfully) financed by the South African Bantu Trust. The Department of Works later took over the role of the homeland government. The type of housing

provision and regulations (site and services, home loans for the more affluent, and employers' housing schemes) varied, and a substantial number of houses were built in the three towns. Between 1970 and 1980, 2 308 houses were built in Seshego, while 561 new houses were built in Mankweng during the same period. Lebowakgomo developed as a new town in the mid-1970's and by 1980 a total of 1 250 houses had been built. Numerous tribal villages existed alongside these proclaimed towns. Certain problems identified by Cloete,¹¹ that were inherent in this so-called informal urbanisation and which are relevant to the study area, include the following: no provision of essential services and an unproductive use of large tracts of farm land. These problems are still evident today. Many tribal chiefs have used the control of land allocation vested in them to enrich themselves.

The Government's policy of establishing border-townships resulted in daily 'cross-border' travel by commuters. Workers could travel as much as 120 kilometres in one direction daily before it might adversely affect their productivity. No rail network serviced the three dispersed entities, and so commuters relied primarily on bus transport. Initially, this service was subsidised from the Bantu transport levy fund in terms of the Bantu Transport Services Act, no 53 of 1957 as amended in 1972.¹² The artificial urban development process resulted in a dispersed settlement pattern with a dominant core (Pietersburg) attracting commuters from the periphery. 'Major' prospective developments in the homelands had been (included) in town planning and capital was available for a proliferation of new (or newly-expanded) homeland towns. A threefold urban typology and transport mode emerged.¹³ One was a daily urban system. Apartheid transport planners had envisaged new commuter zones within a radius of up to 150 kilometres from the core, in which blacks would commute to white employment areas from their homeland urban residential or dormitory towns. A second urban typology was a weekly urban system for residents of so-called dumping grounds, closer settlements or third order settlements, who commuted up to 800 kilometres per week to work. A third urban typology encompassed growth centres from where residents would seek work at manufacturing nodes, such as those in capital cities. Decentralisation, aimed at initiating and enhancing industrial development and deconcentration in homeland or border-homeland towns, failed dismally, not only because the basis for development was politically inclined, but also because of the general lack of initiative and the corruption and nepotism of homeland leadership.¹⁴

11. F. CLOETE, *Towns and cities: Their government and administration* (JL Van Schaik, Pretoria, 1986), p. 9.

12. T. MALAN and P.S. HATTINGH, *Black Homelands in South Africa*, p. 68.

13. C.M. ROGERSON, "New towns in the bantu homelands" in *Geographical Review*, 64(4) (1974), pp. 579-582.

14. See M.H. KANYANE, *Corruption in South Africa with specific reference to former Lebowa and Gazankulu governments*. (MA Unin, 1997).

Historia, 45(1), May 2000, pp. 118-34.

The homeland regional development strategy followed in the 1960's and 1970's embraced an urbanisation process designed to develop numerous smaller places rather than a few growth centres. It became evident, however, that the establishment of this highly fragmented and dispersed settlement pattern was illogical, and that the development of fewer towns would have been preferable. This initial approach, then, changed to growth point and deconcentration point development. Criteria used for the identification of decentralisation points were location, town age, and the period for which incentives had been granted.¹⁵ Lebowakgomo and Seshego were identified as industrial points. During the 1980's, industrial decentralisation became a prominent feature of these towns, particularly with regard to the clothing and textile industry.¹⁶

Despite the incentives offered, however, Pietersburg remained the preferred location for establishing industry. Data available for the three periods 1984/5, 1985/6 and 1986/7 shows that there were twice as many approved applications for industrial development in Pietersburg as in Lebowakgomo and Seshego combined. Over this entire period (1984-87) 105 applications were approved in Pietersburg as opposed to 48 in the two homeland towns. The failure to attract industry to Lebowakgomo may be attributed to the fact that Seshego is located nearer to Pietersburg than Lebowakgomo. Apartheid architects also expected that most employment opportunities would be created in Pietersburg/Seshego. Industrial Pietersburg drew its labour from its homeland hinterland, so that between 1974 and 1987 the black labour force increased by 4 313 workers. So too, the number of industries grew from 72 in 1972 to 177 in 1987: 105 new industries were established during these 19 years. No specification is made, however, as to what industry types these were. Initially, the 1970's saw the number of industries remain constant, perhaps because at that time new industries were also being developed in the other two towns (Lebowakgomo and Seshego). But the failure of industry to grow in the homeland towns contributed to a sharp increase in the location of industry in Pietersburg during the 1980's.

The failure of regional development policies,¹⁷ in Seshego and Lebowakgomo can be ascribed to numerous causes. Too many development points led to the dilution of investment and limited agglomeration. Industrial points were also unfavourably positioned and the high costs involved in setting up industry could not be justified

15. D. DEWAR, A. TODES and V. WATSON, "Industrial decentralisation policy" in *SA*, 23, 1986, p. 365.

16. VAN STRATEN & PARTNERS, Planning for the Mankweng and Sekgosese region of Lebowa: first phase report - evaluation investigation. Report prepared for Department of Development Aid (1988).

17. See E.L. NEL, "Democracy, reconstruction, and changing local and regional economic planning in South Africa" in *Regional Development Dialogue*, 15(1), 1994, pp.102-118.

economically. Examples of success could be attributed to the generosity of incentives and not to the industrial economy. Misappropriation of incentives resulted in low multipliers, and the development of essential linkages with Pietersburg did not materialise.

The proclaimed towns in Lebowa fell under the jurisdiction of the Department of Home Affairs. These towns never developed into fully-fledged municipalities nor did they have in place any significant local government organisational structure. Towns had only a superintendent, and no councillors. This inhibited development planning because no efficient, democratic or transparent structure existed at grassroots level to co-ordinate the process. Separate development committees instituted in 1987 comprised the following: representatives of various government departments, representatives of the Lebowa Development Corporation, two members of a local chamber of commerce, and two members of each local authority in the district. The overriding factor of dependency dominated the underlying economic dynamic of homeland development within the South African economy. This is manifested in employment in 'South Africa'. The inadequate development of commercial sectors in Lebowan towns has been attributed to a massive leakage of purchasing power from Lebowa – in 1984/5, for example, households spent 59 per cent of their budgets outside Lebowa.¹⁸

As a consequence of uncontrolled urbanisation and lack of proper urban management, urban expansion (Table 1) has occurred most dramatically in the three former homeland towns. The greatest expansion has been observed in Mankweng, with 189 per cent increase in the built-up area between 1983-97. Pietersburg, although larger in extent, has only grown by 70 per cent; of this, a large proportion of the built-up area is on the north-western side where industries have developed. The other area of expansion – to the east – is where low-middle income residential development has taken place since 1994 to accommodate the influx of black residents. Lebowakgomo's growth is attributed to informal dwelling expansion.¹⁹

TOWN/CITY	AREA		Actual increase	PERCENTAGE URBAN EXPANSION
	1980	1997		

18. VAN STRATEN & PARTNERS, Planning for the Mankweng and Sekgosese region of Lebowa: first phase report - evaluation investigation. Report prepared for Department of Development Aid (1988).

19. J.H. BOTHA and S.E. DONALDSON, "Viewing apartheid planning from above: contemporary urban restructuring in Pietersburg" in RSS'98: developing international connections conference proceedings.(Harlen Printing, Kent 1998), p 507.

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	Ha	Ha	(Ha)	
LEBOWKAGOMO	366,9	804,2	437,3	119%
MANKWENG	251,3	726,9	475,6	189%
PIETERSBURG	1 737,3	2 953,3	1 216,0	70%
SESHEGO	1 264,5	2 741,1	1 476,6	117%

Table 1: Actual area and percentage built-up area expansion between 1983-97

After the negotiated settlement was reached during the transition to a non-racial and unified South African political territory, Seshego was incorporated into Pietersburg as part of the Pietersburg/Polokwane TLC. Lebowakgomo and Mankweng, however, remained excluded from integration into the urban complex, despite recommendations by a town and regional report on the future direction of development in the province after apartheid.

3. Local government restructuring during transition (1990's)

3.1 Transitional restructuring

The changing nature of South Africa's political system since 1990 has had a direct impact on local government systems. The failure of apartheid is most evident at this level of governance, where most urban areas were separated into different sub-systems such as a white local authority, a Coloured management committee, an Indian management committee, and a Black local authority. Cities such as Pietersburg which straddle homeland boundaries have had particularly difficult transformation challenges imposed on them during this period of political transition. Eight problematic areas are: a tension between own affairs and general affairs, areas of jurisdiction, informal settlements including dense settlements under tribal authority, empowerment, the inadequate training and qualifications of homeland officials and councillors, bankruptcy and mismanaged local government finances, weaknesses of RSC's, and the process of local government transformation.²⁰ The negotiations at national level that led to the Local Government Transition Act (LGTA) for the pre-interim and interim periods will

20. S. BEKKER, "Cities straddling homeland boundaries" in J. SWILLING, M. HUMPHRIES, R. and K. SHUBANE (Eds.), *Apartheid City in Transition* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1991), pp. 108-118.

not be discussed here.²¹ It is, however, important to note that this negotiation process was taking place concurrently with the multi-party Negotiating Council (CODESA). It was agreed that structures seeking membership of this Local Government Negotiation Forum (LGNF) should

(be) nationally constituted, be a stakeholder in local government (or motivate its particular interest in local government), and be a part of either the statutory or non-statutory delegations... Political parties, women's organisations, business groups and regionally based organisations were therefore excluded from the negotiations.²²

Two broad groupings were present: governmental (local government bodies, provincial municipal associations, etc.) and non-governmental organisations under the banner of the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO). The LGTA was thoroughly negotiated at this level and, by way of debates in the press, in various forums and at public meetings.²³

Within the boundaries of the Northern Province (the then Region G) four distinct political administrative entities existed, all of which were directly responsible to parliament and which have since been financed from the Revenue Fund of the Central Government. One of these was the Transvaal Provincial Administration that had functioned since 1986 as an extension of Central Government to the second tier level. A second comprised the self-governing territories of Lebowa and Gazankulu, which were constituted in terms of the National States' Constitution Act. They had a Legislative Assembly, Cabinets and executive departments. A third entity was the 'independent' Republic of Venda, but internationally only the South African government regarded Venda as a sovereign independent state. Lastly, by 1990 many structures also existed at local government level. These included Local Authorities outside the homelands comprising town councils, coloured and Indian Management Committees, Black Local authorities, a Transvaal Board on local government affairs, and Regional Services Councils (RSCs). Within the homelands, the only forms of local government at the third tier level were Tribal and/or Community Authorities and Regional Authorities. The functioning and performance of duties at the second tier governmental level had been highly fragmented by disparate policies, and the fact that certain components were not financially viable, because of their artificiality, prevented a single economic system

21. See for example the discussions of J.J.N. CLOETE, *Local Government Transformation in South Africa* (JL van Schaik, Pretoria, 1995); J. ROBINSON, "Transforming spaces: spatiality and the transformation of local government in South Africa Structuring" in *Federal Business Communications* (Cape Town, 1996), pp. 333-354.

22. J. ROBINSON, "Transforming spaces: spatiality and the transformation of local government in South Africa Structuring" in *Federal Business Communications* (Cape Town, 1996), p 341.

23. F. CLOETE, *Towns and cities: Their government and administration*, p. 4. *Historia*, 45(1), May 2000, pp. 118-34.

from developing.²⁴

3.2 Creation of a Negotiation Forum for Pietersburg

Practically, local government restructuring was realised through the establishment of negotiating forums. These forums and demarcation boards were the creation of the Local Government Transitional Act.²⁵ In terms of the LGTA, 1993 (Act 209 of 1993), a Local Government Forum had to be established for Pietersburg and its segregated black township, Seshego, and any other such areas which were historically and economically bound to the city. In accordance with the negotiated settlement style of politics, characteristic of the South African transition to democracy, all interested political parties, bodies or individuals were invited, via the media, to attend the inaugural public meeting of what was initially referred to as the Pietersburg/Seshego Negotiating Forum, held on 2 March 1994.²⁶ In addition to the advertisement, the town clerk invited other individuals and bodies, such as Lebowa government representatives, to attend the historic meeting. Sixty-two people attended and these included, in addition to those listed above, representatives from rural local government areas historically bound to Pietersburg, such as Mankweng, Mashashane, Matlala, Moletsie, and Dalmada. Lebowakgomo, the third dispersed satellite of Pietersburg, was not asked to participate as it was felt that it was not functionally part of the city.

It was the first time in the city's history that the ANC and other former liberation movements and organisations had assembled with white right-wing parties. The AWB, however, tried to obstruct and intimidate the meeting with ill-considered action in that 'meer as 'n honderd gewapende en soms aggressiewe lede van die AWB (het) 'n paar rye in die saal volgepak'.²⁷ The fate of previously defended spaces was now determined by skilled negotiators, and not by dominance through force and racial prejudice. After approximately eighteen consecutive meetings, and by a two-thirds majority of its members, the Negotiation Forum for Pietersburg/Polokwane – as it was known by then – reached a final consensus and an agreement was signed late in September 1994.²⁸ The following section discusses the important categories negotiated.

24. DE VILLIERS & PARTNERS, Towards a coherent development strategy. Region G Regional Liaison Committee, Pietersburg, 1991, p. 65.

25. Elections Task Group, Local Government Elections in South Africa 1995/1996. Secretariat Local Government. ETG, Pretoria, 1996, p. 33; F. CLOETE, *Towns and cities: Their government and administration*, p. 4.

26. *Noord Transvaler*, 1994/2/18, p. 1.

27. *Northern Review*, 1994/3/11, p.1.

28. *Northern Review*, 1994/9/30, p. 3.

3.3 Forum boundaries and amalgamation

Functions of the Negotiation Forum included making recommendations to the administrator on forum boundaries and the demarcation of wards for the election, as well as the naming of the transitional council, while other negotiated duties included the delimitation of the area of jurisdiction. The administrator, however, made the final decision on boundaries. Recommendations had to be submitted to him by the forum, the interim councils, and the Demarcation Board. Rural areas could have been incorporated into urban areas if the above criteria had been adhered to. The Pietersburg/Polokwane Negotiation Forum never considered incorporating adjacent rural tribal areas that were inherently within the functional area of the city. The complexity of including tribal chiefs in a 'western' style of governance, and not economic, cultural, or civil grounds, was used as the reason for territorial division. The media reported that the Negotiation Forum reached its decision on the jurisdiction boundary by using the following criteria: economic interdependence, local commuter patterns, trade and industry linkages, and the historic relationship between Pietersburg and Seshego.²⁹ However, the functional boundary of Pietersburg was ignored and only political aspects were considered. Urban restructuring during transformation from apartheid relied thus predominantly on consensus and reaching agreement without major conflict, albeit in certain areas only.

3.4 Amalgamation of Pietersburg and Seshego

Once a two-thirds majority had agreed to form a Transitional Local Council (on 24 September 1994), the agreement was adopted and submitted to the Premier a few days later. Adoption of the submission meant that the restructuring process had achieved what had until then been unattainable, namely the creation of a new urban identity through the adoption of a new name – Pietersburg/Polokwane TLC. Practical transitional measures on which the parties had to reach consensus covered general restructuring through amalgamation. The winding up or transfer of the assets, rights, and liabilities of the current Seshego local government body to the Transitional Local Council, and the supply of services, including any subsidies, also had to be arranged. The transfer and admission of employees to the 'new' TLC, with the continued application of existing resolutions, by-laws and regulations of the current local government bodies, also had to be provided for. Restructuring resulted in the termination of the terms of office of those Council members not appointed as members of the TLC.³⁰ This effectively ended white local governance in the city once and for all. The procedure followed after the Demarcation Board had evaluated the written representation from

29. *Northern Review*, 1994/9/30, p. 3.

30. PIETERSBURG MUNICIPAL ARCHIVES, 12/3/3/5/3 - Vol. 7. *Historia*, 45(1), May 2000, pp. 118-34.

Pietersburg/Polokwane TLC was to submit it to the Premier/MEC.

In the Northern Province, twelve urban local authority areas of jurisdiction were proclaimed. Pietersburg was effectively proclaimed in the Provincial Gazette on 16 January 1995.³¹ Five external factors were to be taken into consideration with the demarcation of boundaries at the local government level, for it was argued by the then Transvaal Provincial Administration that the restructuring of Local Government was politically sensitive. To reduce and/or eliminate resistance, the amalgamation of two or more local governments in a new transitional structure – through forums – had to take cognisance of economic linkages and politically sensitive situations. All discriminatory legislation and institutions were to be abolished. People's fears – for example, of being dominated by a majority and the effect on their property valuations – had to be addressed. Local Government Demarcation Boards were given the task of identifying optimal areas of jurisdiction in defining metropolitan councils, metropolitan substructures and local councils with the primary aim of preparing and equipping civil society for the first non-racial local government election, scheduled for 1 November 1995. The aim was to create financially viable, larger, non-racial local government areas, and to guide the integration of functional areas.³² This resulted in a few surprising delimitations. The Boundary Commission did not base the demarcation of Pietersburg/Polokwane on many of the stated criteria. The primary matter, to be carefully handled, was to ensure that no Traditional Area under a Tribal Chief should be divided among different TLCs. Instead, boundaries were decided by the representative from the Provincial Government or Local Government merely to reach consensus and follow formalities and requirements for the local government election.³³ According to Madonsela, the new provincial boundary commission would investigate the changing of all current boundaries with the aim of incorporating economically viable rural Transitional Local Councils within urban areas such as Pietersburg. In summary, the pre-interim phase showed similarities with other small town case studies in that the process was 'enthusiastic, reasonably representative, and often contested'.³⁴ The Pietersburg case study also showed 'extraordinary tolerance, compliance and co-operation'.

4. Post-transitional future of the dispersed city

The common definition of a dispersed city is a 'group of politically discrete cities which, although separated by tracts of agricultural land, function together

31. Northern Transvaal Provincial Gazette, 2(19), 16 January, 1995.

32. F. CLOETE, *Towns and cities: Their government and administration*, pp. 22-25 for guidelines)

33. Interview with Provincial Government representative, Mr Madonsela, 19/9/1997.

34. See the case studies of S. BEKKER *et al*, "Local government transition in five eastern seaboard South African towns" in *Politikon*, 24(1), 1997, pp. 38-56.

economically as a single urban unit'.³⁵ The separate nodes are functionally interdependent urban entities. This concept ignores the existence of a strong core area, thus complicating the sense of place awareness and place perception held by residents of the dispersed city. It is thus an abstract concept, describing the separate cities and their interdependence. However, what if the interdependence is restricted to some extent, with a predominant core only in terms of economy? Should these urban areas then not be seen as dispersed or displaced suburbs of the core, as opposed to being conceptualised as a dispersed city? According to Nieuwoudt³⁶ the Pietersburg study area cannot be defined as a dispersed city as it has a dominant and strong core area, especially now that Seshego has been politically incorporated. Furthermore, there is no real sharing of services between Pietersburg and its surrounding towns, and urban development is occurring separately. He suggests rather that future development of the city be focused within a framework of metropolitan development.

Pietersburg and the dispersed entities could have developed into a functionally dispersed city. In a post-apartheid milieu, during transition, a regional development strategy might have developed Mankweng into a tertiary educational town. Lebowakgomo could have become the provincial and public sector headquarters, while Pietersburg could have continued as the regional service centre. But the transition period has left a vacuum in which any form of coherent planning is unlikely. Pietersburg's progress during transition adversely affected the other towns which were excluded from urban development, denying them incentives for growth within an integrated strategy for the city.

4.1 Lebowakgomo

The former Lebowa's government buildings are under-utilised, yet the Provincial Government has planned to develop a R350 million government complex in Pietersburg. The use of Lebowakgomo's governmental buildings as an integrated but dispersed entity of Pietersburg is a possibility. Although the new political elite does not favour this option, it would enhance the functionality of the two towns and benefit the poorer communities located within the functional area through development along transport routes. It would not lead to further fragmentation, but would result in a polycentric city form with employment cores, ultimately blurring the distinction between urban core and periphery.³⁷ Such a vision should not be

35. I. BURTON, "A restatement of the dispersed city hypothesis" in *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 53, 1963, pp. 85-289.

36. A. NIEUWOUDT, Personal telephonic interview. Professor in Urban and Regional Planning, Potchefstroom Univerosty for CHE, 1997.

37. REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA (1995), Government Gazette, Vol 365(16679), Notice 1111 of 1995, Urban development strategy of GNU, p. 19.

Historia, 45(1), May 2000, pp. 118-34.

seen as a growth centre policy, but rather as an integrated urban development strategy. Functionally, Lebowakgomo would be part and parcel of Pietersburg.

4.2 Mankweng

This town might have enjoyed increased development as a centre for tertiary education through the decentralisation to Pietersburg of branches of other educational institutions. Since 1990 the Technikon RSA and UNISA (regional headquarters), Pretoria Technikon, the University of Stellenbosch (satellite teaching centre), Potchefstroom University, Technical Colleges, and the College of South Africa have all established branches in Pietersburg. Even the University of the North has expanded into Pietersburg by building its Business School (Edupark) there. The lack of integrated development planning by the Provincial Government to enhance the educational character of Mankweng is further proof that Pietersburg's dominant role is political. The possibilities of the university having a multiplier effect on the local economy could have been strengthened and developed. The value of the university on local expenditure in terms of materials and equipment, student expenditure, and household expenditure by staff members will now never materialise. A node of educational institutions in Mankweng could have had further positive effects in terms of an urban role. These effects might have included a general economic impact, a maximising of the local economic, environmental and social benefits, the building of partnerships with the private sector and the community acting as an expertise and information centre, and a role in knowledge-based economic growth and social work.

4.3 Seshego

This former homeland-border township and growth point adjacent to Pietersburg is the only one of the three former homeland proclaimed towns to have been incorporated politically into Pietersburg. In the process it has benefited from the status of the city. Despite this advantage, the area nevertheless experiences similar problems to those in the other former homeland towns.

5. Conclusion

How could the restructuring of a dispersed settlement system such as the one described above be addressed within the context of its legacy, transitional restructuring and contemporary urban linkages? This paper examined what the Pietersburg settlement pattern might have looked like without apartheid-driven planning and development. Would there have been one big city or metropolitan area? One should, however, conceptualise the contemporary displaced settlement pattern and see how, in a changing world and a transformed South Africa, the pattern might adapt and change. The legacies of the apartheid city underpin any discussion of Pietersburg's contemporary urban form and function.

Although the proclaimed towns are politically and spatially separate from Pietersburg, they remain places of cultural significance. Such places, previously referred to as dormitory towns, confound this concept because the emancipated political transformation process is making intra-and inter-urban migration feasible. Political fragmentation, evident through the immense number of local governments in the region, exemplifies the inefficiency of urban structures in this region. While a number of these settlements exhibit a truly traditional and rural lifestyle, the inhabitants are absorbed into the developments and services of the capital city, Pietersburg. Four proclaimed former black homeland towns are found within a 60 kilometre radius of Pietersburg, each with its own characteristics, historical status and functions. Lebowakgomo developed as a new town and as a planned capital of the former self-governing territory of Lebowa. The lack of integrated development planning by the Provincial Government to enhance the educational character of Mankweng is proof that Pietersburg's dominant role is political. If planners can develop towns as multi-centres of a broader polycentric urban network, then their spatially dispersed pattern should be investigated to determine the actual linkage between the dispersed 'towns' of Pietersburg and their respective economic bases. Developing and investing in a multi-centred, polycentric city form should now be seen as the most viable option for developing the study area within the framework of a district form of government or metropolitan area. The absence of integrated development planning is evident in the problems experienced in the former homeland towns. The RDP and municipal infrastructure development programmes (MIDP) are slow to deliver and in any case analysis of their successes or failures is beyond the scope of this study. Policy should be geared towards enhancing the strengths of the dispersed entities. Many initiatives, based on the government's reconstruction ideals, are required to establish and generate local economic development in the identified 'multi-centres'.

Urban planning and restructuring of the segregated city brought about the development of black ethnic towns. Because homeland town development was ideologically driven and originated in unsuitable locations, the towns always depended on nearby apartheid cities. It is logical to reason that homeland towns such as Lebowakgomo, Mankweng and Seshego have to be restructured simultaneously with apartheid cities. As has been shown in this paper, the transition period caught politicians, planners and community leaders off guard because they had not anticipated the potential increase in interest in the Pietersburg area and the detrimental effect this would have on the dispersed entities. The re-demarcation of Pietersburg's boundaries may reverse the decline in which the dispersed entities find themselves.

Opsomming

**Apartheid stedelike ontwikkeling en oorgangstrukture in
Pietersburg en omgewing**

Gevolge van stedelike ontwikkeling in die voormalige tuislande moet ondersoek word na die periode van stedelike transisie. Hierdie artikel fokus op die ontstaan van 'n verspreidestad rondom Pietersburg. Drie aspekte word ondersoek. Eerstens word 'n uitleg van die apartheid erflating van ontwikkeling van die verspreidestad patroon gegee. Tweedens, 'n beskrywing van na-apartheid plaaslike regering herstrukturering van Pietersburg. Derdens word die historiese bevindings gedebatteer in die konteks van herstrukturering van Pietersburg na transisie.