

# GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION, ACCESS TO SERVICES AND EMPLOYMENT, AND ECONOMIC WELL-BEING IN TWO RURAL CISKEI VILLAGES

by Chris de Wet and Murray Liebbrandt

In this paper we want briefly to look at how the relative geographical isolation or accessibility of two rural settlements in the Keiskammahoek District of the Ciskei has affected their access to educational institutions and to employment opportunities, and therefore to general economic well-being.

The first village, Chatha, is situated at the end of a valley tucked up against the Amatola mountains, which form part of the boundary between the Keiskammahoek and Cathcart magisterial districts. It is thus in a relatively isolated location. The second village, Rabula, is much more accessibly located, being situated on the main road between the local town of Keiskammahoek, and the important administrative and commercial centre of King William's Town.

Rabula's location has meant that it has had easier access to a wider range of educational institutions over the years. While records are not directly comparable, it appears that at the time of the Keiskammahoek Rural Survey, (a major socio-economic survey of the area conducted between 1948 and 1950) the average adult inhabitant of Rabula was better educated than was the case in Chatha.

The most significant economic change since then has been the extent to which the average annual cash income of households had risen in both Chatha and Rabula. In nominal terms the Chatha figure grew from R51,20 in 1948 to R840,00 in 1981 which, converted into real terms, is an increase of 169 per cent. For Rabula the nominal increase has been from R45,12 in 1948 to R3 987,84 in 1987. This translates into a 631 per cent real increase.<sup>1</sup> Even allowing for the fact that real cash incomes may have increased between 1981 and 1987 in Chatha, it seems clear that real incomes have grown significantly faster in Rabula relative to Chatha.

A number of developments, taken together, account for the general rise in cash incomes in the two villages. Firstly, state-financed old-age pensions have become a significant additional source of income since the 1948/50 period. Secondly, the rise in real wages in the mining and manufacturing sectors in the 1970's increased the earnings of migrants. Thirdly, substantial regional economic changes have taken place since 1948. East London (the regional port) began to

expand rapidly in the 1950's and King William's Town and other hinterland towns also experienced rapid growth from the 1960's onwards. From the late 1970's there has also been some industrial expansion within the Ciskei itself. Finally, a recent development has been the growing importance of the Ciskeian state bureaucracy as a provider of employment.

Table I, which presents the sources of cash income, makes it clear that Rabula has benefited far more from these regional developments than has Chatha.

TABLE I : SOURCES OF CASH INCOME

	Chatha 1981	Rabula 1987
Wages and Salaries	13,30%	35,85%
Other local sources	40,70	34,26
made up of		
a) Pensions	34,00	24,08
b) Remainder	6,70	10,18
Remittances	46,00	29,89

The 13,30 per cent contribution of locally derived wages (i.e. within the Keiskammahoek district) in Chatha in 1981 is noticeably lower than the 35,85 per cent for Rabula in 1987. This, together with the low (6,7 per cent) contribution of self-employment and local entrepreneurial activity, makes the households in Chatha more heavily dependent on pensions (34 per cent) and remittances (46 per cent) from migrants working outside the region relative to Rabula (24,08 and 29,89 per cent respectively).

This is supported by the fact that 71 per cent of the employed members of households in Chatha were migrants working in the more distant Johannesburg, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth regions, while only 26 per cent found work within the local Ciskei/Border region (i.e. Keiskammahoek, Ciskei/King William's Town and East London). In contrast to this, the corresponding figures for Rabula in 1986 were 25 per cent and 74 per cent respectively.

Furthermore, in Rabula an average of 1,07 people per household are employed within the Ciskei in industrial, bureaucratic, educational or other jobs related to the development of the homeland policy in the Ciskei as compared to an average of 0,26 people per household

for Chatha.<sup>2</sup> Once again, making due allowance for the fact that the Chatha survey was done in 1981 and the Rabula survey in 1986, the discrepancy between Chatha and Rabula of 1 to 4 still seems to suggest that Rabula has capitalised on employment generation in the Ciskei to a far greater degree than Chatha. Even the unemployment rate for able-bodied, work-seeking adults is higher for Chatha (21 per cent in 1981) than Rabula (17 per cent in 1986) and, given the rising unemployment rates in the Eastern Cape/ Border area over the last few years, it is unlikely that this differential would have narrowed through the 1980's.

A significant part of the explanation of why Rabula households have been distinctly more successful in benefiting from changes in the regional economy, would seem to relate to the relative educational opportunities available to households in the two villages.

It was mentioned earlier that in 1948/1950 the average adult in Rabula was better educated than in Chatha. This educational superiority on the part of Rabula has been maintained, and today (1986), the average educational level of working and unemployed adults (i.e. over 18 years) in Rabula, is 8,28 years. This contrasts with Chatha, where in 1981 working and unemployed adults had an average of 5,95 years at school. The fact that the levels of technical and vocational training differ between the two villages is as important as these years of formal schooling. The number of people per household with completed technical or vocational training in Rabula is 0,478 as compared with 0,105 in Chatha.

That these educational differences have a real effect on employment opportunities can be seen by comparing the relative employment rates of the two villages in Ciskei government - related jobs of a skilled nature (e.g. teachers, nurses, clerks, agricultural officers). In 1981, 0,106 persons per household in Chatha held one of these jobs, while the corresponding figure for Rabula in 1986 was 0,53. Indeed, one of the most notable employment differences between the two villages is the fact that considerably more residents of Rabula than of Chatha are finding employment in the state bureaucracy at Bisho, Zwelitsa and Keiskammahoek, as well as in nursing and teaching posts in all parts of the Ciskei. Clearly all of these jobs have relatively high educational entrance requirements.

There would appear to be fairly straight-forward reasons why Rabula's superior initial educational position has perpetuated itself over the years. Better education has enabled people to obtain the more skilled jobs which have been created since the Keiskammahoek Rural Survey. This had led to their earning higher incomes, and being in turn able to afford a better education for their children. The role of higher incomes in this regard is particularly important as neither Rabula nor Chatha

have schools which offer education beyond standard 8, or any form of technical training. Pupils wishing to study further thus have to attend institutions outside their villages, and only the financially better-off households are able to afford the costs that this involves. Rabula has been further favoured by its location, which has provided easier access to the range of secondary schools and tertiary institutions which have been established in Ciskei as part of the homeland policy.

In addition, Rabula's location offers its residents a direct employment advantage over Chatha because it is located closer to the industrial and bureaucratic growth points that have arisen in the Ciskei as a result of the homeland policy. For example, the most successful of the industrial growth points inside the Ciskei has been Dimbaza. Fortuitously, Dimbaza is situated within 20 km of Rabula, with a regular bus service in operation. The residents of Rabula have therefore been able to take advantage of these expanding employment opportunities, whilst residents of Chatha are effectively too far from Dimbaza to make such commuting feasible. Even the major town of King William's Town is within daily commuting distance of Rabula. The importance of this direct locational advantage can be gauged by the fact that 9 of the 45 wage earners in the Rabula sample were working in Dimbaza and King William's Town while there were no wage earners in the Chatha sample working in these places.

The superior ability of Rabula residents to obtain jobs in the local and regional economy has provided them with significant social and economic benefits. One-fifth (21,2 per cent) of the working members of the Rabula sample in 1986 were living at home, either working in, or within commuting distance of Rabula, as opposed to less than one-tenth (8,9 per cent) in Chatha. Double the number of working male heads of household in Rabula (34 per cent) are living at home, as compared to Chatha (17 per cent). Not only are less heads of household away from home in Rabula, making for less social disruption, but daily commuters tend to bring most of their pay-packet home with them, instead of spending most of it themselves, as many migrants in more distant centres tend to do.

Rabula's superior location, on the main road, has over the years provided it with better access to education services and to better paying jobs closer to home. These two factors have interacted in a mutually reinforcing manner, and it is in these terms that we think that Rabula's superior economic position in relation to Chatha can best be explained.

#### References

Houghton, D.H. and Walton, E.M. (1952) : **The Economy of a Native Reserve** (Keiskammahoek Rural Survey, Vol 2) Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter.

## Notes

1 The 1948 income figures have been calculated from Houghton and Walton (1952), p. 106, at the 1961 conversion rate of 1 British Pound to 2 South African Rand. Real incomes have been calculated by means of the South African Reserve Bank's Consumer Price Index. The 1981 figures for Chatha, are taken from De Wet's research, from a once-off sample of 78 out of 405 households, trying to trace income patterns back

over a 6 month period. In Rabula, Leibbrandt sampled 46 out of possibly upward of 600 households in 1987, going back to each household five times over a period of a year.

Statistics are derived from a sample of 162 households in Chatha during 1981 and a sample of 99 households in Rabula in 1986.

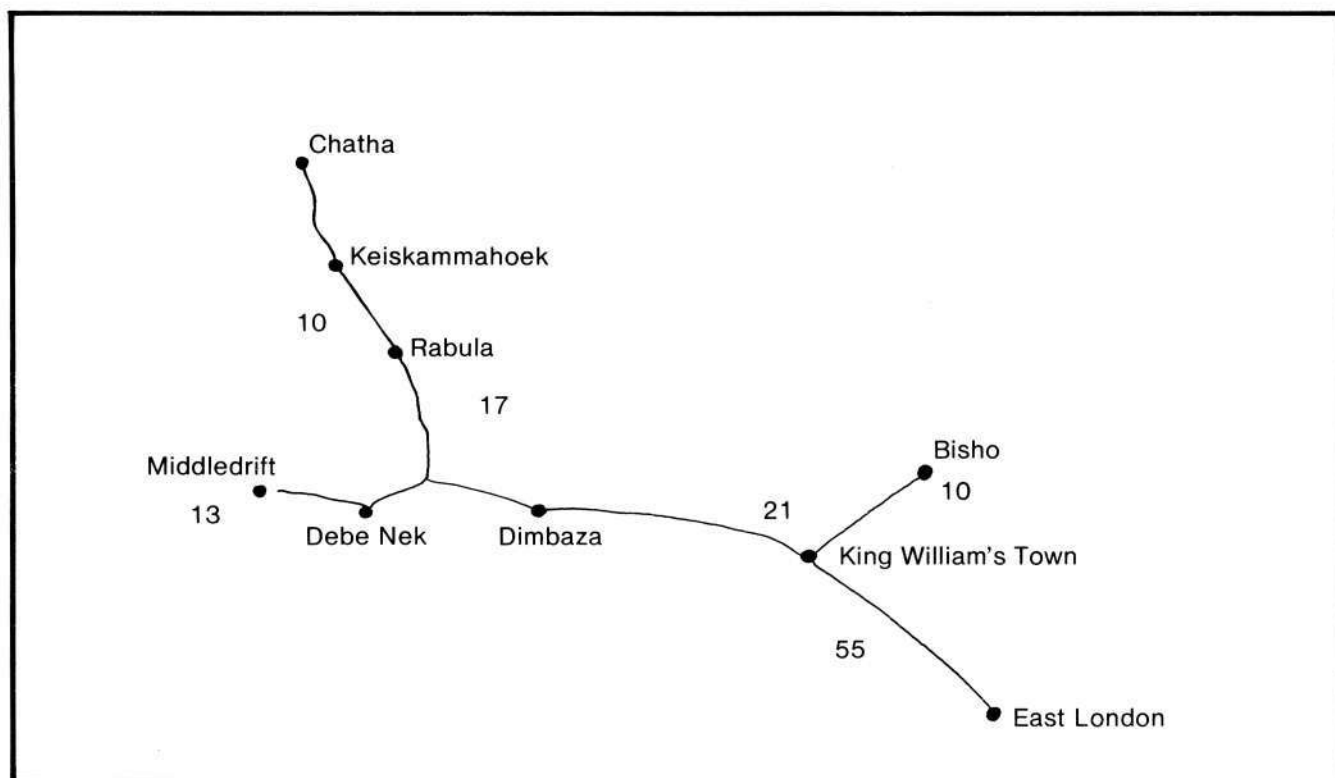
# COMMERCIAL SERVICES AND RURAL-URBAN LINKAGES

by Murray Leibbrandt

## Opening points

This paper will frame its discussion in terms of the commercial linkages between the Ciskeian village of Rabula and the surrounding regional economy. Given

that the story is told by looking outwards from Rabula, commercial linkages are being explored through a rural lens. The rough map below presents the key dramatis personae.



## A macro-perspective on commercial linkages

In a technical sense, commercial linkages can be modelled as a series of flows with goods and services flowing in one direction and payments flowing in the opposite direction. Such an approach offers a useful starting point in documenting the development of commercial linkages and the various institutions through which these operate. The map above

represents a contemporary snapshot of these flows. At the time of the original Keiskammahoek survey (1949), the regional economy would only have included Rabula (which had three trading stores) and the town of Keiskammahoek. East London was effectively as distant as any of the other urban centres with the only linkages being those sustained through long range migrant labour.