

Gerd Wikan

Cash, crops and cattle  
A study of rural livelihoods in Botswana

Høgskolen i Hedmark  
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<p><b>Summary:</b> Lack of economic development has led to a growing scepticism to grand economic development theories and strategies. The focus has shifted towards a more open-ended perspective where the local context and poverty alleviation are in focus. As a result, the new key concepts in the discourse are livelihoods and urban-rural linkages. The academic interest is focused on the question: how are African households surviving given their increasing difficult economic circumstances?</p> <p>In the African context, Botswana is a special case. It is rich; it has a very small and relatively homogenous population and has had a stable democratic development throughout the whole independence period. Situated in the land-locked central part of Southern Africa the peaceful and successful development of Botswana is quite an achievement. However, Botswana's economic progress and development has not had the anticipated spread effects, from the urban to the rural economy, from the privileged to the poor. <i>Poverty amidst plenty</i> is an often-used slogan to describe the present state of development in Botswana. The development processes is a differentiation process, and at the present stage a number of households live in utmost poverty, whereas Gaborone was given the name Benz City because of the number of Mercedes Benz around. On this background on wealth and poverty, I will show how different groups of rural households are making a living; how the poor are managing to stay alive, how the middle income households are planning for survival and security and how the rich are making sure they stay rich and continue accumulating wealth. In short, the main focus of this report is the livelihood strategies of the rural households.</p>			



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## **Introduction**

Lack of economic growth is a characteristic of the development in Africa south of the Sahara. Aggregate figures show that the current economic situation in Africa south of the Sahara can be compared to the level in the 1960's. In contrast with the positive economic growth seen in many Asian and Latin American countries, development in sub-Saharan Africa appears to be characterised by stagnation and decline, rather than growth and progress.

Lack of economic development has led to a growing scepticism to grand economic development theories and strategies. The focus has shifted towards a more open-ended perspective where the local context and poverty alleviation are in focus. As a result, the new key concepts in the discourse are livelihoods and urban-rural linkages. The academic interest is focused on the question: how are African households surviving given their increasing difficult economic circumstances?

In the African context, Botswana is a special case. It is rich; it has a very small and relatively homogenous population and has had a stable democratic development throughout the whole independence period. Situated in the land-locked central part of Southern Africa the peaceful and successful development of Botswana is quite an achievement. However, Botswana's economic progress and development has not had

the anticipated spread effects, from the urban to the rural economy, from the privileged to the poor.

*Poverty amidst plenty* is an often-used slogan to describe the present state of development in Botswana. The development processes is a differentiation process, and at the present stage a number of households live in utmost poverty, whereas Gaborone was given the name Benz City because of the number of Mercedes Benz around. On this background on wealth and poverty, I will show how different groups of rural household are making a living; how the poor are managing to stay alive, how the middle income households are planning for survival and security and how the rich are making sure they stay rich and continue accumulating wealth. In short, the main focus of this report is the livelihood strategies of the rural households.

Development is a complex process; it often leads to growth at some places while it at the same time leads to stagnation at another place. Development can mean prosperity for some groups and poverty for others. Botswana has had a high economic growth rate the last twenty years – a growth rate which has lifted the country out of the group of least developed countries to a middle-income country. An interesting question is what are the regional and social consequences of this growth? This study does not try to give a comprehensive answer to this question. But by doing a re-study of the same two rural villages twenty years after, I will be able to tell how the general development process in

Botswana has manifested itself on rural household standard of living and their livelihood strategies.



## **1. Diamonds and geography**

Lack of economic growth and poverty is a characteristic of the development in Africa south of the Sahara. Aggregate figures show that the current economic situation in Africa south of the Sahara can be compared to the level in the 1960s. In contrast with the positive economic growth seen in many Asian and Latin American countries, development in sub-Saharan Africa appears to be characterised by stagnation and decline, rather than growth and progress. However, there are huge differences between countries in the region.

In the African context, Botswana is a special case. It is rich; it has a small and relatively ethnically homogenous population and has had a stable democratic development throughout the whole independence period. Situated in the land-locked central part of Southern Africa the peaceful and successful development of Botswana is quite an achievement. However, Botswana's economic progress and development has not had the anticipated spread effects, from the urban to the rural economy, from the privileged to the poor. Before proceeding, however, I will give a brief discussion of Botswana's economic miracle.

## *1.1 The economic miracle*

At Independence in 1966, Botswana was one of the poorest countries in the world. Unlike many former British colonies or protectorates, Botswana inherited almost no physical or social infrastructure. The only manufacturing enterprise in the whole country was an abattoir, Botswana Meat Commission. There were hardly any formal jobs created. In the period of the British Protectorate from 1885 Botswana was a labour reserve for South Africa. Wage income was dependent on work in the mines and farms of South Africa. This gave an important extra income to agrarian production, which was becoming increasingly more unreliable due to difficult climatic factors, increasing population pressure and increasing commercialisation of the ranching industry. At Independence 40 % of the national budget was balanced by British aid. Thus, in 1966, this country with its unfavourable conditions for agriculture, no known mineral resources and small population was given a bleak future.

Today, Botswana is classified as an upper-middle income country and is one of the three richest countries in Africa (World Bank 1998). It has in fact been the world's fastest growing economy since its independence (Harvey 1995.) The average annual growth in real terms, during the entire post-independence period was about 13 % (Hope 1996). This impressive economic growth is mainly due to diamonds. After independence rich diamond fields were discovered and the country is at

the moment the world's second largest producer of diamonds. In addition to diamonds, the cattle sector has contributed to economic growth. There was a significant expansion of the national cattle stock and of beef exports in response to the favourable export prices, well above world market prices, offered by the European Community. But still, diamonds are the single most important commodity. Diamond exports account for about 80 % of the export earnings, copper-nickel and meat products for 9 % (Hope 1996)

As a result of the excellent economic growth and overseas aid, the government of Botswana was to develop both a physical and social infrastructure (Harvey 1995). Hence, most human capability indicators on health and education show impressive figures in an African context. According to Harvey (1995), there are equally impressive statistics showing progress in the physical infrastructure, such as roads and water supplies.

Botswana's geopolitical situation in combination with a liberal western-orientated government must also be evaluated as positive factors in the country's economic success. Situated in the middle of Southern Africa, with neighbours that included apartheid South Africa, communist Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Angola and socialist Zambia, Botswana became a favourite for western aid donors.

Other commentators also point to the good development management of the Botswana government as a major reason behind the stable and

remarkable economic growth up to the beginning of the 1990s (Hope 1995).

Lack of formal jobs remains still a major problem despite an increase in formal employment. The percentage of the population employed in the formal sector has increased from 29 % in 1981 to 48 % in 1995 (BIDPA 1997). At the same time employment in traditional agriculture has decreased from 47 % to 16%. This figure is an indicator of an exceptional change in the Botswana economy. In spite of the rapid increase in formal sector employment the unemployment rate has doubled. In 1994 22 % of the labour force was unemployed. Since 1991 formal job creation has slowed down, whilst the exodus from traditional agriculture has continued.

Some commentators claim that part of the problem is Botswana's membership in the Southern Africa Customs Union (SACU). The Customs Union Agreement gave South Africa both the rights to determine the external tariffs applied by all members and the responsibility for managing tariff receipts. There are several problems connected to this issue, but of special interest in the present case is the fact that the member countries are not permitted under the agreement of SACU to raise tariff barriers against manufactured products. Today South African products freely enter the markets of Botswana. The effect was in Botswana the manufacturing sector is small and mainly geared towards the production of light consumer goods (Hope 1996).



In 1992 the economic growth rate started to slow down. The growth rates in the 1992-94 period were only 2 % per year. Are these decreasing growth rates an indicator that Botswana's economic growth was just a flash in the pan? Edge (1998) doesn't think so. He argues that the high growth rates in combination with social development and conservative fiscal management indicate that Botswana will continue its economic development also in the future. However, Edge too admits the problem of lack of manufacturing development and unemployment. The latest figures for GDP 1996/97 show that growth is picking up again at a rate of 6.9 %, at constant prices.

However, despite Botswana's rapid growth and economic success, there is now concern that uneven development, as exhibited by rising unemployment, persistent poverty and grave income inequalities, is becoming a serious problem.

The development debate in Botswana is partly a debate about figures and partly a debate that is becoming more and more focused on poverty alleviation and targeting. Reviewing the literature shows that there are three intertwined questions that dominate the poverty debate: Is poverty increasing, is inequality increasing and what are the causes of poverty? The question of regional unbalanced growth is not much in focus in the current academic debate. However, the problem of unbalanced growth is of some political concern as can be inferred from the national planning policy debate (NDP8).

## *1.2 National development strategies*

Income inequality in Botswana has been a matter of official concern since Independence. The founding official policy document, the Transitional Plan for Social and Economic Development, stated that:

*A more equitable distribution of income is a long-range objective of Government Policy. (Hudson and Wright 1997)*

A more equal income distribution is seen as a key component of social justice, a basic objective of the Government's development policy since Independence (NDP 2 and NDP 8). In the latest development plan the Government's policy is formulated as follows:

*One of the challenges during NDP 8 will be to reduce both relative and absolute poverty through increased incomes and employment creation (NDP 8 p.96).*

The Government has invested considerable resources in developing different programmes aimed at reducing poverty. Free health service and schooling, labour intensive rural road construction, drought relief programmes, Financial Assistance Policy, ALDEP and so forth. On the other hand, one can also point to government policies that have not been supportive of greater equality. Programmes favouring the rural elite, TGLP and subsidies to cattle farmers are examples (Fidzani 1998).

The urban bias in the modernisation project, with most of the job creation in urban areas, has disfavoured rural areas. One can say that the Government rested their development policy on a belief in «trickle down effects». The official belief was that by investing the large return from the mining industry into physical and social infrastructure the growth effects would spread to other sectors of the economy and thereby include an even greater proportion of the population in the modernisation project. Reading the latest development plan shows that even though government reports admit that poverty and lack of modernisation of the rural economy are still a problem, they continue to recommend the same medicine. A major goal is to diversify the economy, privatise more of the public sector, urbanise the rural areas and thereby create employment and provide people with the opportunity to earn income (NDP8<sup>1</sup>). There are for instance no plans to stop migration from rural areas and no plans to support arable production. Botswana's economic growth has so far been good for those in the cattle sector and for those with wage employment. However, a growth based on the export of diamonds and beef is fragile; the livestock sector is vulnerable both to climatic changes and to changes in the international market. Botswana has no influence on the international market for diamonds. Reading the government's development plans reveals the concern for lack of manufacturing jobs and other private sector work.

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<sup>1</sup> NDP 8 = National Development Plan 8 1997/98 – 2002/03



## **2. Regional development**

In 1978 Michael Lipton published a report on the development problems in Botswana, which had urban bias as the main conclusion. Despite the fact that this problem has been focused since – it is still a problem. The development process in Botswana is urban biased. This is most glaring when stock is taken of the socio-economic disparities that exist between urban and rural areas and the resultant differences in standards of living. According to Datta (1995) the percentage of households under the poverty line ranged from 21 % in Gaborone to 83% in the rural northwest region. The majority of all formal jobs are found in urban areas. A study published by the government of Botswana found that 30 % of urban households and 64 % of rural households lived below the poverty line. Uneven regional development must be seen as a consequence of lack of development in the rural economy and a boosting urban- orientated economic growth (Wikan 1999b, Hope 1996).

## ***2.1 Rural Production***

*Rural production* in Botswana has traditionally rested on a combination of crop production and cattle ranching. The location of the country on the outskirts of the Kalahari with mainly sandy, poor soils and little and unreliable rains give marginal conditions for agriculture. Only a few areas mostly in the east, are considered to be suitable for arable agriculture. Mean annual rainfall varies from 650mm in north-east to less than 250mm in the south-west. The riskiness of agriculture also inhibits the chance to improve farming techniques. The farmers' resistance to higher productivity methods may well be rational risk-minimising response by farmers. Average incomes from arable agriculture are low. Figures indicate that few farming households are in a position to meet basic household food requirements, estimated at 1700 kg per year. The level of incomes generated in traditional agriculture is unattractive when compared to an annual income of P3000 at the minimum wage. Even drought relief employment schemes at P125 a month are more attractive than traditional agriculture.

Lack of development of the agrarian sector has resulted in a massive push out of arable agriculture and rural areas. Historically, agriculture was the main form of economic activity for the majority of Botswana. Much of this was subsistence arable production and cattle ownership was the main form of wealth accumulation. Today cattle ownership is skewed. The poor do not own cattle. Apart from a few wealthy large-

scale cattle farmers, there is no evidence that agriculture has historically managed to provide most Batswana with anything above subsistence level income.

**Table 1 Employment in traditional agriculture**

	1981	1991	1994
Traditional agriculture	148700	90900	78500
Proportion of labour force	47 %	21 %	16 %

Source: Ministry of Finance and Development 1997

During the post-independence period, the agricultural sector has declined sharply in economic importance. Its contribution to GDP fell from 40 % in 1966 to 4.2 % in 1994/95. Despite a wide range of agricultural support and extension programmes, there was little success in introducing improved techniques in the traditional arable sector and no improvement in yields. Production of sorghum fell from 29000 tonnes in 1979/80 to 6000 tonnes in 1983/84 before returning back to 11000 tonnes in 1992/93. As a result of highly variable rainfall, agriculture is not a reliable source of income. Minimum prices for agricultural produce fell after 1984. The Government has given up the agricultural policy that aimed at stimulating national production.

At the same time Botswana have taken the opportunity to leave the sector whenever possible. Relative to the formal sector, employment in traditional agriculture had fallen by 75 % in only ten years. In 1988 52 % of the farmers were over 54 years of age, only 9 % were under 35. It seems that farming is not attractive to young people. This is a new situation.

The analysis of agricultural production suggests that rural poverty is not just a result of drought, but is a more permanent structural condition. Production operates with high costs and low productivity. Even in years of good rainfall production is insufficient to keep many households out of poverty.

Even though productivity and returns are low, crop production remains important for those in rural areas without better alternatives and as an income in combination with other income sources. However, contrary to the situation in many other African countries, *it seems clear that the poor in rural Botswana use subsistence farming to top up their incomes rather than as the principal means of subsistence*

In conclusion, there is no empirical evidence that poor farming households can support themselves exclusively from arable farming, let alone graduate out of poverty through arable farming. Farming is only viable as a primary source of income for relatively well-off farmers, with cattle, with access to relatively large areas of fertile land. This requirement excludes the majority of poor rural households.



Lack of income opportunities in rural areas is pushing young people out in search of opportunities in urban areas. Also, it was suggested elsewhere that many people did not move back to agricultural activity after the end of the 1981-86 drought, particularly since the end of the drought occurred at the beginning of the period of rapid growth in other formal sector employment (Hope 1996). There are therefore major factors in the rural areas pushing young people to urban areas. Thus the pressure on the formal urban economy to create jobs is heavier because of the underdevelopment of the agricultural sector in Botswana (Curry 1987).

The reasons for this development are found both in the old power structure and in the new. Even though 75 % of the land in Botswana is communal there is a skewed use of this land. There are a few large cattle-owners, who also happen to be the largest crop producers making an income from the rural resource, whereas the majority of the rural people are not able to make a living from the land because their resources are too small to develop the land.

This could be looked at in a life-cycle perspective. Since the beginning of the 20th century there was a tradition for young males to take up labour migration, investing part of their earnings in cattle and other agricultural assets and settling as farmers in the home villages later in their life cycle. Changes in attitudes towards agriculture and new aspirations, population pressures might have broken this tradition. There

is reason to believe that out-migration from rural village now also is an out-migration from rural life (O'Laughlin 1998, Wikan 1999b).

There has been an urban bias in modern economic activities (Hope and Edge 1996). Infrastructure development, such as schooling, housing, and physical infrastructure are all better developed in urban areas than in rural. In addition most of the formal jobs in government and service are urban jobs. In short the conclusion is that urban areas are the main beneficiaries of the national economic success.

## ***2.2 Rural development and unbalanced growth***

Development since 1977 has shown no sign of a more balanced regional growth. There are considerable differences among the regions of the country and the differences follow a rural - urban line. According to Datta (1995) the percentage of households under the poverty line ranged from 21 % in Gaborone to 83% in the rural northwest region. Table 2. shows rural- urban differences along several indicators.

Rural households are more often poor, have a lower average income, a higher under five mortality and more non-attendance in primary schools than urban households. These figures indicate that in spite of national development strategies aimed at reducing differences between rural and

urban areas<sup>2</sup>, and despite large efforts to improve both physical and social infrastructure, there are still large regional inequalities in Botswana.

**Table 2 Rural - urban differences by socio-economic indicators. 1994**

	Urban	Rural	Botswana
HH* under poverty line	30	64	55
Average income P	848	302	447
Under 5 mortality	42	67	56
Children not enrolled	9	18	17

Source: Datta 1995

\*HH= household

The urban bias in the development process has acted as an urban pull for rural households. There has, however, been an urbanisation process without a parallel job creation. Diamonds have produced good revenue for the State, but production has not given spread-effects in the form of industrial jobs. Thus part of migration to urban areas was a migration from rural underemployment to urban unemployment.

<sup>2</sup> In Botswana an urban area is defined as specific towns, there is no size limit.

The small manufacturing sector in Botswana is mainly light consumer industry localised in urban areas. Growth of the manufacturing sector averaged over 11 % a year in real terms between 1984 and 1994, but it still accounts for only 6 % of GDP.

According to Harvey (1995) Botswana has showed a remarkable growth of formal sector employment. Most of these jobs were in the public sector and private service industry and they were in urban areas. In 1972 48 000 were formally employed in the country and 35 000 were migrant workers. From 1972 formal sector employment grew at about 10 % a year to 182 000 in 1989 (Harvey 1993, Hope 1996, Salkin 1994). Formal employment has, however, fallen since 1992 mostly in the private sector (Salkin 1994).

In spite of high growth rates in the economy, job creation rate has not been able to keep pace with population growth and migration from rural areas. Lipton concluded that there was a need of 35000 new jobs every year (1978.) Partly as a result of this study the Botswana government decided to take a more active part in job creation. They established the Financial Assistance Policy (FAP). FAP is a system of grants the government gives to assist with setting up selected private sector business. This program is being evaluated as quite successful.

According to Owusu and Samatar 1997, 8200 new jobs were created directly as a result of FAP. The government in Botswana's active intervention in job creation in the private sector is in line with what happened in East Asia, but much in contrast to the World Bank's SAP

for Africa. In the rest of Africa we see a decline in industrial development.

Despite problems of job creation in urban areas, in-migration from rural areas continues. There are huge differences in living conditions, in infrastructure development and in the opinion of the migrants as to the *possibility* of making an income, between rural and urban areas in Botswana. So even though not all the new immigrants to urban areas will succeed, they perceive their possibilities there as being better than in rural areas and so they continue to migrate. This is a process well documented in many migration studies.

The lack of progress in the agrarian economy in combination with poor job opportunities in rural areas has worked together to push people from rural areas.

## ***2.3 Rural development strategies***

The Botswana government has introduced a number of programmes with the aim of rural development and poverty alleviation. The programmes can basically be grouped into:

Income-generating programmes

Social programmes

### **2.3.1 Income-generating programmes**

Tribal Grazing Land Policy (TGLP) is a policy aimed at the cattle sector. One of the objectives was to get larger cattle-owners to move their herds from areas close to villages and out into what was to be named commercial areas. To make cattle-owners move their herds they were offered grants and loans for fencing, borehole drilling etc.

The programme was criticized for not solving the problem of overgrazing on communal land, because there was never set an upper limit for the number of cattle kept in communal areas close to the villages. Bigger cattle- owners kept their cattle both in the communal and the commercial zone, thus harvesting the maximum out of the system. Other critics are asking why the government should put so much money in a programme supporting the richest part of the rural

population. Cattle distribution in Botswana is skewed and the majority of rural households either are without cattle or they have so small herds that they will not fall under TGLP guidelines (table 3).

**Table 3 Cattle ownership in the traditional sector. 1981 - 1995. Percentage**

Farming HH	1981	1990	1993	1995
No cattle	32	38	47	49
1-40	41	38	36	25
41-100	18	18	11	16
>100	9	6	6	10
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: NDP 8

In 1978 the *Arable Lands Development Programme* (ALDEP) was introduced. The objective was to improve productivity in the arable farming sector and thereby enhance rural development, create employment and stop migration. Hesselberg says that by introducing ALDEP, the government showed a commitment to a smallholder agrarian strategy (Hesselberg 1985 ).

In the first phase a number of sub-programmes were introduced:

- Subsidies and credit for inputs like row planting and donkey draft
- Water development such as well and catchment tanks at the land areas
- Fencing development, grants up to 50 % of the cost of fencing 10 ha
- Input supply and marketing
- Subsidising prices
- Farm machinery; loans for planters, cultivators, donkey carts and so on
- Seed project
- Agricultural extension

It proved to be difficult to get rural households to adopt the programme, and in 1983 it was changed from primarily a loan to at 85 % grant and 15 % down payment scheme. In 1985 the Accelerated Rain Fed Arable Programme (ARAP) was introduced. This was a grant programme, which was mainly aiming at removing one obstacle to crop production – lack of draft power. The Government refunded the farmer the cost of hiring a tractor for ploughing up to 10 ha of land. This programme is now discontinued.

The Finance Assistance Program (FAP) was initiated in 1982 with the aim of stimulating employment. It gave grants to small-scale enterprises for citizens while grants to medium scale enterprises were open to all



irrespective of citizenship. Eligible enterprises were manufacturing, certain types of non-traditional agriculture and small and medium scale mining.

For small-scale businesses the FAP grant is paid off as a one-off initial payment. FAP contributes with maximum 90% of the initial costs. That means that the entrepreneur must have some start capital and thus cannot be among the poorest.

### **2.3.2 Social programmes**

A type of state-initiated safety net that exists in the village is “destitute allowance”. It works in the following way: the ward headmen suggest to the Village Development Committee persons eligible for destitute allowance. The list of people suggested is sent to the Social and Community Development Officer for final approval. The main criteria for receiving allowance is that the recipient is unable to work and that he or she does not have relatives who can or will take care of them. The destitute receives food coupons to the value of 110 Pula every month which can be used in the local shop. In addition they can get clothes, blankets and other necessities. This programme is also called the Destitute A programme.

In 1992 as part of the Drought Relief Programme, a so-called Destitute B status was introduced. These are people who have become eligible as a result of drought. Lately there were introduced social programmes for HIV positive and orphans. In addition, an old age pension was introduced in 1991.

#### ***2.4 Development in Tutume and Letlhakeng***

The two villages of Tutume and Letlhakeng were chosen for the household study both in 1980 and 2000. In a way they are both typical Botswana villages with a range of different types of households and they are both large enough to give insight into the variation of income strategies. Given this, the villages are also different. The two villages are situated in different ecological zones, their inhabitants belong to different ethnic groups and they are at different distance from the most important labour market – the capital. Today Tutume is three times as big as Letlhakeng. Thus, comparing the villages might give an insight into how the local context influences the household's level of living and income strategies.

The data was gathered by formal household interviews (see appendix 1). The households were chosen randomly in randomly picked clusters;

every third household was visited. The clusters were drawn to make sure that all the wards were included in the sample. Altogether 382 interviews were made, divided equally between the two villages. In addition to the quantitative data, I also carried out 15 in-depth interviews.

The household is a difficult concept to define in the Botswana context. The household in rural Botswana is the unit principally responsible for agricultural production. It is also a unit of consumption whose income derives from various sources. The members of the household are therefore often strewn across dispersed geographical locations in pursuit of the various incomes. The household is thus rarely a complete and precise entity where residence, production and consumption neatly coincide (Selolwane 1992). This disjuncture creates some methodological problems in the study and analysis of the rural households' income strategies.

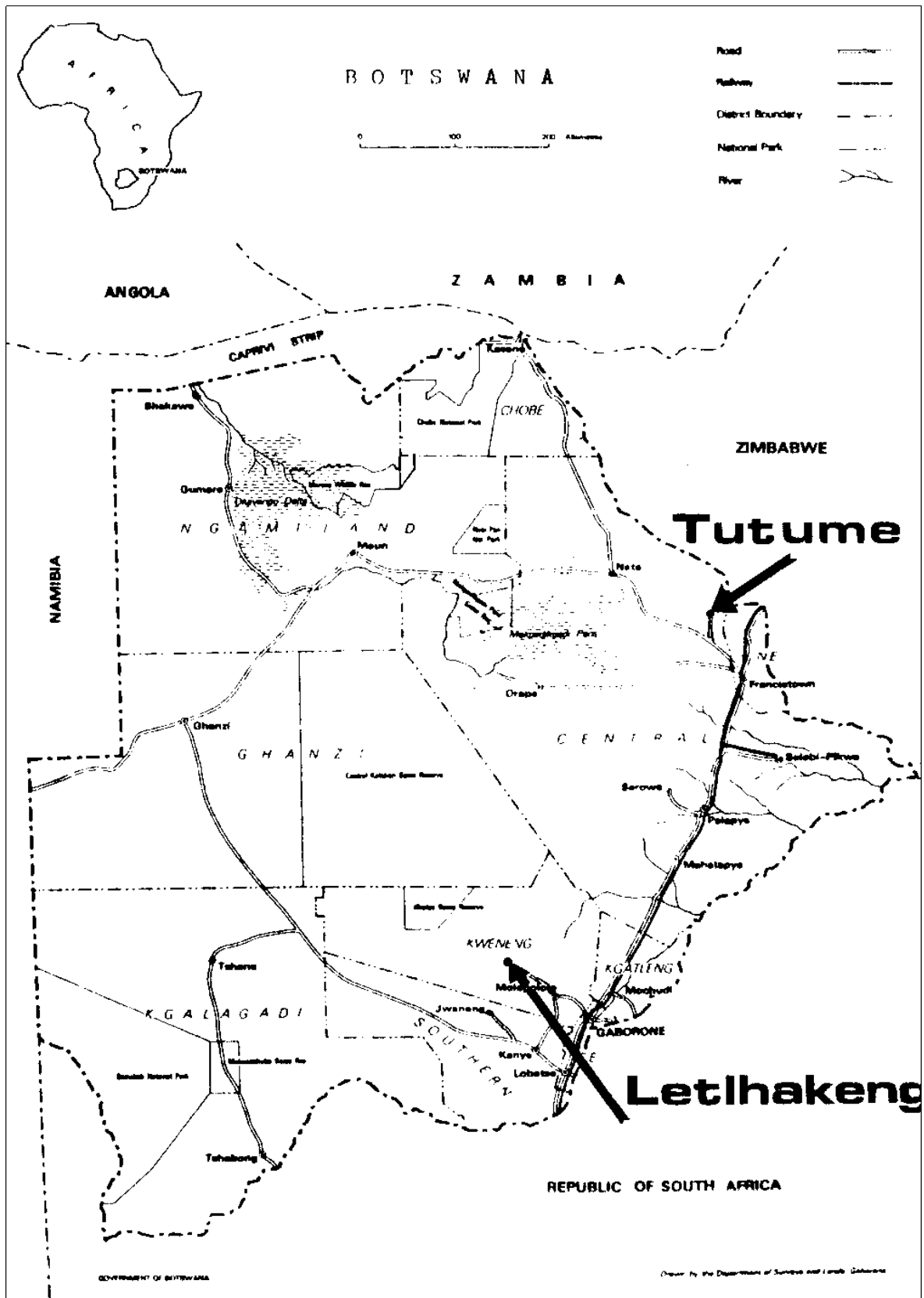
In the present survey I have made the following operational definition of a household; a household consists of a person or group of persons who claim to belong to a single compound and who use part of the available resources in common. They are in addition answerable to the same head. Unmarried members staying elsewhere are included when the respondents include them and when they send or bring home money and/or goods to the rural home.

### **2.4.1 Letlhakeng**

Letlhakeng is situated in the central part of the Kweneng District, and lies about 60 kilometres north west of Molepolole. Kweneng District is located in the south-eastern part of Botswana. The district is characterised by the sandveld at 1000 metres above sea level. Surface drainage is restricted to pans and dry valleys, which rarely carry surface water. The landscape type is bush and tree savannah. The village of Letlhakeng is located at the confluence of three fossil valleys - Mosheng, Marushwane and Goathabogwe. The valleys attracted human settlement because shallow wells may be dug to obtain water and the soils here are more fertile. Traditionally the villagers made their living from agriculture, later in combination with labour migration to South Africa. The climatic condition is better for herding cattle and goats than for crop cultivation. Thus traditionally cattle were the sign of wealth here on the outskirts of Kalahari Desert.

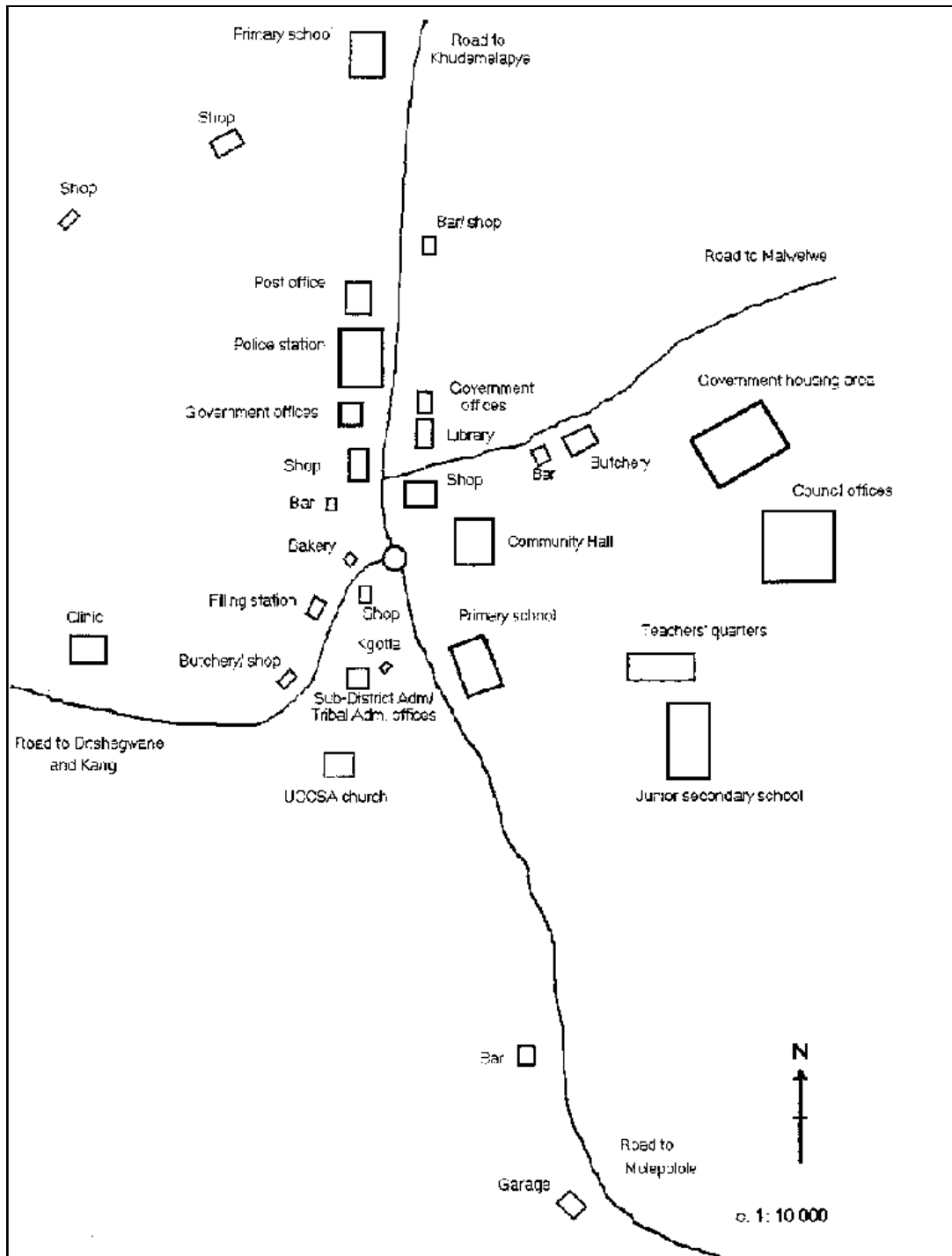
The physical conditions for crop production can at best be described as meagre. Climatically, Letlhakeng lies in a transition zone between the more humid East Botswana and the Kalahari. The mean annual rainfall is only 400mm. In addition, there is a substantial yearly variation. Most farmers are able to grow sorghum, maize, beans and watermelons. Traditionally the organization of farm work was based on help from the extended family and other types of communal work. Today this system seems to have more or less broken down. The division of labour

Map. 1 The study village



between sexes is strict. Men are responsible for clearing fields and for ploughing. Most of the remaining tasks are the work of women.

**Map 2 Letlhakeng**



The village has a long history of migrant work. Letlhakeng started to send labour migrants to South Africa at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1939 it was such an important supplier of labour that it got its own recruitment office in the village. In the hey-days more than 50 % of men were absent on migrant work abroad. Today this situation has changed dramatically. There has been a reduction in the number of men finding work outside the village. This is mainly due to a change in the recruitment policy in South Africa.

The village has had a slow population growth if we look at the whole period from 1980 to 2000. In the beginning of the period the population growth rate was high, but it has slowed down the last ten years. In 1981 the population was 2616, in 1991 4379 and in 2001 it is projected to be around 4800. As one can see from the figures, the village must have had a net immigration in the decade from 1980 to 1990, but after 1990 the growth rate has slowed down probably due to net out migration. The size of the households is more or less the same as in 1980. In 1980 the average household size was 6.3 , in 2000 6.4.

Letlhakeng has recently become a sub-district centre for Kweneng District and has as a consequence got the following new functions:  
District Administration Officers  
Rural Administration Centre

Council Department has decentralised treasury, economic planning, commercial and personal.

It seems obvious from table 4 that Letlhakeng had a positive development in the local job market from 1980 to 1990. The number of shops and bars has increased in number and new functions such as a bakery, a filling station and a garage were established in the village. A number of new government initiated jobs such as a new primary school and a new secondary school were also started in that period. Since 1990 there has not been much new development. The exception is a brand new council office up on the hill on the road to Ditsegwane.

So far all this new functions have not been able to stall out- migration. Lacks of new private businesses as well as the stagnation population figures both indicate that the village of Letlhakeng is experiencing stagnation. Even though the government is trying by its district policy to establish new activity in the village. An interview with the Chief of Letlhakeng substantiates this impression.



**Table 4 Functions in Letlhakeng. 1976 – 2000**

	1976	1980	1990	2000
BAMB	1	1	1	1
Bottlestores/bars	1	1	4	5
Shops	2	3	10	5
Butchery	-	-	2	3
Bakery	-	-	1	1
Filling station	-	-	1	1
Garage	-	-	1	1
Hair Saloon	-	-	-	1
Motor Dealer	-	-	-	1
Subdistrict Center Kweneng	-	-	-	1
Council	1	1	1	1
Police	1	1	1	1
Post office	1	1	1	1
Library	0	0	0	1
Clinic	1	1	1	1
Nursery home	-	-	1	1
Primary school	1	2	2	2
Secondary school	0	0	1	1

Source: Field data 1980 and 2000, Helle-Valle 1990

Interview with the chief of Letlhakeng.

*Unemployment is the main problem in the village. It is only the council that is giving a few local jobs, most of the administration are people coming from outside. Our men have difficulties finding employment outside the village. Before they used to go to South Africa, now they are not welcome there anymore, and in Letlhakeng there are no jobs.*

*Another major problems for the village are lack of electrification, lack of tarred roads and unstable ground conditions. They have problems with cracking of walls of the houses lowest in the valley – they therefore are making plans to move the whole village to the ridge.*

*They have a draught relief program running this year as well. Flooding destroyed the harvest this year. Village development committee houses are built under this program. Those who are taken on this programmed can work for i month and are paid 8 P a day , that is 160 P a month.*

*They have a rotation system, so after a month a new group is taken on. Except for some infrastructure changes like partly electrification of the village, water development and education development there were little changes in the village since 1980. The schools and the administration mainly employ people from outside the village. There has not been a significant increase in the number of new jobs for the locale people. In addition the work opportunities in South Africa have become fewer after the Chamber of Mines partly stopped recruiting workers from outside South Africa. This has hit the village of Letlhakeng with its long labour migrant history hard.*

The chief describes at village, which is left behind in the development process. Except for the new focus that was given to the village due to its administrative role in Western Kweneng, there has been little new development in the village. The main problem is the lack of local jobs, which means that the better-educated people leave the village. This has happened at the same time as the traditional source for money for the unskilled labourers, South Africa has dried up. So Letlhakeng is no longer an attractive place for new migrants – it has become a net loser of population.

#### **2.4.2 Tutume**

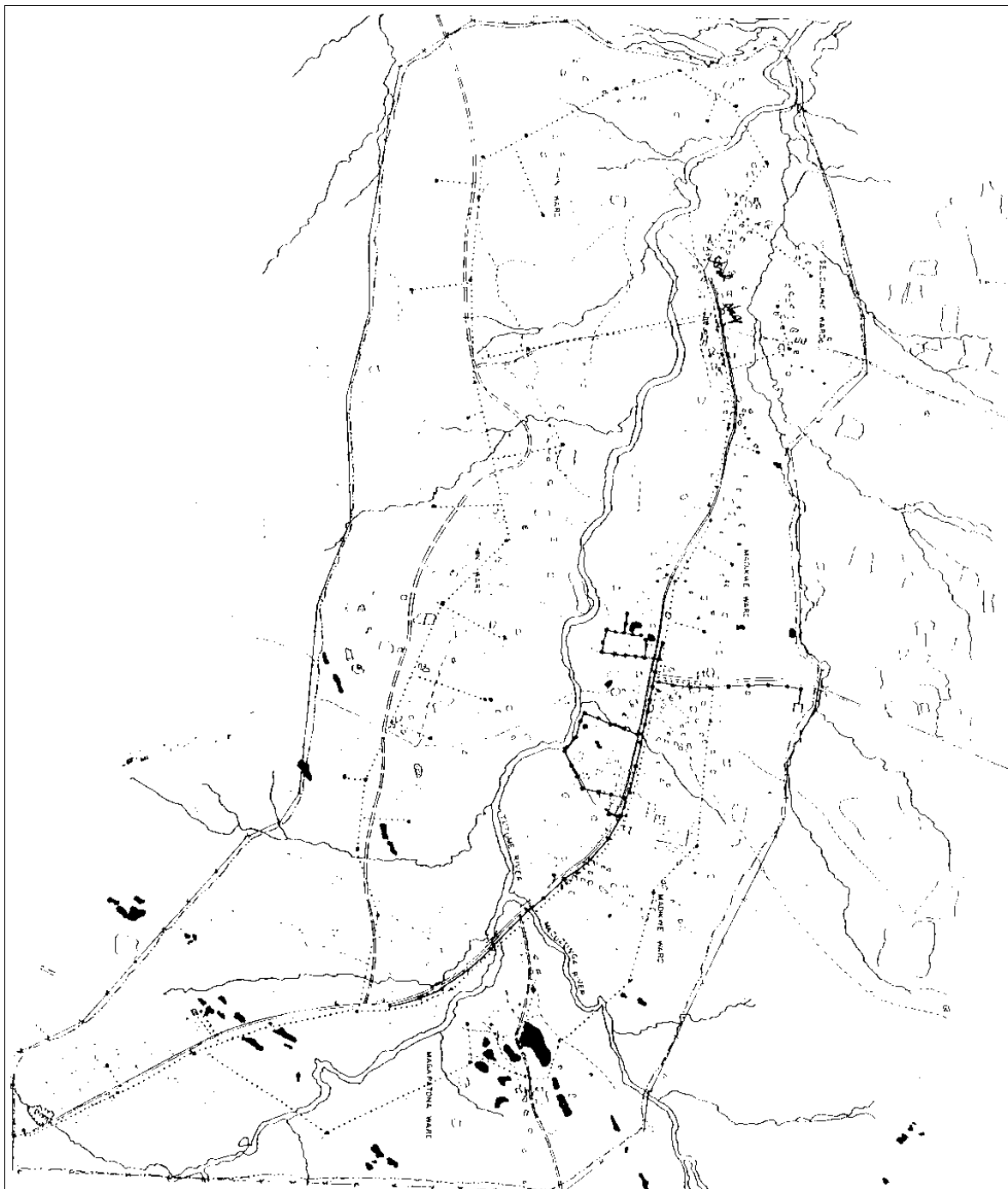
Tutume is situated in the north-eastern part of Central District. It is about 120 km from Francistown, Botswana's second largest town. It belong to Central District and is under the Bamangwato Tribal Territory. The apex of the tribal pyramid there is the Bamangwato chief who is represented at sub-district levels by Senior Subordinate Tribal Authorities and Headmen of various levels at village level. A minority tribe, the Bakalanga, constitute the majority of the inhabitants of Tutume village.

The physical conditions for crop production are somewhat better than in most other parts of Botswana. The annual rainfall is 550mm on average. The rainfall is, however, as unpredictable and variable as in other parts

of the country. Nevertheless, the more humid climate and better type of soil enable the peasants to grow a relatively wide range of crops. Most households cultivate sorghum, maize, millet, melon, beans and groundnuts. The mutual system or organization of work is not more common in Tutume than it was in Letlhakeng. The sexual division of labour, however, is somewhat different. Women in Tutume have always taken a more active part in both the clearing of fields and ploughing, and they are therefore less dependent on men for crop production (Wikan 1981).

Tutume was never involved in the migrant work system to South Africa to the same extent as Letlhakeng. One of the reasons for this was that recruitment to the mines in South Africa was prohibited in Northern Botswana until 1934. Especially after Independence the majority of migrants from Tutume went to other parts of Botswana. Because of the good educational standard of the Bakalanga people they were able to compete successfully for the new jobs being created in the country.

### Map 3. Tutume



Due to several factors the village has had an extraordinary population growth over the past 20 years. In 1981 the population size was 4083 in 1991 10070 and in 2001 it is projected to be around 18000 (DDP Central

1997). Decentralisation of the district administration is probably the main force behind this growth. Since 1980 the village was established as a Sub-District centre with all the administrative offices that go with the status, and social services have also been decentralised from Serowe. As a consequence of this, the village has received improvement in all types of physical infrastructure such as telephonenet, electricity, water supply, roads, schools and health. All this has created many local jobs (table 5). This again had made Tutume attractive for immigration. The natural increase must have been lower. Household size has decreased from 8.3 to 6.0 since 1980.

Population growth in Tutume has obviously created a market for private enterprises in the service sector. The numbers of shops, restaurants, bars, petrol stations and hair saloons show this. There is less development in the manufacturing sector except for three small textile factories producing for the uniform markets of schools and churches. The public sector has also created a number of new jobs in the village by establishing a hospital, more secondary schools and the extension of the sub-district headquarter. But lack of work is still a problem in the village.

**Table 5 Functions in Tutume. 1976 – 2000**

	1976	1980	2000
Botswana Marketing Board	-	1	1
Banks	-	1	-
Bottlestores/bars	1	5	7
Brigade centre	1	1	1
District Council Office	-	1	1
Hospital	-	-	1
Subdistrict Office Central			1
Work Department	-	1	1
Post Offices	-	1	1
Petrol station	-	-	2
Primary schools	3	3	5
Secondary schools	1	1	3
Shops/restaurants	6	13	44
Fresh produce	-	1	9
Hair saloons	-	-	4
Garage workshops	-	1	2
Textile factories	-	-	3

Source. Hesselberg and Dale 1977. Own field data 1980, 2000

### Interview with chief of Selolwane

*The huge pollution growth was due to several factors, natural increase, migration from nearby villages, posting of people on government projects and people has moved in from the lands. The immigration from nearby villages is confirmed by official statistics. The relative high growth rate in Tutume may be explained by land shortages in the North East District, which has resulted in some people moving into the Tutume sub-district in search of land for ploughing and keeping livestock. (DDP Central 1997)*

*People are still producing crops and many have to stay at the lands during the agricultural season. The distance to the lands has increased much do the population growth. However, there is still no shortage of new land.*

*The employment situation in the village is bad. There is a lack of jobs especially for educated people. Emigration of F5 leavers to Gaborone, Pikwe, Jwaneng, Orpa.. Those who are staying at home are unemployed. They mainly depend on their parents for living. Thefts have become an increasing problem in the village.*



*The village has many poor people, but he claims that due to government programs the situation for the poor is better. The orphans are an increasing problem in the village because they have no place to stay. The extended family is not always able to take care of all these children. At the moment there are about 50 orphans in Selolwane only, 23 destitute.*

There has been a tremendous development in Tutume since 1980. Due to several reasons the village has increased from 4000 to over 10000 in a period of less than 20 years. This growth has created a market for local economic activities such as shops, restaurants, car mechanics and so on. This again has created more jobs and more money among local people. Still, lack of work is mentioned as the main problem when the chief describes the development problems for the village.

### **2.4.3 The local context**

As described above, the two study villages differ when it comes to factors important for the households options of choosing local income strategies. Letlhakeng is situated in the outskirts of the Kalahari Desert where the conditions for cattle rearing are better than the conditions for arable farming. Tutume is more of an arable farming area, both because of climatic and cultural factors. Letlhakeng is only 1 1/2 to 2 hours from

the rapidly growing capital Gaborone and has for that reason or other reasons not had much population growth or growth of local jobs for local people. Tutume is far from the capital and has had a growth in population and jobs opportunities the last 20 years.

I asked how the local people view the situation for their village, by asking them to name the main village problem (table 6). People in Letlhakeng are more worried about the lack of jobs and poverty than in Tutume where health problems are the one most often mention. There are no indicators that there are more HIV/AIDS positive people in Tutume than in Letlhakeng. Asking people about their own main problem gives the following result: in Letlhakeng 75 % say it is lack of work and lack of money, in Tutume less than 50 % claim that lack of work and lack of money are their main household problem.

**Table 6 Main problems in the village. 2000. Percentage**

	Tutume	Letlhakeng
Lack of jobs	39	57
Health situation	50	16
Poverty	11	27

The more severe situation for many households in Letlhakeng is also underlined by the fact that 80 % of the households received some kind of social assistance; the figure for Tutume is 25 %.

Periodic crop failure is more common in Letlhakeng, which is shown by the fact that 60 % of the households claim they received or are receiving money under the drought relief programme; the figure for Tutume is only 15 %. When it comes to who received support under some of the income generating programmes, a comparison between the two villages shows the following: in Letlhakeng only 26 % had received support from ALDEP, ARAP, TGLP or FAP; the figure for Tutume is 50 %. This might indicate that households in Tutume are more willing to invest in local income-generating production. Willingness to invest money is often seen as an indicator of optimism and resource-richness. A higher degree of acceptance of investment programmes might show that households in Tutume compared to those in Letlhakeng have resources above the minimum and are therefore able to make long-term plans.



### **3. Social Development**

Development is a multi-dimensional concept. In addition to the economic aspect, it has a social, political, cultural as well as ecological dimension. As Goulet 1989 says; development is a two-edged sword. The development process might lead most people out of poverty but it also means increased inequality and loss of cultural values. The development process so far has not been able to eradicate absolute poverty. Today more people than ever than live in absolute poverty.

In the early 60's poverty was seen as an original state and inequality as a necessary stage in the modernisation process. Later the neo-Marxist paradigm blamed poverty and inequality, so typically at Third World problem, on the linkages with the developed countries and the peripheral nature of the capitalist expansion. This peripheral capitalism keeps the Third World countries in a transitory form of production. The penetration of the market economy creates both opportunities for and obstacles to development. In this process some areas and some people are succeeding while other lack the qualification for success and thus become victims of this type of development process. According to Hesselberg 1985 this is the primary reason behind the creation of mass poverty in the Third World.

### **3.1 Poverty**

Whether development process, which has brought Botswana to the position of one of the most prosperous countries in Africa, has led to a generally better standard of living and a reduction in the number of poor households is one of the more central question. *Most of the sources I know of conclude that living conditions generally improved but that poverty is still a major problem in Botswana, especially rural poverty.*

#### **3.1.1 Poverty at the national level**

Studies made by the Ministry of Finance (1997) conclude that 47 % of the people and 38 % of the households were living in poverty in 1993. That is, 620, 000 individuals or 100, 000 households. *Poverty* as defined in this study includes incomes for covering basic needs and income that allow one to take part in social life.

Due to the choice of a poverty definition that goes beyond absolute poverty the researchers felt the need to split the poverty group into two: *poor and very poor*. The poor are those, who often are referred to as *absolute poor* or food poor. Table7 shows that 23 % of the households were very poor. Thus, most of the poor household fall into the category very poor that is they have problems covering basic needs.

The proportion of poor and very poor was higher in rural areas than in urban areas. 33% were very poor in rural areas; the figure for urban areas was only 7 % (MFDP 1997) A highest absolute number of both the poor and very poor were living in rural areas. In 1993/94 45,173 of the 66,150 households that were living in food poverty (very poor) were rural households.

The data shows furthermore that a higher proportion of female-headed households than male-headed households were living in poverty. In overall terms 50 % of the female-headed households were living in poverty, as compared to 44 % of the male-headed households. In rural areas the differences were less, 32 % of female-headed households and 32 % of male-headed households were very poor (MFDP 1997). In urban areas 10 % of female-headed households and only 5 % of male-headed households were very poor.

*Has poverty increased?* According to figures presented by the MFDP 1997 report, it has not. The report is based on an analysis of Household Income and Expenditure surveys from 1985/86 and 1993/94. These figure shows that both the absolute and relative numbers of very poor has decreased (table 7). However, the number of poor households, poor and very poor, was constant since 1985. *It is, however, of interest to notice that the number of very poor has decreased and the number of poor above the food poverty line has increased.*

**Table 7 Estimated national household poverty by poverty groups.**

	1986		1994	
	%	no.HH	%	no HH
Non-poor	51	113,831	62	182,106
Poor	16	35,697	15	43,354
Very poor	33	72,860	23	66,150
Total	100	222,388	100	291,610

Source: Ministry of Finance and Development Planning 1997

There are many methodological problems linked to conducting income and expenditure studies in general, and poverty studies in particular. There are problems of how to secure validity and reliability through the data collection phase and there are problems linked to the definitions of poverty. In the case of Botswana there are huge problems linked to the theoretical and the operational definition of household. It is unclear from the publications, which definition is being used. This makes comparison with other studies difficult. In addition one might criticise the present study for the size of the sample, which is small, especially in rural area. Of a total sample of 3,600 households, only 908 are rural.



This is little when 47 % of the households in Botswana are still rural. The size of the sample demands caution in analysis of the data.

However the main conclusion is strengthened by the fact that other researchers (Valentine 1993, Hudson&Wright 1996) end up with the same conclusion; *poverty in Botswana is decreasing*. Valentine in addition makes an important point when he writes that as family ties are still strong, committing members to taking care of each other, household members who make their living in the rural areas benefit from growth in the formal urban economy. Household members who are in waged employment still send money home to the household in the country. For this reason, Valentine concludes that the existence of this reciprocal responsibility contributes to spreading the positive effects of the economic development to more people than those who benefit directly from waged employment. This conclusion is supported by Hudson and Wright (1996), who claim to have found a general improvement in living conditions among households in Botswana, although they add that there are households who have not managed to participate in the overall growth and do not fit in the with general picture.

Based on the 1991 Census, Hope finds than 50 % of the population lived below the poverty line (Hope 1996). His study also shows that the poverty situation is gravest in rural areas. In 1991 twice as many households lived below the poverty line in rural areas as in urban areas. This is more or less the same as that found in the 1993/94 survey.

Edge too finds evidence to indicate that the number of Batswana households living below the poverty line (PDL) is growing. A study by the Botswana government in 1989 estimated that 55 % of the national population was living below the PDL. In rural areas the number was 64 % as compared to 45 % in 1974 (Edge 1998). There are reports that the poverty situation is becoming worse in the bigger towns too. In a study conducted in 1993 researchers found about 500 street children in Gaborone (Cambell and Ntsabane 1997). These children run away from home, left school and spend all day on the streets of Gaborone. One can look upon this as an indicator of the growing number of poor families in the capital.

There are methodological problems linked to poverty studies and none of the studies referred to be free of these, some claiming that poverty has increased, and some claiming that it has decreased. Still, I feel that the conclusion from the latest household survey (MDFD 1997) looks plausible. *Poverty has decreased, but it is still a major problem in rural areas and among particular groups.* In a study made by the university of Botswana in 1997 they get the following results when they ask people to assess their situation:

**Table 8 Self-assessment of standard of living. Percentage**

	Poor	Average	Wealthy
Lobatse	50	47	3
Mochudi	50	49	1
Thamaga	63	37	-
Maitengwe	55	43	3
Sorilatholo	81	19	-
Kokotsha	86	14	-

Source: Selolwane (unpublished paper)

This shows that smaller rural villages have more poverty than larger villages and urban areas.

*Who are the poor?* What are the demographic, social and economic characteristics of poor households? The National Household's Surveys gives insight into these questions.

The majority of the poor households are in rural areas. The mineral-lead economic growth in Botswana has favoured urban areas where most of the new formal jobs were in created. Little development has taken place in the rural based economic activities. An exemption might be cattle ranching. Professional cattle ranching are, however, an activity that means little income-wise for the majority of rural households. Cattle

distribution is skewed and only a few big ranchers, many of them based in urban areas, make a living from that sector. *The rural poor were found to be predominantly subsistence families who owned small plots of arable land with no or small livestock holdings.*

Some claim that one can use non-ownership of cattle as a single indicator to target the very poor, the food-insecure poor (Smith 1997). In Botswana, the single most important factor for food production efficiency is ownership of cattle. Those who are without must hire /borrow from others; they then become late ploughers and the risk of crop failure increases. These households are therefore vulnerable in the way that they depend on others for crop production (Wikan 1991).

*Female-headed households are more likely to be poor than male-headed households* It is not possible to detect whether there is a difference in living standards between *de facto* and *de jure* female-headed households. Earlier case studies concluded that *de jure* female-headed households are the poorest, while *de jure* female-headed households might have much higher income level (O'Laughlin 1998, Wikan 1981). This was due to the fact that they had men at work in urban areas or in South Africa.

Households where the head of household is old are also more likely to be poor. There is evidence that poor and very poor households suffer from a severe shortage of members that earn income. Large households, with high dependency ratios, are poorer than small households with a

low dependency ratio are. Lack of education is positively correlated to poverty. Uneducated households are more likely to be poor than households with educated household members.

Botswana does not suffer from problems of acute homelessness. Most Botswana live in their own homes. Cash income is important for most income groups. In 1994 59% of male-headed households and 53 % of female-headed households had some paid employment (HIES 1995/96). However, rich households get most of their income from cash sources, while the very poor depend heavily on transfer (table 9). The middle-income group, that is the poor, are characterised by many income sources of equal importance. They are the typical *multi-income* households in Botswana.

In rural areas consumption of own produce accounts for 29 % of income among poor male-headed households, 22 % of very poor male-headed households. Figures for female-headed households are 26 % for poor and 18 % for very poor. This shows that very poor households are less involved in subsistence crop production. This may indicate shortages of household labour or essential farming assets among these groups. This is in accordance with findings in case studies, which show that especially female-headed household are short of labour for crop production tasks. In marginal areas for crop production, the result was that households discontinued crop production; while under better agricultural conditions they hired labour in order to continue (Wikan 1981). There might

therefore be regional differences in the value of own produce as a source of income.

Consumption of own produce is largely insignificant in urban areas and urban villages. Typically about 50-60 % of consumption expenditure of the poor and very poor is for food and much of the remainder is for basic necessities such as clothes and footwear.

To sum up: research from Botswana identifies different poverty factors that define household income level; education, age, sex, assets, status on the labour market. The most likely groups of poor and very poor household therefore are.

- The rural households.
- Female headed households
- The uneducated households
- The elderly households
- The remote area dwellers, the san people
- Household who depend significantly on arable farming

**Table 9 Composition of income by poverty groups. Rural. 1994.  
Percentage**

	Cash income	Net transfer	Earnings in kind	Own prod.
Nonpoor MHH	72	12	1	16
Poor MHH	48	22	1	29
Very Poor MHH	53	24	1	22
Nonpoor FHH	48	32	0	20
Poor FHH	30	43	1	26
Very Poor FHH	39	43	0	18

Source: MFDP 1997

*\*Net cash income: consisting mainly of cash earnings, and including unearned cash income and business profit, less taxes paid*

*\*\*Net transfers: consisting of cash and in-kind gifts and transfers received less cash and in-kind gifts and transfers given.*

Poverty in Botswana is a structural problem and not linked to periodic drought conditions (Hesselberg 1985). The problem is serious despite the country's impressive economic growth. Poverty is the most serious human problem confronting the economy of Botswana; it is still one of the least discussed issues in Botswana. When the rate of poverty was 38 % on the household level in 1993/94 and that in the same year 47 % of

the population it says that the development process in Botswana has had a skewed social outcome. That these rates reflect improvements over the poverty rates in 1985/86 is no consolation when nearly a quarter of the population (23 %) still remains very poor, that is, unable to afford basic foodstuffs.

These poverty rates are reported to be most severe for female-headed households (table 9). These striking statistics on poverty contrast with the usually fashionable discussions on high growth rates and prudent financial policies, which is normally the agenda when Botswana's development is discussed

### **3.1.2 Poverty in Tutume and Letlhakeng**

Given the high economic growth and a Government with a clear policy of poverty alleviation one would expect poverty to have decreased since 1980 following the main conclusion in most of the national studies on poverty in Botswana. Based on national surveys the common agreement among researchers is that poverty is still high but decreasing. However, this conclusion is challenged by some, who claim that poverty is increasing, especially rural poverty. On this somewhat non-conclusive empirical background, I will now *show how the households' standard of living have changed and developed in the two study villages over the last twenty years.*



In the present study a composite level of living index is used to group the households into standard of living-groups. The index is based on material indicators (see appendix 2). The decision to use an index based on material indicators was taken because it is easy to get reliable information compared to for instance income data or other productive assets. When discussing this method, Hesselberg concludes that the index is a very good way of measuring households' level of living (Hesselberg 1984)

*The main conclusion is that poverty in both Tutume and Letlhakeng has increased since 1980. This seems to be contrary to the general view that poverty has decreased - also rural poverty. It is however, impossible to make a significant comparison due to the difference in definitions of poverty. However, the percentage of poor households is more or less equivalent to what is found in other studies in Botswana. In Tutume there is less poverty than the 38 % national average, according to the Household Income and Expenditure Survey, in Letlhakeng the percentage is higher than the national average for rural households.*

**Table 10 Standard of living. Tutume and Letlhakeng. 1976 - 2000. Percentage**

Tutume

	1976*	1980	2000
Poor	6	10	27
Middle-income	75	66	57
Rich	19	24	16
Total	100	100	100

Letlhakeng

	1976	1980	2000
Poor	30	40	46
Middle-income	57	46	45
Rich	13	14	9
Total	100	100	100

*\* Based on data by Hesselberg and Dale 1977*

If we look at a set of consumer items that the household either needs or at least it will give it status to have, the difference in material well-being between the two villages is striking (table 11) Households in Tutume can afford to buy a number of consumer items, which households in Letlhakeng can not. For instance, whilst around 40 % in Tutume have

manage to pay for the expenses of getting a standpipe in their yard, the figure for Letlhakeng is only 9 %. Carrying water from a distance is not something that a household would prefer to continue with if it could afford to get water into their yard. Thus, this indicator alone shows that the average household in Tutume is better off than the one in Letlhakeng. Indicators like shoes for all children, or how often they eat meat, confirm the findings; there are more poor households in Letlhakeng. The number of expensive consumer items like cars and television sets show the same tendency, they appear more frequently among households in Tutume than in Letlhakeng. The conclusion is thus that there are more rich households in Tutume.

**Table 11 Ownership of selected consumer items. Tutume and Letlhakeng. 2000. Percentage.**

	Tutume	Letlhakeng
Standpipe	42	9
Shoes for all children	71	30
Meat every day	16	4
Bed	91	70
Radio	88	45
TV	12	6
Car	13	6

In the HIES 1994 one finds that 23 % of the households are so-called food poor, that is, they have too little to satisfy the basic need of the household. This according to that study is a relatively growing group of households. Data from the present study substantiate this conclusion, in Tutume and Letlhakeng the absolute poor is a growing group (table 12).

Around 1980, there were few households without any source of income in Tutume but in Letlhakeng 21 % of the households had no income. In the year 2000 the situation has developed negatively, 12 % and 34 % of the households in Tutume and Letlhakeng respectively were so-called food poor; that is absolute poor (table 12 ) One hypothesis is that there has been a selective in- migration to the larger villages from smaller villages and lands. That is, a disproportionately large group of the poorest households from these areas went to the villages and not to the urban areas.

**Table 12 Absolute poor households. Tutume and Letlhakeng. 1976 -2000. Percentage.**

	Tutume			Letlhakeng		
	1976	1980	2000	1976	1980	2000
Food poor hh	3	1	12	19	21	34

Being poor in rural Botswana means that one does not have money to eat properly, and one can seldom serve a meal with meat. Being poor in rural Botswana also means that one does not have shoes for the children, and the houses in the compound are few and in bad shape, which makes it difficult to keep warm and dry, and it means not having enough blankets to keep warm in the long and cold winter nights.

Traditionally, the extended family was responsible for taking care of the household that could not manage to make a living on their own. Many commentators claim that due to the modernisation process and the urbanisation process this traditional safety net is starting to break down. It is thus interesting to note that respectively 62 % and 59 % of the poor households in Tutume and Letlhakeng say that they receive gifts like food and clothes from other households in the village. In rural areas it is obvious that the extended family is still taking responsibility for its poorest members.

In addition to the private social safety net, the government has established programmes for destitute, for HIV-positive, for orphans and an old age pension. In years of crop failure the local councils operate a drought relief program, which is a food for work programme to help those most severely hit. In Tutume, 58 % of the poor households claim that they are receiving or have received support from the Government. The figure for Letlhakeng is 80 %. This shows that different social programmes of the Government are reaching the poorest. The assistance to the destitute is mostly food, but they also get clothing and blankets,

candles, matches and soap, depending on their circumstances. Those who are admitted into the program are not employable due to infirmity or other disability. The destitute program aims at the individual rather than the whole household. At present the ordinary destitutes get 100 P/month, HIV/AIDS about 220 P and the old age pension is P110.

The majority of the respondents were aware of the different Government assistance programmes (ALDEP, ARAP, FAP, Destitutes, Drought Relief, AE10, LG17) and they also had received some help. In Tutume about 60 % acknowledged they had benefited from at least one of these, the figure for Letlhakeng is 91 %. There is a significant difference between the two study villages in the profile of the support. In Tutume as many as 50% say they received support from one of the agricultural programmes, the figure for Letlhakeng is 35 %. Another striking difference is in the figures for drought relief. There is a majority of the village households in Letlhakeng that receive support under that program, in Tutume the figure is low , only 5 %.

Who are the poor? Other studies referred earlier in this report conclude that the poor are the female-headed households, the uneducated households and the elderly households. My study confirms these results. In Tutume almost 70 % of the absolute poor are households where the head of household is old; the figure for Letlhakeng is around 50 % (Table 13)

**Table 13 Absolute poor by occupation. Tutume and Letlhakeng. 2000. Percentage.**

	Unemployed	Retired	Total
Tutume	31	69	100
Letlhakeng	55	45	100

Many of the so-called retired are getting old age pensions. This pension of P110 is, however, too small to keep them out of poverty. The situation might in a long term perspective be more serious for the younger households. Especially if they do not have resources such as an education that makes them employable on the formal labour market either locally or in urban areas.

Data shows that poor households have less educational resources than average in the village. *The poor household is also smaller than the better-off household.* This is the same as we found in 1980 and it is the same for both villages. One can see this as an indicator of households with inadequate labour resources, which makes it difficult for them to take part in a multi-income labour strategy and which therefore makes them poorer. The result, however, is contrary to what Jefferies (1996) finds. He claims that it is the largest households that are the poorest.

**Table 14 Educational level head of household by standard of living groups. Tutume and Letlhakeng. 2000. Percentage.**

	Tutume			Letlhakeng		
	Poor	Middle-income	Rich	Poor	Middle-income	Rich
No ed	26	7	3	75	60	31
< s7	66	35	16	21	28	28
S7	8	29	24	4	5	13
>S7	0	29	57	0	7	28
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Female-headed households are said to be the poorest. In both Tutume and Letlhakeng this group of households are poorer than other households in the villages (table 15).

In 1980 16 % in Tutume and 40 % in Letlhakeng of the de facto female-headed households were poor. There has thus been a decrease in poverty in this group. This might indicate that their husbands have better paid jobs in urban areas, making it possible to sustain a household on a wage, and/or that they are sending back money to enable the wife at home to hire labour and continue crop production. However, because the absolute number of cases in this group is small, I will not draw any firm conclusion on this question



**Table 15 Real head of household and standard of living. Tutume and Letlhakeng. 2000. Percentage.**

	Tutume			Letlhakeng		
	Poor	Middle-income	Rich	Poor	Middle-income	Rich
De jure FHH	36	56	9	71	27	1
De facto FHH*	4	61	35	0	67	33
Male HH	28	56	16	32	57	11

*de facto fhh is a household were the male head is a migrant and with no other grown-up male at home*

Orphans are a new and growing poverty group. Botswana is hard hit by the HIV/AIDS epidemic; one of the results is an increasing number of orphans. According to a study conducted in 1999 there is an urgent need for support for orphans, they are living in absolute poverty and the extended family is not in a shape that make it possible for it to absorb these children (Fallow 1999). In September 2000 ,1710 orphans were registered in Tutume. The DDP V for Central District says that poverty continues to rise in the whole district as evidenced by the rising number of registered destitute. In Tutume there were 400 destitutes in 1989, in year 2000, 1362.

*In conclusion;* the relative number of poor households has increased in both villages. This is not what was expected given other reports based

on national surveys like the Household Income and Expenditure Survey and the 1991 Census. The level of household poverty is however around the national figures. The poverty situation in Tutume is somewhat better than the national average, in Letlhakeng worse. The characteristics of poor households are in accordance with other findings they are the elderly, less educated and more female-headed households. I do not; however find support for the hypothesis that larger households are less well off than the smaller households. It might not be the size of the household only but also the age and sex composition that is important for the standard of living. On the one hand a larger household has more members to feed and thereby need a larger income, on the other hand a larger household has more members to work and thereby might get a larger income. The size and composition of a household varies throughout its life cycle. There might therefore be a correlation between life cycle and poverty. However, the data from the present survey do not make it possible to address this question.

### ***3.2 Inequality***

The Income Inequality Index was published by the UN in their yearly report and showed that Botswana had the highest degree of income inequalities among the countries of the world for which statistics were available (UNDP 1994). According to Good 1993 there are indicators that income distribution in Botswana is changing in favour of the rich, further increasing the income gap between the rich and poor.

Major surveys of household income and expenditure were conducted in 1973, 1986 and 1994. The first two studies showed that rural income distribution had become more skewed. The Gini coefficient rose from 0.52 in 1973 to 0.55 in 1986 (Harvey 1993). If we look at the figures for 1994 it shows a Gini coefficient of 0.54, a slightly more equal income distribution than in 1986. However one must consider how income is defined; income includes income in cash and income in kind. If one only looks at cash income, Botswana shows a Gini coefficient of 0.74 (HIES 1994). It is however difficult to compare the figures because different definitions of income were used. Thus, simply comparing the Gini coefficient from the three studies does not answer the question of whether inequality is increasing.

*The rise in income inequalities follows an urban- rural division.*

According to the HIES 1985/86 urban households earned twice as much as rural households and in 1989 the urban household earned on average three times the income of a rural household. (Hope 1996). Urbanisation seems at the same time to be linked to the reduction of poverty on the national level and to the increase of inequalities at a national level. The Gaborone-area and the other urban areas have fewer poor people than the rest of the country. At the same time figures from for instance Central and North East districts shows an increasing poverty rate. This region is larger and has more poor people than any other region *Thus there are reasons to believe that the regional differences in income are increasing.*

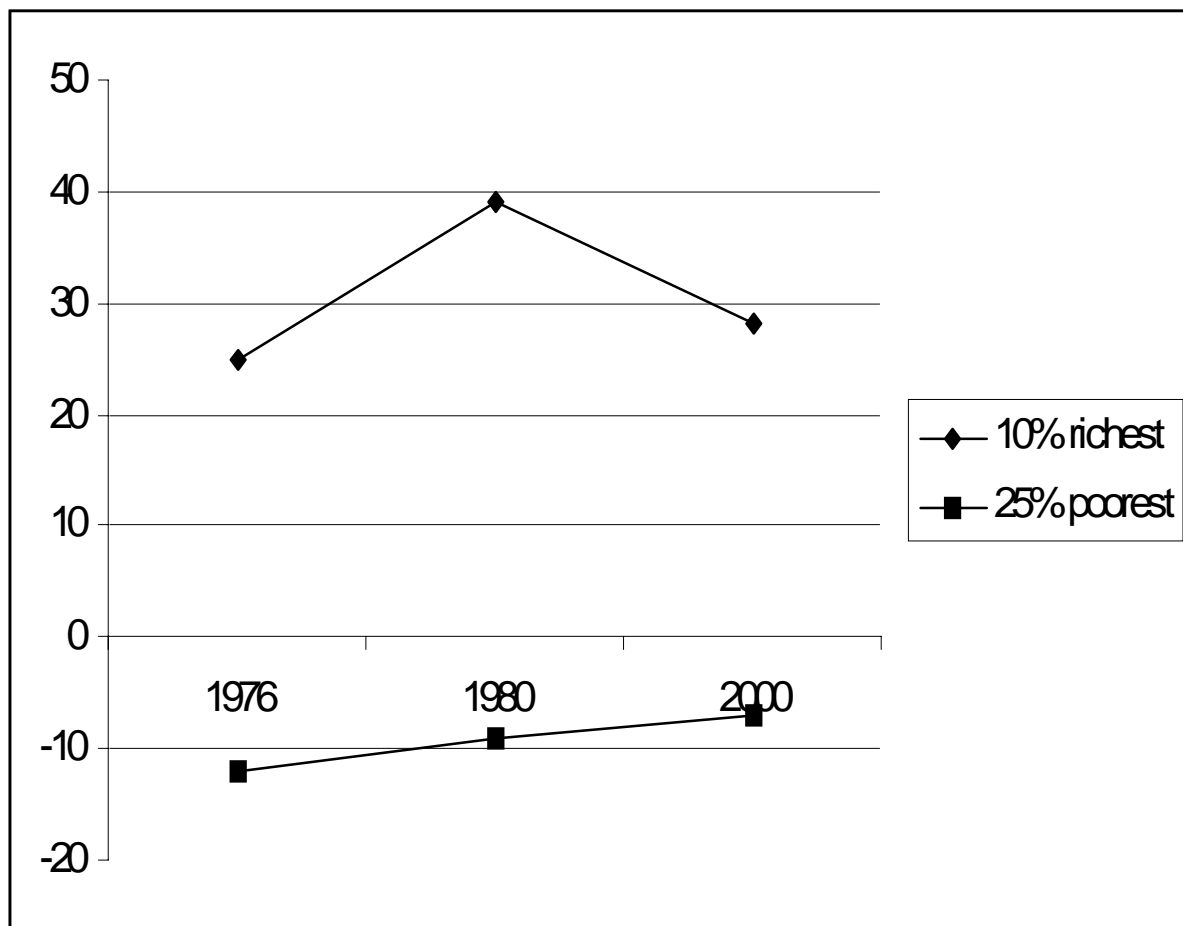
The review of the social indicators for Botswana appears to indicate that Botswana have had an improvement in the standard of living. However, Botswana's HDI rank is lower than its GDP rank, which implies that human development was not as advanced as could be expected for a country of Botswana's income level. Still one can see that survival rates improved, gross school enrolment ratio has increased and so has access to clean water (Siwawa-Nadi 1996). Thus there are indicators of improvement. However, these are aggregated figures; as soon as other relevant data are brought to bear, it becomes clear that such an improvement has not been evenly distributed, according to Siwawa-Nadi 1996. She indicates that there is a growing inequality, or as she puts it "*some people and some locations have benefited more..*"

Mazonde 1996 argues along the same line when he says that in 1994 the annual income received by the poorest 10 % was lower than in 1975 and that 75 % of rural households had an income below the mean average income.

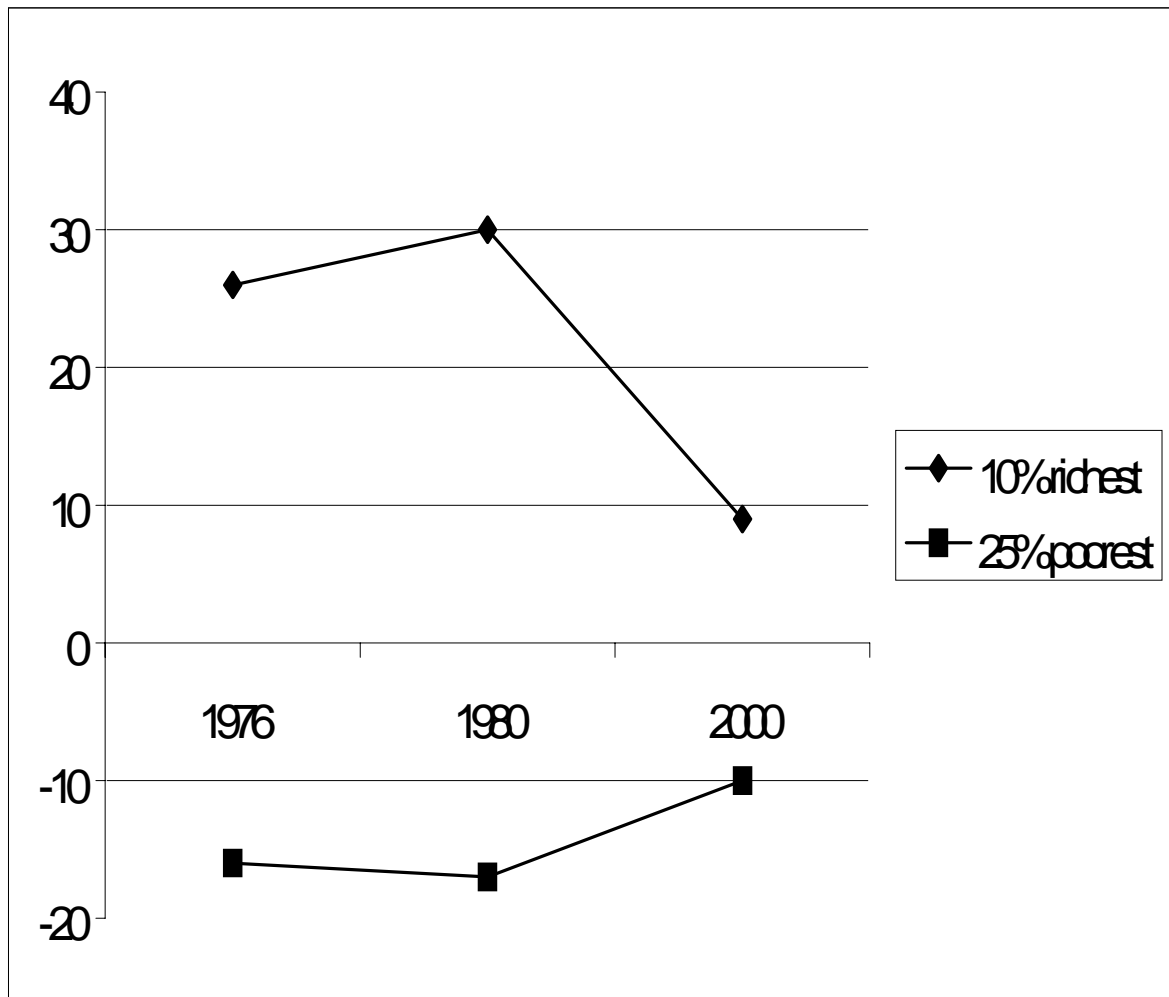
### **3.2.1 Inequality in Tutume and Letlhakeng**

Botswana is one of the most unequal societies and this has been so for years. It is therefore unlikely to expect the inequality in the two study villages to have increased since 1980. The survey data confirm this hypothesis. On the contrary, *the main conclusion is that inequality in standard of living is less today than it was in 1980* (fig.3.1 and 3.2)

*Figure 1 Standard of living 1976.1980.2000. Tutume Index values*



*Figure 2 Standard of living 1976.1980.2000. Letlhakeng. Index*



The main reason for the reduction in inequality is that the richest 10 % are less well off than in 1980. What has happened in the rural villages is probably that the richest households left for a more rewarding life in urban areas. Since Independence there were great opportunities in urban areas for those with personal qualifications and economic resources to succeed. Migration is always a selective process; the most able-bodied and youngest are leaving first. Thus rural villages are left with a

disproportionate number of resource-poor and elderly people. This process has mainly gained in a momentum after 1980 owing to the increased job and educational opportunities in urban areas since 1980. This process might be called an *internal brain drain*, leaving the rural areas in stagnation.

**Table 16 Inequality. Tutume and Letlhakeng. 1976 - 2000. Index-values for households.**

	Tutume			Letlhakeng		
	1976	1980	2000	1976	1980	2000
10% highest	25	38	28	27	27	9
25% lowest	-12	-9	-7	-17	-17	-10
10% lowest	-15	-12	-9	-18	-18	-11

From 1976 to 1980 Hesselberg concludes that there has been a general improvement and increased inequality in Tutume and stagnation in Letlhakeng. From 1980 to 2000 there has been a general improvement in living conditions and a reduction in inequality. One can see that poor households in Letlhakeng are poorer than the poor households in Tutume. At the same time inequality in standard of living is smaller in Letlhakeng than in Tutume (table 16).

In Letlhakeng the material situation for the 25 % poorest is, however, better now than in 1980. Rich households are less rich than before. Table 17 substantiates this. There are fewer households today than in 1980 that have a substantial large herd of cattle. Ownership of cattle is seen as a reliable single indicator of wealth in Botswana. That the number of larger cattle-owners is fewer today than twenty years ago supports the hypothesis that the richest household left the villages after 1980. This is a process that has gone further in Letlhakeng than in Tutume. One explanation might be the stagnation of the economy in that village.

**Table 17 Cattle ownership. Tutume and Letlhakeng. 1980 and 2000. Percentage .**

	Tutume		Letlhakeng	
	1980	2000	1980	2000
Less than 36	80	87	85	96
36-100	16	11	11	3
100+	4	2	4	1
Total	100	100	100	100



### ***3.3 Conclusion***

Botswana is an economic miracle in both a Third World context and especially in an African context. Its economic growth was stable and high for more than 30 years. Rich diamond resources were the driving force behind this growth. In addition, stable political conditions, regular democratic elections, and lack of civil wars blessed the country. The other side of the story is the lack of spread- effects. The growth was urban biased; the rural economy and thus the rural areas have not developed economically. Poverty is today more widespread in rural areas than in urban. A consequence of the diamond-lead growth was the highest urbanisation growth in all of Africa. However, urban job creation has not been able to absorb the migration from rural areas. Hence, urban unemployment is a problem. Unequal development is a result of the resource-lead modernisation of Botswana. This is, however, not unique for Botswana.

Botswana like all third world countries has seen a development which has altered the traditional forms of production through contact with the capitalistic form of production. This development has been going on for several hundred years but it gained extra momentum in the twentieth century. One of the results is that these self-sufficient economies become of less importance for both the national and the household economies. Employments in the formal part of the economy increased and an

increasing large part of the population get their income from waged work. Despite these considerable upheavals in the economy there are signs which indicate that income other than money income still remains important for the living conditions of households in Botswana

The imbalance in regional and social growth led to increased rural poverty in Tutume and Letlhakeng. This is contrary to the common view that poverty is severe but decreasing. It is especially women, the aged, and those without personal resources who are falling out of the general improvement in the standard of living in the village. The situation is especially difficult in Letlhakeng, a village with a stagnating economy. One might ask if its closeness to the Gaborone growth area might be a drawback for development of the village. As Myrdal 1957 would have put it; the backwash effects of the centre – drawing capital, labour and trade from the village, hit Letlhakeng. The skewed regional development with most of the activities and work being situated in urban areas is probably one factor behind the quite sharp reduction in inequality. The selective migration process left rural areas with a skewed population distribution both when it comes to age and qualifications. This is more prominent in Letlhakeng than in Tutume. Tutume has prospered for a long time owing to its status as a sub-centre in Central District creating public jobs which with its multiplier effect led to jobs in the private sector as well. Thus there are many local jobs in the village.

The debate of causes and remedies of poverty seems to be a non-conclusive one. At one time one paradigm held the upper hand ;at other periods in history another opposition paradigm is the most popular. In the shadow of this debate live the people of the Third World today, most of them in absolute or relative poverty. How are they surviving? How are they making a living given their small resources and difficult circumstances? This is the question I will now turn to.



#### **4. Rural households income strategies**

The economic growth in Botswana has led to both structural and regional changes. Rural production is today insignificant in the formal economy and increasingly less important in the household economy. However, the other side of the success story is the difficult employment situation. The mineral-led growth was not able to create formal work in a tempo that kept up with the growth of the labour force. In addition, most of formal jobs were created in urban areas and in larger villages. This led to one of the world's highest urbanisation rates.

Household income surveys reveal that the country has also had an unequal development and that relatively speaking the situation is worst in rural areas. There are huge regional imbalances in living standards and differences among households. In addition there are a few researchers that even claim that absolute poverty is growing in rural areas. There is no argument about the fact that poverty is still a major problem, especially in rural areas. How these households are coping, how they are making a living, despite their difficult situation, is an intriguing question.

In this chapter I will show how rural households in Tutume and Letlhakeng make a living today compared to 1980. In 1980 most

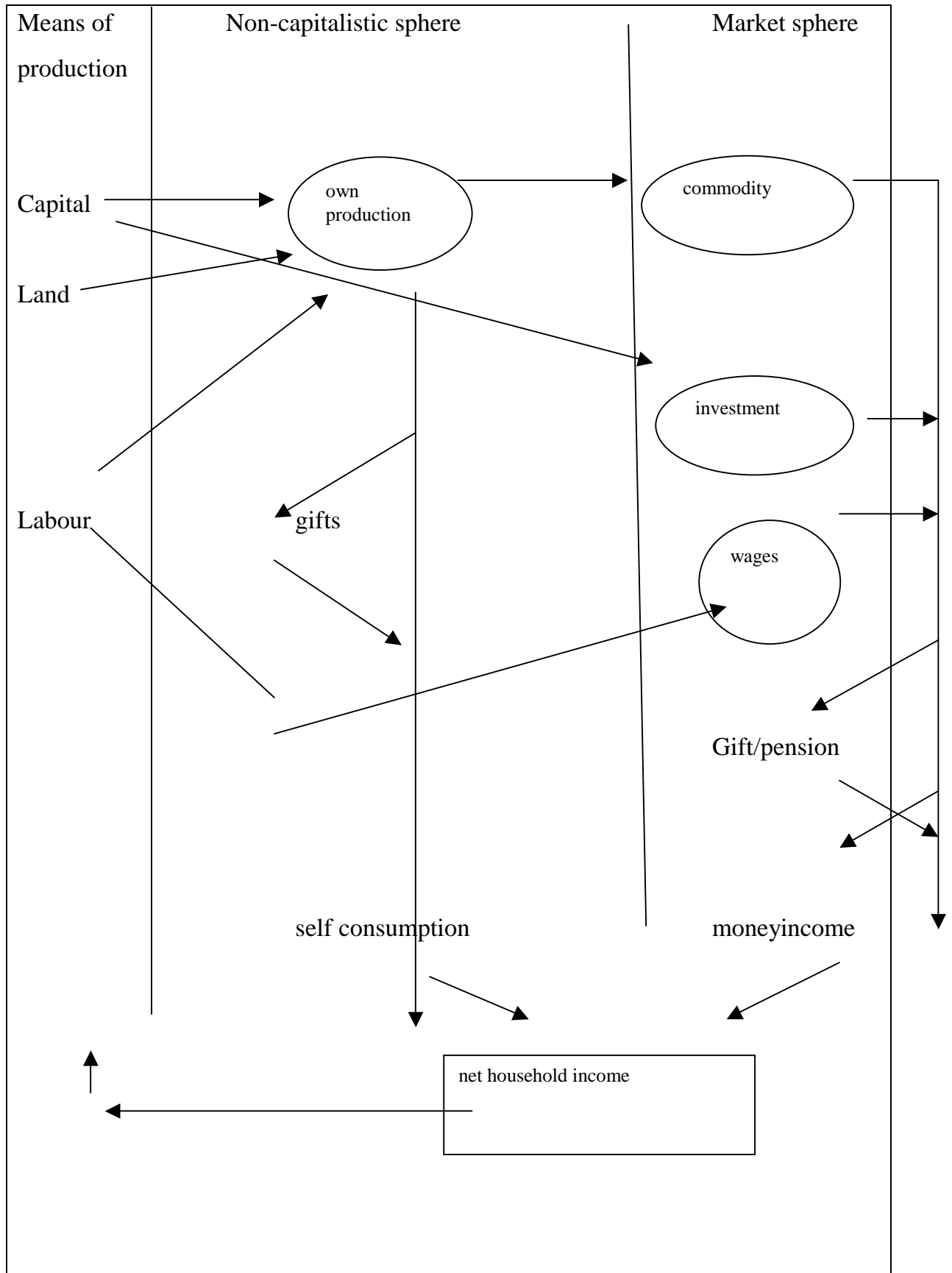
households employed at multi-income strategy, harvesting resources in both the traditional and modern sector in order to make a living. The predominance of this strategy was explained as a result of the transitional nature of the development process. Since 1980 Botswana had been through a general modernisation process fuelled by diamond-lead economic growth. If this general economic growth and development trickled down to rural areas, transformed the economy and included rural households in the modern economy in such a way that the general standard of living became better, one would expect changes in the way households are making a living. One would expect that the traditional rural economic sector like subsistence farming has become less important and employment in the modern formal economy become more important. One would also expect that fewer households have to make a living by combining income from both sectors, that is the multi-income strategy should be less predominant today. Instead one would expect to find that more households live from wage employment, private businesses and commercial farming. That is if the development process managed to transform the economy from a traditional to a modern market economy one should expect to find a higher degree of specialisation in the households' income strategies.

#### ***4.1 Making a living***

The household productive capacity depends on labour, land and capital. In the Botswana context land for crop production is communal and therefore not a household asset. However, owing to privatisation of boreholes and fences, land for cattle is private, although the cattle actually are grazing on communal land. Draft power, that is cattle, was the most important capital asset up to the present time. Selolwane (1994) claims that draught power is the household asset that usually is scarcer and therefore restricts the accumulation process of the household. In addition, household's demographic characteristics and size are important for the household's productive capacity. Figure 3 is schematically showing how household's resources can be applied in different economic sectors and at different economic activities in order to make a living. It is also in principle showing how different households resources in this way leads to social differentiation among households.

Households can, in principle, have several alternative sources of making a living. There may be a group of households that are completely dependent on financial income from the sale of goods or services, and these households are fully integrated into the capitalistic mode of production.

**Figure 3 Household survival strategies**





Another group of households may live off the food they produce or exchange within a kind of self-sufficient economy, making these households appear as if they exist in a non-capitalist mode of production. Krokfors (1995) calls this a seclusion strategy. I do not think this is a meaningful term to describe the situation in many third world countries. From a dualistic development point of view it was commonplace to believe that there were areas of the economy, which were not influenced by the market economy, where households and individual persons could continue living in a traditional way. However, I find it hard to believe that there are any such areas of significance today. What may at first glance appear to be traditional societies will, at closer inspection, turn out to be societies that are considerably altered and influenced by contact with the capitalist mode of production. There are households in the country, which survive with practically no money income. These households can be one of two different kinds. There are those households, which have resources to make use of local resource foundation. Then there is a group of households that survive because they benefit from connections to a large family or a more prosperous household. These are the poorest households in the country, who live on food and clothes donated by other households.

In rural areas there will also be a group of households which make use of resources in the spheres of both circulation and self-sufficiency. These are the *multi-income households*, using a variety of combinations of sources of income to form the household's income strategy. Every household aims to utilise its resources in a way which achieves the best

possible connection between consumer needs, resources and alternative ways in which to generate an income. Income strategy as a concept may lead to wrong associations in that it could suggest there is a planned deliberation in choice of strategy. I believe this is not necessarily the case. The reality for most households is probably that they try, in the best possible way, to combine their resources in order to attain their goals, whether the household is at the survival end of the living conditions scale, or is prosperous. Particularly for the less well to do households I believe the degree of conscious analysis and considered choices is small.

The multi-active income strategy makes varying demands on a household's labour resources, and may often make *conflicting demands on the resources*. The conflict is often created owing to location of the activities in space. Farming is located outside the village, sales and cash generating is in the village and wage employment is often found in the urban areas. The result is that allocation to one limits allocation to other activities. The demands of these activities on peoples labour-time is often exacerbated by the spatial dispersion of work, and often over considerable distances, thus effectively meaning that members engaging in one activity are physically cut-off from other activities.

Farming has an extremely low cash- generating capacity – a factor that largely explains why most rural households seek to earn their cash income through waged work rather than the sale of their produce. Rural households are mostly doing sub-subsistence farming and are far from

producing a surplus for sale. This means that it is necessity for most rural household to choose multi-activity as their labour allocation strategy- to secure their survival. *Selolwane finds that space is an important factor for both the availability of labour and the quality of income derived from its allocation.*

However, the demands of this strategy are often conflicting and therefore affect the productive capacity of the household. Generally labour allocation to wage employment has a negative impact on arable production. Yet wage employment also enables some households to perform better in their farming, providing them with resources to invest in agriculture. There is therefore some trade off to be made in this varied income base. Some households have considerable labour resources they are unable to employ fully to produce for them.

During my research in Botswana in the 1980's I found that the typical rural household was closely linked to an urban counterpart. Interaction between urban and rural areas was close, which manifested in that a significant group of households had a place of residence in both places. The majority of households had an economic footing both in the urban market economy and in the rural self-sufficient economy. *The typical rural household in Botswana was multi-local.*

An intriguing academic discourse is if multiactivity is a strategy for the poor or a strategy to become rich. Thus *what is the correlation between the household's standard of living and income-strategies?*

Baker (1995) shows how the poorest households are forced to sell their labour to neighbouring farms. Baker (1995) finds that this combination of income as a strategy is a necessity for the majority of village households. From his studies in Tanzania, he finds that 83% of the households are multi-active. He discovers that this is particularly widespread among households with little access to land. It is often they who combine farming with paid income. This he calls *survival strategies*, rather than considered strategies aimed at accumulating wealth. The households he refers to for the most part find work at other farms nearby. In their case, multi-activity does not lead to accumulation and opportunities for improving economic conditions in the long run. He points out, however, there is a qualitatively different kind of households, which have other and more active choice potentials, namely the more prosperous households. For them, it is possible to use multi-activity as an accumulation strategy.

The 1980 households' studies also looked at the complex connection between poverty and multi-activity (Wikan 1993). One has to look at both the number and the type of income sources. That is because some of the income sources are more insecure as a job alternative than others. The poorest households had the most insecure income sources, like beer-brewing, local farm labour, prostitution and work for other households. The most prosperous households were those combining own crop production with ownership of cattle and wage work in the formal sector (Hesselberg 1985, Wikan 1993). These results partly confirm Baker's

finding, it is a complex relationship between income-strategy and standard of living.

Some researchers see the multi-income strategy only as a *poverty strategy*. That is; multi-income is a strategy forced upon a household out of necessity. Roth (1996), studied nomads in the northern part of Kenya, where she finds that it is the poorest households which often have paid work in addition to income from farming. Consequently, she sees multi-income as a survival strategy. Potts describes a development in towns south of the Sahara coloured by increased poverty and insecurity for a growing group of households. She shows how this results in a new trend in Africa, namely counter-urbanisation. In addition, she finds that a continually increasing part of the poorest households choose to maintain, or even establish new, economic links with the village from which they, or their ancestors, came. Multi-activity as an income strategy in towns is becoming more and more important for the poor (Potts 1995). This is a parallel development to the one Potts finds in the rural areas of Zimbabwe.

Preliminary result from the Poverty Study found interestingly enough that the non-poor households were the ones that had the largest incomes also from non-money sources (Jefferis 1997). This result might indicate either an accumulation strategy or that linkage to rural areas still has certain cultural and/or economic values in Botswana.

Dahlberg (1995) interprets the fact that a large number of households have waged work in addition to farming as a clear strategy for minimising the risks. She writes that:

*“It is common for households to try to limit the adverse effects of the irregular rainfall by having at least one family member in waged employment” (p.265).*

However, from her studies in the northern part of Botswana, Dahlberg cannot quantify the level of multi-activity. Dahlberg (1995) finds that income strategies that are similar to what I call multi-activity are the most common in Botswana. The way in which agricultural production is described still seems to be characterised by a high degree of sub-subsistence, with low capital investment and simple technology. Only 5% of the households are able to live off the income from their own farming production. However, Dahlberg and Blaikie (1996) claim that a qualitative change in income strategies in Botswana is about to take place, moving away from the time when male work migration to South Africa was the only source of waged income. “Throughout Botswana livelihood strategies changed, reflecting diversification of income sources away from farming and livestock. It is common today to hear villagers say that in dry years they do not bother to plant, that at the most they will plant only small areas, and that the young people lack an interest in farming. Instead, wages and drought relief are used to buy the necessary staples”

They say that most households cultivate grain and some vegetables for their own consumption but emphasise that few of these households rely solely on income from farming in order to make a living. In other words, they say indirectly that multi-activity forms the main strategy in this village. It should be noted that Kalakamate is situated in a region of Botswana, with a good climate for cultivating grain.

It is possible to hypothesise that in other more marginally situated regions of the country in which the potential for good yields is considerably poorer, the threshold is lower for abandoning one's own grain cultivation. Should this turn out to be the case, one has to see the income strategies as influenced by external contextual conditions, the national context and the local context within which households operate. Structural changes in the labour market might have influenced the possibilities for rural development negatively. Lack of work opportunities in South Africa and lack of work for unskilled labourers in Botswana made investment in cattle less of an option for many workers. This lack of investment in cattle means less local work for poor rural households and in the long run also discontinuation of urban- rural linkages.

It is important to take regional differences into account. Even in Botswana there are differences in the physical and cultural basis for agricultural development. This follow-up study in two villages, situated in different ecological zones, questions some of the conclusions from the latest national surveys; that crop cultivation is a way to poverty and that

there is no future for crop cultivation as a means of poverty alleviation in Botswana (MFDP 1997).

Ellis 1998 argues that there was confusion in the literature between household strategies for spreading risk and coping strategies, which are essentially reactive. He makes a useful distinction between *ex ante* risk management and *ex post* coping with crisis.

As mention it is problematic to use the *concept strategy* when describing all kinds of different ways households in Africa are making a living. Problematic both because the concept gives an impression of deliberately that is not always the case and problematic because the goals of these strategies vary according to the resources of the household

Grown and Sebstad suggest that the goal of the poorest groups is *survival*, that the goal of people whose basic survival is assured is *security* and that the goal of people who achieved basic security is *growth* (cited in Francis 2000). They argue that these shifts also make a shift in the degrees of variation of income strategies. Going from survival strategies to security strategies means and increased complexity in the mix of livelihoods. The shift to growth on the other hand means a concentration on fewer income-earning activities.

*To sum up this debate*, the actual income strategy on the household level seems to depend on three factors: *the national economy, the locale resource base and the household's resource base.*



The households are no homogenous group, and depending on the available resources there will be three different **aims** of the income strategies:

*The survival strategies of the poor*

*The risk minimilisation strategy of the middle-income*

*The accumulation strategy of the rich*

Household *income strategies*, however, is a problematic concept. It gives the impression of freedom of choice and planned action on the household level that is far from reality for most rural households. Many of the choices are *ex post* crisis management. In addition there are normally no single individuals in the household who control all the households' resources. Capital is managed on another level than labour. Thus, the household members are making use of their labour either for the best of the household's interest and /or for the best of their own interest.

Given that, rural households are no homogenous group; they command different types of resources. This is nothing new in Botswana; there have always been commoners, serfs and chiefs in a village. The development process has continued and maybe strengthened the process of social differentiation. It is the amount of resources, capital and labour that a household has control over that limiting its freedom of choice of income strategies.

Research on the correlation of household resources and income strategies is inconclusive. Some find that multi-income is a strategy for the poor, others say it is a strategy for the rich, while others again find it to be a risk-minimising strategy for the middle-income household.

I will now analyse households in the two study areas with the objective of showing how the households are making a living and how the income-strategy is connected with household's resources. With these two villages, situated in different ecological zones, I might be able to question some of the firm conclusions from the latest national surveys; that is, *crop cultivation is a way to poverty and there is no future for crop cultivation as a means of poverty alleviation* (MFDP 1997).

## 5. Income-generating sectors and the rural household

A village household has the following options for making a living: traditional crop cultivation or cattle rearing, local wage employment or local business, external wage employment or external business. I will in this chapter show the households involvement in each of these income-generating activities today and compare it to the situation in 1980. The main focus will on the agricultural sector because that was traditionally the most important sector for food and security for the rural household. I will also look at the importance of local income generating activities as well as external work.

### 5.1 *Local income options*

*Betty (62) has always grown her own crops. Betty was once married but her husband never gave her help or money - only five children. Betty had to work as a cleaner at the school in addition to being a farmer in order to support her family. Now the children are grown-up and Betty is living alone. She still produces some crops, but lack of manpower and draft power make it difficult for her. In order to get some help she arranges beer parties that are she invites people to come and help her and she pays them with a beer party. She never produces enough to feed herself. In addition she has to help to support the household of her daughter Caroline who has six children and no husband. Caroline is also producing crops, but her production is under the same constraints as her mothers. She has no cattle, no tractor, no husband and no money. Betty and Caroline admit that they are thinking of giving up crop production. But Betty is quick to add that that would be a shame because the Kalanga women do plough their fields.*

*Ruth is a nurse. She is 60 years old and divorced with one grown up daughter and three grandchildren. The daughter has left her children with her mother in the village. Ruth is a big grain producer. She has a tractor, a threshing machine and hires labour from Zimbabwe to do the agricultural work for her. She produces enough to feed her household and also sells on a regular basis. She does not sell to BABM, because private buyers pay better, especially for the red sorghum. Ruth says that the purpose of producing crop is both because she does not want to spend money on buying grain and she also wants to make money. Ruth has also her own small, irrigated vegetable plot, but the produce is only for own consumption.*

### **5.1.1 Crop production**

Land productivity in Botswana is one of the lowest in the world (Hesselberg 1985). In the period from 1972 – 1976 the yield for sorghum was 367 kg/ha and for maize 527 kg/ha. The averages for 1978 – 81 were 198 kg/ha for sorghum and 205 for maize, for 1990 –95 316 kg/ha and 134kg/ha respectively (Botswana agricultural survey). The figure shows that the yields mainly vary according to weather conditions and that there was no substantial development in crop production sector. Yields are still low and unpredictable.

It is quite common among Botswana observers to dismiss household farming as a residual activity whose importance waned over the years as a result of declining production and the shift of labour towards wage

employment and off-farm livelihoods. Figures from the agricultural statistics do not entirely substantiate this view; for instance they show that in 1980 150000 ha of sorghum was planted and in 1995 170 000 ha. There are, however, national figures and says nothing about how many farmers are engaged in crop production. It is possible to keep up the area planted at the same time as the numbers of farmers are decreasing. That is exactly what took place in European agriculture.

Data from the study villages gives support to both views; *crop production is still an important activity in both villages, but it has become less important in Tutume than twenty years ago.*

In Tutume around 2/3 of the households are still involved in crop production. The figures for Letlhakeng are lower, less than 50 %. However in both villages half or more than half of the households are producing crops. These figures indicate that crop production is still important for the rural households.

**Table 18 Household active in crop production. 1980 and 2000.**

	Tutume		Letlhakeng	
	1980	2000	1980	2000
Yes crop prod.	91	66	48	48
No crop prod.	9	33	52	52
Total	100	100	100	100

In Tutume there has been a significant process of discontinuity of crop production. Whereas in 1980 practically all households produced their own crops, the figure for year 2000 was 66 %. In Letlhakeng the level of crop production was about the same as in 1980.

All commentators on Botswana claim that crop production is on the retreat. The development in Tutume is in accordance with that.

However, the percentage of households still involved in crop production is higher than the literature gives impression of. Already in 1980 half of the households in Letlhakeng were none-farmers and there has been no noticeable decrease in crop production. Is that because of the lack of alternatives in this village, with its meagre local labour market and the almost complete isolation from mine work in South Africa? This might be the same process as Potts (1995) notes in Zimbabwe; people are retreating to subsistence production out of lack of alternatives.

The situation today in the two villages is that there are a substantiate number of households that are living there and are not farmers. Some of them have never been farmers, some says that they plan to take up farming, whilst others have discontinued farming . I will no take a closer look at the households that are not farming.

**Table 19 Household characteristics and crop production. Percentage. 2000**

Tutume

	size <5	female head	no cattle	poor	ed.head
No crop prod.	74	36	64	40	15
Average	45	31	43	27	11

Letlhakeng

	size <5	female head	no cattle	poor	ed.head
No crop prod.	45	52	85	69	70
Average	40	38	62	46	64

Size and assets are the two factors that significantly differs the non-farming households from the farming households. They are *smaller* household; they are more often *female-headed* households, *without any cattle* and belonging to the poorest in the village. These types of

households are therefore those who lack many of the resources necessary for continuing with crop production. They have little money to hire help, they are short of household manpower, they lack their own draft power and they lack grown-up male manpower. Lack of male manpower seems to be an important obstacle to crop producing ( table 19). It is the households that have men at home that most often produce their own crops. Francis (2000) says that that access to household *labour* will be one of the most important factors determining the households' future. Larger households are more able to diversify their portfolios of activities and give labour to crop production as well as non-agricultural activities.

In addition, if they have income from a migrant husband at the same time as they have other grown-up males at home, they will be the type of household most likely producing crops. As table 20 shows, in both villages the absent worker male households are those most often active in crop production, as a number two comes the male households. This is the same finding as in 1980. This substantiates the hypothesis that available male labour at home is crucial for keeping up crop production. Rain in Botswana is scare and unpredictable, it is therefore difficult to plan when to go ploughing the fields. As ploughing is a job for men, good timing is difficult for those households that have no men at home. That is the main reason why fewer of the households without men at home are involved in crop production.



**Table 20 Absenteeism and crop production. 1980 and 2000. Percentage.**

Tutume

	Yes crops prod.		No crop prod.	
	1980	2000	1980	2000
Absent worker male household	98	92	2	8
Absent worker female household	80	53	20	47
Male household	94	69	6	31
Female household	88	46	12	54
All HH	91	67	9	33

Lethakeng

	Yes crops prod.		No crop prod.	
	1980	2000	1980	2000
Absent worker male household	73	79	27	21
Absent worker female household	30	48	70	52
Male household	51	62	49	38
Female household	19	21	81	79
All HH	45	48	55	52

In the study in 1980 lack of labour was already noticed and especially lack of male labour as one major reason for not producing crops (table 20). In 2000 the major change to notice in Tutume since 1980 is that the households without male labour at home and /or lack of remittances

from migrants have had a remarkable drop in crop production. It is only the absent- worker male households that keep their crop production almost at the same level as in 1980.

Hesselberg (1985) reports that there was an increase in the number for female households, which dropped out of crop production from 1976 to 1980. He also claims that many of these households survive by working as farm labourers. Also in 2000, female households are the group, which is most often out of crop production. However, I do not find any change since 1980 in Letlhakeng. But they were already on a low level in 1980. In Tutume I find that the percentage of female households that is still ploughing dropped to half the numbers since 1980.

In addition to lack of male labour, lack of draft power might be one reason for a household to make the decision to either not try to produce crops or discontinue crop production. Hesselberg (1985) shows that women with cattle are equally likely to plough as men. He therefore explains lack of crop production mainly due to the household being without cattle. Given the ARAP policy of aiming to help household with ploughing, this might not be such a relevant factor as it was in 1980.

Also in Letlhakeng the absent worker male households kept up crop production. The migrant households without males at home have had an increasing crop production rate; the same is true of the male households. This is a surprising development. Why should these households be more

involved in crop production today than twenty years ago? One reason might be simply that they harvest agricultural subsidies for ploughing and never intend to harvest. Thus, the figure for crop production is artificially high. Another reason might be that as the salary level is higher, the remittances are larger and thus the household has more resources to put into crop production than they had twenty years ago.

Crop production is resource- demanding activity. In addition to labour and land you need some capital for hired help, transport, seeds, pesticides and so on. It is therefore not surprising that it is too difficult a task for the poorest household to undertake, especially given the risky condition for crop production in Botswana. The poorest household lack own draft power and they lack money to hire draft power. In addition many of the poorest households are female and small and might therefore also lack manpower in general for crop production. The agricultural programmes are mainly aimed at removing one obstacle for the crop production households. *The poorest households are however in a multiple-obstacle situation and might therefore have difficulties in utilising the programmes.*

**Table 21 Crop production and level of living. 2000. Percentage.**

Tutume

	Poor	Middle-income	Rich	Average
Yes crop prod	43	71	76	67

Lethakeng

	Poor	Middle-income	Rich	Average
Yes crop prod	35	65	71	48

Crop production in Botswana is said to be a sub-subsistence activity. That is the households in general are harvesting to little to support the household with food through the year. In Tutume about half of the crop producing households and in Lethakeng 28 % say that they get all the grain the need from their production(table 22). The rest of the households have either to buy or are given grain under some kind of Government programme or from relatives. Asking people if the amount harvested is enough to feed the household (table 23) furthermore shows the sub-subsistence character of crop production. It seems that crop production especially in Lethakeng is even more of a sub-subsistence kind today than in 1976 and 1980. There is no change in Tutume.

**Table 22 Source of grain supply. 2000. Tutume and Letlhakeng. Percentages.**

	Tutume	Letlhakeng
Own production only	56	28
Buy in shop	33	19
Gift	1	27
Combination of sources	9	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 23 Amount harvested according to the respondents perceived needs. Percentage.**

	Tutume			Letlhakeng		
	1976	1980	2000	1976	1980	2000
To little	42	53	44	50	53	72

Hesselberg (1985) predicts that along with the modernisation process one would expect an increased commercialisation of crop production. This has not happened. Few households are planting crops with the intention of sale (table 24).

**Table 24 Purpose of crop production. 2000. Tutume and Letlhakeng. Percentage.**

	Tutume	Letlhakeng
Own consumption	88	74
Sale and consumption	12	26
Total	100	100

Surprisingly more households in Letlhakeng than in Tutume claim that they are selling crops and that is one of the reasons why they continue with crop production. Given the physical conditions for crop production one would expect this to be even a more risky business in Letlhakeng than in Tutume. There might be cultural factors that explain why the Kalanga-people are less eager to sell part of their harvest. Another aspect is that there are more poor people in Letlhakeng and they also need money. Selling part of the harvest is one way of getting hold of some.

What is the future for crop production? Is this an activity that older people are practicing out of habit and tradition? Will new households take up crop production? The figure shows that in *Tutume about 23 % of the households have never ploughed, which means they have never been involved in crop production. The figure for Letlhakeng is 29 %.*

Who are these households? If crop production can be seen as a traditional activity, a left over, one might hypothesize that young households more often are non-producers. This is supported by the data. *There are significantly more of the younger households that have never ploughed than the older households..* It is however, not possible to go further into this question on basis of these figures.

The households give a variety of reasons for not being involved in crop production (table 25). The most important reasons were lack of manpower and lack of money. According to the Poverty Alleviation Study (1997) there are several reasons for not ploughing: drought, limited numbers of tractor for hire, inadequate labour, general lack of agricultural inputs as well as several personal household reasons. Among the more personal reasons are such factors as death of spouse, old age and infirmity, no resources for ploughing. In the present study lack of manpower and lack of money are the most mentioned reasons for not ploughing.

In arable agriculture the basic factors of production are land, labour and draft power. The evidence of the use of these factors is that the nuclear family unit may have access to and control over its land assets but have joint access to draft power from livestock units held by a larger extended family unit. Because of the shortness and unreliability of rainfall in Botswana, a critical factor in the output performance of a farm is the optimal timing of arable activities. This puts households which have to rely on limited drafter- power and labour resources at a disadvantage.

**Table 25** Reasons for not producing crops. 2000. Percentages.

	Tutume	Letlhakeng
Lack of cattle	10	2
Lack of manpower	23	23
Lack of money	18	45
Climatic reasons	5	3
Other	45	27
Total	100	100

*The farming methods* have changed considerably since 1980. In 1980 almost all households used cattle as draft power. In 2000 we see that there is a variety of types of draft power. The tractor has become common. In Letlhakeng it is the most common means for ploughing the fields. In Tutume cattle are still an important means of ploughing. The extensive use of tractors might be due to the ARAP, which paid for tractor ploughing.

In Tutume only 54 % of the household own their own draft power; the figure for Letlhakeng is even lower only 24 %. This means that the households have become more dependent on other and professionals for ploughing. Risk and timing are factors that must be taken into consideration when producing crops in Botswana. In an environment



where good timing is all important, the households that do not control own draft power stand a greater chance of getting bad harvest due to the importance of good timing. However, relatively few households see lack of own draft power at the major constraint in crop production.

**Table 26 Method of ploughing 2000.Percentage.**

Tutume

	Cattle	Tractor	Donkey
Own	49	2	3
Borrowed	11	1	1
Hired	13	20	1
Total	73	23	5

Letlhakeng

	Cattle	Tractor	Donkey
Own	2	6	16
Borrowed	1	2	2
Hired	0	68	2
Total	3	76	20

In 1980 borrowing of draft power was quite common. Hesselberg (1985) says that 20 % of the households in Tutume and 43 % of the households in Letlhakeng borrowed cattle for ploughing. In 2000 borrowing was not longer common (table 26) In Letlhakeng the majority of households hired tractors for ploughing. In Tutume ploughing with oxen is still most common, but as many as 23 % of the households used tractors, mostly hired.

In 1980 there were a higher percentage of absent-worker female households that hired draft power than the average in the village. It is the same in 2000, the absent worker female households are the type of households that rely mostly on hired draft power.

The natural condition for crop production in Botswana is what Hesselberg (1985) describes as fair with regard to dryland, semi-arid farming. This are conditions that do not favour a modernisation of crop production, was one major conclusion from the study of the two villages in 1980. The new study does not alter this conclusion. I see few signs of a major modernisation of the arable agriculture sector in Botswana. There is no commercialisation; crop production is still an activity for producing food for the household. The increased number of tractors is the only sign of modernisation and might in fact be due to agricultural policy and not a more capital intensive agriculture Drop-out has increased but those who farm are still working the land in more or less the same way as they always have done.

### 5.1.2 Local business

*Peter is 45 years old. He has a wife and three children at home. He is running a commercial vegetable garden in the village. He worked for twenty years as a manager in the mining industry and is investing some of his savings in the vegetable business instead of the cattle industry. He has also received grants and loans from the Financial Assistance Policy for the necessary and expensive irrigation system of the garden. Peter says that he has started this garden for two reasons: he wants to make a living and he wants to influence the people in the village to start eating more vegetables. At present he is not making much money so he has to rely on his wife's salary. She is a primary school teacher. Peter believes in his business idea, but he sees that there are obstacles ahead. Without much capital - transport and marketing will be a problem. At the moment his production is so small that he is selling most of the produce off the premises. But next year he hopes to go to the market in Francistown with some of his produce. Peter and his wife have never been producing grain, because he thinks that the reward is less than the input. It costs around 200 pula per 10 hectares to produce grain, which is less than the value of the crops. But old people do not think like that. Peter's mother says that he is lazy because he is not doing masimo.*

*Isaac is 54 years old. He is living with his second wife and four grandchildren. Since his early twenties he worked in the mines of South Africa, mainly on 9-month contracts. He has invested his savings in cattle and manages a herd of around 500 head of cattle. He is not an owner of all these cattle; some belong to other members of his family. As there are no members of his household earning money and none of his children are sending money from Gaborone he has to sell cattle to make money. So for Isaac cattle sale is his source of income. Isaac however is not happy with this situation because he is the traditional type of cattle owner who like to keep cattle, not sell cattle. Fortunately, his herd is so big that he sells to the abattoir, not to the South African Mr. Brink, who cheats the smaller cattle owners by paying half the going rate for a good cow.*

There is little local business excepts the type linked to agricultural production, and few of the households involved in sale of agricultural produce get at substantial part of their income from the sale. You need, for instance, to have more than a 100 head of cattle to have a regular income from sale of cattle. In 1980, only 4 % of the households in Letlhakeng and Tutume had that big a herd. In 2000 the percentage had fallen to two in Tutume and one in Letlhakeng. So between one and two percentage of the households had herds big enough for capital accumulation. The development has gone in the opposite direction to what Hesselberg predicted in 1985. He foresaw that the group of big

commercial cattle-owners would increase. However, they might have left the rural areas for the city in the period since 1980.

In Letlhakeng the South African cattle-buyers came on a regular basis and bought the cattle for a price far below the official figures. This was exactly the same situation as before the cooperative system was established in the mid-seventies. The reason the farmers still sold to the private cattle-buyers was that they could not afford to pay the costs to drive a small herd to Lobatse (the nearest abattoir). Thus most farmers were forced to sell to the South Africans at a lower price. Small cattle owners sell to acquire money for necessary expenditures such as school fees, food and clothes. This is the same as we saw in 1980.

**Table 27 Agricultural business, 1976, 1980, 2000. Percentage.**

Tutume

	Sale of cattle			Sale of crops		
	1976	1980	2000	1976	1980	2000
Household						
selling	60	44	38	24	22	22

Lethakeng

	sale of cattle			sale of crops		
	1976	1980	2000	1976	1980	2000
Households						
selling	74	59	36	24	5	31

As mentioned, except for some sale of farming produce, there are few households involved in the private local business. In Tutume 3 % and in Lethakeng less than 1 % of the households had their own local business. There are all kinds of businesses from petty trading to supermarkets, bars and restaurants. Most of the locally owned business is in the service sector. There are also a few building firms. Except for one in Tutume these are small firms.

Beer-brewing was a local business that quite a few of the poorest households were involved in in 1980. 12 % of the households in Tutume and 3 % of the households in Letlhakeng made money income from beer brewing. Making an income from brewing and selling beer from your own compound has always been seen as a last option and is therefore nothing for the more well off households in the village. In that perspective it is interesting to see how the percentage of household in Tutume doing beer-brewing on a regular basis fell from 12 to 8 %, while in Letlhakeng there was an increase from 3 to 11 %. As I have shown in chapter 3 the number of poor households has increased in both villages. A question is then the why we have had a different development in the two study villages.

### **5.1.3 Local wage employment**

*Matsholola is 27 years old and a widower. His wife died in a traffic accident one year ago and Matsholola is now taking care of his two under-school aged children with a little help from a cousin. He has his education from the brigade and is trained as a car mechanic. He is working at the local garage. The salary is not much, but it buys them food and clothes. He has no money left for investing in for instance cattle. That worried him. Even though he is young, Matsholola is quite a traditionalist; he believes that a man should have some cattle. If for instance he wants to marry again he needs cattle to pay lobola.*

*Walter is a 34-year-old technician; he has got work at the local hospital. When he took his vocational training in Gaborone he met Linda and married her. She is a student at the university of Botswana, so most of the year Walter has to take care of the three children. He still lives in his father's compound. However by Christmas time Walter thinks he can take his wife and children to their own home. Walter and Linda say that they do not plough and that they never will. When I ask them why they stay in Tutume, they say that they prefer village life.*

In Tutume 65 % and in Letlhakeng 37 % of the household have an income from wage labour. This is less than in 1980. In 1980 72 % and 51 % of the households in the two villages had wage incomes. There are many factors which might explain the drop in formal wage income; the villages have had a population increase that outnumbered the creation of local work. This is especially the case for Tutume with its enormous population growth. Opportunities of external work options are also fewer than 20 years ago. This is especially true in Letlhakeng, which was hit by the localisation policy in the South African mines.

Of the households who had wage income the majority had only one job. There are ,however, a few households with more than one wage income. In Tutume 19 % had two and 2 % three members in wage employment. The figures for Letlhakeng were 4 % and 2 %. *Those households with two or more wages are significantly more well off than the other households in the village.*



Wage employment is a way to earn money to meet household needs, but it might also mean split households and lack of labour for village-based tasks like crop production. One of the conclusions we made in 1980 was that in order for a household to get the maximum out of combining crop production and wage income, the wage-earner must work locally. The study from 1980 found that around one third of the households had local work in Tutume, but only 11 % in Letlhakeng. How many of the households find work locally today?

*The percentage having local work has increased in both villages. This must be a result of the increasing number of jobs in both villages since 1980. As I showed in chapter 2, this is a result of a planned government decentralisation policy and private initiatives. However, it is obvious from table 28 that the chance of getting local work is meagre in Letlhakeng compared to in Tutume.*

**Table 28 Local wage employment by head of household. 2000. Percentage.**

	Tutume		Letlhakeng	
	1980	2000	1980	2000
Local wage hh head.	33	41	11	16

The households with local employment mainly have regular cash work. A few have piece jobs. In 70 % of the household the employee is the man in the household, in 30 % the woman. The women are mainly doing sales or service work; men are more employed in professional and technical type of work. On average the locally employed worker has more education than the average, he also have larger and younger households.

## **5.2 External income generating activities**

*Benjamin is 35 years old. He is married to Cholo (26) and they have two sons Denis (8) and Thabo (6). Both Benjamin and his wife have completed Form 2 in Letlhakeng Secondary. He works as a police officer and is at the moment stationed in Molepolole. Being so close to home means that he can come home quite often and look after his family. His wife has a small income of her own, she is working as a hair dresser. Most of Benjamin's salary is spent on building a brick house. He also has a middle-sized herd of cattle, but he is not selling cows. Cattle are my security in case of more difficult times, he says. Benjamin and Cholo have never had their own fields for crop producing, and they say that they never will. "Ploughing is for old people", Cholo says. "I cannot plough because I do not have anyone to help me in the fields".*

*Jowitt is 38 years old and married to Fatty (27). Their two children are both under school age. Denis did not complete standard 7. At the moment he is working as a driver in Gaborone. Fatty is active in crop cultivation in order to get staple food for herself and the children. She admits that Denis is spending most of his salary in Gaborone on drinks and other women, she says. Fatty is taking part in the drought relief program in order to get some money. They have no cattle.*

Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century external work has been a way of finding money for necessities as well as taxes. In Letlhakeng the Chamber of Mines had a recruitment office until the end of the 1970's.

In some households the head is working outside the village, in some households there are other household members and in some cases we find a combination.

Table 29 Households in external work 2000..Percentage.

	Tutume	Letlhakeng
Head	13	10
Other member	23	16
Total	36	26

In 1980 60 % of the households in Tutume had one or more member in external wage employment, the figure for Letlhakeng was 33 %. Thus, there are fewer households with external income from external employment today than 20 years ago. There are many possible ways of explaining this change. The out-migration of whole families to the urban areas is one factor, the lack of employment opportunities in South

Africa is another factor and increased local work opportunities is a further factor behind this development.

Remittances are a less important source of income for households in the village of Tutume today than 20 years ago. However, for those households that are receiving money or goods or help with money for fencing from migrant members, it may be a very important source of income. If we look at Letlhakeng there are slightly more households which are receiving money from migrant members today than in 1980. The households in Letlhakeng have become relatively more dependent on external wage income in the form of remittances (table 30).

**Table 30 Migrant households. 1980 and 2000. Percentage.**

	Tutume		Letlhakeng	
	1980	2000	1980	2000
Absent worker male household	28	21	19	13
Absent worker female household	28	16	13	12
Male household	34	43	46	41
Female household	10	20	23	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 31 Remittances.1980 and 2000. Percentages.**

	Tutume		Letlhakeng	
	1980	2000	1980	2000
Household				
Receiving	41	34	17	24

Today a labour migrant must find work in Botswana; they are more or less cut off from the South African labour market. That puts extra pressure on job creation in Botswana. Francistown is only 11/2 hour away from Tutume and being Botswana's second largest town which also has experienced an economic boom it is the most obvious place to seek work for someone coming from Tutume. Gaborone has that function for Letlhakeng. Partly owing to the transferee system still practiced by the Government, most of the migrants are spread all over Botswana.

**Table 32 Place of work migrant. 1980 and 1976. Percentage.**

	Tutume		Letlhakeng	
	1980	2000	1980	2000
Closest town	18	35	8	15
Other Botswana	53	62	16	67
Other country	29	3	76	17
Total	100	100	100	100

**Table 33 Type of work migrants. 1980 and 2000. Percentage.**

	Tutume		Letlhakeng	
	1980	2000	1980	2000
Mines	12	-	70	15
Unskilled	27	43	14	57
Skilled	51	51	16	24
Academic	-	6	-	4
Total	100	100	100	100

There are more migrants in skilled work today than twenty years ago. One reason might be the fact that the labour market in the mines in South Africa is more or less closed to the Batswana. The difference in skill profile that was the case in 1980 is still there. The migrants from Tutume are more often in skilled work than the migrants from Letlhakeng. The reason for the difference is obvious: the migrants from Tutume are better educated than the migrants from Letlhakeng. The same was true in 1980. Hence, the migrants from Tutume stand a better chance on the national labour market than the migrants from Letlhakeng.

**Table 34 Education characteristics of the migrant. 1980 and 2000. Percentage.**

	Tutume		Letlhakeng	
	1980	2000	1980	2000
No education	21	-	60	17
Some primary	50	69	20	65
Some sec.	29	18	20	17
Form 5	-	12	-	-
Univ	-	1	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>



### 5.3 Conclusion

Crop production is still an important income generating activity on the household level in both Tutume and Letlhakeng. But especially in Tutume this activity has become less important than it was 20 years ago.. In Letlhakeng there has been no change since 1980, which means that about half of the households are involved in arable production. Crop production is still mainly a sub- self-sufficiency activity and there has been little modernisation except for the introduction of tractors for hire. Most households claim that they are producing to little to feed the family and that a surplus for sale is rare. This is substantiated by the fact that most households have to buy grain. So even though the majority of the households are still producing crops, they cannot make a living from arable agriculture.

Unemployment is a problem. The local work opportunities are not good enough to provide well paid and secure work for the households. In Tutume 60 percentage of the heads of households have no paid job, the figures for Letlhakeng is 84 %. At the same time the importance of external work and remittances from migrant household members is less than before,.

The following changes have taken place for the households in the two study villages since 1980. *In Tutume fewer households are producing crops, relatively fewer have wage income, the migration rate has gone down and the local businesses are still for the few. In Letlhakeng the*

*percentage of households producing crops is the same, but as in Tutume fewer have wage income and fewer are labour migrants. Almost none is involved in local business.*

*The relative number of households in both villages, which are not involved on a regular basis in any income-generating activity has increased.* That is they are not farming, they have no wage income and are not selling goods. These households are dependent on some kind of security net for their survival. The official social security system (such as destitute programmes, drought relief programmes, AIDS programme, orphans programme and old age pension) picks up some households. Owing to an increased number of old people as many as 26 % of the households get old age pensions. 42 % of the households say that they get some kind of transfer from other households in the village. Many researchers claim that the extended family system is about to break down in Botswana. However, the large number of households that get support from other households indicates that the system is still intact.

In short, the situation for the household can be describes as follows: the output of arable agriculture normally gives to little to support a household, the migrants' incomes in the urban areas are not high enough for them to remit a substantial amount of money to the household, the wage level locally for many households is too low to support a household. The question then is; *how are the households making a living, what are their resources and what are their incomes–strategies?*

## 6 The multi-income household

Some researchers say that the rural households' income strategies are more diverse now than before because it has become more difficult to make a living from one source of income (Francis 2000). *Because of increased poverty in Tutume and Letlhakeng, one would expect to find that the percentage of households having a multi-income survival strategy has increased since 1980. One might also expect to find more households without any source of income.*

In 1980 the income strategies of the rural households were complex. Most households produced their own food. In addition, many households had one or more members who were in paid employment either in the local community or in town. There were households which lived solely off their own agricultural production, households, which had paid work as their only source of income, and households which were self-employed in the market sphere. However, twenty years ago: *the majority of the households turned out to be multi-active – that is they applied a multi-income livelihood strategy.* In 1980, the marginalisation process in rural Botswana had not turned most people off the land and few households were without any sources of income. The present debate on rural livelihoods in Africa claims that de-agrarianisation is very evident and as a result household had to increasingly resort to income diversification to secure their livelihood.

## **6.1 Livelihood strategies**

*MaThabiso is 60 years old and sharing the village with her brother. She left her husband more than twenty years ago. He was a migrant labourer in South Africa and came home only to make her pregnant, as she puts it. She has got 5 children and 20 grandchildren. Three of her children have got jobs in town and are helping their mother with money every now and then. She has no regular source of money income, because of old age she had to give up her work as a cleaner at the local school many years ago.*

*work. Because she speaks English well and is an educated woman, she was able to get hold of the grants the government has given under the ARAP agricultural programme. She got money for buying donkeys and for fencing the field. She has some plans to start a small shop, but is not able to finance the investments needed. She describes herself as very poor, but because she is still able to work and because she has got children who can support her, she cannot get support under any of the Governments programmes.*

MaThabiso's story is typical; the rural household is making a living by a combination of several sources of income (table 35).

**Table 35 Income strategies 1980 and 2000. Percentage.**

	Tutume		Letlhakeng	
	1980	2000	1980	2000
Farming for subsistence	10	11	15	6
Farming for subsistence and sale	18	9	10	20
Farming for sale	1	1	4	3
Wage income and subsistence farming	19	17	15	4
Wage income and farming for sub. and sale	39	28	15	18
Wage income and farming for sale	8	5	1	7
Wage income	6	17	20	7
No source of income	1	12	20	34
Total	100	100	100	100

One striking observation from table 35 is *the variation in livelihood strategies* at the household level. Households in general combine different sources of non-monetary and monetary income to make a living. The most common combination is *wage income and farming*. In Tutume 50 % and in Letlhakeng 39 % have this combination. The

second most important income- strategy in the villages is farming and wage income the third.

This is the same as was found in 1980, when the typical combination was wage income and farming. But there were changes in the importance of the different strategies. Since 1980 one can observe the following changes in income-strategies at the household level;

Tutume		Letlhakeng	
<i>Farming + wages</i>	<i>decreased</i>	<i>Farming +wage</i>	<i>no change</i>
<i>Farming only</i>	<i>decreased</i>	<i>Farming only</i>	<i>no change</i>
<i>Wage only</i>	<i>increased</i>	<i>Wage only</i>	<i>decreased</i>
<i>No income</i>	<i>increased</i>	<i>No income</i>	<i>increased</i>

The importance of wage income as the only source of income is strengthened in Tutume. Farming is less important than 20 years ago. Furthermore, the number of households without any means of income has increased. In Letlhakeng, however, the development is different. Wage employment has, surprisingly, become less important the last 20 years, whilst farming is on the same level as before. As in Tutume the number of households without any means of income has increased.

**Table 36 Multi-income or single-income. 1980 and 2000..**

	Tutume		Letlhakeng	
	1980	2000	1980	2000
Single-income	34	38	49	26
Multi-income	65	51	31	39
No income	1	11	20	34
Total	100	100	100	100

Multi-income is still the most important income strategy in both villages, but the importance of it decreased in Tutume. This might indicate that the development process included more households fully in the modern market economy. On the other hand the percentage of households that have no source of income and depend on a private or official social system of support increased in both villages.

In Tutume 38 % combine income from their own crop production with income from formal employment, mostly in the village. The next most important combinations are crops, wages and remittances (9 %) and crop production and remittances (7%). In Letlhakeng; 23 % of the households are combining agriculture and wages. That is the most common income strategy. 4 % survive on agriculture and remittances; 2 % wages, remittances and agriculture; 1 % sell cattle and have other business.

If we only take a look at the figure for those households that are *economically active* we get the following picture (table 37). In Tutume, which is the one of the two villages with less poverty, multi-income as a strategy is less important now than twenty years ago. Letlhakeng, which is a village with more than average number of households under the poverty line, the multi-income strategy increased. This is supporting the hypothesis that multi-income is a strategy for the households with less resources. On the other hand, the poorest households are dropping out of economic activity at all; they live on hands-outs from neighbours or relatives and/or get social support from the Government.

**Table 37 Income combinations for economically active households. Tutume and Letlhakeng. 1980 and 2000. Percentage.**

	Tutume		Letlhakeng	
	1980	2000	1980	2000
Single-income	35	42	62	40
Multi-income	65	58	38	60
Total	100	100	100	100



**Table 38 Type of single-income strategy. 1980 and 2000.**

	Tutume		Letlhakeng	
	1980	2000	1980	2000
Single-income agri	28	19	29	18
Single-income wages	6	19	20	8
Multi-income	65	51	31	39
No source	1	12	21	34
Total	100	100	100	100

*Single –income as an income strategy has become more important the last twenty years, in Tutume. However, in Letlhakeng multi-income has become more important as an income strategy on the household level..*

In Tutume the relative number of households that are making a living from wage income only has increased, those living only from agriculture have decreased. In Letlhakeng the percentage of households living from wage income only is much lower now than twenty years ago and at the same time those solely involved with farming have diminished.

So far I have discussed the *total income-strategies* of the households. I will now turn to the question of *how they find money*. Money is a part of life in rural Botswana and has been so for ages. The household need money to buy food, washing powder, school uniforms and so on. Table 39 shows the various ways in which households get hold of money.

**Table 39 Sources of money. 2000. Tutume and Letlhakeng. Percentage.**

	Tutume	Letlhakeng
Wages income	41	19
Sale of crops	2	5
Sale of cattle	1	11
Beer-brewing	3	2
Local agricultural work	3	5
Gifts from other hh	2	9
Pension/social help	13	22
Agric and wage income	16	9
Cattle and pension/social help	5	3
Total	100	100

There are three sources of money; *selling labour, selling produce or social assistance*. Sale of labour is the single most important money-source in Tutume, transfer from Government is the second most important, and sale of produce in combination with sale of labour is third. In Letlhakeng transfer is most important, sale of labour second and sale of cattle third. Few of the households in Letlhakeng have much cattle; thus the high percentage of households selling cattle must be an indicator of how poverty-stricken the households are. Many of the households selling cattle must be using their savings in order to meet daily needs.

It is furthermore important to note that, as in 1980, most of the combinations of income sources are at the household level. In 1980 Hesselberg finds that in Tutume 17 % and in Letlhakeng 4 % of the households had members who combined wage income with farming. The figures for year 2000 are 29 % and 14 % respectively. So the situation is still the same, multi-income is mainly an income strategy at the household level. However, there is an increasing tendency for individuals to have more than one job as well. Typically, women in wage employment do crop production while men in wage employment keep herds of cattle.

To sum up; there has been a development in Tutume that indicates a transition from the traditional to the modern market economy. The percentages of households making a living only from subsistence farming has gone down and more households have wage income locally as their income strategy today than twenty years ago. Many of them find their income in the village and thus there are fewer split households. The multi-income strategy has become less dominant, which indicates that the general standard of living has increased in the village. On the other hand, there was an increase in the percentage of the rural households with no source of income. This shows that there are households which are not included in the development process. *On a whole the picture I have described is both one of increased specialisation and increased proletarianisation.*

In Letlhakeng there has not been a process of transition from the traditional to the modern sector at the household level. Traditional crop production is on the same level as twenty years ago and the percentage of households getting all their income from wage employment has gone down. Multi-income has increased in importance for those households that are economically active. The percentage of households without any source of income has increased. The general impression from the study of Letlhakeng is that the poverty is severe, many households have to combine many sources to make a living, and many are completely marginalised.

## **6.2 *Income strategies and household characteristics***

*Mapetra is 60 years old. She belongs to the royal family in the ward. At the age of twenty she was sent abroad to get her education as a health worker. There she met her husband and got one daughter. Today she is divorced and has moved back to her home compound where she stays with her mother and a number of orphan relatives. Mapetra has got work at the local hospital. It was the fact that the village got its own hospital that made it possible for her to move back home to the village and look after her old mother. Mapetra inherited cattle from her fathers' family and by investing part of her saving in the cattle industry*

*has increased the herd, so today she has around 500 head of cattle. She keeps the cattle on a cattle-post farm from the village. She employs some Basarwa people to look after the herd. She also ploughs a large field not far from the village. She has her own tractor, but must hire labourers for driving the tractor and all the activities during the agricultural season. At the moment she hires labour from Zimbabwe. She has also invested in a bar and restaurant in the ward.*

*Sara and Wilma are two old sisters. Sara is a widow who has had five children. Three of them died many years ago, the two others live someplace in Botswana, but she never hears from them. The two old women have no cattle but they plough a small field with the help of some distant relatives. In a normal year they get enough grain to get them through the year. They never get a surplus so that they can sell. Their only source of money income comes from Sara's old age pension, which is 110 pula a month.*

The household's resources - land, labour and capital - will determine the option it has in choosing income strategies. The poorest households will have fewer options than the richer households. Thus one might expect to find that the poorest households have fewer income sources and less secure income sources than the more well off-households in the village. Hence one should expect to find a higher degree of wage employment and multi-income among the less resource-poor households than among

the poorest, which one would expect to be more often living on one single not-so-rewarding source and piece work.

Grown and Sebstad also suggest that the *aim* of the income strategy differs among different standard of living groups. The goal for the poorest groups is mainly *survival*; the goal of people whose basic survival is assured is *security*, which involves minimising risks by spreading their resources and the goal for the richest households, who have achieved basic security, is growth or accumulation (cited in Francis 2000). They argue that these shifts also make a shift in the degrees of variation of income strategies. *Going from survival strategies to security strategies means an increased complexity in the livelihood mix. According to some the shift to growth on the other hand means a concentration on fewer income-earning activities.* I will now look at the data from Tutume and Letlhakeng and see to what degree it can substantiate this hypothesis.

The largest group of the poorest households are not economically active. That is, they are not working any resources to make a living, and are living on handouts from the government or from relatives. Another important subgroup is those who live from subsistence farming, sometimes in combination with wages.

**Table 40 Level of living and income strategy. 2000. Percentage.**Tutume

	Poor	Middle-income	Rich
Crops	27	15	4
Wages	14	20	16
Cattle/business	-	-	7
Wages + agric.	16	58	73
Social programme	43	7	-
Total	100	100	100

Lethakeng

	Poor	Middle-income	Rich
Crops	24	22	14
Wages	10	8	14
Cattle/business	-	4	6
Wages + agric.	15	49	64
Social programme	51	17	-
Total	100	100	100

The middle-income households are typically working a multi-income strategy whose main combination is crop production and wage income. Some of these households are also living either from wages or from crop

production. Especially in Letlhakeng quite a few live on old age pensions.

The richest households are also mainly making a living by being multi-active, combining crop production with wage income. Some live only off wage income, some are running commercial agriculture or other kinds of private business. Hence, there is little difference between the middle-income and the rich households in their choice of income-strategies.

If we, however, look at the *sources of money income* for the different groups we find the following: The poorest households are mainly getting money from piecework locally and from pensions or other types of social programmes. As many as 8 % of the poorest households in both villages say they get money from working for other local farmers.

The middle-income households have wages, often in combination with the sale of agricultural produce, as their main source of money. The richest households also have in principle three equally important strategies for money income: wages, wages in combination with sale of agricultural produce and wages plus cattle sale and remittances. It is worth noting that there are only the richest who combine three or more sources of money income. Thus, a way of getting rich is to have resources - such as size of household and education - to be able to harvest many sources of income.



This is more or less the same picture as Selolwane sees in her study of rural households in Ngamiland. As a general rule she finds that the cash status of the household depends on how significant local regular wages is in its income strategy. These poorest households are those who relied on petty trading, remittances, and the wages of members in temporary employment or any combination of these sources of cash. In contrast, the richest are those who relied on the earnings of locally resident members as well as on regular sales: preferably on non-agricultural goods or products manufactured by the household.

*The analysis of the data so far supports the hypothesis that the income sources of the poor are few and more in the traditional sector than for the more well off households. However, in this material there is nothing so far to support the hypothesis that the richest households chose less complex income strategies than the middle-income households. Quite the opposite; the richest households are the most multi-active of all households. One explanation for this might be the fact that for instance land is still free in Botswana. That makes it possible for the households with resources to make private profit on communal land by holding large cattle herds (Table 41.) If a household has a multi-income strategy by combining local wage employment and cattle rearing, that is a much more rewarding and secure income strategy than for instance the combination of wage employment and crop production. This last combination is the most common one among the middle-income households.*

**Table 41 Number of cattle by level of living group. 2000.  
Percentage**

	Tutume			Letlhakeng		
	Poor	Middle-income	Rich	Poor	Middle-income	Rich
no	78	34	17	92	41	19
less than 8	20	16	17	5	14	-
8-35	2	38	28	4	43	50
36-100	-	13	28		3	25
100+			10			6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 42 Type of strategy and households level of living. 2000**Tutume

	Poor	Middle-income	Rich
Single-income agri	32	18	9
Single-income wages	14	20	20
Multi-income	14	56	71
No income	40	6	-
Total	100	100	100

Letlhakeng

	Poor	Middle-income	Rich
Single-income agri	20	18	-
Single-income wages	9	7	14
Multi-income	21	61	86
No income	50	14	-
Total	100	100	100

Single-income as a livelihood strategy exists among all income groups. As with the multi-income strategy, a closer look at the content of the single-income strategies reveals, however, considerable differences between the household groups.

The poor households that are single-active active have another type of income profile than the rich households :

*Poor:* periodic work, low paid work, beer brewing, local agricultural work, sale of agricultural produce, sale of cattle

*Rich:* Wage employment and sale of cattle

If the length of education of head of household can be taken as an indicator of the educational resources of the household, it shows that the rich households which have wage income as their only income are better educated than the poor.

**Table 43 Educationally level among heads of households. Households with only wage income as their income strategy. 2000. Percentage**

Year of education	Poor household	Rich household
No education	50 %	9%
Less than 7	41%	51%
More than 7	9%	40%

**Table 44 Migrant labour and income group.**

	Tutume	Letlhakeng
Poor HH	8%	14%
Middle-income HH	33%	40%
Rich HH	67%	100%

Diversification into different economic sectors is the most common livelihood strategy for all income groups. Especially common is this strategy for *the less* poor households. *That means, to be able to diversify a household must have a minimum of household resources.*

*Diversification in space* is mainly a strategy applied by the most well off households (table 44). In Tutume 60 % and in Letlhakeng the entire rich households had one or more migrant labourers, which were sending home money to the rural household. Very few of the poorest household had migrant labourers. If we look only at household head and their place of work: we find that in Tutume 40 % and in Letlhakeng 60 % coming from rich households had external work. Thus, the richest rural household have close economic linkages to the urban economy, which help them to accumulate wealth. The typical middle-income rural household do not have linkages to the urban economy to the same extent as the rich households.

**The rich** households have better paid and more secure types of jobs. In addition the head of household in the rich households are more *often*

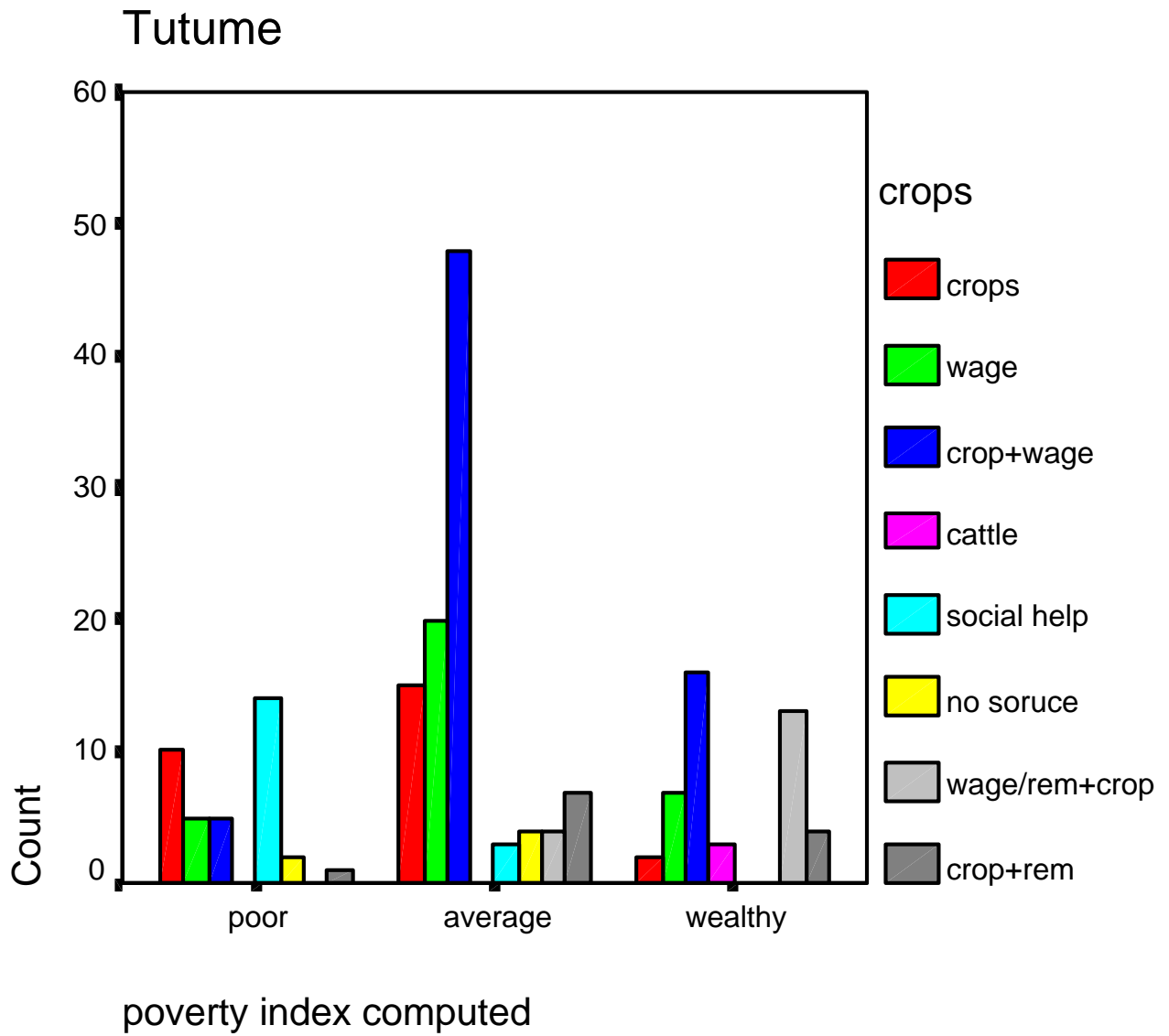
*migrants* and they work in professional or technical types of jobs. In addition the rich households more often have more than one wage earner. 45 % of the rich households had more than two wages

**The poor** households lack of education means that they get low paid and insecure types of jobs. Many work as night watchmen, cleaner, agricultural labourer and house maids. They often live on grants or sub-subsistence crop production.

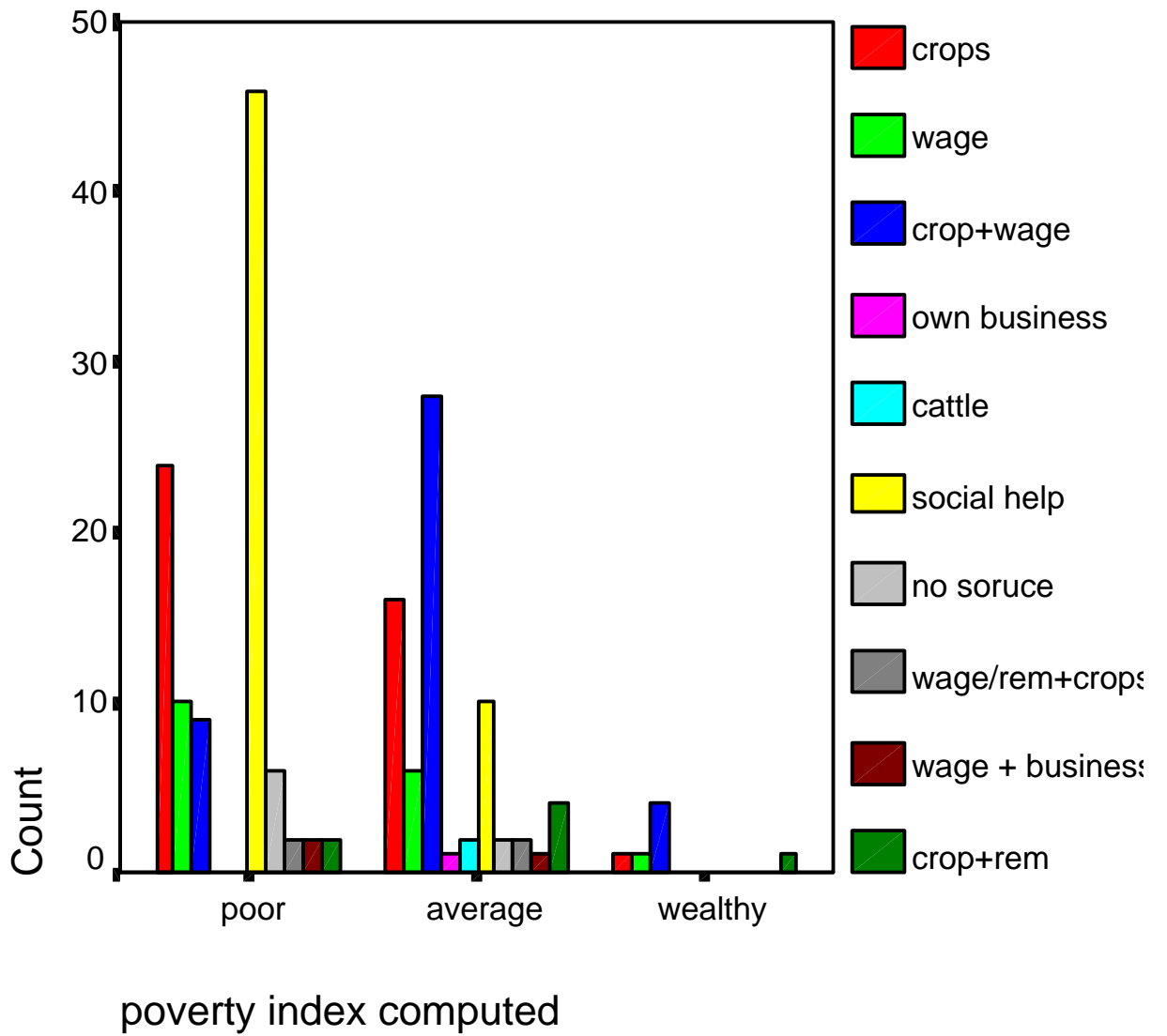
**The middle-income** households, which are single-active, seldom have more than one wage earner. Compared to the rich households it is much rarer for the average household to have migrant workers. The typical situation is that the head of household works at home if he has work. Most middle-income households are applying a multi-income strategy. The most typical combination is crop production and *local* wage employment.

A closer look at the income strategies and standard of living groups indicate that there are *the middle-income households that have the most complex income strategies*. (Fig.4).

**Figure 4 Income strategies 2000.**



# Lethakeng





As can be seen, there is a correlation between income strategy and the household's level of living. The richest households have more often a multi-active income strategy than the poor household, but it is the middle-income households that have the most *complex strategies*

I will now look closer into which characteristics of the household that determine the income strategy.

**Table 45 Household resources and income strategies. 2000**

Tutume

	Single agri	Single wage	Multi income	No income	Tot.
<5hh size	50	68	27	80	45
Female household	38	35	22	50	31
>1 grown female	59	29	61	28	52
>1 grown male	27	15	48	10	35
No ed. head	18	6	7	30	12
Local work head	100	68	80	-	78
Former migration	29	12	44	30	24
Have cattle	40	36	79	30	57
Cattle >100	-	3	2	-	2

## Letlhakeng

	Single agri	Single wage	Multi income	No income	Tot.
<5hh size	46	36	28	49	39
Female household	27	29	21	67	38
>1 grown female	45	71	60	35	64
>1 grown male	36	14	45	18	32
No ed. head	70	64	51	79	64
Local work head	100	55	73	-	75
Former migration	82	36	76	43	62
Have cattle	48	14	67	3	38
Cattle>100	-	-	10	-	1

*The multi-active household is often a large household and is headed by a man. Often it has more than one grown-up female and more than one grown-up man. This means that this household has ample supply of labour for all kind of tasks. The head of household is better educated than the average; this might imply that this household has members that can get better-paid and more lasting work. The head of the household has often a local job; which makes it easier for the household to combine wage income*

*and arable agriculture. It has had a history of former migration and also keeps cattle; a few have enough cattle for accumulation. Cattle and former migration might be interlinked factors and give this type of household an economic platform that has brought them out of the poorest layer in the village.*

*The single-active agricultural household is smaller than the average household and is often female-headed.. It has more grown-up females than the average but fewer men, judging by the results from Tutume. The education level of the head of household is low and if they have work they are employed locally. In Tutume fewer and in Letlhakeng more of this household has a migration history. It has some cattle, but too little for accumulation. Cattle can give this household money income to secure survival, but not accumulation. The single-active agricultural household might be a residual of the traditional Tswana or Kalanga household,*

*The single-active wage-income household is small and more often male headed than the single-active agricultural household. It has seldom more than one grown-up man in the household and he is often a migrant. Few of this household have had any former migration and they rarely have more cattle than households with other types of income strategies. They are more often better educated than the single-active agricultural household.*

**In conclusion;** multi-income households have more labour and more capital than the others, whilst the single-income household are short of labour. If they have an education they might choose to rely totally on wage income. The older more traditional single-income household, often with few resources but some cattle, becomes single-income agricultural. They are very often the poorest households with little security. This can be seen by the fact that they are selling cattle to meet their needs.

### ***6.3 Income strategies and the local context***

The local context, with its natural environment, with its local job market and with its people will always be a factor determining the development of a place. Today Tutume and Letlhakeng are two villages that differs more than they did twenty years ago (see chapter 3). This different general development has affected the households livelihood strategies?

Household in Tutume and households in Letlhakeng are mainly applying a multi-active income strategy. Around 60 % of the households are combining several sources of income to make a living. The development has , has however, been different in the two villages. In Tutume the multi-income strategy are less important today than in 1980.

That is there are more common for the households to make a living from one source. In Letlhakeng we have seen the opposite development: multi-income has increased and single-income has decreased as a household income strategy.

The households in Tutume are more involved in crop production than the households in Letlhakeng. But it is in Tutume that a substantial number of households have discontinued crop production.

Wage employment either locally or some distance away has become more important in Tutume. The situation in Letlhakeng is the opposite; a relatively smaller percentage of the households have wage income today than in 1980. Letlhakeng is hit by the lack of work opportunities in South Africa in combination with a stagnating local labour market.

In both villages the percentage of households without any means of income have increase. In its worthwhile to underline that there are twice as many without income in Letlhakeng as in Tutume.

Hence, there are both similarities and differences in the development in the two study villages. Which local contextual factors are behind these different developments? As described above, the two study villages differ when it comes to factors important for the households' options of choosing local income strategies. Letlhakeng is situated in the outskirts of the Kalahari Desert where the conditions for cattle rearing are better than the conditions for arable farming. Tutume is more of an arable

farming area, both because of climatic and cultural factors. Letlhakeng is only 1 1/2 to 2 hours from the rapidly growing capital Gaborone and has for that reason or other reasons not had much population growth or growth of local jobs for local people. Tutume is far from the capital and has had a growth in population and jobs opportunities the last 20 years.

Tutume is situated in an area with strong traditions for crop cultivation and with a climate that is somewhat more sympathetic to arable farming than Letlhakeng. So both the cultural factor and the climatic factor might explain why crop production is still so important in Tutume.

The local labour market is larger in Tutume than in Letlhakeng. That means that more households can find a job that they can live off. In Letlhakeng, the stagnating economy and the lack of work opportunities in South Africa and lack of work for unskilled labourers in Botswana have made life difficult.. As a result more households either give up finding an income or they have to survive by meddling several small and insecure sources of income. Therefore multi-income has become more important in Letlhakeng out of necessity – which is, lacks of other opportunities.

## **6.4 Conclusion**

The most common livelihood strategy in the study villages is multi-income, that is the majority of the households are applying a diversification strategy to secure their income. At the same time there has been a process of increased marginalisation. The number of households that are without any means of income have increased the last twenty years.

Diversification as the main livelihood strategy is nothing new in the Botswana context. The situation is more or less unchanged since 1980. The major difference is that we find some younger households that make a living only from wage employment and have no plans to ever take up crop production. In fact in Tutume multi-income is a less widespread strategy than twenty years ago. In Letlhakeng, the poorer of the two villages, we find an increased tendency to use income diversification to secure their livelihood.

Diversification in space seems to be a most rewarding strategy and it is mainly a strategy for the richest households. The middle-income and poor households are diversifying by combining local income sources. The richest households are diversifying their income by labour displacement in space and utilising the rural – urban income gap to enhance their income.

The objective of income diversification on household level varies. The poorest household have a range of insecure, low-rewarding off-farm income sources which they sometimes combine with crop production. The typical middle-income household are diversifying their resources mainly in wage employment and crop production. The richest households are also mainly combining crop production and wage employment, but in addition they have income from for instance the cattle business. The richest households have more often a member in external wage employment than the other households. The rich household is using income diversification and labour dislocation as the livelihood strategy, , whereas the typical middle-income household is mainly diversifying into economic sectors - not in space.



## 7. Cash, crops and cattle

Making a living in rural Botswana today does not involve withdrawing from markets and concentrating on subsistence production. There is nowhere to retreat to, certainly not as Krokfors claims. a mythical subsistence economy .In Botswana the case is that arable farming cannot provide most households with an adequate living. Botswana, like the rest of rural Africa, has been locked into the market since the colonial period: paying taxes, buying food, selling crops, cattle and labour.

There are now as Francis (2000) puts it: “ too many things that people need money for to allow them to retreat into self provisioning, clothing has to be bought, children need school fees and uniforms. Consumption patterns have changed – people have come to expect to drink tea and use sugar and soap.” Most compelling of all, most rural households do not grow enough food to provide them through the year and have not been able to do so for decades. According to Francis , farming often provides a surprisingly small proportion of the household’s total income. The share of non-farm income was particularly high in parts of Southern Africa, Namibia 93 %, Lesotho 78 % Botswana 77 %.

The way households are coping with this situation differs. It differs between households and it differs between regions. However it seems that one generalisation can be made: Rural people tend to construct their livelihoods by combining different income-earning activities. The multi-income household strategy is the most common. For some households with ample resources this is a strategy for *minimalizing risks*, for the more well-off household this might also be a strategy for *accumulation of wealth*. There is also a tendency that the younger and educated are discontinuing crop production and are living on salaries, or if they have no income, they prefer to live on hand-outs. The poorest households make a living either by combining a range of low paid and insecure income sources ,or by living from their own subsistence crop production, often in combination with drought relief money or old age pension.

The factors determining the livelihood strategy a household are partly household specific. Educational level, sex and age composition, capital basis and so forth differ among the rural households. It is these differences which set one type of households in a position to accumulate wealth while other households are kept in poverty. Thus, household resources are factors that trigger and uphold the process of social differentiation in the rural villages. The households' choice of livelihoods will depend on its resource or long term.

Diversification of resources and income is the main livelihood strategy for rural households in Botswana. Some household diversify their

income by dislocating household labour to other places in Botswana or abroad. This is mainly an option for the richest households. For the majority of the households diversification means combining different local sources of income.

Diversification as the main income strategy is nothing new in rural Botswana. This was the main strategy in 1980 and probable also earlier. Crop production in Botswana has never had the potential to provide a surplus on a regular basis. The natural conditions are too poor. Thus, cash crops were never introduced on a large scale in Botswana. This makes rural Botswana different from most other African countries. When the demand for money was introduced in the colonial period, the rural people had to sell their labour in order to find money. So in Botswana diversification is an income strategy, which can be traced back to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

However, the increased importance of the multi-income livelihood strategy as seen in Letlhakeng is interesting. Given the higher than average poverty rate, the stagnating local economy and loss of external opportunities this must be seen as a poverty strategy. Thus the development in Letlhakeng is in line with reports from other African countries. Households are using diversification as a livelihood strategy to meet difficult economic circumstances ((Bryceson & Bank 2001).

Even though Botswana in many ways is not a typical Third World country given its high economic growth and the rich State, this

observation is typical for rural households in general. From a theoretical point of view the interesting question is whether this lack of economic growth or at least lack of a trickle-down effect of the growth, poverty and the subsequent necessity of households to combine many sources of income, is a structural and more permanent problem, or a transitional one.

Two qualitatively different theoretical approaches give diametrically different answers to this question. If the development is analysed from the perspective of dependency, it could be argued that the situation is best described as structural. Global capitalism leads to a polarisation of economies in which some are placed in the periphery. It is a typical feature of a peripheral capitalistic economy that the development process has limited self-dynamics; capitalistic demands for accumulation and control of the market set the terms for the development. In a peripherally placed capitalistic country, employment generated as a result of the introduction of modern technology will have an effect on a global, not national, level, because the export industry lacks links to the local industry. On the other hand, the introduction of modern technology will have a strong effect on manpower savings. There is a tendency to export positive cumulative effects, while the negative side effects remain in the country, acting as self-amplifying marginalisation processes. Investing in the export sector with advanced technology can lead to strong growth but the consequence will be increased polarisation in society, as this requires a work force with more formal education.

The polarising effect of capitalism leads to huge differences in living conditions. Households included in a positive aspect of capitalism have the opportunity to accumulate wealth. Marginalized households are trapped in a circle of poverty in which they have to work in different conditions to keep afloat. Some argue that we can see an increasing polarisation between these groups of households and that this polarisation is the result of a peripheral capitalistic development. Multi-activity as an income strategy, that is, a combination of sources of income from both the capitalistic and the non-capitalistic sectors will, in a theoretical perspective based on the concept of dependency, form a meaningful and constant part of the households' income strategy. For the marginalized households multi-activity will be seen as a means of survival, whereas for the prosperous households the strategy can be described as an accumulation strategy.

Some economists of a more conventional persuasion will reject this and claim that the differences and mass poverty seen today represent a transitional phase in the capitalistic development. With reference to history and the development we have seen in Western Europe they argue that poverty, the existence of different economic sectors and multi-income as an income strategy was commonplace in this part of the world, too. As the capitalist economy here has become universal this has for the most part disappeared. In Western communities all that remains are small pockets of multi-activity. If the development processes in developing countries are parallel to those that have taken place in the Western capitalist countries, multi-income will disappear since both the

basis and the need for this income strategy disappear. Is this the kind of development we are now witnessing in developing countries which are experiencing positive economic growth? Is a permanent betterment of living conditions taking place as a result of fundamental structural changes in the economy?

Given the development in rural Botswana, the answerer is *yes and no*. The development process has lead to poverty and plenty. The households with resources to succeed in the modern economy have increased their standard of living considerably over the last twenty years. In rural areas they are the few. The households with small resources become marginalized and proletarianized and live from handouts from the State or from relatives. This is an increasing group. The majority of rural households are making a living by diversifying their resources and surviving by combining income from the modern market economic sector and the traditional subsistence sector. Hence, the picture is more or less the same as in 1980 - an economy in-between and people making the best out of this economy in transition.

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## Appendix 1      The Questionnaire

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### Questionnaire : rural villages re-studied 2000

1. **Sex of interview object:** Male      Female

2. **List the members of the household**

	Relation to head	Sex	Age	Education	Type of work	Place of work
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						

3. **The household members working outside the village. Do they send home money or food?**

Yes      No

**If Money:**

How is the household spending the money? \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Are the absentee members helping the village household in any other way?**

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**5. Is the household giving money or food to anyone?**

	Absentee members	Other households in the village
Other		
Yes money		
Yes food		
No		

**6. Have any other members of this household lived outside this village before? Yes No**

If Yes: State who, reason and when returned to the village.

	Who returned	reason	where	purpose	left
1					
2					
3					
4					

**7. Does the household normally plough? Yes No**

*If No:*

When did the household last plough? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do they not plough?

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**If Yes:** Why do they  
plough? \_\_\_\_\_

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**8. What methods were used for ploughing?**

	Cattle	Donkey	Tractor
Own			
Borrowed			
Hired			

**9. What are the households main problem with  
farming?** \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. As you see it, what are the main sources of survival of this household?**

Own agricultural production

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Wage income

---

Own agricultural production + wage income

---

Sale of cattle + agricultural production

---

Sale of cattle + wage income

---

Own business

---

Own business + sale of cattle

---

Gifts from relatives

---

Government programmes

---

Other:

---

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**11. What are the money income sources of this household?**

Wage income
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Remittances
-------------

Sale of agriculture produces
------------------------------

Sale of cattle
----------------

Local agricultural work
-------------------------

Beerbrewing
-------------

Gifts from relatives
----------------------

Old age pension
-----------------

Government destitute program
------------------------------

Other

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**12. From where do you get maize and other grains?**

Own produce                      Buy in shop                      Gifts

**13. Does the household have access to cattle?**

	No	Less than 8	8-35	35-100	100-500	500+
Cattle						

**14. Which of the following goods does the household possess?**

number

Blanket
Bed
Cupboard
Water bucket
Iron pot
Lamp
Chair
Table
Axe
Plough
Car
Tractor
Bicycle
Radio
Television
Fridge

**15. Do all the children have a pair of shoes?    Yes            No**

**16. How often does the household eat meat?**

---

**17. How many dwelling houses does the household own in the village? \_\_\_\_\_**

*For the main house state standard*

Material roof:            Iron   Straw

Material walls            Mud   Bricks

Running water    yes    no

General impression of compound: very fine    fine    bad

**18. How many dwelling houses at the lands? \_\_\_\_\_**

**19. What is this households main problem?**

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**20. What is the village's main problem?**

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**21. Do you think there are many poor households in the village?**

**Yes      No**

**22. How do you see that they are poor?**

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**23. In which way is the government helping the poor?**

**Yes**

**I have received**

Agricultural subsidies
Loans
Social relief programs
Drough relief programs



## Appendix 2      Standard of living index

A composite standard of living index was derived from the so-called standard score method (Smith 1979). The scores measure the departure of individual observations from the arithmetical mean of all observations.

The mean of a set of observations, symbolized X, is calculated as follows:

$$X = \sum X_i / m$$

$X_i$  = the magnitude of the condition X for household I

M = total number of households

The standard score (Z) for a household is calculated as follows:

$$Z = (X_i - X) / \sigma$$

$\sigma$  = standard deviation

A composite standard of living index is calculated as follows.

$$I_i = \sum Z_{ij} W_j$$

$Z_{ij}$  = standard score for household I on criterion j

$W_j$  = weight of the jth criterion

The index is composed of 11 indicators of economic level of living; ownership of blankets, cupboard, lamp, chair, table, axe, plough, car, bicycle, radio and television . The choice of these indicators rested on two principles: one was to use as many as relevant of the same indicators as was used in 1976 and 1989, the other was to include items that ere more common today because of the twenty years that had passed.

The obvious shortcoming of this standard of living index is that it only contains indicators on economic welfare.