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1. Introduction: The history of the region

The United Nations has proclaimed the San and the Khoi as the first indigenous people of the territory now known as South Africa. These groups were to a great extent driven south and west when the black tribes moved southwards through the region. The whole settlement pattern in the Free State, one of post-1994 South Africa's nine provinces, changed with the growth of Chaka's empire in the east and the breakaway of Mosilikatse in 1817 from the Zulus to form the Matabele empire in the west. The historian GM Theal (1973/1887: 41) stated that '[in] the county over which he [Mosilikatse] marched…literally no human being was left…for his objective was to place a great desert between Chaka and himself.' In 1836 the first organised white groups of Boers (descendants of Dutch and other settlers at the Cape who had moved inland seeking to free themselves from domination by the colonial power in the region, Great Britain) moved into this void which was later to be known as the Free State, and found only chief Marokko of the Barolong tribe at Thaba Nchu (Theal 1973/1887 : 77). [1] Black inhabitants of the region, travelling mainly as family units, moved into the Free State to sell their labour to white farmers and the new town-dwellers (Smit & Booysen 1981: 14).

The Republic of the Orange Free State established by the Boers obtained its independence in 1854. The first municipal governing body for Bloemfontein was established in 1859 (Schoeman 1980: 19, 34). In contrast to most of the other provinces of South Africa the Orange Free State started out with a predominantly white population in 1854; by the time the first census was conducted there in 1880 there were 61 022 whites (46% of the population) and 72 496 blacks (54%); the white proportion decreased to 30% in 1921 (Grosskopf 1932: 153) and to 10% by 2007. The present population of the Free State consists of 2 500 830 black, 269 018 white, 80 989 coloured and 4 835 Indian people, in terms of the population group categories still used in demographic analyses (Global Insight 2008).

Bloemfontein, the provincial capital, is the fourth-oldest settlement in the Free State and was founded in 1846 by Major Warden as a peace-keeping settlement for the British. He described the site as follows in a letter to the Governor of the Cape: 'It is within a few miles halfway between Philippolis and Thaba Bosiu, in an open part of the country…and within one mile of the high road to Winburg; this part of the

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[1] According to Theal (1973/1887:49, 52), using a book by the Reverend S. Broadbent entitled *Introduction of Christianity amongst the Barolong tribe*, the Western missionaries led the clan from just south of the Vaal River at Platberg to Thaba Nchu in December 1833 (less than three years before the Boers arrived). An area of several hundred square miles was bought by the Wesleyan Missionary Society from the Basotho chief Moshoeshoe for the price of seven young oxen, one heifer, two sheep and one goat (Theal 1973/1887: 52–53). The Wesleyan missionaries accepted that Moshoeshoe had sold them land that was really open for anyone to settle upon, but thereafter had the deed drawn up to prevent any land claims on behalf of the Basotho. Thaba Nchu was annexed by the Free State in 1884 and in 1890 had 17 572 blacks, while the area called Qwa-Qwa was given in 1867 to the tribal leaders of the Kwena and Tlokwa tribes seeking protection from Moshoeshoe and for services rendered to the Free State Republic.

country has also the advantage of being free from horse sickness' (Schoeman 1980: 3). According to Schoeman (1980: 89), in 1880 the population of Bloemfontein consisted of 1 688 whites and 879 blacks; this figure is viewed by some as too low.

After the Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902) the Orange Free State became part of the British Empire again, but was given a certain degree of self-government as a province within the Union of South Africa, later the Republic of South Africa. The boundaries of the province and the location of its capital city, Bloemfontein, have not changed in the past 150 years, while the same parliament building used by the Boers in 1899 is still used today to house the legislature of the province, which was renamed the Free State after 1994.

Bloemfontein is a classical medium-size city, with a traditional colonial city structure of the kind which Hall describes as 'plans based on the fiction that these cities were completely White with, perhaps, a separate Indian bazaar area at a respectful distance; Africans were either assumed not to exist, since they were officially supposed to be farmers, or were herded into squatter reservations with the aid of mass deportations and pass systems' (Hall 1988: 190). This structure was transformed in 1948 to follow the apartheid type of city layout, with different ethnic groups being settled in different areas in the black township. It has developed a traditional central business district which creeps westward, following the classical trend whereby 'supply and demand' dictate location.

2. The distinctive character of the Free State

The relatively dry climate of the Free State has had an influence on the carrying capacity of farms and thus on the population density. The result has been that the predominance of bigger farms has led to towns being further apart from each other, forming central places further apart. Four major types of lifestyle settlement pattern can be identified, namely communal rural settlements, commercial farms, smallholdings as a rural-urban mix, and urban settlements. The last of these has, at least in principle, access to full municipal services which include at a minimum water, sewerage, electricity and waste disposal, whereas the other three types do not have these services. The new edge-to-edge boundaries of municipal areas make old local authority divisions, such as those which involve having a local governing body, redundant, as all inhabitants now vote for the city council, although farmers and others do not receive full municipal services.

The province has no real industrial capacity except for the oil-from-coal industry located in Sasolburg, which to a great extent forms part of the Gauteng economy despite being situated on the wrong side of the Vaal River (which forms a boundary between the two provinces). The Free State Goldfields mines have lost 120 000 jobs over the past decade due to a combination of reorganisation of operations, the mining out of the rich gold-bearing ore, the bad economic situation in the 1990s and the general trend to reduce overheads by reducing staff numbers. The former 85 municipalities located in the province have been consolidated into 20 local municipalities and 5 district municipalities. However, most of them do not have a sound economic base and this, combined with poor governance, has led to a situation in which more than 80% of municipalities are technically bankrupt and survive only through provincial grants. At a provincial level the governing party, the African National Congress (ANC), is split into at least two camps and in the past 14 years the province has had four premiers (provincial heads of government); the ANC-controlled Provincial Executive Council has asked for the resignation of the current premier whom they want to replace with the provincial chairperson of the party.

2.1   Demographic and economic growth patterns

The Free State covers 10.6% of the surface area of South Africa, but in 2001 had only 6.4% of the total national population. The population grew between 1996 and 2001 from 2.64 million to approximately 2.7 million, giving a 0.6% annual growth rate (FSP 2005: 15). In 1996 nearly 68.7% of the population in the Free State was urbanised; by 2007 this had increased to 78.6%.

Bloemfontein was a rural town until the 1950s, after which the global economic growth of the 1960s and the population explosion worldwide after the discovery of penicillin in the 1950s had its effect on this town as on many others, with an increase in economic activities and population growth. This is reflected in the population growth shown in Table 1.

Since the 1990s there has been a large influx of people into towns and cities in the province. A large proportion of them have migrated from farms, mainly due to ongoing droughts which meant farmers did not have sufficient funds to keep workers, but also due to government policies on minimum wages and land tenure, which led to farmers reducing their workforce. In 1999 Bloemfontein was amalgamated with four adjacent municipalities[2] to form the City of Mangaung (Figures 1 and 2), which will most likely become a metropolitan council in 2011.

Table 1:   Population growth in Bloemfontein, 1880–2001

Year	White	African	Coloured	Indian	Total black*
1880	1 688				879
1904	35 002	41 495	2 382		43 877
1921	40 661	44 687	4 130		49 817
1951	88 042	114 938	7 332		122 370
1960	114 758	154 974	12 561		167 535
1970	141 116	203 048	20 454		223 502
1996	100 978	467 193	31 349	1 091	499 633
2001	78 048	534 452	31 923	1 015	567 390

Sources: Department of Statistics 1977; Global Insight 2008; Grosskopf 1932;

Note: * In South Africa the category 'black' usually covers the three apartheid-era population group classifications African, coloured and Indian.

The pull factors for urbanisation of the population include the fact that in the urban areas workers can get an RDP house,[3] and have their families near schools and clinics offering a better future for them. In Bloemfontein the population grew from 617 258 in 1996 to 696 893 in 2007, mainly due to in-migration, as the natural population growth showed a decrease from 2.3% in 1996 to –0.1% in 2007 while the actual population growth was 1.1%. The new migrants come mostly from rural areas and retain strong ties to these areas, including tribal areas such as Qwa-Qwa and the Transkei. The white population was mostly urbanised between 1930 and 1960, and has few ties with the rural areas. In the past decade migrants from other countries – especially Lesotho, which borders the Free State – have also become a presence in the province.

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[2] The municipalities amalgamated were Bloemfontein, Bainsvlei, Bloemspruit, Botshabelo and Thaba Nchu.

[3] RDP (Reconstruction and Development Programme) housing is provided by government at minimal or no cost to eligible individuals.

The Free State is a supply region of natural resources, food products and skilled labour with low internal economic growth, losing most of its young educated people to the metropolitan areas. For the past four decades economic growth has mostly been lower than population growth, resulting in declining levels of per capita income. Unemployment in the province was 39.1%[4] in 2004, while the informal sector provided jobs to about 102 566 people (FSP 2005: 42, 49). The unemployment rate increased by nearly 10 percentage points between 1996 and 2004, from 29.9% to 39.1% (FSP 2005: 42). This increase is the largest of all provinces for that period. A large number of people receive state pensions or other types of government social grant and these grants support their extended families, but no statistics could be found at a provincial level to quantify this.

In Mangaung the estimated number of people working in the informal sector is 38 430, while the number of jobs in the formal sector was 147 893 in 2007 with an estimated 35% of the workforce unemployed. Bloemfontein contributes 87% of the gross geographic product in Mangaung Municipality, with Botshabelo and Thaba Nchu contributing respectively 7.1% and 5.9%.

The housing backlog in Botshabelo in 2003 was 24 409 houses, and in Thaba Nchu 14 319. The average annual household income for Mangaung in 2001 was R57 914; the breakdown of this figure for the different urban components gives household income for Bloemfontein of R76 611, for Thaba Nchu R32 105 and for Botshabelo R24 828 (Mangaung Local Municipality 2008: 8). In Mangaung 263 267 people are living in poverty (FSP 2005: 56), with 75% of individuals earning less than R800 in 2001 (Mangaung Local Municipality 2008: 8).

Figure 1: The Free State and Mangaung in context

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[4] This figure is calculated using the expanded definition of unemployment which includes those no longer seeking employment, as used in the Free State Growth and Development Strategy (FSP 2005: 41).
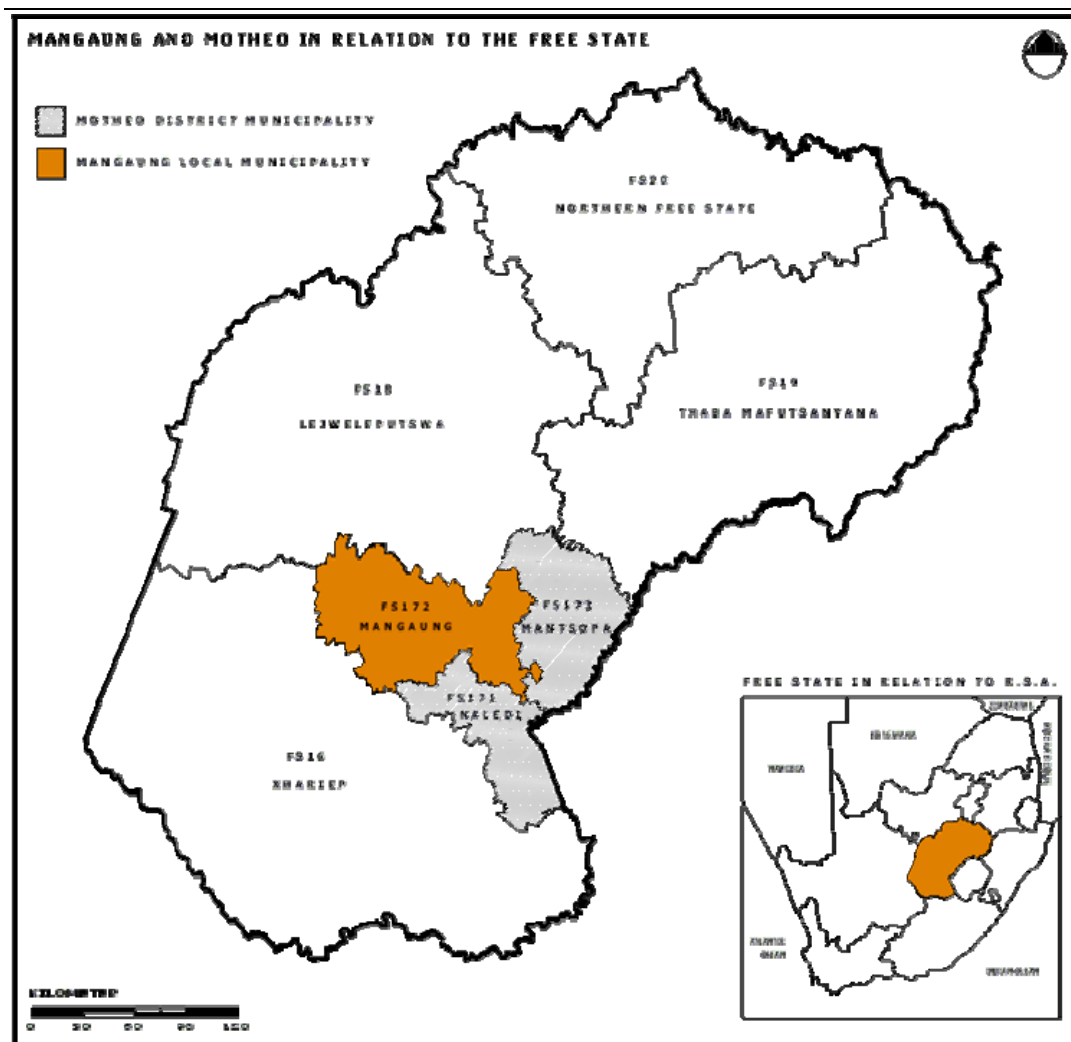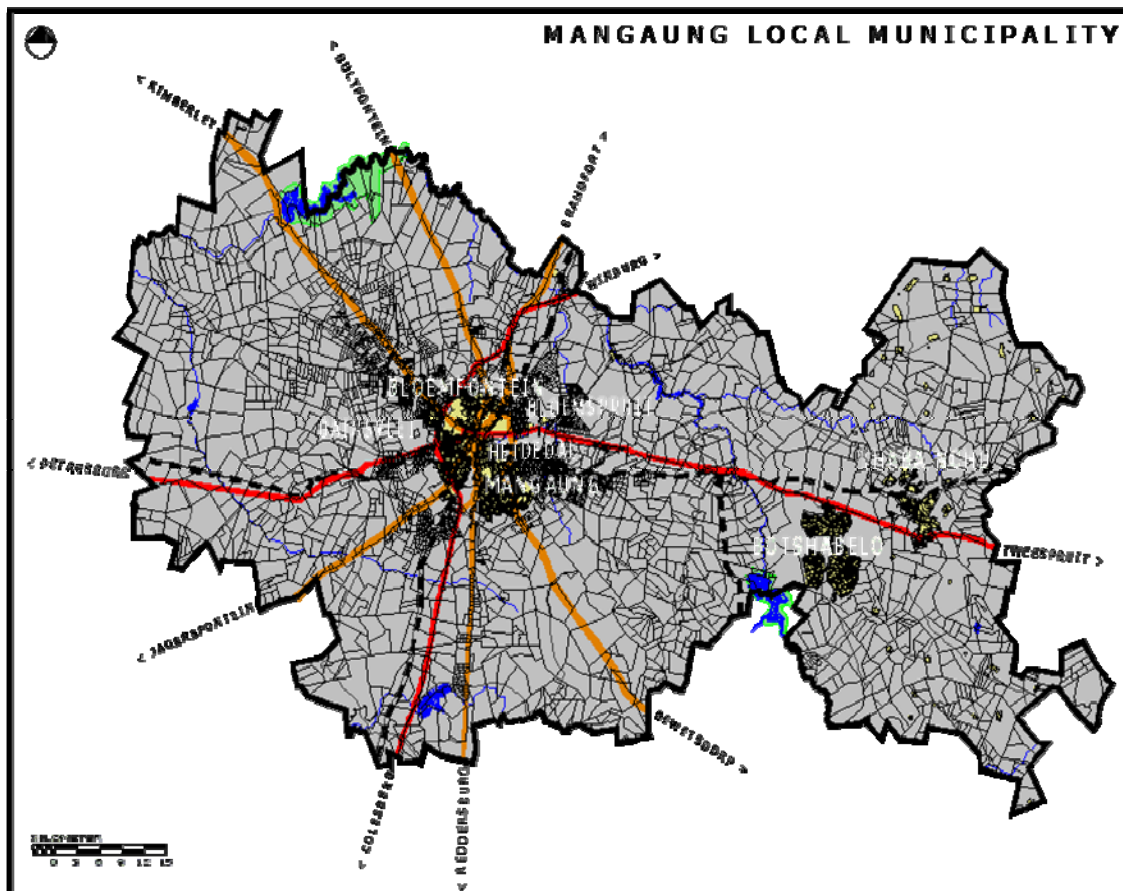
Source: Mangaung Local Municipality 2003: 8

In the 1990s it seemed that the number of informal dwellings grew faster than the ability of the local governments to provide low-cost housing or supply stands to migrants. The biggest problem with the provision of government (RDP) housing to the poor is that a large percentage of this housing is built in small towns in rural areas with no potential for economic growth, thus binding households to uneconomic areas. If people relocate to another area they cannot get another house, and in the place where they come from there is no housing market that would allow them to sell their house in order to buy another one elsewhere. In Mangaung 36 903 families were living in informal housing in 2007, compared to 2003 when 69 515 families were living in informal housing or in shacks[5] (27 263 families in Bloemfontein, 24 409 in Botshabelo, 14 319 in Thaba Nchu and 3 524 in rural areas) (Mangaung Local Municipality 2008: 15). In Bloemfontein there were approximately 13 000 families living in informal housing in 1999, while in 2008 there were an estimated 7 000 families still living in shacks. Meanwhile about 25 000 residential sites were provided in the municipal area as a first step in the provision of

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[5] Informal housing is housing which is relatively permanent but not on land where formal township establishment has taken place, while shacks are non-permanent forms of housing.

housing.

Figure 2: Mangaung with its different nodes

Source: Mangaung Local Municipality 2003: 8

2.2   Social and environmental factors

Civil society in the province is strongly dominated by political power, and in most cases the political will of the dominant party is forced onto the people as the ANC government has total control in all spheres of government. The gap between rich and poor has not diminished, but the composition of both groups has changed as a large proportion of middle- and upper-class blacks have entered the category of 'haves', while a proportion of the whites have moved to the 'have nots' category. The tensions and divisions within the Free State ANC which have been smouldering for the past 14 years consume much energy which could otherwise have been used for the development of the province.

Commercial farming is mostly in white hands, while communal farming is found in the former homelands of Qwa-Qwa and Thaba Nchu, where even in some of the urban settlements land is still owned by the tribal authority. A relatively large number of farms in these areas have been bought by black individuals or black empowerment enterprises. In the rest of the province land is privately owned. Land tenure in the Free State remains one of the major challenges, as in the previous black townships freehold was something unheard of, and people merely occupied the land in 'locations'. In the 1970s the so-called 'permission to occupy' system came into being and this manner of tenure was followed for people in the black areas in the Free State. The Conversion of Certain Rights into

Leasehold or Ownership Act (No. 81 of 1981) came into being to convert these properties into freehold, subject to certain conditions and within particular parameters. This is an ongoing process and in order to eradicate the backlog, particular government structures have been created to manage this transformation.

In the Free State there are relatively few land claims for restitution of land, due to the absence of large black settlements. A number of people from other provinces whose land has been expropriated are buying up land in this province, while the national Department of Land Affairs is also buying land for the purpose of meeting the target of 30% black ownership of land by 2014. This has pushed up the price of farms by about 100% in the past four years. Urban land prices have followed the general trend in the country in the past decade, with dramatic growth since 2000 and a negative growth rate since November 2007. In the Free State Goldfields house prices have not increased to the same extent, and houses can be bought at much lower prices than similar houses in Bloemfontein and some of the other bigger towns would cost. In small towns with declining economies, house prices are also much lower than in larger urban areas. Black low-cost housing, especially RDP housing in rural areas, also has not followed the market trends.

The Free State, being highveld with cold, dry and sunny winters, has a healthy climate with no major natural health risks. However, there is an HIV-positive prevalence rate of 33.5% in the province among pregnant women visiting pre-natal clinics, which is the second-highest prevalence in South Africa.[6] This is causing serious social problems such as an increase in orphans and pressure on clinics and hospitals which have to treat more patients when AIDS is diagnosed. The increase in the death rate also puts pressure on the economy, as trained workers have to be replaced, and people are burdened by the high costs of traditional burials in black society, where relatives are expected to travel long distances to attend funerals.

During a security survey done in Bloemfontein in 2005 it was found that the actual crime statistics showed a declining pattern, but the public perception was the opposite (Landman & Liebermann 2005: 5, 17). The fear of crime is likely to be based on impressions of the inner city as carried in the media, and on environmental factors such as overcrowding, litter and informal street trading. When analysing the actual types of crime in terms of incidents, it is found that four categories stand out, namely general theft, theft of and from vehicles, shoplifting and common assault.[7]

So far as the environment is concerned, soil degradation leading to desertification of large parts of the province is a problem. Furthermore the rapid increase of population in smaller towns has led to pressure on the water resources, which mostly come from boreholes. In the Free State Goldfields pollution by the mining companies can have a long-term effect on the surrounding countryside. Air pollution from the heavy oil-from-coal and steel industries at Sasol and Iscor is found in the northern part of the province.

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[6] Pienaar A, Vigssyfers vir swanger vroue 'nie reg' [AIDS figures for pregnant women 'not correct'], *Volksblad* Bloemfontein, 13 January 2009

[7] General theft alone accounts for about 30% of all crime, and another approximately 30% is made up of the next 3 categories of crime named here, while another 12 categories make up the rest, all with lower than 5%.

3. The planning system in the Free State

In the Free State no provision has been made for so-called post-apartheid legislation and the political leadership has also refused to implement the Development Facilitation Act (DFA) (No. 67 of 1995). Only the principles of the DFA and the portions relating to the Land Development Objectives have been accepted and implemented; unfortunately the Land Development Objectives ceased to exist in 2000 when the Municipal Systems Act (MSA) (No. 32 of 2000) was promulgated and it was thought that the Land Development Objectives had been 'replaced' by the Spatial Development Frameworks (SDFs) provided for in the new Act. New provincial legislation is apparently to be drafted and will hopefully be implemented soon.

3.1 Legislation governing planning

The main pieces of legislation governing all land use and development in the Free State are the following:

- Townships Ordinance (No. 9 of 1969)

  This Ordinance regulates township establishment, introduction of town-planning schemes, and the amendments thereof, subdivision and consolidation of sites and the creation of a Townships Board[8] that considers all applications and advises the Member of the Executive Council for the Department of Local Government and Housing, who takes a final decision.

- Removal of Restrictions Act (No. 84 of 1967)

  This Act deals with the removal, amendment or suspension of restrictive land use conditions as registered in the particular deed of title. Rezoning is also done in terms of this legislation.

- Less Formal Township Establishment Act (No. 113 of 1991)

  According to this Act township establishment can take place more quickly if a dire need for housing exists.

- Physical Planning Act (No. 125 of 1991)

  This Act is used for the establishment of uses outside the urban area municipalities. As municipalities are now edge-to-edge this Act will soon be repealed.

- Removal of Restrictions Act (No. 84 of 1967)

  This Act deals with the removal, amendment or suspension of restrictive land use conditions as

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[8] The Townships Board originated as an ad hoc planning advisory board in terms of the Dorpserkenningen Act, 1894 (No. 6 of 1894) when a commission had to investigate any application for land development. The first Townships Board was appointed on an ad hoc basis to investigate each township's establishment (section 3 of the Act, which was an Act of the Orange River Colony). Matters progressed to such an extent that it became important to have a permanent board and in 1909 in terms of the Township Act (No. 15 of 1909) a commission was appointed to investigate all applications for township establishment (section 2 of the Act). After South Africa became a Union, the Acts made way for Ordinances and this culminated in the first official Townships Board that was established in terms of sections 3–14 of the Orange Free State Township and Hamlet Ordinance (No. 6 of 1928). The next legislation was the Orange Free State Townships Ordinance (No. 20 of 1947) and this resulted in the still used Free State Townships Ordinance of 1969.

registered in the particular deed of title. Rezoning is also done in terms of this legislation.

- **The Development Facilitation Act (DFA) (No. 67 of 1995)**

  The DFA was the first developmental Act that provided some generic principles for development. These principles were obligatory for all provinces. They can be divided into the following five categories (Emdon 1994: 91):

  - Restructuring the spatial environment by setting principles to correct the racial pattern of development.
  - Spatial order principles whereby cities are made more compact and a unity is created between the separate urban areas, integrating transportation, job opportunities and residential areas, infrastructure and uses.
  - Sustainability is promoted in order to create sustainable urban units.
  - Involvement from all sectors is promoted as the whole process cannot be viewed as a government-only matter.
  - Participation of communities is promoted.

- **The Municipal Systems Act (MSA) (No. 32 of 2000)**

  This Act concerns development, with the emphasis placed on the local government sphere.

- **The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996)**

  The Constitution places great value on development by especially the local government sphere, and this is further supported in the MSA, in the section on SDFs.

3.2 Plans and planning

The plans affecting the control and management of land use are the town planning schemes (as control documents) and the SDFs which form part of the Integrated Development Plans (IDPs). The SDFs are the competency and responsibility of the local and district municipalities. The province has a provincial SDF; this derives from the Spatial Growth and Development Strategy which in turn is derived from the National Spatial Development Programme. Within the SDFs, so-called local plans or precinct plans are sometimes found for areas where specific parameters govern the use of land. The SDFs are updated annually. These plans are in line with the provisions of the MSA regarding SDFs and integration is the key element of these plans.

These plans are not yet fully exploited and they do not really fulfil their proper purpose. Continual training and skills development regarding these plans are taking place in order to have them serve the intended purpose. The processes for the production of these plans are described by legislation, but unfortunately these are not always followed; in particular the public participation process is sometimes not followed or, if followed, is not done very effectively.

The relationship between 'forward' planning and the regulatory (zoning) system is a bone of contention; in most cases the town planning scheme is still also used as a forward planning document and the SDF is regarded as just another plan, whereas it should serve the real planning function and the town planning scheme should take over the control function. This matter will take another few

years to resolve, and at present much time and effort are expended on this aspect of planning and control.

The Bloemfontein Town Planning Scheme (No. 1 of 1954 as amended) is in the process of being redrafted and in the process hopefully also being extended to include the rest of Mangaung. In Bloemfontein the control function, the 'forward' planning function and the IDP function are not located in the same department, and sometimes it seems that there is little coordination between the various responsible departments and the plans they produce.

An international planning initiative in Mangaung for action research on community involvement in planning and management of local development was funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID). This formed the basis of a DFID-funded action research project covering Uganda, Zimbabwe, Ghana and South Africa (Mangaung), 'Action Research on Community-Based Planning'. Its focus was on building capacity and a firm commitment to supporting communities by service providers, forming a basis for the successful implementation of community-based planning. The research was strengths- and opportunities-focused, participatory, driven by the communities themselves, sustainable and replicable.[9]

The principles of the SDF are based on the concept of sustainable development and the relevant town planning schemes should be aligned accordingly. However, as the democratic rights and obligations of citizens are increasingly reduced to issues of consumerism and 'who can pay for what', planners are confronted with more complex questions of whom they are serving and what values underpin the process of planning. This 'dilemma' also lends the planner a form of power which derives from their professional or expert discretion and freedom to choose which imperative to serve and to what degree. This latitude gives rise to the possibility that in many instances, planning may serve those who plan.[10]

The alignment of the urban plan with broader regional or rural planning processes is described by legislation, but unfortunately these steps (including the public participation process) are not always actively or effectively followed.

3.3   Current problems

In the Free State planning should have been in a good situation as provincial boundaries did not change after the first democratic government came to power in 1994. Unfortunately the lack of planning capacity within the province and on a municipal level has had a negative effect on planning in the province. Plans and legislation are in place but implementation and control are not effective. Although recently drafted legislation is not yet in place, the existing legislative provisions are adequate for control and implementation.

The biggest problem with planning in the Free State and in Mangaung is that the capacity to do the planning only partly exists. In both the province and the municipalities a large number of town and regional planning positions are vacant. The present Mangaung Municipality, with more than 600 000 inhabitants, has fewer planners than the old Bloemfontein Municipality with a little over 100 000 inhabitants.

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[9] Information supplied by T. Maine, IDP Manager, Mangaung Municipality, Bloemfontein, 2008
[10] Information supplied by T. Maine, IDP Manager, Mangaung Municipality, Bloemfontein, 2008

4. Planning education at the Free State University

4.1 Background

The University of the Free State, located in Bloemfontein, is one of South Africa's oldest universities, and celebrated its centenary in 2004. Six faculties offer a full range of under- and postgraduate programmes to more than 25 000 students. The university is a multicultural and multilingual institution with parallel-medium instruction in English and Afrikaans.

The Department of Urban and Regional Planning started out as part of the Department of Architecture in the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences in 1976, and offered only a graduate programme in the form of a Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) and a PhD programme. In 1979 it became an independent department in the same faculty. In 2005 the old two-year master's programme was split into a one-year honour's and a one-year master's programme to comply with the new higher education formula of the national Department of Education.

4.2 Aims of the department

The vision of the department is to be an urban and regional planning department of excellence. Its mission is to train urban and regional planners who will expand the freedom of South African citizens, and who will urge themselves and others to take on greater responsibilities and provide a variety of choices for humankind and the community to develop in an innovative and sustainable way.

Furthermore, the department strives to widen its knowledge base and academic culture by means of research. Academic staff members identify their fields of interest in terms of the goals set for the university, with its clusters focusing on the eradication of poverty and the special requirements that arid areas have in relation to human settlements and development. Research and community service learning for practical research projects always go hand-in-hand and are concerned with the nature of this discipline 'to plan with the people rather than for the people'.

The programme has a multidisciplinary approach in which students learn just as much from each other as from the lecturers. Students are encouraged to form learning groups to help one another and to hone their communicative skills. Planning involves more than making plans or the processes to implement them, but also has a normative responsibility to address the problems in any period of time that humankind, the community and the environment are experiencing. For this reason ethics is a compulsory course in the programme in order that students can realise that not only their own values, but also those of the community, must be taken into consideration in the planning process. As planning has to do with place, people and work, all students are inter alia introduced to geography, sociology and economics.

The programme tries to widen the vision of students and to combine a theoretical foundation with practical applications. Students must thus be able to think critically and be able to apply this knowledge. As a large proportion of our students are currently working as planners or even in senior planning positions at local government or provincial level without the necessary qualifications, our compact learning programmes help to serve the goal of transformation of skills for people who really need this.

4.3   Programmes offered

The MURP programme was traditionally a structured two-year full-time or three-year part-time programme. It was changed into a one-year full-time or one-and-a-half-year part-time Honours in Spatial Planning (BHons SP), plus a one-year full- or one-and-a-half-year part-time MURP from 2005. For professional registration as a corporate planner a MURP is required, as the BHons SP is only an entrance degree for the MURP. If a student has either the old two-year full-time or the new one-year MURP (which requires the one-year BHons as an entrance degree), and has acquired the experience required by the South African Council for Planners (SACPLAN), he or she is eligible for registration as a corporate member. A research master's as well as a PhD programme in Urban and Regional Planning are also offered by the department.

The BHons SP consists of 144 credits, while the MURP consists of 200 credits. One credit is equal to 10 notional hours spent on a subject.

For both programmes the composition of the student's curriculum and optional courses are determined in advance, at the beginning of each year, in consultation with the Head of Department.

B Honours in Spatial Planning programme

For the BHons SP programme students must, in addition to the compulsory major modules bearing 96 credits, take semester modules worth a minimum of 48 credits, as determined by the Head of Department according to their particular needs and background, with a total of at least 144 credits (Table 2).

Table 2:   B Honours in Spatial Planning modules

Old code	New code	Description	Credits
		Major (fundamental and core) modules (80 credits)	
BTR714	BTR604	Basic theory of urban planning	16
BCP712	BCP612	Basic computer use for planners	8
BSP712	BSP612	Basic urban planning practice	8
GCP722	GCP622	Advanced computer use for planners	8
GSP722	GSP622	Advanced urban planning practice	8
BRT714	BRT604	Basic theory of regional planning	16
ATS724	ATS604	Advanced theory of regional planning	16
		Further core learning (research) (16 credits)	
BMK 712	BMK612	Planning methodology	8
BNA722	BNA622	Planning research	8
		Elective modules*	
BET714	BET614	Planning ethics	16
BGO714	BGO614	Environmental planning	16
BNA722	CSB 614	Capita selecta	16
EVB714	EVB614	Applied economics and entrepreneurship for planners	16

Note: * Any choice of modules, as selected in consultation with the Head of the Department.

Master's in Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) programme

For the MURP students must, in addition to the compulsory major modules bearing 136 credits, take semester modules bearing a total minimum of 64 credits, as determined by the Head of Department according to the students' particular needs and backgrounds (Table 3).

Students receive the opportunity to specialise in one of the following fields:
1. Sustainable Rural Development, with the following modules:
   LGB712, OGG712 and OEB712.
2. Tourism and Development, with the following modules:
   RBT712, OGG712 and PDF712.
3. Planning for Communities, with three of the following four modules:
   PDF712, BVG712, STO712 and TVB712.
4. Integrated Development Planning, with the following modules:
   GOB712, SBF712 and RPB712.

Table 3:   Master's in Urban and Regional Planning modules

Major (fundamental and core) modules (136 credits)			
Code	**Description**	**Module type**	**Credits**
GTR793	Advanced research in urban planning	Fundamental	16
TSP792	Applied regional planning programme	Fundamental	32
SSS791	Extended research essay or publishable scientific article	Core	88
Elective modules (64 credits)*			
Code	**Description**		**Credits**
BEH752	Housing		8
BGM752	Urbanisation and metropolitan planning		8
BGR752	Planning management		8
BVG752	Planning for sustainable communities		8
CSB752	Capita selecta in planning 1		8
CSB762	Capita selecta in planning 2		8
CSB702	Capita selecta in planning 3		8
CSB704	Capita selecta in planning 4		16
ENB752	Property development and valuation		8
GBE752	Geography for planners		8
GIB754	Geographic information systems for planners		16
GOB752	Integrated development planning		8
LGB752	Planning for rural areas		8
OEB752	Development economics		8
OGG752	Development planning		8
PDF752	Public participation and facilitation		8
PPB752	Professional practice and project management		8
RBT752	Spatial planning for tourism		8
RPB752	Control of the spatial plan		8

SBF752	Strategic spatial planning and financial management	8
SOB662	Sociology for planners	8
STO752	Urban design	8
TVB752	Futurology for planners	8
VVB752	Transportation planning	8

Note: * Any choice of modules, as selected in consultation with the Head of Department.

4.4   Teaching methods

The new BHons SP is mostly a taught programme, with fundamental planning theory and principles as core modules related to urban and regional planning, the teaching of research methodology and electives to fit the individual student's needs. As indicated above, in the new master's degree students have the opportunity to specialise in four fields, namely Sustainable Rural Development, Tourism and Development, Planning for Communities, and Integrated Development Planning, in the way their electives are selected. As part of a university where teaching, research and community service are the fundamentals, students' involvement in the latter two have to be incorporated into the programme.

The programmes are structured in such a way that the students have more taught modules in the honours programme and more research work in the master's programme. The master's course culminates in a dissertation wherein the student demonstrates his/her ability to do independent and thorough research on a planning topic integrating the knowledge acquired in this programme.

4.5   Admission requirements

For the honours programme students apply in September–November, filling in a form with their academic record and a CV and some motivation as to why they want to do town planning. If students comply with the following entrance requirements they are put on the list for selection:

Reg. D30 – Entrance requirements

(a)   A person may be admitted to the above-mentioned programme in Spatial Planning if he/she is in possession of one of the following qualifications and has the necessary academic background:

(i)   A Bachelor's degree in Urban and Regional Planning.

(ii)   A Bachelor's degree in Commerce, Administration or Law.

(iii)   A Bachelor's degree in Architecture, Civil Engineering, Land Surveying, Quantity Surveying, Construction Management, Land and Property Development Management.

(iv)   A degree with one of the following major subjects: Agricultural Economics, Anthropology, Applied Mathematics, Botany, Business Management, Computer Information Systems, Economics, Environmental Science, Forestry, Geology, Geography, Mathematical Statistics, Psychology, Public Administration, Sociology or Statistics.

If a student does not have the full required entrance qualification and academic background, but has merits insofar as experience in the field of planning is concerned or is in some other way a meritorious case, the application is referred to the Prior Learning Office. Supplementary courses may be required or a student may be expected to undergo an extra year of study in order to complete the programme. Students with experience in the field of planning and working as planners are given the opportunity to improve their skills.

For the master's programme the honours programme is a prerequisite when applying for selection. Finishing the honours programme does not automatically ensure acceptance into the master's programme, as students have to sit for a written test and an individual oral selection evaluation before being admitted.

4.6   Evaluation

In each module the student should be given at least three opportunities to obtain a year mark, which should be a combination of testing the student's knowledge of the subject, the understanding of the material and the ability to apply it in one form or another. For all major (fundamental and core) modules examinations are required, while with elective modules students may be promoted with a semester mark of 65%. A student must have a year mark minimum of 40% to be allowed to take the examination.

For all modules external examiners are used, preferably academics from other planning schools or practising planners. In all modules presented by the Department of Urban and Regional Planning oral examinations are conducted, except in cases where the Head of Department decides otherwise. This could be in the case of a single student doing a second examination due to illness where, for example, it is not feasible to fly somebody in from another city such as Pretoria to conduct an oral examination. A number of video examinations (using video conference technology) have been conducted with students who only have one major module outstanding, mostly the dissertation examinations for students and/or examiners in Cape Town, East London, Durban or Windhoek (Namibia). All oral

examinations are seen as a teaching experience where students demonstrate their ability to think critically, be creative and hone their communicative skills.

4.7   Student statistics

Students are selected from a pool of applicants each year, but largely for economic reasons a number of students do not register in the year for which they were selected. Furthermore, students tend to take much longer than the minimum period to complete their studies, due to working conditions, family problems, money or pregnancy. Our aim is to put 15 students with a master's degree into the market each year (Tables 4 and 5).

Table 4:   Number of honours students selected per year, 1998–2007*

Year	Students
1998	20
1999	23
2000	32
2001	26
2002	25
2003	28
2004	25
2005	29
2006	21
2007	32

Note: * Before 2005 the figure was for the first year master's degree students when the old master's degree was a two-year programme; it has changed into a one-year honours and a one-year master's degree.

Table 5:   Number of master's students graduating per year, 1997–2005

Year	Students
1997	14
1998	12
1999	12
2000	14
2001	8
2002	10
2003	12
2004	11
2005	8

Throughput of students is shown in Figure 3. The success rate shown there does not reflect the true rate as students will study for a year or two and then cannot continue because the previous year's fees were not paid; or they just disappear for a time and return at a later stage to continue their studies.

The demographic composition of our students has been transformed through market forces from a predominantly white student group in the 1980s to a predominantly black student group at present (Table 6). The gender split fluctuates. We do not select students on the basis of race or gender.

From about 1994 the number of students enrolling dropped, and a new type of student began applying for enrolment. They were a group of people who had got into town planning positions in all three spheres of government, but did not have the necessary qualifications for the job. These students

were not able to undertake full-time or part-time studies as they were employed full-time and had people depending on their income.

In 1998 a first group of three students were selected to test the possibility of a compact learning programme consisting of exactly the same number of lectures as were being taught full-time or part-time in one quarter, but given in one eight-day period for all courses. Normally all students write their tests in the same week that the students in the compact programme are at the university. This ensures that only one test week exists at a time, and it also ensures that quality control can be done to keep all students at the same level.

The department, through its compact learning programme, plays a pivotal role in addressing the educational wrongs of the past by empowering students – especially rural students, women and youth – by enabling them to further their studies while still working and taking care of their families and communities. After completion of their planning degrees they can compete in the very demanding job market and be a competent addition to the black economic empowerment initiatives in a range of economic sectors.

Figure 3: Relation between first-year students and graduates (MURP)
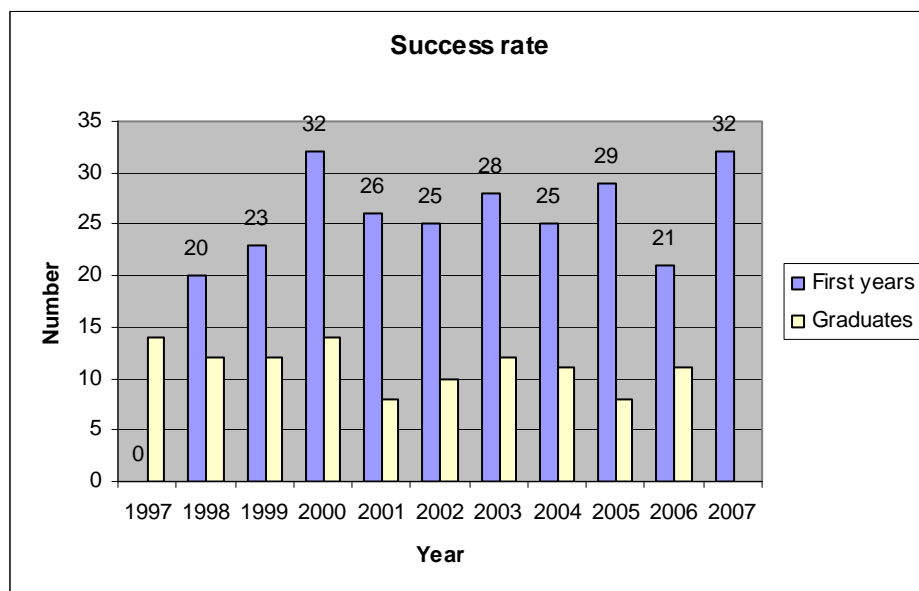
Note: * Some students are still in the process of completing their degrees and the success rate might thus be higher than that shown here.

Table 6: Distribution of MURP students, by race and gender, 1997–2007

	MURP students (N)														
Year	White			Indian			Coloured			Black			All students		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
1997	18	12	30	0	0	0	1	1	2	5	5	10	24	18	42
1998	16	7	23	0	0	0	1	1	2	5	6	11	22	14	36
1999	24	7	31	0	0	0	0	2	2	15	9	24	39	18	57
2000	19	6	25	0	0	0	0	2	2	20	16	36	39	24	63

2001	13	4	17	0	0	0	0	2	2	17	14	31	30	20	50
2002	16	5	31	0	0	0	0	3	3	23	15	38	39	23	62
2003	17	6	23	0	1	1	3	0	3	26	22	48	46	29	75
2004	13	4	17	0	1	1	2	1	3	35	14	49	50	20	70
2005	14	4	18	0	1	1	2	1	3	41	23	64	57	29	86
2006	14	5	19	0	1	1	3	1	4	34	23	57	51	30	81
2007	10	4	14	0	0	0	3	0	3	36	24	60	49	31	77

4.8   Staff and accreditation

The department consists of four full-time academic staff members (one professor, one senior lecturer and two lecturers), two full-time non-academic staff members, one departmental secretary, one student assistant, eight part-time lecturers practising in the field of planning, and two colleagues from other fields. Two of the departmental lecturers have PhDs. The department's professional officer has a MURP degree. All lecturers have experience in the profession and many years' experience as academics.

Each staff member specialises in a specific field of interest and students have full access to his or her knowledge and source references. In some modules we use specialised practitioners to help cover specialist areas, together with a full-time lecturer acting as coordinator. Most of the staff are members of the South African Planning Institute (SAPI) and are registered with SACPLAN.

The department had inspections from the South African Council for Urban and Regional Planners in 1980, 1988 and 1997. An accreditation visit was scheduled with SACPLAN for 2004, but was postponed to 2007 and eventually to 2008. A benchmarking visit by the UK Royal Town Planning Institute in 2007 gave the department the green light to go ahead with an application for an accreditation visit by this body.

4.9   Relevance of programmes

The lecturers are encouraged to attend international conferences on different topics in order to keep up with new developments. All hard-copy subscribed journals are circulated monthly to all lecturers and help them to keep in touch with new ideas in planning. Journals can also be accessed by both staff and students through the internet; most journals are available in this manner. Staff order books as they see fit, within the allowed budget. In the last few years extra funds have been made available to the library for departments needing more books than their initial budgetary provisions. The Department of Urban and Regional Planning made the best of this deal and tried to buy as many books as we could. Lists of new books are e-mailed to the academic staff as they arrive in the library.

In most subjects articles from journals are used for student reading work, and annual revision of subject content keeps these readings up-to-date. Students also have to write papers in most subjects and this forces them to look for reference material in the library. If the library does not have a book it can be obtained through the inter-library loan system.

The department is involved in two of the six major research clusters at this university, namely those on poverty and on arid regions. As most of the central area of South Africa can be described as poor

and arid, we hope to fill a niche area in the field of planning research.

4.10 Facilities

The department shares a building with the Department of Architecture, but has its own entrance and security system. Physically the department occupies a total floor area of approximately 540 m². There are two lecture rooms available, seating approximately 50 and 24 people respectively, for teaching or seminar purposes or guest lectures. All lecture venues are equipped with traditional blackboards, overhead projectors and a data projector as teaching aids. The committee room is also used for smaller classes and for meetings. A fully equipped computer laboratory is used for practical modules such as CAD and layout design. It has 17 Pentium IV workstations which are at students' disposal 24 hours per day, 7 days a week. For students, the department has equipped four research rooms which can accommodate ten students in total. Each room is equipped with university access points, allowing the occupants to have network, e-mail and internet access.

The UFS-Sasol Library boasts more than 700 000 sources which are, due to the multidisciplinary nature of the programme, at the full disposal of the department and its students. Between the Department of Urban and Regional Planning and other departments involved in urban or regional studies approximately 37 000 sources are available, whilst this department alone owns approximately 12 400 sources. The library has a dedicated librarian for the department and she has extensive knowledge of the academic requirements of staff and students.

The library has several computer centres where students could go for instruction, help or access to computers and printers. The departmental computer laboratory is access-controlled and provides a safe and secure environment for students to work in, do research and surf the internet. Computer hard- and software are constantly upgraded to stay abreast of technological developments.

5. The future: Challenges and prospects in the 21st century

Universities in South Africa are under pressure of transformation as far as staff are concerned. The problem, however, is that universities pay relatively low salaries and expect high output from staff. It is thus very difficult to attract well qualified personnel, especially from the previously marginalised groups.

Furthermore, the standard of the school system is deteriorating and we have a problem in that many students at postgraduate level cannot formulate and write a good paper or report. These students are expected to do independent study and research without these basic skills. As students should express their own values and take responsibility for their work academically, it is becoming difficult to have a good throughput rate in the programmes. It is a new ball game to teach students to do the basics, to be critical, but also to come up with realistic solutions to problems which show some creativity. The teaching staff will have to find ways in which to achieve this in order to prepare their students to operate in the 21st century.

Looking at what 21st-century teaching can demand from universities, a SWOT analysis might help the University of the Free State planning school's curriculum to focus on its future education practice.

5.1 Strengths

- Our approach is to develop students' ethical, theoretical and practical knowledge and skills to

enable them to address urban issues on the local and also on the global scale. With our community engagement projects, students get hands-on experience in both rural and urban communities.

- All students completing both the programmes have experienced a very general programme teaching them to think critically, but also to emerge with creative new approaches to present and future problems.

- The curriculum allows master's degree students to specialise in some fields of planning , from sustainable rural development to integrated development planning. The curriculum is also regularly revised to accommodate new developments in planning.

- The compact learning programme for both the honours and master's programmes allows people already working to have the opportunity to obtain a professional degree, thus empowering persons working in large cities but also coming from small rural municipalities, and giving them a chance to equip themselves better.

- Our approach as a department is to have strong personal relations with our students. We know them, their fears, their expectations, but also their family- and work-related problems. We try to accommodate students as far as possible, even if we have to give them extended time of up to 365 days to hand in a late assignment.

- Students who have no computer skills are taught the necessary skills to help themselves, even if it takes several years to complete these courses. Students have 24-hour, 365-days-per-year access to the computer laboratory, and learning these skills is in their own hands as most of the necessary skill comes from practice.

5.2   Weaknesses

- The curriculum offers a general programme and assumes that students have a general knowledge of what is happening in other fields in the world. Unfortunately, for a large group of students Bloemfontein is the largest urban area they have ever visited and very few read a newspaper regularly. For this reason a large number of eight-credit optional courses are required in the master's programme.

- Most students are being taught in their second, third or fourth language, while all the teaching staff is Afrikaans-speaking and English is their second language. In many cases the lecturer is not sure if the student has a lack of subject knowledge or a lack of vocabulary when answering questions.

- In some cases compact programme students are very isolated, coming from places such as Riemvasmaak where the nearest library is nearly 300 km away and the nearest academic library is 900 km away.

- Being relatively isolated from bigger centres, it is not that easy for us to show our students a lot of high-order planning examples. For this we have to take them on tour to see what is happening in the bigger metropoles of South Africa.

5.3   Opportunities

- The curriculum focuses more on general issues than on specific rules and regulations, allowing for students coming from other Southern African countries to fit in.

- The huge urbanisation that has taken place in the past decade, together with the projected future migration of people to urban areas, makes planning as a profession a scarce skill. In the developing world more planners will be needed in the years to come and this opens up opportunities for the future.

- Our students, coming to a large extent from previously marginalised communities, have a strong sense of community and want to help the people in their communities. They also understand the languages spoken in the rural areas. Although the planning language in the Free State is English, most discussions in rural areas are conducted in either Sesotho or Setswana. In some cases not a word of English is spoken at rural meetings.

- Being in a class with students from other parts of the country, having different backgrounds and value systems, in a department that does not teach recipes but allows diversity in thinking and doing, is a learning attribute of this department.

5.4 Threats

- Students are in some cases more interested in making money, and sometimes fast money, than in anything else, and reject all the academic and ethical values taught at university. These students are also a bad advertisement for the department as people might think that this is how we teach students.

- Although planning is not value-free some planners, instead of being professional planners, tend to become lackeys of the politicians and do whatever is asked of them without any critical thinking.

- Giving personal attention to students, their work and their problems takes up a large part of the lecturers' time and, together with the demands of community service, leaves little time for research work.

- The advanced age of the planning teaching staff and the researchers means that the academic world in South Africa might soon find itself without the necessary lecturers.

- The scarcity of planning skills in developed countries is drawing a large number of our graduates to countries such as Britain, Ireland, the USA, Australia and New Zealand. It is also cheaper for other countries to import brains than to educate them.

- It is also difficult to get students to understand the relationship between planning with the people and retaining a professional approach to planning.

The ability of the Free State University's Department of Urban and Regional Planning to adapt and change its curriculum in the past has made it possible for this department to educate students for the 21st century. This willingness to listen and to make the necessary changes over time is part of the way of thinking of the department. Planners, above all other professions, must be able to be innovative and creative in order to solve the problems of tomorrow.

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