

Land Reform and Rural Territories: Experiences from Brazil and South Africa

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Executive summary

Despite programmes for rural land reform and redistribution around the world, inequitable land distribution and rural poverty remain profound in much of the rural South. This paper suggests a new approach to land reform and rural development. “Rural territorial development” (RTD) is based on and encourages shared territorial identity (distinctive productive, historical, cultural and environmental features) amongst different stakeholders and social groupings. It builds on the fact that rural people’s livelihood strategies are complex and often mostly non-agricultural in nature. It works by (1) promoting collaboration between different sectoral agencies, levels and administrative units of government, and with civil society and private sector actors, within distinctive geographical spaces; and (2) creating new, inclusive multi-stakeholder fora for participatory development planning and implementation at the meso scale—working across groupings of local municipalities, which are often too small on their own to drive economic development.

The paper presents case studies of RTD approaches in Brazil and South Africa. It finds that a territorial approach to land reform could potentially:

- Strengthen land reform groups over wider areas by creating platforms to secure institutional support, improve productivity, tackle collective marketing needs, and negotiate with private sector interests.
- Support a more integrated approach to diverse and overlapping issues of tenure security, access to seasonal pasture, indigenous rights, land expropriation and restitution, and market based land access.
- Improve co-ordination among and more responsive prioritisation by state agencies.
- Improve service delivery and agricultural support to land reform communities, with better prioritisation of scarce resources for social and physical infrastructure.
- Create shared platforms whereby diverse social groups can debate and agree on visions and practical priorities to help steer government interventions.

The Brazilian and South African experiences are at a very early stage; a variety of institutional and political problems still remain. Despite its potential, RTD is no magic bullet. The main lessons identified by the studies include that:

- Follow-up development and agricultural support is needed, delivered within a more integrated, decentralised approach involving government agencies, social movements and other rural development actors.
- Investing in new territorial institutional frameworks and processes can help reconcile divergent interests. New territorial institutions are needed, with legal powers and capacity to manage delivery of strategic development projects on the ground.
- A genuinely enabling national policy framework for RTD will overcome weak participation by parochial local municipalities, the private sector and sectoral, top-down government agencies.

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The impasse in redistributive land reform

Today we face an impasse in the ability of land reform programmes to promote more equitable rural economic growth and development in countries with large land inequalities. Development agencies and civil society movements tend to disagree over the choice between traditional state-led and more recent World Bank promoted market-assisted approaches to land transfers to the poor. In both South Africa and Brazil, the case study countries in this paper, both approaches have been found to be poorly integrated with broader development support (Deininger, 2003).

Land reform social movements are now beginning to network across areas and regions so as to create broader alliances and linkages between land and wider struggles. This suggests that a territorial arena may allow rural development concerns and state and civil society strategies to be combined effectively. It can establish shared and broad based strategies for rural economic development across geographical regions.

Rural territorial development

Rural territorial development (RTD) is an evolving and innovative approach to rural development and poverty reduction. RTD initiatives are based on and encourage shared territorial identity (see Box 1) amongst different stakeholders and social groupings. They focus on strengthening local economies through dynamic market development based on the comparative advantages, wider linkages and distinctive productive, historical, cultural and environmental features of different geographic regions. The approach involves socially inclusive and participatory planning strategies combining civil society, private and public stakeholders, and stresses the importance of civil society participation in building productive and market opportunities for the poor across urban and rural space (Schejtmann and Berdegué, 2002; Sepulveda *et al.*, 2003; Abramovay *et al.*, 2004; Cleary, 2003).

To reduce poverty and create economic opportunity for the poor across deprived areas beyond the local scale, new institutional arrangements may be needed to overcome the

predominantly parochial and sectoral interests which often characterise municipal and national government. In Latin American countries particularly, a plethora of micro-municipalities—often configured around historical patterns of land ownership and political power—has enabled the capture of public development funding by local political elites, often closely associated with established remnant aristocracies and dominant business figures. Rural territorial development seeks to refocus institutional frameworks for rural development by (1) promoting collaboration between different sectors, levels and geographic units of government; and (2) creating new participatory territorial fora for development planning and implementation. These may include organisations such as rural unions, social movements, churches, NGOs and indigenous social institutions, as well as private sector producers and trade organisations.

RTD approaches have assimilated, and implicitly include, many of the principles, insights and developments of sustainable livelihoods approaches widely adopted by development agencies from the late 1990s onwards. Most important of these are recognition of the mutually reinforcing roles of social capital and productive assets in shaping livelihood and market opportunities, and of the fact that rural people's livelihood strategies are complex and often mostly non-agricultural in nature (Sepulveda *et al.*, 2003). We suggest that RTD offers opportunities to concretise, spatially, a livelihoods approach in practice, and that applying this approach to land reform might achieve more sustainable impacts in terms of economic opportunity and poverty reduction. We explore this potential through case studies in Brazil and South Africa.

Research approach

Our research involved two stages:

1. The assessment of key concepts and approaches relating to land access and rural territorial development through literature reviews, country visits and ongoing dialogue with partners and key informants from government and civil society at national and local levels.
2. A set of case studies, one in Brazil and two in South Africa. All of the case studies involved:
 - Analysing secondary data and literature.
 - Documenting local initiatives to link land access programmes with participatory territorial planning processes as they unfolded.
 - Key informant interviews with government agencies, civil society actors and stakeholders in rural planning, as well as with community leaders and representatives participating directly in land access and territorial development programmes.
 - Participatory local workshops to debate case study findings and emerging policy issues organised at the case study sites involving a wide range of local actors.

These were supplemented by a variety of specific survey methodologies, according to local partners' objectives, priorities and capacities, and the specific questions they sought to answer. The case studies presented here are:¹

- Médio São Francisco, north-east Brazil: a rural territory comprising 16 local municipalities. A local team² identified and mapped different types of traditional rural communities and land reform settlements, conducted field visits, key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Empirical and locational data were supplemented by documentary analysis of data on land holdings, land transactions and land transfer or tenure regularisation processes for all the sites for which this was available. Detailed geo-referenced mapping exercises were undertaken using GPS for a number of selected sites and projects. The historical development of administrative and planning units in the region was reconstructed using maps, and a historical analysis of settlement and land use was undertaken.
- Elliot District in Eastern Cape Province, South Africa: a former commercial farming district, targeted for land redistribution. The study used small-scale statistical surveys of land reform beneficiaries and commercial farmers using random sampling techniques, supplemented by analysis of land market, land registration and farm employment data.³
- Makhado local municipality in Limpopo province, South Africa: a much larger area comprising both commercial and communal areas. This study relied primarily on participant observation by a local NGO team,⁴ backed by researchers, and data collection on land restitution claims and claimant communities as part of the Makhado Area Land Reform Initiative. As in Elliot, this was supplemented by analysis of land market, land registration and farm employment data.

Land access and rural territorial development in practice

What does practical experience tell us about the progress of territorial and area based approaches, and the issues and opportunities encountered in applying these new approaches? This section presents evidence from the case studies in South Africa and Brazil.

1. Fuller details contained in NRI reports (see Papers 3 -7 available at: www.nri.org/projects/reed/laptd).

2. Led by Prof. Guiomar Germani of the Geosciences Institute, UFBA (Universidade Federal da Bahia), Brazil.

3. The Elliot study was led by Dr Michael Aliber of HSRC (Human Sciences Research Council), South Africa.

4. Nkuzi, based in Polokwane, Limpopo, South Africa. The team was led by Marc Wegerif.

Brazil

"...agrarian reform must promote regional development the omission of this dimension from land policies to date, with the predominance of isolated land reform settlements and without creating the right conditions for production and marketing, explains their limited effectiveness" (MDA, 2004b).

Brazil has recently sought to develop a territorial approach to agrarian development, having recognised the need to integrate continuing efforts for land reform in a sustainable economic, institutional and social context. In 2003, under the newly elected Lula government, the Ministry for Agrarian Development (MDA) created the Secretariat for Territorial Development (SDT) to develop and implement a more integrated and participatory approach to rural development planning. Given the extent of land concentration, and the historical marginalisation of smallholder production in the poorest areas of Brazil, land reform is a fundamental strategy for expanding family farming and for poverty reduction. Land reform needs to be adapted to different circumstances, and linked to provision of credit and support services⁵ for family farming as a whole. SDT's programme has attempted to bring together land reform and agrarian development programmes, and link them to strategic provision of infrastructure and other services at the territorial level. One of the major issues which MDA and its collaborators in government and civil society seek to address is the politicisation of planning at the local level, whereby scarce resources in remote and impoverished rural areas have become increasingly controlled by (frequently conservative) municipal prefects who use them paternalistically to generate political support in electoral campaigns.

Brazil's second National Programme for Agrarian Reform (MDA, 2004b) also seeks to take a territorial approach to land reform, in contrast to the centrally organised but dispersed pattern of expropriation which previously characterised state-led land reforms. The programme combines a variety of land reform instruments, namely land redistribution, land acquisition and tenure regularisation to meet the needs of the range of beneficiaries, including the landless, those with insufficient land access, women farmers, youth, indigenous peoples, Afro-descendent communities, people displaced by e.g. hydro-power projects, and traditional riverine and agro-pastoral communities. In practice this requires considerable cross-sectoral co-ordination and integration of public policy at federal, state and municipal levels, supported by democratic dialogue and social management of rural development activities. While these principles are set out in SDT's strategy documents, a fundamental question is the extent to which the alliance between the Brazilian Federal Government and rural social movements which underpins the new approaches is capable of facilitating the necessary institutional transformation.

The case study area

In the interior of Bahia, north-east Brazil, territory has been constructed through land occupation and colonisation by both powerful politically connected interests and small-scale farmers. Médio São Francisco (MSF) lies in the middle section of the São Francisco river basin. The river, popularly known as *Velho Chico*, was chosen as a symbol by the

5. NEAD (2003) noted that in 2002 only 15% of land owning families had access to credit.

territorial forum as the region is now referred to as the *Território do Velho Chico*. It includes 16 municipalities and has some 373,000 inhabitants, around 60% of whom live in rural areas outside the major towns. Partially settled and claimed during Brazil's colonial occupation, the river basin formed an important trade and transport route for the exploration of north-eastern and northern Brazil.

In common with other regions of the semi-arid *Sertão*, the area also formed a centre for providing cattle and human labour—in the form of slaves—to the sugar estates on the coast. As a result the riverine areas and arid rangeland became populated by the descendants of migrants and escaped slaves who established communal pastoral and extractive livelihood systems based on cattle raising, seasonal flood plain and dryland arable farming, and fishing (Germani *et al.*, 2004; 2005). Particularly after the end of slavery, and as a result of the unreliability of rainfall and farm production, cyclical labour migration, principally to the São Paulo Region (Estrela, 2003) became a vital and characteristic feature of the livelihood systems of the area.

As settlement by the landed class continued, and vast colonial estates changed hands, the traditional riverine, pastoral former slave communities (*quilombolas*) became surrounded by private property. The gradual encroachment onto traditionally-managed community land caused widespread loss of land and resource rights by the original inhabitants, through enclosure of communal rangelands, displacement of communities and confinement to limited areas. This in turn led to spontaneous and organised resistance, supported initially by the church and subsequently by a variety of social movements, to defend traditional livelihood systems, reclaim community identity and restore alienated land rights (Germani *et al.*, 2005).

Territorial identity as a platform for development

These land rights social movements form the basis for territorial identity in the case study area. These movements operate at two levels: (1) struggles of specific communities, such as agro-pastoralist groups and *quilombolas*, for rights over rangeland and riverine areas on which they depend and with which they identify closely; and (2) networked initiatives across wider regions which connect communities facing similar problems of land access and insecurity to better defend common interests and extend their rights and opportunities.

However, the emergence of a common territorial platform for rural development is a direct result of MDA's territorial development initiative to create a more favourable policy and institutional environment for family farmers and land reform projects. It has focused on MSF as one of its initial priority territories in Bahia because of the density and diversity of landless groups and land reform initiatives.

A series of participatory workshops in 2005 gave rise to a territorial plan. A territorial commission (a broad-based forum comprising the representatives of the different rural social movements, together with interested, federal and state government agencies, NGOs and municipalities) and an elected management committee have also been established. A series of priority infrastructure projects has been launched to open up economic

opportunities in areas such as livestock and meat marketing, honey and bio-diesel production and land reform for small farmer communities across the territory.

Impacts and challenges⁶

Impacts

- A territorial vision and a permanent collegiate territorial forum, backed by a management group and technical team. By the end of the research project in 2006, the territorial development process had united representatives of the broad range of rural social groups, including those previously invisible to development planners (the *quilombolas* and indigenous groups), around an agreed territorial vision.
- A territory-wide plan for small-scale infrastructural and development projects. The aim is to build processing and marketing networks for distinctive local produce such as goat meat and honey. The process included a variety of land reform communities and isolated rural settlements, using a community infrastructure credit line which the federal government placed under the jurisdiction of the territorial forum.
- Acceptance by the Bahia state government of principles of territorial development. Government has realised that municipal units are too small and too parochial to adopt a wider development vision, and that greater participation by civil society is necessary. The state government has officially adopted the rural territories defined by MDA and the rural social movements as the basis for the planning and management of rural development across the state as a whole, and is pioneering the implementation of a new Federal Programme, *Territorios de Cidadania* (Territories of Citizenship), partly to better integrate at territorial scale the rural and regional development activities of ten different federal ministries, state government, municipalities and civil society initiatives.
- An ongoing programme of tenure regularisation and group titling of *quilombola* communities, whose land is widely encroached upon by commercial estates. This is serving to strengthen their local identities and presence at the territorial level.
- A series of thematic debates. Organised by the territorial forum, these cover topics such as land reform, rural credit and environmental management and are supporting a longer-term territorial vision. The forum has also mobilised its member organisations and communities in a campaign to revitalise the river basin and to oppose a federal government proposal to transport water from the São Francisco river to other semi-arid states of north-east Brazil.

6. This section is based on a territorial forum workshop held by the study team in December 2005 for representatives of diverse social movements, rural unions, local NGOs, municipalities and state agencies.

Challenges

- Weak participation by municipalities. This is one of the greatest challenges to the territorial approach. In part it is because local politicians are not interested in wider territorial concerns which threaten to undermine municipal political power. But this hostility risks de-linking the territorial development experiment from more local development visions and existing institutional mechanisms for project implementation.
- Poor collaboration by municipal and state governments. This affects the legal and institutional mechanisms for implementing participatory budgeting and planning for small-scale infrastructure provision to support agricultural livelihoods. The fact that the new territorial structures remain in a pilot stage means they lack a clear status and mandate in relation to the constitutionally pre-established structures of local government, and without significant legal and resource power.
- Incomplete coverage. Involvement in the territorial vision has largely been confined to the leaders of different social movements. It is not clear how effectively they are able to mobilise or represent the concerns of their constituencies in developing a territory wide plan and development vision. Private sector interests are also absent from the process, not surprisingly since it centres on a development vision for the rural poor, often sharply opposed to that of landowners. However, in the absence of a wholesale transformation in the structure of land ownership, this means that a full range of possible development partnerships and opportunities are not being explored. Together with the absence of municipal authorities (whose interests coalesce with those of landowners and the organised private sector) this reinforces the view of the RTD process as a partial, political project of the current PT (Workers' Party) government, intended to create an alternative popular bloc to challenge localised, parochial political power and the dominant development model.
- Failure to engage at a wider level with sectors and forces which have a driving influence on certain aspects of regional economic development. These include large-scale commercial agriculture (the Ministry of Agriculture);⁷ urban enterprise and industrial development (led by municipalities and the private sector).
- Difficulty in developing shared definitions of territory (Box 1). Territory can exist at different scales—local, regional, and even national. The notion of territory is thus frequently disputed, and the planning units of local government and different sectoral agencies, groups and the spatial organisation of civil society indigenous and customary groups differ. In MSF there has been uncertainty, particularly at the outermost margins, about which territories are to be included. Three municipalities have left to join neighbouring territories.

7. The ministry's role in NE Brazil is primarily to support agribusiness and operates along entirely sectoral and commodity focused lines, i.e., taking a non-territorial perspective.

BOX 1. DEFINING TERRITORY

A territory can be considered as a specific, but not necessarily precisely bounded, geographical area with a shared cultural identity, thereby facilitating collective development.

Maintaining flexibility over territory definition in the early stages is critical. For example, Brazil's rural territories are still being constructed. Rigid territorial boundaries tend to reduce territory to an administrative planning unit as opposed to a more open set of inter-linked social spatial and market networks with a common sense of identity. Moreover, policies and theories of territorial development stress the importance of integrating development actions at different scales (see for instance MDA, 2004a; NEAD, 2003; Sepulveda et al., 2003). This is crucial so that programmes and projects funded and managed at federal state and municipal levels, or by agencies, NGOs and social movements operating at different regional and local scales can combine to deliver coherent and tangible improvements for local communities.

For more details in territory, see www.nri.org/projects/reed/laptd

Legislative and fiscal reforms are likely to be needed to mandate compliance by local government in resourcing and implementing territorial development programmes and responding to the demands of participatory territorial bodies, or to enable other bodies, including federal agencies, municipal consortia and NGOs, to undertake territorial projects. This has potentially far reaching implications for the nature and accountability of decentralised government in Brazil, and may require constitutional amendment. It also illustrates the fragility of the territorial endeavour, as presently designed, closely wedded to the execution of projects as a primary incentive for participation and indicator of success. This risks de-mobilisation of participants in the event of failure.

South Africa

"There is a profound tension between morally charged narratives of dispossession on the one hand, and the narrowly technocratic and under-funded land reform programme on the other" (Walker, 2000).

South Africa is another multi-racial, middle-income yet highly unequal country. But it presents a rather different picture of approaches to land reform and local economic development. Rural poverty remains a major problem, with over 70% of all South Africa's poor living in rural areas, excluded from ownership and control of the means of production. Half of them are chronically poor (Aliber, 2003).

Land reform is centrally planned and managed in South Africa, posing a significant challenge for broader redistributive change through land restitution (the collective restoration of land rights alienated from the black majority under apartheid, mandated by South Africa's constitution). It also raises challenges for achieving social ownership of successful commercial farming, the development of new forms of collective territorial identity and political control, and the democratisation of spatial development and economic opportunity.

The division of land occupation and territorial identity along racial lines is a legacy of apartheid spatial planning which created a mosaic of white-owned export crop producing commercial farms and marginalised “communal areas” where the black population primarily obtains a living through migrant labour to industrial zones. The physical separation of the two communities remains largely intact in rural areas as a result of the slow pace of land reform and its failure to unscramble the apartheid map. This is despite the creation of new local government units bringing together urban, rural, former white farming and black communal areas, and the existence of a nominally participatory Integrated Development Planning (IDP) process (see Box 2). Development planning at the local government level does not extend to land reform and agriculture, which remain, respectively, national and provincial level responsibilities. Moreover, there is no deliberate attempt or policy to facilitate territorial networking of civil society groups and social movements and their participation in development planning.

Cousins (2007) advocates a rethinking of land and agrarian policies and programmes in South Africa. He notes the increasing reliance of the rural poor on multiple non-agricultural livelihoods (including employment, remittances, pensions, trade, micro-enterprise and natural resource extraction, as well as small-scale farming). He argues that an area-based approach is required to ensure coherence of an effective agrarian reform, involving a restructuring of rural socio-economic space and socio-economic relations. This should take place, Cousins argues, alongside a more wide-ranging programme of land transfers, major improvements in infrastructure, support services and extension, a break from market-led approaches, and a central role for the state together with progressive forces from civil society in driving land acquisition and distribution.

BOX 2. INTEGRATED APPROACHES TO DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

The South African state has attempted to deal with the contradictions of apartheid geography through the reorganisation of local government and a radical decentralisation of government functions to local level. This has been tackled through the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) process, in place since 1996, under which newly created district and local municipalities have responsibility for participatory development planning. In 2001 South Africa went on to introduce the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Programme (ISRDP), a 10-year initiative focusing on specific pilot areas where institutional problems in regional and spatial development planning are tackled by bringing together all departments and spheres of government, as well as traditional leaders, in an integrated approach. It is not clear, however, how the lessons of the ISRDP process will be extended throughout South Africa, and the initiative is not integrating issues of land access and inequality into its sustainable rural development framework.

Planning for land and agrarian reform needs to be better integrated into IDP processes, despite the present mandate of central government agencies to implement land reforms. Active participation of beneficiaries, and more systematic provision of infrastructure and support services are needed, for which the private sector and civil society can assist in delivery alongside the state. Such an approach requires considerable capacity-building and innovative institutional arrangements to link central to local government, provide support for rural enterprise and organise inputs and marketing.

Makhado case study

A variety of white commercial farming areas, such as those in Makhado local municipality, Limpopo Province, are subject to community demands to recover alienated lands through the government's land restitution programme. Here, over 60 land restitution claims covering over 90% of land in Makhado have been lodged by communities from the former homeland of Venda, concentrated in the central Nzhelele valley area, a typical resettlement area where forcibly removed communities had been dumped during the apartheid era (Nkuzi, 2003).

In 2002, the Nkuzi Development Association, a land sector NGO based in Limpopo Province, embarked upon an Area Land Reform Initiative (ALRI) to deliver land across the Makhado municipal area within a broader development strategy. The strategy aims to help landless communities develop a plan for land and agrarian reform in the Nzhelele area, and to meet the needs of some 10,000 farm workers, many of whom live with their families on the white-owned commercial farms.

Nkuzi has also helped community land claimants negotiate with the private sector to develop plans for managing viable, high value commercial horticultural farms in the Levubu valley adjacent to Nzhelele, the focus of the earliest and most high profile restitution claims. Indeed, the success of the restitution programme in transferring these high value enterprises to land claimant communities requires new forms of partnership with the private sector, including existing land owners, to maintain productivity, employment and access to global markets.

Impacts

- Recognition by the Provincial Land Claims Commission that restitution claims must be dealt with in clusters to facilitate settlement, and that partnerships with the private sector are critical to safeguard the future of thriving enterprises.
- Considerable interest in uptake of the ALRI approach from the local municipality, particularly amongst local councillors. However, Makhado itself lacks the funds and technical expertise to resource the programme, and the municipality's economic development unit has been resistant to incorporating the ALRI programme into IDP proposals. Moreover, the view of Vhembe District Municipality (responsible for approval of the Makhado IDP and channelling the resources to support it), is that land restitution and reform are higher level responsibilities.

Challenges

- There is no post-settlement strategy. Makhado, like most municipalities, had no plan for dealing with land reform through IDPs, despite the fact that settlement of the land restitution claims covering most of the municipality's surface area would have a far-reaching effect on economic development and would indeed

affect most developments already planned within the IDP. This highlights the need for a clearer overall development vision and strategy linking across the different levels and branches of government responsible for land restitution, land reform and economic development planning. The critical role of local government in delivering development support to rural communities needs to be better resourced and co-ordinated with programmes managed at central and provincial levels.

- Failure by government departments to commit to the roles and responsibilities identified for the ALRI approach and to allocate the required resources. As a result ALRI has not moved forward, except where Nkuzi has directly intervened to pressurise government, to facilitate the development of the Makhado land reform forum and discussions between claimant communities, commercial farmers and potential private sector partners for farm management.
- Significant institutional inertia at provincial level, a feature of the general "sectoral silo" approach which currently prevails in South Africa. Nkuzi has now asked the government to endorse the proposals as a pilot for an area-based approach, and is investigating how to achieve greater ownership and engagement by the departments involved. This will include developing clear and enforceable implementation guidelines; a requirement by the Minister for Land and Agriculture and Provincial Government in Limpopo that all parties formally negotiate an integrated approach; a territorial agreement formalising the commitments made by different stakeholders to work together; and some pooling of financial and human resources across government departments, to implement more integrated programmes.

An independent body is needed to facilitate the process, foster ownership of an integrated approach and broker a contractual agreement amongst different parties (frequently adopted by successful territorial initiatives elsewhere). Once again, however, there is no policy framework which promotes such an approach, and as yet, no officially supported initiative through which it could be piloted.⁸ It is also likely that local communities and their political representatives will need better levels of organisation to mobilise behind improved strategies to hold government accountable for commitments made.

Elliot District case study

Elliot District demonstrates successful progress of a market based land distribution programme; perhaps the most successful case of land transfers through the Land Reform for Agricultural Development (LRAD) programme in South Africa. It has transferred around 10-15% of formerly white-owned land into the hands of relatively poor blacks, through approximately 50 land purchase projects, involving 350 grant recipients.⁹

8. A stakeholder workshop organised through the Makhado case study agreed that such an independently facilitated agreement would be needed. Nkuzi subsequently drafted a quasi-legal agreement whereby the different stakeholders could agree to commit human and financial resources to support the local municipality in implementing the ALRI. However Nkuzi was unable to provide finance or gain high level political backing for a formalised negotiation process, and the agreement remains unsigned, with no status in law.

9. This discussion is based primarily on Aliber *et al.* (2006) and on a workshop discussion of the findings of the Elliot case study held in East London, South Africa in November 2005.

The beneficiaries of the LRAD programme fall broadly into two groups:

1. Black entrepreneurs from neighbouring areas of former Transkei who had begun buying land on the market anyway, but who received subsidies from the LRAD programme.
2. Poorer households from neighbouring Transkei who have clubbed together to access LRAD grants at sufficient scale to purchase land.

Beyond LRAD there has been no governmental or NGO initiative to develop a territorial vision and transform productive relations. Nevertheless, the relatively high rate of land transfers to blacks through LRAD and spontaneous market activity has led to a changing racial pattern of land occupation, and indeed to changing social relations between whites and blacks, illustrated by cases of collaboration and mutual aid between neighbouring black and white farmers, and the inclusion of new black farmers in formerly white only marketing and input supply co-operatives.

LRAD has achieved this, however, in a context of restructuring of commercial farming in South Africa, and has in fact facilitated the exit from the sector of less successful (or retiring) white farmers, and consolidation by more successful white commercial farmers. As a result of rising costs, loss of subsidies and diminishing markets there has been a net decline in farm employment in Elliot District, by around 50% since the mid-1970s according to our survey. The decline has been particularly steep since the late 1980s.

The LRAD programme has created jobs, but not in sufficient quantity to compensate for the net loss in farm employment, although it has cushioned the impact of economic restructuring. Moreover we found little scope for continuing land transfers at the rate between 2000 and 2004 as remaining white farmers are unwilling to sell.

Impacts

The indication is that the LRAD programme is succeeding in Elliot, not as a vehicle for creating a new emergent class of black farm entrepreneurs, but rather in meeting the livelihood objectives of individual beneficiaries. Positive impacts include:

- Creation of new farm livelihoods. Allowing for the loss of farm worker jobs as a result of land transfers, and the fact that some of these would have been lost in any case as a result of market trends, we calculated that LRAD projects have created some 130 new farm livelihoods. These include the active beneficiaries of the land purchase projects, plus hired-in labour. Thus land reform has mitigated the overall increase in farm unemployment (perhaps by around 10-15%), but not compensated for it.
- Additional access to pasture land for beneficiaries and increases in stock numbers. Improved mobility of stock between communal and commercial areas was also widely cited as an advantage of the scheme and grazing and population pressures in neighbouring communal areas have been reduced.

- Relatively high beneficiary satisfaction, even in the absence of significant gains in productivity. Poor and landless farmers from former Transkei have been able to adapt the scheme to meet basic livelihood and subsistence needs.

Challenges

- High rates of beneficiary absenteeism with only about 50% of grant recipients found to be active on the new farms.¹⁰ While not necessarily a problem, this restricts farm labour. In 10% of cases members were only involved at a distance, relying on hired labour to manage cattle transferred from the communal areas to the acquired farms.
- Weak or absent farm infrastructure (owing to neglect by former owners). Poorer beneficiaries find it difficult to get small-scale capital to maintain and replace the fencing and farm machinery required to sustain or develop arable and horticultural projects on farms which were mainly for livestock production. These groups also tend to suffer from limited access to markets and to social facilities, as a result of the lower prices (and therefore easier accessibility to poorer groups within the LRAD programme).
- Access difficulties. Much of the land acquired is isolated (frequently in the foothills of the Drakensberg mountains, where there is poor road access and lack of transport). These factors frustrate settlement by beneficiaries, in turn undermining the sustainability of their farming projects.
- Few measures for farm workers. Former workers on the transferred farms are amongst the poorest groups in South Africa, and have seen the least benefit from the LRAD programme. Whereas some have joined Communal Property Associations established by the new owners, and others have formed CPAs of their own, the majority have simply disappeared from official statistics and moved on, presumably into neighbouring communal areas. Thus additional targeted measures are needed to safeguard the livelihoods of farm workers.
- Uncertain commercial sustainability of the transferred farm enterprises. This is a significant part of the critique of land reform in South Africa. Beneficiaries face problems with credit and infrastructure, and are unable to sustain arable production. Of all LRAD projects in Elliot, 55% produced no garden crops, even though the majority of the farms transferred previously did. Of those that did produce garden crops, 44% did so purely for their own consumption. The longer term commercial livestock off take and dairy output, and the sustainability of the improved stocking rates are also uncertain. The provincial Department of Agriculture is criticised for failing to provide post-settlement support, and failing to co-ordinate effectively with DLA's successful, area focused approach to planning.

10. Clearly, however, members of land reform beneficiary groups are also engaged in other, off-farm livelihood activities, whether in their areas of origin or through migration to major urban areas, and this explains the levels of absenteeism from the projects identified by the study. A limitation of this study was the lack of opportunity to assess the diversity of respondents' livelihoods, and the roles played by the interaction between farming in land reform settlements and other activities, and the nature of and reasons for their continued mobility.

If further progress is to be achieved, with greater livelihood, employment and economic development impacts, the following will be needed:

- Institutional innovation towards a more integrated territorial approach, involving co-ordination between different agencies and levels of government, or mechanisms for consultation and partnership with civil society.
- A broadening out of successful land reform experiences in Elliot to neighbouring districts, with stronger institutional co-ordination between DLA and the Provincial Department of Agriculture. This could focus on the agricultural support needs of land reform farmers across Chris Hani District Municipality, in line with Eastern Cape Province's professed development strategy.
- Mechanisms to link land reform to the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) process at municipal and district levels, in order to deliver effective social and infrastructural support.
- A policy framework which ensures that land reform can be factored into local government planning and local economic development.

Conclusions and policy implications

Our research indicates that territorially-based approaches to rural development and redistributive land reform could be the way forward for more equitable and inclusive economic development. In theory, territorial approaches:

- Strengthen land reform groups over wider areas by creating platforms to secure institutional support, tackle collective production and marketing needs, and negotiate with private sector interests.
- Support a more integrated approach to diverse and overlapping issues of tenure security, access to seasonal pasture, indigenous rights, land expropriation and restitution, and market based land access.
- Improve co-ordination among and more responsive prioritisation by state agencies.
- Improve service delivery and agricultural support to land reform communities, with better prioritisation of scarce resources for social and physical infrastructure.
- Create shared platforms whereby diverse social groups can debate and agree on visions and practical priorities to help steer government interventions.

However, significant institutional, legal and political difficulties remain. These include establishing and legitimising the authority of new, participatory territorial structures in the context of overly-parochial local government agencies and key agencies which remain wedded to an overwhelmingly sectoral approach and which may also be aligned with organised commercial and agro-industrial sectors.

Improving co-ordination between diverse communities seeking tenure security and better access to infrastructure, technical support, credit and marketing facilities as well as to land is fundamental for land reform to succeed. To realise these shared social goals an effective and legally sanctioned interface is also needed with local political power and with established planning frameworks to enable participation in local economic development.

In order to bring about more inclusive economic development, however, territorial development cannot ignore structural inequalities. This requires a genuine mainstreaming of agrarian reform within these approaches, and development of institutional frameworks within which conflicts of interest between social groups, and different elements of the state itself can be properly addressed. Greater participatory democratic control over rural economic development will require institutional and legislative reforms which assure greater transparency and accountability over local and central government planning processes as well as the activities of the organised agribusiness sector. All these sectors will need to be brought together within a single policy framework for territorial planning.

The lessons from this research for rural development policy can be summarised as follows:

Land reform as part of a wider strategic approach

- More equitable land access can improve poor people's livelihoods, but follow-up development support must be linked into the process. An integrated approach is best tackled by decentralised collegiate local bodies involving government agencies, social movements, NGOs and the private sector. These should work within a genuinely enabling national policy framework, together with supportive action at state, provincial and government level.
- To ensure that land reforms can contribute to sustainable local economic development, strategies need to be informed by an understanding of territorial dynamics, land occupation, power relations and historical trajectories of the diverse social groups and the different places that compose rural territories.
- Effective approaches are likely to encompass a number of neighbouring municipalities to enable a fuller picture of the place and impacts of land reform in the context of broader economic trends. In many cases the administrative units of local government are too small to enable effective local economic development and therefore to link land reforms to new economic opportunities.
- New territorial institutions are needed, with legal powers and capacity to implement strategic development projects and to address the factors which undermine success such as over-centralised land reform approaches, low local government capacity, poor alignment of small local government units with real world social and economic networks, and political tensions between different layers and sectors of government.

Building effective participation

- Deliberate investment in participatory territorial development processes is needed to help create "bridging social capital" to provide the glue between different social groups and organisations.
- There are challenges in aligning resource allocation and planning by different sectors and levels of government within a common territorial framework. In particular, weak participation by local government municipalities which take a predominantly parochial approach, by the private sector, and by government agencies wedded to overwhelmingly sectoral top down approaches, can all undermine sustainability. A genuinely enabling national policy framework for rural territorial development would overcome weak participation by local government, the private sector and sectorally-focused government agencies.

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