

**UNIQUE CASE, GENERIC SOLUTION**

**SOUTH AFRICAN LAND REFORM IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT**

Graeme Mackenzie, PhD Candidate

Political Science and Public Policy, The University of Waikato

New Zealand

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## Contents

Contents.....	2
Introduction .....	3
Relevance to land redistribution in South Africa .....	4
Discourse Analysis approach.....	5
Methodology.....	7
Discourse Analysis of international land reform approaches.....	9
LARGE FARMS DISCOURSE:.....	9
SMALL FARMS DISCOURSE.....	12
HOUSEHOLDS DISCOURSE .....	15
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE.....	17
Phases of land reform in SA.....	20
Prime Minister de Klerk .....	20
SLAG.....	20
LRAD .....	21
PLAS.....	22
Conclusion.....	25
References .....	26

## Introduction

No policy is created in a vacuum - a multitude of both domestic and external factors affect the formulation and implementation of any public policy (Lindblom, 1959, pp. 79-80). The domestic pressures on the South African land redistribution policy, such as the need to redress the country's history of unjust dispossession, have been comprehensively analysed (H. P. Binswanger & Deininger, 1993; Budlender & Latsky, 1990; Cousins, 2007; R. Hall, 1998; Ruth Hall, 2004b; Lahiff, 2005; MacDonald, 2003; Ntzebeza, 2004). In contrast, the influences from outside of South Africa on the conceptualisation of the problem needing to be addressed have received less attention, other than acknowledgement that the initial formulation of this policy was strongly influenced by the World Bank. Given the strong influence of the land reform<sup>1</sup> approach favoured by this international body at the time, it is possible that other approaches to land reform drawn from around the world have also exerted some influence on it. In order to understand these influences, it is first necessary to clarify the general approaches to land reform existing outside South Africa. If these approaches are treated as discourses, discourse analysis offers a powerful tool to achieve this. Accordingly, this study applies discourse analysis methods derived from Dryzek (2005) to clarify the basic assumptions and theoretical frameworks of the various approaches to land reform found in other nations. The normative perspectives on development and land reform, the agents involved in land reform and their motives, along with the policy proposals for land reform in each discourse are outlined. These insights are then applied to the various phases of the South African land redistribution policy. The traces of various discourses originating outside of South Africa are uncovered, some of which may not be well known within the country.

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<sup>1</sup> A distinction is only drawn between 'land reform' and 'land redistribution' in the South African land reform programme, where 'land reform' consists of land redistribution, land restitution and efforts to improve tenure security. This distinction is not drawn in discussions on the topic originating outside of South Africa, and so in this study, the term 'land reform' will be used interchangeably with 'land redistribution'.

## Relevance to land redistribution in South Africa

During the Codesa negotiations to set the political framework of post-apartheid South Africa, various parties were also working on a land redistribution policy for the next South African government. One of the most active participants in this process was the World Bank. Simultaneously giving policy advice and soliciting a new client, it oversaw a major programme of policy research (Ruth Hall, 2010, p. 178) which culminated in the publication of *Options for Land Reform and Rural Restructuring in South Africa* (World Bank, 1993). The World Bank was a remarkably successful policy advisor here, as the aims, methods and original timeline of the State Lands and Acquisition Grant (SLAG) phase of this policy were almost directly derived from these options (Williams, 1996, p. 165). The approach to land reform favoured by the World Bank at that time decisively shaped the early stages of the South African land redistribution policy. This raises the question of whether other approaches from outside South Africa exerted influence on this policy. To answer this question, it is first necessary to understand what other approaches to land reform exist.

Over the years, many different approaches have been developed towards land reforms and their place in the economic development of nation-states. While some of these approaches directly address the place of agriculture in this process, others derive their ideas about it from overarching economic approaches. Many of these approaches have been built up over time through careful observation, field-work and theoretical analysis. These scholars will not normally think of their approaches as 'discourses'. However, discourse analysis offers a powerful tool for clarifying the underlying assumptions, theoretical models and discursive world-views of these different approaches. This makes a discourse analysis of these approaches an important part of understanding the various influences on the South African land redistribution policy from outside the country.

## Discourse Analysis approach

Firstly, what is meant by 'discourses'? They are seen here as ensembles of ideas, concepts and categories through which meaning is given to social and physical realities. They are structures embedded in language (Dryzek, 2005, pp. 67, 68), which enable people to interpret bits of information and put them together into coherent stories. Individual discourses rest on assumptions, judgments and contentions which give basic terms of analysis (Dryzek, 2005, p. 9). Discourses do not neutrally reflect our world, identities and social relations. Rather, they play an active role in creating and changing them (Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002, p. 1).

This makes discourses extremely powerful. By conditioning perceptions and values, discourses advance the interests of some and suppress those of others (Dryzek, 2005, p. 9). Discourses are intrinsically political – their formation involves the drawing of frontiers between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' (Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000, p. 4). The formulation and implementation of policy can be seen as an argumentative struggle in which actors not only try to make others see the problem as they do, but also position other actors in a specific way. Discourses inform the conceptualisation of problems and protagonists, the politics around a problem, and the appropriate actions to be taken towards these problems. Discourses are therefore the things for which and by which there is struggle. Discourse is the power to be seized (Fairclough, 1992, p. 51).

Scholars of discourse analysis agree that "... there is no set procedure for doing discourse analysis" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 225). In fact, most researchers avoid prescribing a particular method of discourse analysis, as this would afford a particular position the status of truth, in a perspective where truth is always conditional (Hewitt, 2009, p. 3). Most analyses of discourse assume that language profoundly shapes our view of reality, so discourse analysis can be the examination of how a political problem is defined (Dryzek, 2005, p. 66). The emphasis is on understanding and explaining the logic and the socially constructed identities discourses confer (Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000, p. 7). The analyst examines the hidden assumptions and practices behind the discourse being studied (Hewitt, 2009, p. 3).

This study uses a discourse analysis method based on that developed by Dryzek (2005) in his analysis of environmental discourses. In his study, Dryzek (2005, pp. 9, 11) argues that environmental problems are doubly complex, as they occur at the intersection of ecosystems and human social systems. This creates many potentially plausible perspectives on environmental issues. While other studies examine environmental discourses in the context of particular issues, Dryzek offers an overview of a much larger terrain of discourse, deploying analytical devices which he feels give him "... some confidence in painting such large and complex discursive terrain in broad strokes". This

study aims to provide a similarly wide-ranging overview of a large terrain of discourse. Land reform can also be seen as being doubly or perhaps even triply complex. Issues of land reform and redistribution involve not only the overall economic development of a country, but also agricultural production and human rights issues. On these grounds, Dryzek’s system of analysis was broadly adopted in this study.

To make sense of the multiple overlapping perspectives in the land reform policy arena, I developed a checklist of four elements (derived from Dryzek’s method). Firstly, I sought to clarify the **normative perspective** of each discourse on development and land reform. This meant clarifying the processes assumed when these discourses talk of development, the entities that are involved in these processes, and where they see land reform fitting in. Secondly, I examined who the discourse sees as being the **agents** in land reform, and the **motives** given to them (Dryzek, 2005, p. 18). Thirdly, I looked at the **narratives** implied (explicitly or implicitly) in each discourse. How policy problems are defined are of vital importance – by defining a problem in a certain way, the policy proposals of a discourse can seem the perfect solution. To understand the kernel of each discourse, it is vital to analyse how each one defines the problem through narrative stories, and proposes their policies as the perfect solution (Stone, 2002, pp. 137, 138). Finally, I investigated the **policy proposals** each discourse offers for land reform.

<b>Step 1.</b>	Normative perspectives on <b>development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Entities</li> <li>- Processes</li> <li>- Place of land reform in this process</li> </ul>
<b>Step 2.</b>	<b>Agents</b> involved in the land reform process and their <b>motives</b>
<b>Step 3.</b>	Key <b>narratives</b> of the discourse
<b>Step 4.</b>	<b>Policy proposals</b> for land reform - what should land reform look like?

Table One: Discourse Analysis Method used in this study

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## Methodology

The first step in this study was to undertake a comprehensive review of the English-language literature on the South African land redistribution policy. In the course of this review, I identified authors like Lipton (2009) and El Ghonemy (2010) who have studied land reform in other national contexts. In these works this group of authors detailed their own favoured approaches to land reform and critiqued other approaches. Further reading led me to authors such as Kuznets (1955) and Rostow (1990) who detail modernist approaches, Hayek (1976) and Bauer (1981) describing neoliberal approaches, and Marangos (2009) and Stiglitz (2004) on the 'Washington Consensus' approach. Among others, I read Frank (1970) and Cardoso and Faletto (1979) about the dependency approach, J. Friedmann (1992) and J. N. Pieterse (2010) for an outline of alternative development ideas, Sen (1999) and Qizilbash (2006) on human development approaches, and Escobar (2006) and Rahnema and Bawtree (1997) on post-development approaches. Lipton (2009) also briefly outlines Communist approaches to land reform. Not all approaches specifically addressed the issue of land reform, but their implicit proposals could be inferred from their overarching economic approaches. In total I read 65 works on economic development and land reform, ranging in date of publication from 1955 to 2010.

Having accumulated this information, I developed a general summary of the normative perspective in each of these approaches around how a country should develop economically. I used the NVivo qualitative analysis programme to help build up a comprehensive picture of the narrative in each approach. For example, I created a node in NVivo called 'market-led'. Then, in my reading, I gathered in this node all the pieces of literature describing and or advocating such a land reform programme. Once my reading was completed, I was able to go through all the pieces of literature under this node and build up a comprehensive narrative (out of all my readings) of market-led land redistribution programmes.

I then applied my adapted version of Dryzek's system of discourse analysis to each of these narratives. Specifically, I drew out the entities and processes assumed to be involved in development, and the place given to land reform programmes in each of the discourses. I then identified the agents and their motivations as described in each discourse. The key narratives for development and the role of land reform in that process in each discourse were identified, along with the specific policy proposals for land reform programmes. Again, I used the NVivo qualitative analysis programme to carry out these tasks.

Out of this analysis I uncovered seven discrete approaches or discourses around land reform: the Large Farms, the Small Farms, the Households, the Human Development, the Dependency, the

Communist and the Post-Development discourses. This study concentrates on the first four of these discourses, as the last three are not evident in the debate around land reform in South Africa.



# Discourse Analysis of international land reform approaches

## LARGE FARMS DISCOURSE:

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Due to its support for large-scale mechanised farming systems, I have named the first discourse described here the 'Large Farms' discourse. It has been the most influential in the international land reform policy arena recently, and is accepted today in many national contexts as the 'common sense' approach. This discourse has its origins in the modernisation approach, which arose after the Second World War (Mergel, 2012), and is explained in works by Kuznets (1955) and Rostow (1990). This approach was expressed in a slightly different form with the rise of neoliberalism, or the 'Washington Consensus' during the nineteen-eighties (Akram-Lodhi, 2007, p. 1439; Marangos, 2009, p. 197). Policy recommendations for land reform from this discourse were until very recently common from institutions like the Inter-American Development bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank (Marangos, 2009, p. 197).

### NORMATIVE PERSPECTIVE ON DEVELOPMENT

#### *Entities involved*

The Large Farms discourse sees the process of development as involving 'traditional societies', 'modern societies' and the market. According to this discourse, the traditional society has a population that is largely poor and engaged in small-scale subsistence farming using human or animal power (Rostow, 1990, p. 4). Food production is organised through kinship units (Keelan & Moon, 1998, p. 3), and agricultural production is limited, as the technology used is primitive (Rostow, 1990, pp. 4, 5). These societies are called 'developing', 'Third World', or 'subsistence economies'. The 'modern' society is seen as the opposite of this, and is embodied for the Large Farms discourse in the Western world. These societies are called 'developed', 'First World' or 'industrial economies'. The population in these societies are largely urban (Larrain, 1989, p. 87), and most of the workforce is in the industrial and service sectors (Rostow, 1990, pp. 10, 11). The agricultural sectors of these societies form only a small part of the national economy, and are highly mechanised. The market is seen as an arena where buyers and sellers can interact. Through the market, assets like agricultural land are transferred to those most able to use them efficiently (Akram-Lodhi, 2007, p. 1440).

#### *Process of development*

In this discourse 'traditional' and 'modern' societies are seen as connected by a fixed linear trajectory (Larrain, 1989, p. 87), similar for all societies in the world. It can be understood by

examining the history of the development of the 'modern' world, as these nations were all once 'traditional' societies (Todaro & Smith, 2009, p. 111). In the Large Farms discourse then, 'development' is the movement of societies along this 'trajectory of development' from the traditional to the modern society (Cardoso & Faletto, 1979, p. 11).

The market is considered to be the primary mechanism for moving countries along this trajectory. Through the market, agricultural land, capital and technology are transferred from inefficient to efficient users, who make the most productive use of the land. There is a "... structural transformation where agriculture, through higher productivity, provides food, labour and even savings to the process of urbanisation and industrialisation" (Timmer, 2006, p. 5). This structural transformation enables the country to progress along the trajectory from 'tradition' to 'modernity'. It is therefore extremely important in this discourse that the market works as perfectly as possible, with no distortions.

As with other free market theories, market distortions are considered to result in the skewing of the distribution of resources, allowing less efficient farmers to retain ownership of the land. Relying on such a distorted market to distribute resources like land, capital and technology drastically slows the movement of a society along the trajectory towards 'modernity' (Akram-Lodhi, 2007, p. 1440).

### *Place of land reform in development*

With this normative perspective on development, this discourse is ambivalent about the place of land reform programmes involving market regulation and explicit initiatives to redistribute land. If large mechanised farms are the inevitable result of development (Timmer, 2006, p. 5), why should a developing country already with an agricultural sector dominated by large farms (for whatever reasons) subdivide and redistribute them? In addition, in this discourse the agricultural sector constitutes a secondary development factor (Bandeira & Sumpsi, 2009, p. 33). A shift away from agriculture is an invariable accompaniment to economic and industrial growth (Kuznets, 1955, p. 7; Rigg, 2006, p. 1). Governments in developing countries should therefore not expend precious resources creating small farms that will only reconsolidate into larger ones over time.

### **AGENTS AND THEIR MOTIVES**

In this discourse, the state is motivated to move along the trajectory of development as rapidly as possible. Therefore, it takes every measure possible to create the open undistorted markets necessary to channel assets to the most efficient users (S. Jacobs, 2010, p. 16).

This discourse assumes economically rational citizens, acting to maximise their own material self-interest (Stone, 2002, p. 18). To increase their material well-being, land-owners increase production.

Those who are successful prosper and expand their holdings. The unsuccessful sell or hire their land out. In this way, large pieces of land end up in the hands of those most able to produce from them.

### **NARRATIVE**

The narrative here is that agriculture in developing countries is hampered by small, unproductive, backward farmers, who refuse to use new technologies to produce more. Large mechanised farms are the most technologically advanced and productive form of agriculture – they are ‘real’ agriculture. Anything else endangers the national food supply. Developing countries should do all they can to achieve this form of agriculture.

### **POLICY PROPOSALS FOR LAND REFORM**

The Large Farms discourse is not normally in favour of land reform programmes that involve explicit attempts at redistribution. However, in cases where overwhelming social or political pressures mandate land reform, this discourse advocates market-led land reform policies. In these ‘willing buyer willing seller’ policies, large landowners are paid the full market value for land that they are willing to sell voluntarily. Beneficiaries usually bear the full costs of the land transfer (Akram-Lodhi, 2007, p. 1438). Repaying these debts can be extremely difficult, as land market values are often higher than productive values. Government subsidies on the interest rates paid by beneficiaries are sometimes recommended to remedy this (Bandeira & Sumpshi, 2009, p. 41).

A market-led land reform programme depends on individual, permanent, inalienable, and freely tradeable forms of land ownership. In countries where they do not exist, this discourse proposes they be created. Specific transformations in property rights must take place in the developing world, resulting in the ‘enclosure’ of land. They are seen as an important condition of the development of capitalism (Akram-Lodhi, 2007, p. 1442), as they are assumed to increase the investment incentives of land users (Deininger, 2003, p. 2).

## SMALL FARMS DISCOURSE

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

During the nineteen-sixties development scholarship in the West was dominated by the development economics approach, which recommended government-led redistributions of productive agricultural assets, to spur economic growth and development (El-Ghonemy, 2010, pp. 36-86). During this time there was strong institutional support for this approach from international bodies such as the United Nations and the World Bank. During the nineteen-eighties however, this approach was abandoned in favour of neoliberal approaches. Through this period, scholars such as Lipton (2009) and Griffin, Khan and Ickowitz (2002) continued to advocate in favour of the creation of small-scale agricultural sectors in developing countries.

### NORMATIVE PERSPECTIVE ON DEVELOPMENT

#### *ENTITIES*

This discourse recognises the same basic entities found in the Large Farms discourse - the 'traditional' and the 'modern' society, and the market. The characteristics of these basic entities are the same.

#### *PROCESSES*

The Small Farms discourse also sees societies moving along a trajectory of development through the mechanism of the market. Through the market, assets like land, capital and technology are transferred from inefficient to efficient users. The efficient users use the assets to their full potential, and so agricultural production grows. This frees workers to work in the cities, and the country progresses along the trajectory from 'tradition' to 'modernity'. Distortions to these markets will obviously have a negative effect on the progression of a society along the trajectory of development (El-Ghonemy, 2010, pp. 8, 72). So far, this is the same as the narrative in the Large Farms discourse. However, these two discourses differ drastically as to who the most efficient users of agricultural assets are, and what changes need to be made to the market for agricultural land to ensure that these users can get access to land.

#### *PLACE OF LAND REFORM IN DEVELOPMENT*

In developed countries capital is cheap while labour is expensive, making it logical to employ fewer people and use more machinery. As it takes a certain minimum amount of land to make full use, for example, of a combine harvester, smaller farms are gradually consolidated into larger units. In the developed world then, there are **economies of scale** - farm productivity increases with farm size

(Bandeira & Sumpsi, 2009, p. 35; Banerjee, 1999, p. 2; Koo, 1968, p. 77; Lipton, 2009, p. 65).

However, according to the Small Farms discourse, the situation is different in the developing world.

Rather than capital being cheap and labour expensive, in the developing world capital is in fact expensive and labour is cheap (Lipton, 2009, p. 69). This means that in the developing world capital-intensive mechanised farms are inefficient. The most efficient farms in the developing world are labour-intensive. Furthermore, scholars in the Small Farms discourse argue that supervising agricultural labour is extremely expensive and not especially effective. This means that small farms using mostly family labour are the most economically efficient mode of agricultural production in the developing world (Binswanger-Mkhize, Bourguignon, & Brink, 2009, p. 51; Lipton, 2009, p. 65). There are no economies of scale in the developing world – rather, the productivity of farms is seen as increasing as their size decreases (El-Ghonemy, 2010, p. 70; Koo, 1968, p. 74). There is an **inverse relationship** between farm size and efficiency in the developing world. Large farms are seen as inherently inefficient, and so must be broken up into smaller units and redistributed to rural farming families. Land reform programmes are therefore a vital part of the development process.

### **AGENTS AND THEIR MOTIVES**

According to this discourse, the primary agents in land reform are the rural poor, large farmers and the government. Of these, the rural poor want to make productive investments and start new enterprises in order to better their lot. When they are able to get small farms they are strongly motivated to produce as much as possible from it. They live on their farms, manage the farms themselves, use labour-intensive farming techniques, and have strong incentives to invest all their savings back into their land (Binswanger-Mkhize, et al., 2009, pp. 9, 12). They leave a lower proportion of their land fallow or uncultivated, and have intense cropping rotations, using the most valuable crops possible in their environments (Griffin, et al., 2002, p. 286). Motivated as they are to increase the production on their land as much as possible, they make the best possible use of the land.

Because of the inverse relationship in the developing world, the large farms that do exist have normally been created by government intervention. Being artificial creations, these large farmers do not need to use these assets in the most efficient way possible, and some value their farmland for reasons other than agricultural production, like insurance, inflation hedging, and tax shelters (Binswanger-Mkhize, et al., 2009, pp. 13, 46). The Small Farms discourse describes two types of large farm in the developing world. Firstly, unmechanised large farms in the developing world face major problems in mobilising and organising labour to work their land. To overcome this, the large landowners create systems of control over the available labour in rural areas, ensuring that they

have no choice but to work for them at low rates of pay. This creates an unskilled workforce and exacerbates rural poverty (Griffin, et al., 2002, pp. 287-289). The second type of large farm is highly mechanised, using minimal labour. This means that few people can work on these farms, and most have to migrate to rural or urban slums. In countries where there are chronically high rates of unemployment, this form of agriculture has a very high social cost (Hans P. Binswanger, Bourguignon, & van den Brink, 2009, p. 9). Both these forms of agriculture are seen as slowing the movement of developing countries along the trajectory of development.

This discourse sees governments in the developing world as primarily motivated to move their countries along the trajectory of development as quickly as possible. To achieve this, some mistakenly adopt development strategies that neglect agriculture and the rural areas, and will often discriminate against small farmers (Griffin, et al., 2002, p. 284).

### **NARRATIVE**

The implicit narrative in this approach presents large farming systems as being inefficient in the developing world context. As markets in these countries are often distorted against small farmers, they cannot be relied on to create efficient agricultural sectors. The state must intervene in these markets to create optimal solutions.

### **POLICY PROPOSALS FOR LAND REFORM**

The land reform policy proposals of this discourse revolve around aiding and encouraging the development of a small-scale farming sector. As a first step, the Small Farms discourse recommends that all measures favouring urban areas over rural areas must be disbanded, and rural infrastructure must be upgraded and maintained. At the same time, all legislative and financial support for large farms must be removed (Griffin, et al., 2002, p. 284). This discourse also recommends that developing states actively take steps to break up large farms into smaller units, similar to the process implemented in Taiwan in the years immediately after the Second World War. In this programme, the farms of large landowners were expropriated at lower-than-market values, and beneficiaries paid prices for their land linked to its productive value (Koo, 1968, pp. 36-38). Once these small farms have been created, the state must provide a wide span of support mechanisms for land reform beneficiaries, like extension, agricultural credit and processing and marketing facilities (Bandeira & Sumpshi, 2009, p. 34; Deininger, 2003, p. ix).

## HOUSEHOLDS DISCOURSE

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The 'Households discourse' derives from the alternative development approach, which began as a rebellion against the neoliberal and 'Washington Consensus' focus on economic growth to that exclusion of all else. This approach asserted that if social and economic development is to mean anything at all, it must mean a clear improvement in the conditions of life and livelihood of ordinary people (Friedman, 1992, p. 9). The first visible incarnation of this approach was a proliferation of nongovernmental organisations around the world (Friedman, 1992, p. vii). The later publication of the Brundtland Report stimulated renewed discussion of alternatives to 'mainstream' development initiatives (Friedman, 1992, p. 6). Over time, Alternative Development ideas were accepted into mainstream development projects. It became widely accepted that development efforts are more successful if the community participates, and nongovernmental organisations were given key roles in development cooperation (Pieterse, 2001, pp. 73, 79). In addition, due to influence from Alternative Development approaches, by nineteen-ninety international bodies like the World Bank had offices focused on the environment and women (Friedman, 1992, p. 6).

### NORMATIVE PERSPECTIVE ON DEVELOPMENT

#### *ENTITIES*

This discourse implicitly accepts the idea of there being a transition from one type of society to another, as described in the Large and Small Farms discourses. The precise nature of this transition is not made clear, other than an assertion that development does not automatically mean 'Westernisation'. The goals and values of development are to be generated from within the society concerned (Pieterse, 2001, p. 86).

#### *PROCESSES*

As in the other discourses discussed to this point, all societies are seen as being in transition, through state and market interaction. However, this discourse argues that technical and economic development in its current 'top-down' form excludes the majority of people from its potential benefits.

To change this, the state must empower households through involving them socially and politically in the development process. Households are seen as miniature political economies that have a territorial base and are engaged in the production of their own life and livelihood (Friedman, 1992, pp. 47, 48). These elementary units of society are gathered together into small communities (Pieterse, 2010, p. 97), which are represented through and helped by NGOs. Successful development

here is 'bottom-up', and comes from and works through these bodies. Ideally, all problems that are best handled locally would be decided on by local units of government and the organisations representing households and communities (Friedman, 1992, pp. 2-35).

### **PLACE OF LAND REFORM**

No set processes for economic development schemes are prescribed in this discourse. Rather, the communities and households concerned must be consulted on what they want. If they want a land reform programme, then it must be implemented in the shape and form that they require.

### **AGENTS IN LAND REFORM AND THEIR MOTIVES**

The main agents in this discourse are households, communities and the state. The state here is motivated to aid and encourage the human development of excluded households and communities. Doing this ensures that their society travels along the trajectory of development in the best way possible. It is thus extremely receptive to the needs and requirements of poor households and communities, and consults them extensively.

The households and communities of the rural poor want to have their basic needs provided for, and to improve their quality of life. However, they alone know the best ways to achieve these goals, and so must be the architects and drivers of the development process.

### **NARRATIVE**

In this discourse the problem is that the forms of economic development currently dominant today focus only on growth of the overall economy. With this sole focus they tend to marginalise and impoverish the majority of the poor in developing countries.

The solution is that economic development needs to be adjusted so that it improves the lives of the poor. Governments need to devolve as much power as possible to households, communities and NGOs, allowing them to decide what they want from the development process, and empowering them to achieve this. At the very least, the basic needs of the poor must be provided for, in terms of infrastructure, health and education.

### **POLICY PROPOSALS FOR LAND REFORM**

The Households discourse does not directly address itself to land reform, but the basic principles of the approach suggest first consulting poor rural households and ascertaining if they want a land reform programme. If they do, consultation would be needed to find out what form of land reform households want (e.g. large farms run by communities, or small farms run by households), and how they want to get it (Pieterse, 2010, p. 98). The government would then be required to play a facilitating role in bringing these wishes to fruition (Friedman, 1992, p. 35).



## **HUMAN DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE**

### **HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

The Human Development discourse puts people at the centre of the development process. This discourse largely derives from the work of Sen (1999), who emphasises the importance of expanding the capabilities of the poor in the course of development (Pieterse, 2001, p. 6). His ideas were distilled and brought to a policy-oriented audience by UI Haq (1995). This led to the development of the Human Development Index by the United Nations Development Programme (Qizilbash, 2006, p. 247).

### **NORMATIVE PERSPECTIVE ON DEVELOPMENT**

#### ***ENTITIES AND PROCESSES***

In the Human Development discourse there is an acceptance once again of the idea of societies undergoing transitions, but asserts that human beings are both the ends as well as the means of development. “People are the real wealth of a nation. The basic objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives” (United Nations Development Programme, 1995, p. 21). Development therefore has two components: firstly, the basic needs of the poor must be met – food security, education, health services, clean water supplies, health services and adequate shelter (Cathie, 2006, p. 179; Stewart, 2006, p. 15). Secondly, the capabilities of individuals need to be increased – they need the tools to make the best use of these basic necessities, and of potential future opportunities (Pieterse, 2001, p. 6). Development is thus seen in this discourse as “... a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy” (Sen, 1999, p. 3).

#### ***PLACE OF LAND REFORM***

This discourse does not address itself directly to land reform, but does make a general case for the nexus between equity and growth, arguing that the greater the degree of equality in a society, the faster the likely rate of growth. Therefore, measures to reduce inequality (like creating many small farms out of a few large ones) can contribute to development (Pieterse, 2010, p. 133).

#### ***AGENTS IN LAND REFORM AND THEIR MOTIVES***

In this discourse, the rural poor do not have a ‘capability to function’ (Todaro & Smith, 2009, p. 16), and are deprived of basic necessities. They are trapped in their inability to make full use of what they have, and need to be pulled out of this condition by the state, which is motivated to improve the conditions of its citizens. To do this, it is to take action to provide the poor with their basic necessities and develop their capabilities (Mehrotra, 2000, p. 29).

## **NARRATIVE**

Here, the problem is that mainstream conceptions of economic development assume that its objective is only to increase material well-being. However having many material objects is not what makes a person rich. The potential uses of these objects are what make their owners rich, meaning conceptions of economic development focused solely on increased material well-being miss the point. Governments of developing countries must take steps to, firstly, meet the basic needs of the poor, and then increase the capabilities of the poor to use what they have to the fullest extent.

## **POLICY PROPOSALS FOR LAND**

Here, the idea of a land reform programme would be to create a degree of equity in the amount of land held by individuals. Much as in the Small Farms and the Dependence discourses then, we can expect a process where larger farms are broken up into smaller units and redistributed to individuals. There would be an emphasis on ensuring that each of the beneficiaries has their basic needs met on their new land, and a heavy focus on educating the beneficiaries on how to make the best use of their land. This would imply a strong agricultural extension programme focused on building up the farming capabilities of the beneficiaries.

DISCOURSES	NORMATIVE PERSPECTIVE ON DEVELOPMENT	AGENTS AND THEIR MOTIVATIONS	NARRATIVES	POLICY PROPOSALS FOR LAND REFORM
LARGE FARMS	Movement from 'traditional' to 'modern', by the market; Land reform not necessary	Economic rationalists; State creates the perfect market for them	Small farms are backward; Large farms are most efficient and advanced; Large-scale mechanised agriculture must be facilitated	'Willing buyer willing seller', through an undistorted market; If necessary, create land rights to make market possible
SMALL FARMS	Movement from 'traditional' to 'modern' by the market; Land reform vital	Small farmers, motivated to use their land fully; Large farmers, motivated to keep their non-market advantages; State, motivated to move along the trajectory of development	In the developing world, small farms are most efficient and productive; Large farms retard economic progress; Large farms in the developing world must be broken up and redistributed in smaller pieces	Remove urban bias; Remove large farm bias; State must buy large farms at productive value; Break up and redistribute them to beneficiaries at productive value; State must support beneficiaries
HOUSEHOLDS	'Bottom-up'; Development not necessarily Westernisation; Land reform necessary if communities and households want it.	Households and Communities want to improve their lives and provide for their own basic needs; The state wants to move along the trajectory of development	Current forms of economic development marginalise the majority of the poor; Economic development must be driven by households, communities and NGOs	Communities and households must decide if and what type of land reform programmes necessary; State must facilitate what they want
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT	Development is the creation of an enabling environment; Through provision of basic needs of the poor, and enhancing their capabilities; Land reform can be part of this process	Rural poor passive, deprived of basic necessities; State wants to move along the trajectory of development as quickly as possible	Economic development schemes focused solely on increased material well-being miss the point; Governments must meet the basic needs of the poor, and increase their capabilities	Land reform can help improve equity; Large farms must be broken up and redistributed; Beneficiaries must be given the basic necessities, and be given the capacity to use the land as productively as possible

Table Two: Summary of the land reform discourses discussed

## Phases of land reform in SA

### Prime Minister de Klerk

Having identified these discourses of land reform, the various phases of post-apartheid land redistribution policy can be examined for traces of their influence. The first phase began in 1991 in the dying days of apartheid. The government of Prime Minister F. W. de Klerk proposed a land reform programme establishing a few black farmers as small-scale or 'beginner' farmers – smaller versions of white commercial agriculture (Winkler, 1994, p. 445), and subject to strict land-use controls (Ruth Hall, 2010). While the real reasons for this proposal were probably different<sup>2</sup>, the justification for it drew on implicit assumptions that large-scale farmers constituted the 'real' agricultural sector in South Africa. This links to **Large Farms** assertions that large-scale farms are the natural result of 'development'. It was therefore unnecessary to break up the existing 'fully developed' agricultural sector in South Africa.

The small number of openings provided for black farmers also links to **Large Farms** ideas that agriculture is not a significant factor of development. The rural poor were expected to find work in the cities or bantustans, rather than achieve security through working on their own small farms.

This proposed programme was to work through the 'willing buyer willing seller' mechanism. Again, while the real reasons for this choice were likely different, it was justified as entrenching free market principles (Winkler, 1994, p. 445), drawing on **Large Farms** policy proposals.

The de Klerk government later passed the *Provision of Certain Land for Settlement Act (No. 126 of 1993)* to put this programme into effect. While based on market principles, this Act mandated that the government provide an eighty per cent subsidy and a fifteen per cent loan to beneficiaries. The remaining five per cent was to be paid by the beneficiary, and the fifteen per cent loan was to be repaid over five years (Winkler, 1994, p. 445). This strong government support for the beneficiaries could have derived from **Small Farms** discourse arguments for strong government support for farmers, allowing them to develop quickly.

### SLAG

In 1994 the apartheid era officially ended, and the government of President Nelson Mandela assumed power. Under President Mandela, land redistribution policy came to be based on SLAG, which was derived from a 1998 amendment of *Act 126 of 1993*, now called the *Provision of Land and*

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<sup>2</sup> It is most likely this policy was created with the aim of protecting the existing white commercial farming sector, as the National Party had done through all its time in power.

*Assistance Act (No. 126 of 1993)* (P. Jacobs, Lahiff, & Hall, 2003, p. 2). SLAG also worked through the willing buyer willing seller mechanism (Ruth Hall, 2010, p. 179), and it was publicly stated that this method would redistribute thirty per cent of white-owned farmland within five years (Ruth Hall, 2004a, p. 4). This confidence expressed in the market shows a strong **Large Farms** influence.

SLAG was based on the distribution of land purchase grants of R15 000 to households with a monthly income below R1 500 (Ruth Hall, 2010, p. 179). The focus on poor households here shows the use of ideas from the **Households** discourse.

The small size of the grant in relation to the high prices of large-scale farms in South Africa shows an original intention to break these farms into smaller units, pointing to potential influence from the **Small Farms** discourse.

However, at the time an apartheid-era law banning the subdivision of existing large farms remained in the statute books, originally enacted to prevent small black farmers living in the midst of large-scale white farming areas. While such a justification was no longer possible in post-apartheid South Africa, it could be justified using **Large Farms** discourse ideas about the superior efficiency of large farms. While land redistribution projects are automatically exempted from the effects of this law (Ruth Hall, 2012), in practice large farms were still not subdivided, showing the power of the groups at all levels of the policy process in South Africa adopting Large Farms discourse ideas.

Rather than subdivide large farms, households were encouraged to pool their grants and purchase existing large farms jointly. As facilitated in the *Communal Property Associations Act (No. 28 of 1996)* (Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, 2011, p. 10), it was expected that they would work together as communities on these large-scale farms (Ruth Hall, 2010, p. 179). This belief shows further adoption of ideas from the **Households** discourse. The adoption of ideas from such varying discourses in this policy shows evidence of a discursive struggle, worthy of further study in the future.

## LRAD

In 1999 President Thabo Mbeki was elected, and his government soon announced a new land redistribution policy, based on the Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development (LRAD) programme. Proceeding under the same legislation as SLAG, under LRAD the thirty per cent target was retained, but the timeframe for its achievement was extended for another fifteen years (Ruth Hall, 2004b, p. 216). This amount of land was still to be transferred through the 'willing buyer willing seller' model, showing a continued influence from the **Large Farms** discourse.

In addition, the stated aim of this programme was to create a class of black commercial farmers (Ruth Hall, 2004b, p. 216), alongside the existing large-scale white commercial farmers. This policy goal shows a strong influence from the **Large Farms** discourse idea that large-scale farms make up 'real' agriculture. Therefore, black farmers should aspire to become large-scale farmers rather than small.

Under LRAD, applicants made a contribution out of their own capital to the cost of the land. The government gave a matching grant which followed a sliding scale, depending on the amount contributed by the beneficiary (Ruth Hall, 2004b, p. 216). This aspect of LRAD clearly favoured those who already had some capital saved, showing a strong influence from the **Large Farms** idea that those who have already benefitted from the market will make the best use of new resources.

The law banning the subdivision of farms was not repealed during LRAD either, showing a continued influence from the **Large Farms** discourse. Groups of beneficiaries were still allowed to pool their grants to buy large-scale farms, but LRAD only allowed smaller, preferably family-based groups (Loest, 2012). That families and households were still able to access redistributed land through LRAD shows some lingering influence from the **Households** discourse.

## PLAS

The next phase of the South African land redistribution policy, the Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS), began in 2006 (Ranwedzi, 2011). Under PLAS, the willing buyer willing seller mechanism has been retained along with the ban on subdividing existing large farms, showing a continued influence from the **Large Farms** discourse. However, governed by a 2008 amendment to the *Provision of Land and Assistance Act (No. 126 of 1993)*, under PLAS the government buys the farms and retains ownership of them indefinitely (Anonymous 1, 2012). This means that PLAS is also governed by the *Public Finance Management Act (No. 1 of 1999)* (South African Sugar Association, pp. 3, 4). This aspect of PLAS shows a strong influence from **Small Farms** discourse ideas that government intervention in the market is necessary to ensure optimal outcomes.

The government will then rent its farms out to black beneficiaries for set periods of time (Loest, 2012), in return for six per cent of the turnover that the beneficiary achieves. The beneficiaries are given mentors – normally white ex-farmers with adequate experience (Anonymous 1, 2012). This measure to increase the farming capabilities of the beneficiaries shows influence from the **Human Development** discourse. However, if the government feels the beneficiaries did not make the best possible use of their land, they are replaced with new beneficiaries (Anonymous 2, 2012). On farms where large groups were settled during SLAG and LRAD, the government now brings in 'strategic

partners' with finance and technical expertise in producing agricultural commodities. In partnership with the communities they initiate commercial production, sharing the profits from what they produce (Loest, 2012). All of these measures are taken to ensure that commercial production on redistributed farms continues. Beneficiaries are viewed as agribusiness owners who need to make the optimum use of their assets, showing a strong influence from the **Large Farms** discourse assertion that agricultural land is an economic asset that must be used as efficiently as possible.

Where necessary, redistributed farms are funded by the government's Recapitalisation and Development Programme, to upgrade or replace infrastructure (Anonymous 2, 2012). The government funds the recapitalisation of the redistributed farms rather than leaving it to the market, showing influence from the **Small Farms** discourse.

LEADER	LAND REFORM POLICY	CHARACTERISTICS	LAND REFORM DISCOURSE
Prime Minister de Klerk	Act 126 of 1993	Small number of black farmers allowed to begin as small-scale farmers	<b>Large Farms</b> – agriculture is not a significant factor of development
		Preserve the existing white large-scale farming sector, as it is the most economically efficient form of farming	<b>Large Farms</b> – a small number of large-scale farms are the natural result of development
		Willing buyer/willing seller	<b>Large Farms</b>
		Generous government subsidy to the beneficiaries	<b>Small Farms</b> – government support is required in the market to help national development
President Mandela	SLAG	Willing buyer, willing seller	<b>Large Farms</b>
		Grants made available to households	<b>Households</b> – focus on households
		Small grants for buying smallholdings	<b>Small Farms</b>
		Failure to repeal apartheid-era law banning subdivisions of existing large farms	<b>Large Farms</b> – large farms are more efficient than small ones
		Beneficiaries encouraged to pool their grants and work large-scale commercial farms as communities	<b>Households</b> – focus on households and communities
President Mbeki	LRAD	Willing buyer, willing seller	<b>Large Farms</b>
		Creation of a class of large-scale black commercial farmers	<b>Large Farms</b> – large-scale farms are most economically efficient
		Individual graduated grants, depending on the contribution of the beneficiary	<b>Large Farms</b> – those who have already benefitted from the market will make the best use of new resources
		Smaller groups and households still able to access redistributed land	<b>Households</b>
		Continued failure to repeal apartheid-era law banning subdivisions of existing large farms	<b>Large Farms</b> – large farms are more efficient than small ones
President Zuma	PLAS	Willing buyer, willing seller	<b>Large Farms</b>
		Continued failure to repeal apartheid-era law banning subdivisions of existing large farms	<b>Large Farms</b> – large farms are more efficient than small ones
		State buys farms and retains ownership indefinitely	<b>Small Farms</b> – government must intervene in the market to ensure optimal outcomes
		Beneficiaries rent the land from the government for a fixed term. If they do not produce adequately from the land, their rental will not be renewed.	<b>Large Farms</b> – agricultural land is an economic asset that must be used in the most economically efficient way possible
		Strategic partners and mentors	<b>Human Development</b> – increase the capacity of the beneficiaries to farm. Also, <b>Large Farms</b> - production levels on redistributed land must be maintained as high as possible
		Recapitalisation	<b>Small Farms</b> – government must intervene where the market will not provide finance

Table Three: Land Reform Discourse Influences on the various land redistribution policies in South Africa – 1994-2013



## Conclusion

The South African land redistribution policy has been subject to various influences through its different phases. The influences on it originating outside the country have been relatively ignored. In order to assess what these influences may have been, this study uses a discourse analysis approach to clarify the norms, assumptions and theoretical frameworks of various approaches to land reform from around the world. Seven discourses were identified and analysed in this way, and then compared to the basic features of the various phases of the land redistribution policy in South Africa. The Large Farms discourse was found to exert a constant influence in all phases of this policy. However, its influence was tempered by ideas from other discourses in each different phase. So while strongly influenced by the Large Farms discourse, the land redistribution policy under Prime Minister de Klerk also used policy suggestions from the Small Farms discourse. Similarly, in SLAG the influence of the Large Farms discourse was tempered by ideas from the Households and Small Farms discourses. LRAD shows the strongest Large Farms discourse influences, with a lingering trace of Households discourse ideas. Finally, while the Large Farms discourse continues to exert a strong influence on PLAS, concepts are also taken from the Small Farms and Human Development discourses. The Communist, Dependency and Post-Development discourses were found to have had no influence on land redistribution policy in South Africa so far. The Large Farms discourse has therefore exerted a strong and sustained influence on all phases of the South African land redistribution policy up to today. This perhaps helps to explain why a market-based land redistribution approach was adopted in post-apartheid South Africa, despite its history of unjust dispossession, and despite the unique extent of its land inequality.

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