



Radical Land and Agrarian Reform on the horizon in South Africa: Following Zimbabwe's Footsteps?

In the context of skewed land ownership patterns, extreme inequality and poverty, land reform must represent a radical and or significant break from the past, without, however, disrupting agricultural production and food security

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Introduction

The patterns of power relations and privilege in South Africa have for long been shaped, produced and reproduced by a historic accumulation regime – starting with primitive accumulation which escalated to all manner of enslavements – dependant on the dispossession of the majority of people, particularly their right to use and control their own land. There were many distortions that colonisers introduced to Africa's natural economy, as Archie Mafeje (2003) argues. In the case of South Africa, the true story is yet to be told of how the colonialists violently disrupted relatively advanced farming in the most southern tip of the African continentⁱ. The diabolical colonial administrations were basically interested in mineral exploitation. This logic of exploitation informed the type of infrastructure that they put in place in the form of roads, rail system and ports. As Claude Ake (1980) argues, in the context of the African continent as a whole, the introduction of wage labour, which was occasioned by taxation, led to rural-urban migration. This singular act grossly dislocated the prospect of an agrarian revolution, which should ordinarily precede industrial revolution (Ake, 1980). It is no surprise that the life of an African, relative to the life of a non-African, even in the continent of Africa is a life in hardship, deprivation and underdevelopmentⁱⁱ.

Given the development challenges that Africa has faced and continues to face, it is obvious that Samir Amin has consistently argued for an alternative socio-economic

development approach, particularly pushing for socialismⁱⁱⁱ. Amin (1997: 95) put it well when he said that “contemporary society is manifestly in crisis, if we define crisis as a situation in which the expectations of the majority cannot be satisfied by the logic of the [capitalist] system”. Amin goes on to say that “capitalism and crisis are not incompatible: far from it, because the logic of capital necessarily generates crisis. The solution implies a modification of the rules of the game...an alternative social project” (p96). A number of formidable African economists, including Adebayo Adedeji and Thandika Mkandawire, have unpacked the African development challenge satisfactorily and proposed ways to address the fundamental development challenge at hand. In essence, we need to undo the damage that centuries of colonialism and imperialism have visited on the African continent and to Africans. Land and agrarian reform is, naturally, one of the main catalysts for the change desperately needed in the continent at large and in South Africa in particular.

Africa’s development challenge

Essentially, we are dealing with skewed global power relations which maintain the status quo. At the level of domestic economies, the skewed global order manifests itself through state-market relations that privilege capital and its allies at the expense of development and the people. There is a deliberate design by the global capitalist order to perpetuate a socioeconomic and political system that advances interests of the West and maintains the peripheralisation of the African continent, as Adebayo Adedeji explains the notion of the global merchant system. In the case of South Africa, Sampie Terreblanche (2012:40) captures it well that “in the history of South Africa since 1652 a great variety of capitalist corporations have succeeded in ‘identifying’ themselves so triumphantly with successive political authorities (or with successive states) that they took over the states and (mis)used them to promote the narrow *class interests* of the capitalist/corporatists class to the detriment of society at large.”

It is no surprise therefore that Lungisile Ntsebeza and his co-editors (2013: 1) open their recent book with a punchy sentence saying “there remains a land crisis in South Africa.” In fact, Lungisile Ntsebeza, a leading South African scholar on land and agriculture, starts a paper he delivered at Yale University in 2008 with a very direct and a clear testimony that “the pace of land reform in South Africa is undeniably slow. This is a fact

that has also been acknowledged even by the president of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, when he delivered his State of the Nation address in February this year, 2007.

However, while there may be general acceptance that the South African land reform programme is not occurring fast enough, there is no agreement on the reasons.” In the ensuing sections, I advance an explanation – perhaps at a theoretical level – why land reform in South Africa has been slow. I tap on land reform experiences of selected countries within our African continent and selected countries in Asia, to suggest what should or would happen in South Africa, regarding land and agrarian reform.

Deconstructing a legacy of land dispossession in South Africa

Between 1811 and 1909, there were at least ten wars of resistance by Africans against the settlers. This excludes the many battles and wars that Africans fought against non-Africans starting in 1510, a war that Africans fought and won against the Portuguese colonialists. The unfortunate accident of the Dutch ship, 150 years later, in 1647, along the Cape coast ushered in a new struggle by the Africans against European invaders – in the ship, there was the heartless, racist and white supremacist Jan Van Riebeeck who came back five years later to the Cape as part of the Dutch East India Company in 1652.

The Dutch East India Company had obtained approval by the colonial Dutch government to settle in the Cape coast, something that Africans, led by the brave Chief Qora of the Khoi, resisted however unsuccessfully. The Cape colony was to change hands between the Dutch and the English, until ultimately the evil English made the Cape colony a ‘permanent British possession’ in 1815. Eighty five years later – in 1909, through the malicious Union of South Africa Act – the whole of what we now know as South Africa, became the country of European colonialists when the “British colonial power transferred the country of Africans to the Anglo-Dutch settlers” (Pheko, 1994: 5)^{iv}. Immediately after the formation of the Union of South Africa, the most evil law – the Natives Land Act – was passed by the colonialists in 1913^v; making Africans ‘aliens’ and ‘temporary visitors’ in their country of birth. South Africa effectively went through, for centuries, a similar brutal experience to that of other African countries, although of course life was even harder for other parts of the African continent^{vi}.

For about 350 years, Africans in South Africa were subjected to discriminatory and unjust (land) laws. Colonial and apartheid laws played a key role in legitimising systematic land dispossession and segregating Africans. For instance, the 1913 Natives Land Act allocated only about 13% of land to Africans, the rest of fertile land was allocated to whites. Land dispossession has remained strategic in creating a racially and spatially divided South Africa. Discriminatory land laws, particularly, have had a negative impact on the economic, social, political, and general wellbeing and status of Africans in South Africa – the stubborn legacy of apartheid colonialism is ensuring that Africans continue to disproportionately bear the brunt of socio-economic hardship in South Africa.

Land dispossession was used as a means to subjugate and oppress Africans in order to amass the mass of their lands. Land dispossession has also been used to reduce Africans into labour reserves that ensured dispossession of the majority into wage-work, as Archie Mafeje explained. Land dispossession has since reinforced the extreme racial inequalities that persist in South Africa even today. Despite efforts to address the land question, the legacy of land dispossession remains visible on the South African socio-political and economic landscape. Lungisile Ntsebeza and his co-editors, fittingly, argue that “the resolution of the land question by radical land redistribution [in South Africa] is a *sin qua non* for dismantling the former bantustans... [and that land and agrarian reform should ensure] thoroughgoing process of decolonisation” (Hendricks et al (2013: 348-9).

Revisiting the Land Question^{vii}

As Frantz Fanon (1963: 9) aptly put it, “for a colonial people the most important essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity”. The preceding section gives some details on the repulsive systemic process through which Africans were dispossessed of their land. In the case of South Africa, Paul Hebinck and Ben Cousins (2013), among others, give a thorough genealogy and historicity of the land question. The land question in Southern Africa, and particularly South Africa, is the core when a liberation project is considered – the complete liberation of Africans requires that land must be redistributed, at minimum. Policy should be very clear so as to guide actions to be

undertaken regarding land and agrarian reforms. Tendayi Murisa (2013), for instance, argues that the poor understanding of small scale farming in Southern Africa has resulted in inappropriate policies and that “policy reform at regional & national levels should be driven and informed by the needs of affected communities” (p.209)

Land remains a major source of livelihood for most Africans and this will likely be the case until the industrial and service sectors take the lead in most African economies (Moyo, 1998). There are also spiritual reasons why land is of paramount importance – it is in the land and through the land that people can connect with their spiritual being and are able to be truly themselves^{viii}. The rural poor in South Africa are now beginning to look to land and its productive use as a means of livelihood and food security. Apart from its value for agricultural production to realise commercial and subsistence farming for monetary exchange, land also provides basic household needs such as woodfuel, medicines, game meat and housing material. Given the high levels of unemployment and the limited opportunities for investment in the hinterland of the country, this is not only an option but an imperative. But for land and agrarian reform to resolve the issue of rural poverty, vast changes are needed. Rural people need access to land, tenure security, agricultural support and an environment that is conducive to small-scale farming. Our national development initiatives depend, to a large extent, on the attainment of equitable land distribution and its sustainable utilisation. The success of our democracy depends on this.

The arguments for land redistribution are many and wide ranging. There are political, economic, social as well as moral reasons why there should be a radical transformation process in land ownership patterns in South Africa. Regardless of how land ownership imbalances came about, everyone agrees that it is highly unequal, and that redistribution would reduce inequality and hence social justice. Land reform is also necessary to right past wrongs because productive land was stolen from Africans during the process of colonisation, as indicated in the preceding section. It is a given, as Fanon (1963) contends, that as part of the process of decolonisation, this land should be restored back to the people that owned it. Redress in South Africa has to start by recognising the historical experience of apartheid colonialism. It is in this context that many, convincingly, argue that South Africa should follow on Zimbabwe’s footsteps^{ix}.

Zenzo Moyo^x (2013) observes that land owners and the landless people in South Africa seem to agree that so far land redistribution and the transformation of land ownership patterns in South Africa is moving at a very slow pace. As an example, parliamentary hearings on land reform in 2007, the ANC's conference resolutions in 2007, and the parliamentary media briefings in 2008 confirmed the view that many people (both within and outside the ruling party) are increasingly unhappy with the pace of land reform. The premise on which this belief is held by these stakeholders differs fundamentally.

Arguably, landowners want land reform to be speeded-up in order to avoid the 'chaotic' way in which it was done in other countries such as Zimbabwe, while on the other hand, landless people want land redistribution to be quickened so that they also participate fully in the economy of the country and correct the imbalances of the past. Andile Mngxitama, one of leading proponents for radical land reform in South Africa, summarises the reasons forwarded for a failing land reform programme as,

The budget [that] is inadequate, there is no political will, the Department of Land Affairs lacks capacity, the problem is not the property clause in the constitution but the market assisted land reform policy and the unwillingness of the land owning class to 'play ball'.

Because of a negligible amount of land that has been redistributed so far, many people have begun to doubt the efficacy of market oriented land reform processes. Yet, while the need for redress is acknowledged, the legacy of the principle of willing buyer- willing seller has been unending and grossly underwhelming to say the least. The implication is that those who now own the land will either willingly give up portions of their ill-gotten gains or that the state has enormous financial reserves which will allow it to buy up huge tracts of viable farmland with which to satisfy the land. Unsurprisingly, neither of these assumptions has proved correct and the result is that the colonial and apartheid status quo in land relations have been largely left intact. It is worth highlighting that in almost all countries where market assisted land reforms have been undertaken, the outcomes have been disappointing. In the case of Southern African countries such as Zimbabwe and Namibia, and more recently, South Africa, market assisted land reforms have served to justify and legalise colonial land apportionment, and effectively freeze in time all that has gone before.

In South Africa, despite conflicts that exist on the redistribution procedures followed by the state, there are fundamental agreements between the private sector and

government that need to be acknowledged (Moyo, 2013). Almost everyone in South Africa agree that land reform is a central part of the constitutional settlement hence sacrifices and compromises should be made in order to accomplish what the constitution requires. There is agreement that land reform should be prioritised by government because the costs of failure are very high, considering what has happened in Zimbabwe. There is also agreement on the pressing need to transfer some land to African farmers. The present slow pace of redistribution is 'flaring up' conflict, as Amartya Sen (2009) would put it, between organised agriculture and government, and among farmers, officials as well as farm workers. Such land is required for both settlement and farming purposes.

In order to accomplish satisfactory land reform, a combination of state and market forces is required to achieve effective and sustainable transformation (Moyo, 2013). Many land claims that have been registered with the courts are justified and these should be settled quickly to avoid a blocking effect, which will slow the pace of land redistribution (CDE, 2008). There is also increasing agreement that the alarmingly frequent murders of white farmers are indicative of yet unprecedented antagonisms and should be seen rather as being yet another expression of a determination to seize land, and not equated simply to rural crime. We should understand that these contemporary antagonisms are mostly prompted by historical antagonism between white commercial farmers, African labourers and local communities (Think Africa Press, 2013). Some farmers' associations have acknowledged that their responsibilities to surrounding communities have fundamentally altered and need urgent attention, whilst others have proved far more resistant to change. This has also led to fears that South Africa may follow Zimbabwe's 'chaotic' land reform programme.

Thomas (2003: 694-5) argued the following about Zimbabwe, which is also relevant to South Africa:

It is uncontested that land was simply stolen from its owners throughout the century before independence. Redistribution would reverse this process and return land to the dispossessed. Additionally, racial basis of land inequality needs to be specifically acknowledged. Redistribution is justified at least in part through the need to redress racial imbalance in land ownership for a number of reasons not least among them being that the political instability is inevitable when the subordination of Africans is perpetuated by the inactivity, through collusion or impotence, of an essentially African government. The eradication of this nexus of privilege

and humiliation is essential to the re-establishment of confidence among a demoralised black population.

Of late, there are even more direct comparisons between Zimbabwe and South Africa when it comes to land and agrarian issues. There are even scholars who recommend that South Africa should adopt the recent Fast Track Land Reform programme that Zimbabwe has implemented. Ian Scoones (2010) and his co-researchers, for instance, make a case that there are important lessons from the Zimbabwean Fast Track Land Reform programme for South Africa and Namibia. They further argue that what happened in Zimbabwe during 1999-2002 could also happen in South Africa. Sam Moyo (2013) draws insightful parallels between South Africa and Zimbabwe, effectively arguing that South Africa is increasingly facing similar 'forces' that led to the radical land reform in Zimbabwe – the agrarian question is just as prominent in South Africa today as it was in Zimbabwe in 2000.

Lessons from Zimbabwe

Zenzo Moyo (2013) makes a point, which many people have repeatedly made, that the land question in Zimbabwe has been a problem since the political independence of that country in 1980. One of the reasons why people participated in the liberation war was because of the skewed land ownership patterns that favoured the minority white population (Shoko, 2004). Even though land redistribution started immediately after independence, it was very slow and various reasons contributed to this. According to Shoko (2004), from 1890 to 1965, Zimbabwe, then known as Rhodesia was under the rule of the British. In 1965, it declared a unilateral declaration of independence that resulted in Rhodesia becoming independent from the British Crown. From the 1960s up to 1979, the country was engaged in a liberation war where nationalist parties (ZAPU and ZANU) were fighting for majority rule.

Through a process of systematic and 'legal' evictions, about 5 000 large commercial farms had come to occupy 15.5 million hectares of the 33 million hectares of farm land by independence (Thomas 2003). This process expropriated fertile land from blacks and ensured that most fertile land was in the hands of white commercial farmers. In 1979, the colonial government led by Ian Smith and the nationalist parties led by Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo participated in the Lancaster House negotiations that were

meant to end the war and lead to a majority rule (Moyo, 2013). This 1979 Lancaster House Agreement (LHA) set the terms for all land reform policies in the first ten years of Zimbabwe's independence (Sadomba & Andrew, 2006). A close look at LHA shows that the proposed land reform process nuanced the reconciliatory nature of the 1979 negotiations, thereby discounting any radical process of land reform. Moyo and Murisa (2008:72) are more scathing about these negotiations:

Neo-colonialism indeed triumphed in 1979 at the Lancaster House where a settlement was reached between the liberation fighters and the white regime in Rhodesia, led by Ian Smith ... A ten-year block on Land reform was achieved during the negotiations. Although Britain and the United States pledged to help fund the land re-distribution ten years after the agreement, these pledges were never fully honoured.

In terms of seeking a resolution to the land question in Zimbabwe at the time, the British, as former colonisers, agreed that they would contribute to land purchase, and pledged 20 million pounds in 1980 (Scoones *et al* 2010). The basis of land acquisition according to the Lancaster House Agreement was through the principle of willing seller-willing buyer (Moyo, 2013). All participants of the negotiations acknowledged that land reform had to be a central plank of post-independence policy. During this period, the new government played by the rules, keen to gain international confidence and encourage reconciliation with the white farming community. White commercial farmers were seen as a protected species for much of the 1980s (Scoones *et al* 2010).

During the 1980s, plenty of land was made available through the willing seller willing buyer arrangements (Moyo, 2013). However, this often represented only the marginal sections of larger properties, as farmers retained their productive core. Most of those who got land received marginal land, not very fertile for agricultural purposes. Without any doubt, the willing seller, willing buyer principle ensured that whites withheld their best land, thereby denying new settlers the opportunity to fully participate in the agricultural economy (Thomas, 2003 and Scoones *et al* 2010). As Thomas (2003) indicates, by the late 1980s, it was clear that plans for mass resettlement were not going to materialise. Consequently, the land question was therefore brought back into the political agenda (Moyo, 2013). It provided an opportunity to reform policy to facilitate

a more aggressive transformation to neutralise the looming crisis of expectation on part of the landless masses.

Post-LHA, the government amended the Zimbabwean constitution to allow for the compulsory acquisition of land with little compensation and limited rights of appeal to the courts (Moyo, 2013). There followed in 1992 a Land Acquisition Act which gave government the right to compulsorily acquire land with minimal compensation. But donor pressure ensured that the Lancaster House willing seller willing buyer condition persisted and with escalating land prices, this meant that very little land redistribution actually occurred (Moyo, 2013). In 1997, the government decided to act radically. It launched the second phase of the land reform and resettlement programme (LRRP II), based on compulsory acquisition, but with compensation. It identified a number of farms for acquisition based on criteria spelt out in the 1990 land policy statement. These farms were where farmers owned more than one farm, the farmer is absentee, the farm is derelict or under-utilised; or borders a communal area (Scoones *et al* 2010).

As stated by Scoones *et al* (2010), from 1999, it was rather, in the midst of political confusion and intense debate generated by the constitutional referendum and the run up to the much delayed 2000 elections, land invasions started across the country. These invasions set in motion a process of radical land reform. Competing visions of what land was for and what land reform should be about played out. As Scoones *et al* (2010) further observe, there is currently active academic debate on whether these land invasions were spontaneous peasant-led movements motivated by a genuine desire for land, a bottom up process to force government into action (as suggested by Sadomba & Andrew, 2006; Moyo, 2011 and Moyo & Yeros, 2007) or they were occasioned by selfish interests of politicians to buttress their position in an almost faltering political position.

In parallel to the technical view focused on the commercial viability of the agricultural sector, other visions of the resettlement programme emerged, including claims for restitution of ancestral lands, compensation for war veterans and wider social and equity goals linked to a radical restructuring of the agrarian economy (Scoones *et al* 2010). According to Sam Moyo (2011), a large number of blacks, especially the poor landless and farm-workers sought radical land reform to redress racial and class

inequalities, foreign domination and historical loss of land. The disbelief that land should only be distributed through market friendly processes is precisely where the Zimbabwean 'land grabs' by the masses began. Zenzo Moyo (2013) is of the view that these reasons are also applicable to the South African context and this explains why everyone agrees on the need to transform current land ownership patterns.

Moyo (2013) argues that the Zimbabwean government's Land Reform and Resettlement Programme (LRRP) can therefore be seen as comprising three phases: the first from 1980 to 1990; the second from 1990 to 1996 where several laws were passed after the realisation that the first decade had achieved very little land reform. The third phase commenced with the identification of 1471 farms for compulsory acquisition in 1997. The purpose of land reform in post independent Zimbabwe was to redress past land alienation by creating equal access to land for the majority of the population. The LRRP's goals were to create political stability and an acceptable property rights regime; to promote economic growth through wider equity and efficiency gains from land redistribution; and to foster national food security, self-sufficiency, and agricultural development through labour intensive small farm production, optimal land productivity, and returns to invested capital targeting the landless, war veterans and poor farm workers.

From a broader perspective, the Zimbabwean land reform and resettlement processes followed four distinct models. First was the intensive settlement on an individual family basis (known as Model A) which accounted for close to 80% of the land reform in the 1980s and 1990s. Land was acquired by the state and then divided into smaller plots that were then distributed to beneficiaries. In this model, beneficiaries received cropping land as well as access to grazing land. Tenure was in the form of permits – one for settlement, one for cultivation and the final one for livestock grazing (Sadomba and Andrew, 2006). Beneficiaries of this model were to give up any other land that they owned elsewhere. The second model was the village settlement with cooperative farming (Model B), designed to repossess large commercial farms and then reorganise them as farms owned and run by cooperatives. Financial resources were to be made available to the cooperatives and income realised would be allocated either to individual members of the cooperative or allocated to farm improvement (Zamchiya, 2011).

The third one was Model C, state farms with out-growers. In this model, beneficiaries were resettled around a core estate. Thus the estate provided the settlers with certain services such as water, seeds, and technical expertise while the settlers provided labour for the estate. Cropping land within this estate was allocated to villagers who also gained access to grazing land for their livestock, which was managed communally. The fourth one was implemented mostly in the arid southern part of Zimbabwe. In commercial grazing for communal areas (Model D), the government purchased commercial ranches that were near communal lands. Livestock was then purchased for these communal areas and were allowed to fatten the livestock on the ranch before they sell them. The idea was to reduce grazing pressure on communal lands.^{xi} The models associated with the FTLRP are: A1 (i.e. small farms of between 12 and 30 ha) and A2 (i.e. farms composed of individual plots that are classified as small, medium and large scale commercial schemes)^{xii}

It is also important to acknowledge the upside of the land reform processes that took place in Zimbabwe. Today Zimbabwe has radically altered agrarian structure. According to Moyo (2013), over 15 million hectares were devoted to large scale commercial farming, comprising around 6,000 farmers, nearly all of them white in 1980 but that fell to around 12 million hectares by 1999, in part through the modest land reform and resettlement programme. Moyo (2013) estimates that there are still five million hectares under large scale farming, some of that is in very large holdings. It is estimated that there are just over 2000 white-owned commercial farms still operating, with most having been displaced, along with a substantial number of farm workers (Moyo, 2013). Most of the land lately is under small scale farming, either as communal or resettlement areas. Estimates vary but around 7 million hectares have been taken over through the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) (Scoones *et al* 2010) exceeding the original FTLRP target of expropriating five million hectares (Moyo, 2011).

Moyo (2011) indicates that there have been some major shifts in production, with certain commodities such as tobacco, beef, horticulture, tea and coffee, seen by some as Zimbabwe's mainstay in agricultural economy, being badly affected by land reform, while others such as cotton, traditionally a small holder crop have been less affected. Food production particularly maize has gone down in most years compared to 1990s

averages due to the dislocations of land reform and the establishment of new farms, as well as poor input supply and repeated drought (Moyo, 2013). Food imports and emergency relief have occurred each year since 2000, although the 2009 maize harvest was estimated at 1.24 m tonnes, reducing the need for emergency measures (Cross, 2009).

A closer look at how the Zimbabwean land reform programme was conducted may be opportune to try and establish whether or not it was as chaotic as many in South Africa fear, and what lessons South Africa can learn from that process. As Mngxitama (2000) warns, a comparison of the land reform process between Zimbabwe and South Africa has to be sensitive to some very fundamental differences. The Zimbabwean liberation struggle was inspired by the land question. The South African struggle was mainly premised on urban demands mainly couched in terms of freedom and equality (Mngxitama, 2000). But in both countries, the idea of colonial conquest is the reason for skewed land ownership patterns. This difference should be acknowledged and emphasised because it may premise some differences in approach that may be apparent in these two countries' land reform programmes.

I also briefly looked at the South Korean and Malaysian land reform process. The Korean land reform processes were lauded, together with Thailand, as the best land reform processes that developing countries should aspire to emulate. Laishey (1979) argues that if a land reform programme is to succeed, it must be radical and far reaching. Those who receive land must also continue to receive assistance and support from the state in order for them to be able to properly and sustainably utilise the new resource they have just acquired (Laishey, 1979). I make use of the Korean and Malaysian land reform experiences too as I propose a way forward and conclude^{xiii}.

What could be a way forward?

Land and agrarian reform must represent a radical and rapid break from the past without significantly disrupting agricultural production and food security. Ntsebeza and his co-editors (2013) and Sam Moyo (2013) share this view. However, although the speed of redistribution matters, simple shunting of hectares is not sufficient. Land reform must go hand-in-glove with a restructuring of the rural economy. A bolder and more holistic approach to restructuring South Africa's rural economy is therefore needed.

As Zenzo Moyo (2013) argues, the process of land reform in South Africa should result in agrarian transformation which must ensure food security for the country as well as environmental sustainability. A progressive transformation process should benefit small farmers and emerging African commercial farmers, who should be capacitated by being equipped with the requisite skills to assist them not only to own land, but to also contribute to food security within the country and region. Small farmers should also be assisted to move up the farming ladder and this can be achieved through deliberate and radical empowerment processes where loans and grants are availed to new entrants into the farming economy.

Ian Scoones and his co-researchers (2010), Prosper Matondi (2012) and Tendayi Murisa (2013) provide very specific areas that the government of South Africa should pay attention to – aspects that, as these scholars suggest, would make the Zimbabwean land reform programme an even better success if appropriately addressed. Murisa (2013) in particular recommends that Southern Africa, in its quest to ensure a vibrant small scale farming sector, should pursue:

- African-defined & sustainable agrarian revolution
- Commit more resources
- Pursue pro-poor land reforms
- Strengthen rural mobilisation

The apartheid government had equated national food security with large-scale commercial farming – a sector dominated by whites. The potential for millions of African smallholders to increase production, raise incomes and create much needed jobs was

overlooked, even in the post-apartheid dispensation. This was the bedrock of agricultural transformation which fuelled the rapid economic growth of most Southeast Asian economies. In South Africa, the government has prioritised grafting redistributed land onto existing commercial units. Much of this land has been deemed no longer productive. No doubt, successful large farms will always have a key role in South Africa's agricultural economy. However, the current model is not compatible with a critical need to transform the rural economy and to create more rural jobs. Between 2006 and 2012, the number of South Africans employed in agriculture fell from 1.09 million to 661,000. Rural unemployment stands at 52%, twice the national average. Acute poverty is rife in rural areas. For the country as a whole, South Africa has a dubious honour to be having the highest inequality in the world.

The Southern Africa region also faces a number of challenges relating to land. Not only do we have racially skewed land distribution and poorly resourced land administration institutions, we also have problems of unsustainable land utilisation leading to the decline in the ability of our land resources in providing goods and services. The degradation of the land base is both a cause and an effect of poverty among land users. It is, therefore, important that the land users are provided with skills, knowledge and other resources to be able to optimally and sustainably utilise the land for income generation and poverty reduction. There is a need to enhance and deepen skills development, infrastructure development, service provision and credit access to ensure that smallholders are well supported. Related to this is the need for government to ensure the better use of existing irrigation facilities, to extend irrigation schemes and to enhance water access by rural dwellers. There is now renewed emphasis, which is placed on overcoming food insecurity through support for smallholder farmers and by stimulating market opportunities for smallholder farmers for instance through targeted state procurement. The ANC's undertaking to create a million agriculture-related jobs by 2030 might suggest that it is beginning to recognise a real opportunity in agriculture. It is clear that if this opportunity is to be realised, a bolder – and more wholesale – approach to restructuring South Africa's rural economy is needed.

The state must also support new entrants into the land market for agriculture and food security. Sustainable land reform is a key strategy in achieving national food security.

Production, income and the high price of food are the variables that contribute to hunger in rural areas. In line with the ANC's policy proposal, it is for this reason that government must take the conscious decision to establish a unit with the specific mandate of ensuring that land reform is both sustainable and strategically placed to ensure national food security.

Redistribution strategies of mixing market driven models with state driven processes appear to be ideal. As argued by Sam Moyo (2011:527), the Zimbabwean experience shows that even under neoliberal economic trajectories, a radical process of land redistribution is still possible. The state only needs to be more radical as portrayed by the South Korean process, and the Zimbabwean one, albeit with modifications where necessary.

The state should have the right of first refusal for any land that comes into the market, and such legislation should be implemented transparently. Expropriation of land should not be totally abandoned, but must be used as a tie breaker. With the correct dose of radicalism, and the benefit of retrospection afforded by the Zimbabwean, South Korean and Malaysian processes, South Africa should be able to proceed smoothly towards acceptable redistribution levels within the foreseeable future. Cliffe (2007) also identifies another important dimension that needs re-examination. South Africa conducts land transfers through a one-to-one basis where the government matches the seller of a specific property to a group of purchasers who are supposed to provide a business plan for that particular property. The government therefore plays a facilitators role and funds the purchasers. This business approach acts as a bottleneck and is costly and therefore retards the process of acquiring land. It also militates against smallholder and communal subsistence farming.

The approach by government to encourage joint operations in the form of groups or cooperatives does not always produce desired results too. First, this tendency shows failure by government to fully implement restitution and redistribution. Most projects fail to materialise due to differences of opinion on the part of the beneficiaries who are supposed to implement a business plan (that may have been drawn by a business consultant in the first place).

Most importantly, clarity regarding the kind of farming that South Africa envisages the land reform to accomplish should be a starting point. Put differently, what kind of land reform and land tenure is ideal for South Africa? Where does such a system place smallholder farmers? It is not uncommon for one to see swathes of idle land when one traverses the breath of South Africa. Is it because this land is unproductive, or it is because the land reform programme that the country has adopted attaches more value to peri-urban land? Will working that land not help decongest urban centres at the same time ensuring food security in the rural areas? Cliffe (2007:2) calls this the 'alternative farming system' and says smaller-holder production has many advantages.

In conclusion, South Africa should learn a lot from the land reform process in Zimbabwe in terms of what worked and what should be avoided. The South Korean and the Malaysian experiences that I also been looking at provide valuable lessons too. For instance, the Korean experience suggests that market oriented land redistribution processes can still be employed in a fast track reform programme. The state also needs to ensure that those who have been given land are assisted and guided until they are clear on what they need to do with the land they have gained. Although the land question for South Africa appears similar to that of Zimbabwe from a historical sense, it might very well be that the current contexts require different sets of interventions. The critical issue relates to policy^{xiv}. It is important that land reform programme is informed by clear policy. It should be unequivocal as to what is intended with a programme such as a land reform programme. It would seem that the land reform processes in post-apartheid South Africa have been influenced by a multitude of policy options, understandably informed by multiple objectives, and not a clear policy direction.

If government does not change gear towards a radical or comprehensive approach to land and agrarian reform, the consequences would be devastating for the entire country at some point. It is in the interest of all of us, the private sector and large scale white commercial farmers included, that redistribution of land and reform of agricultural development takes place.

ⁱ Leonard Thompson (2001) briefly covers the important pre-colonial farming methods which were disrupted by the arrival of whites in what we now know as the Western Cape.

ⁱⁱ Walter Rodney (1973), in his timeless book – *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* – has a much apt definition of underdevelopment and he canvasses profound perspectives on how the continent of Africa remains in hardship, marginalisation and underdevelopment. As Rodney (1973) put it, “at all times, therefore, one of the ideas behind underdevelopment is a *comparative* one. It is possible to compare the economic conditions at two different periods for the same country and determine whether or not it had developed; and (more importantly) it is possible to compare the economies of any two countries or sets of countries at any given period in time”

ⁱⁱⁱ I have argued for communalism, as explained Samir Amin himself in his description of the pre-mercantalist Africa and as discussed by Walter Rodney. Marxism and socialism, as western concepts, could limit the search and or scope of an alternative framework for further developing our continent. I am in agreement with the critique of the global economic system, and share Samir Amin’s “delinking” thesis – the disagreement is on the specifics of an alternative socio-economic paradigm.

^{iv} As Motsoko Pheko (1994) summarises the history of land dispossession in South Africa, there were 349,837 settlers and over five million Africans in South Africa at the point of the passing of the 1909 Union of South Africa Act – the Act that established what we now know as modern day South Africa.

^v The South African colonial apartheid parliament under former president FW de Klerk abolished the racially based land measures through a new law (i.e. Act 108 of 1991, which repealed the 1913 and 1936 Acts). The white paper on land reform was later published, proposing limited land redistribution.

^{vi} Kwesi Kwaa Prah (2006), in a must read book, *The African Nation*, provides a detailed account of what non-Africans – the English, the French, the Dutch, the Germans, the Portuguese etc – did to Africans during the various forms of enslavement, colonialism and imperialism.

^{vii} The South African land reform programme, since 1994, is based on three main tenets: tenure reform, redistribution and restitution.

^{viii} This point, about the ‘spiritual’ importance of land, was emphasised by small scale farmers I interviewed in Zimbabwe during 18-21 October 2013. I also had detailed discussions with two leading scholars in Zimbabwe: Dr Ibbo Mandaza of the Southern African Political Economy Series Trust and Prof Sam Moyo of the African Institute for Agrarian Studies.

^{ix} Hendricks et al (2013) appear to be openly recommending radical land reform akin to the Zimbabwean Fast Track Land Reform Programme, so is Moyo (2013) and others.

^x Zenzo Moyo, a former MA student at the University of Johannesburg, worked with me on land reform research that was comparing South Africa and Zimbabwe. He wrote an article on that and I reference it as Moyo (2013) – the article is available at: http://www.consultancyafrica.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1323:land-reform-in-south-africa-and-zimbabwe-towards-the-realisation-of-socio-economic-rights&catid=91:rights-in-focus&Itemid=296. I have also published a paper in the International Journal of African Renaissance Studies (9(1), 2014), in which I draw substantially for this chapter. I have also worked with Zukiswa Mqolomba on the land reform in South Africa, as part of research towards my forthcoming book.

^{xi} Lebert, T. An introduction to Land Reform in Zimbabwe. Available at: <http://www.foodfirst.org>; Zamchiya, P. 2011. A Synopsis of Land and Agrarian Change in Chipinge District, Zimbabwe. *Journal of Peasant Studies*. 38 (5) pp 1093-1122.

^{xii} See Matondi (2012: 8-12)

^{xiii} It is important to acknowledge that context matters. Korean and Malaysian Land Reform experiences were influenced by their peculiar circumstances, just as the Zimbabwean Land Reform was influenced by a specific context.

^{xiv} I have been explaining, in my various recent publications and opinion articles, what are the policy constraints that face the government. In the context of social and economic policies, for instance, see Gumede (2013)