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Land reform, equity and growth in South Africa: A comparative analysis

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NOTES ON TERMINOLOGY

Land reform/Agrarian Reform

A distinction is often made between agrarian reform and land reform. Land reform generally refers to the redistribution of property rights for the benefit of the landless, tenants and farm labourers. It often assumes two basic forms: the break-up of large holdings and their redistribution or, the consolidation of fragmented land holdings.

The term agrarian reform emerges as a conceptual construct of the Cold War period and includes both changes in land ownership and changes in agricultural organisation and production.[1] Agrarian reform, therefore, often combines land reform with specific interventions designed to promote rural development, such as the provision of extension services, credit and infrastructure to rural producers. In this thesis, however, the terms land and agrarian reform are used interchangeably - similar to the Spanish words "*reforma agraria*" that encompass both land and agrarian reform in their meaning (there is no separate word for either concept).[2] As such land/agrarian reform includes land redistribution and changes in agricultural organisation and production within an overall framework of rural and urban economic development. In other words, the mere redistribution of land is not land reform. Land reform programmes should include emphasis on productivity and equity (justice).

Development

In this thesis the word development is not reduced to economic growth measured in terms of annual increases in per capita income or the gross national product. Development includes more equitable distribution of resources between class, race and gender groups. Political and social transformation, as well as peoples' participation in effecting economic growth are seen as prerequisites for genuine development. "*People have to be fully involved from the start in all development policies and strategies and thus have to become active subjects of development rather than the passive objects to whom development is provided or delivered*".[3] In this sense, there can be economic growth without development but, there cannot be development without economic growth.

Equality

Equality refers to the equal distribution of incomes and assets among a population.

Equity

This concept is not neutral and involves issues of justice and morality. In this thesis, equity is equated with justice and is seen as a first step towards equality.

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[1] Adams M, "Land Reform: New Seeds on Old Ground", Natural Resource Perspectives, No.6, Overseas Development Institute, October 1995

[2] Thiesenhusen W.C, "Introduction", Searching for Agrarian Reform in Latin America, Unwin Hyman, London, 1989

[3] Beukes E.P. "Contemporary Development Theories: Implications for development Strategies in South Africa", South Africa: Perspectives on Development, Maganya E.B, Turok B, Coetzee S & Beukes E (Eds.), IFAA, JHB, 1994

Landless
People who do not have access to land, but also includes people who do not have secure access to land.

Land Reform Beneficiaries
People who are on the Department of Land Affairs' lists of beneficiaries of land reform projects.

Potential beneficiaries
Individuals or groups who can / should benefit from land reform projects.

Intended beneficiaries
Individuals/groups/communities that reform programmes or projects were designed to benefit.

Communities
Groups of people who live and/or interact in one locale.

Livelihoods
The means (i.e. capabilities, assets and activities) through which people try to obtain a living that meets their needs for food, shelter, health, belonging and well-being.